



JUDICIAL
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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PRACTICE DIRECTION HANDED DOWN FOR COURT WORKING DRESS REFORMS

The Lord Chief Justice has today handed down a Practice Direction which will introduce the wearing of a new civil robe in civil and family law cases from 1 October 2008. The Practice Direction is appended to this release. The new civil gown will be worn without a wig.

The President of the Family Division has provided additional guidance for judges sitting on family cases (also appended to this release) to cover certain types of family proceedings that are normally conducted in private.

Court working dress in criminal cases is not affected by the reforms other than High Court Judges wearing their winter robes in summer and winter alike.

The Bar Council is today publishing guidance to the court working dress of advocates, which take effect on the same date.

In response to the Bar Council's announcement, Lord Phillips, the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales said:

"I welcome and approve the guidance which the Bar Council has published today on court working dress, to run in parallel with the changes to judicial court working dress that take effect on 1 October this year. I am grateful to the Bar for having reached agreement with the Law Society and Institute of Legal Executives before producing their guidance."

ENDS

(Appendices follow)

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF ENGLAND AND WALES
AND IN THE COURT OF PROTECTION
AND IN ALL COUNTY COURTS

PRACTICE DIRECTION (COURT DRESS) (NO. 5) AND AMENDMENT NO. 20 TO THE CONSOLIDATED CRIMINAL PRACTICE DIRECTION (COURT DRESS)

It is ordered as follows –

1. The following direction in relation to court dress to be worn by the judiciary of England and Wales when sitting in court, whether in public or private, will take effect on 1 October 2008.

Civil Jurisdiction

2. Save where the relevant Head of Division, the Senior Presiding Judge or the President of the Court of Protection agrees for good reason that a gown should not be worn:
 - a. All judges and members of the High Court Masters Group, (other than Circuit Judges) will wear the new civil gown without a wig (or bands, wing collar or collarette).
 - b. Circuit Judges will wear their existing gown and lilac tippet without a wig (or bands, wing collar or collarette).
 - c. Barristers or solicitors sitting in a judicial capacity will wear their practitioners' dress without a wig.
 - d. District Judges retiring after the 1st of October and sitting as Deputy District Judges will wear the new civil gown without a wig (or bands, wing collar or collarette).
3. Tabs at the neck of the new civil gown will indicate the rank of judge as follows –
 - a. Court of Appeal – gold tabs;
 - b. High Court – red tabs;
 - c. Members of the High Court Masters Group – pink tabs; and
 - d. District Judges – blue tabs.
4. Members of the High Court Masters Group include Masters of the Chancery or Queen's Bench Division, District Judges of the Principal Registry of the Family Division, Bankruptcy Registrars and Costs Judges.

Criminal Jurisdiction

5. There will be no change of court dress worn in the exercise of the criminal jurisdiction save that High Court Judges will wear their winter robes in winter and summer alike.
6. This Practice Direction amends the Consolidated Criminal Practice Direction handed down by the Lord Chief Justice on the 8th of July 2002 as amended. A new paragraph I.1.2 shall be inserted after paragraph I.1.1 to state – “High Court Judges hearing criminal cases shall wear the winter criminal robe year-round. Scarlet summer robes are no longer issued or worn.”
7. Amendment Number 20 to the Consolidated Criminal Practice Direction (Judicial Dress) is added to the end of the list of included Practice Directions in Annex A to the Consolidated Criminal Practice Direction.
8. This Practice Direction is made by the Lord Chief Justice in accordance with the procedure laid down in Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005.

The Right Honourable
Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers
Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales

**President of the Family Division
Guidance on Court Dress**

For the purposes of paragraph 2 of the Practice Direction (Court Dress) (No. 5) and amendment no. 20 to the Consolidated Criminal Practice Direction (Court Dress), the President of the Family Division directs that there is good reason that a gown should not be worn by any of the judges listed in the said paragraph 2 when the judge is sitting in family proceedings¹, otherwise than in open court.

When not wearing a gown, judges should sit wearing a dark coloured business suit or similar.



Sir Mark Potter
President of the Family Division
Date 31st July 2008

¹ As defined by Section 32 of the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 and Schedule 1 to the Supreme Court Act 1981 as amended

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**President of the Court of Protection
Guidance on Court Dress**

For the purposes of paragraph 2 of the Practice Direction (Court Dress) (No. 5) and amendment no. 20 to the Consolidated Criminal Practice Direction (Court Dress), the President of the Court of Protection directs that there is good reason that a gown should not be worn by any of the judges listed in the said paragraph 2 when the judge is sitting in the Court of Protection, otherwise than in open court.

When not wearing a gown, judges should sit wearing a dark coloured business suit or similar.



Sir Mark Potter
President of the Court of Protection
Date 31st July 2008