

Press statement

The investigation by the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office into Lord Justice Fulford (Sir Adrian Fulford) has concluded. All complaints against him have been dismissed by the Lord Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor who have agreed that there is no evidence to support the allegations of misconduct or to undermine his position as a judicial office holder.

Following allegations in the Mail on Sunday, repeated by other media outlets, that Sir Adrian supported an organisation known as Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) in the late 1970s while a volunteer at the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL), Lord Kerr of Tonaghmore, a Justice of the Supreme Court and former Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, was appointed to carry out a full and independent judicial investigation in accordance with Part 5 of the Judicial Conduct (Judicial and other office holders) Rules 2013.

Lord Kerr considered a number of documents, including those which had been referred to in media reports. He also conducted two lengthy interviews with Sir Adrian in which the allegations which had been made in the newspapers and other outlets were scrupulously examined. Searching questions were put to and responded to by Sir Adrian. He was closely questioned about his involvement with the NCCL and about that organisation's association with PIE. Sir Adrian was also questioned about his authorship of an article which had been referred to in the press reports.

Having conducted a challenging and interrogative inquiry, Lord Kerr concluded that the allegation that Sir Adrian had been a supporter of the PIE was without substance. On the evidence that had been presented and on the basis of the interviews which he had conducted, Lord Kerr concluded that Sir Adrian was not and had never been a supporter of PIE or its aims. Further there was no reason for Sir Adrian to have disclosed his association with the NCCL on appointment to judicial office.

As part of the judicial investigation Lord Kerr considered a number of judgments referred to by the Mail on Sunday in which Sir Adrian had been involved since his appointment to the High Court bench and which concerned sexual crimes. He also examined summaries of all cases of a sexual nature in which the victim had been less than 21 years old and in which Sir Adrian had sat as a member of the Court of Appeal. He found nothing in the least untoward about any of the decisions that had been reached.

Sir Adrian has voluntarily refrained from sitting in criminal proceedings pending the outcome of this investigation. Having been fully exonerated, he will now resume sitting in all jurisdictions.