



NEWS RELEASE

PUBLICATION OF THE 10TH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCOTTISH CRIMINAL CASES REVIEW COMMISSION

The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission today announced the publication of its 10th annual report, covering the period from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.

The Commission was established in April 1999 to review alleged miscarriages of justice in Scottish criminal convictions and sentences independently of Government and the Crown.

The report sets out the Commission's main functions and performance over the reporting year, including the annual accounts. Additional information is provided on case statistics and the decision making process, as well as future plans.

The Commission's Chairman, Mrs Jean Couper CBE, said today:

"It gives me great pleasure, as the Commission's new Chairman, to report on our work and performance during our 10th Anniversary year. The Commission's primary roles continue to be the investigation of alleged miscarriages of justice and to promote confidence in the criminal justice system. Case numbers have increased slightly from the previous year. However I am pleased to report that the Commission has successfully reduced the overall average review times for both sentence-only and conviction cases, achieving its targets in both these areas.

The 2008-09 Annual Report details the Commission's achievements for the year, providing information on case statistics and trends, and sets out our aims and objectives for the coming year. In addition, the findings of the Commission's first research project on referred cases are highlighted. In the coming months we will analyse further the researchers' report in order to identify areas for improvement in our work and for discussion with others within the criminal justice system..

The Commission has since its establishment in April 1999 referred a total of 82 cases to the High Court for determination. It is important that once a case is referred by the Commission it is dealt with speedily and efficiently. There continue to be a number of older referred cases yet to be determined and we will continue to work with appropriate stakeholders to identify and resolve the reasons for delay.

I pay tribute to my predecessor the Very Revd Dr Graham Forbes CBE who retired on 31 December 2008 and to all who have served the Commission in the

past 10 years. They have considered each application impartially, investigated each case thoroughly and in all aspects of the Commission's work demonstrated their commitment to fairness and justice.. Moving into our 2nd decade we will build on these achievements and values."

The report is available via the Commission's website www.sccrc.org.uk free of charge from the Commission at 5th floor Portland House, 17 Renfield Street, Glasgow, Tel: 0141 270 7030, Fax: 0141 270 7040. E-mail: info@sccrc.org.uk

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission was established in April 1999 as an independent body to review alleged miscarriages of justice in Scotland. Previously the Secretary of State for Scotland held the responsibility for reviewing alleged miscarriages of justice and for referring deserving cases to the High Court for determination.

Under section 194 A to L of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 (as inserted by section 25 of the Crime and Punishment (Scotland) Act 1997) the Commission can refer a case to the High Court if it believes that a miscarriage of justice may have occurred and that it is in the interests of justice that a reference should be made.

As at 31 March 2009 the Commission had received a total of 1092 cases and had issued final decisions in 1043 cases, 82 of which were referrals to the High Court.

The Commission will issue a short news release after a case has been referred to the High Court. The news release will give notice of the fact that a named applicant's case has been referred, including details of the conviction and/or sentence, and a brief overview of the grounds of referral. No further information in respect of the case will normally be disclosed by the Commission due to the statutory non-disclosure provisions under which the Commission operates. The Commission will also put the information contained in the news release on its website.

The Commission operates with a Board of 9 Members, one of whom is the Chairperson, a Chief Executive, a Director of Corporate Services, 2 Senior Legal Officers, 7 Legal Officers and 3 admin support staff.

For further general information contact Mr Chris Reddick, Director of Corporate Services, SCCRC, 5th Floor, Portland House, 17 Renfield Street, Glasgow, G2 5AH, telephone 0141 270 7030, email creddick@sccrc.org.uk or visit the Commission's website at www.sccrc.org.uk