

The resignation of Dame Lowell Goddard as chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse (IICSA) earlier this month—the third chair to resign since the inquiry was established in 2014—has caused anguish among abuse survivors and a headache for the new Home Secretary.

Whoever takes up the mantle and oversees the most ambitious public inquiry ever established in England and Wales will have to contend with criticism that the inquiry's remit is impossibly wide, as well as questions about whether the inquiry can continue in its current format, or needs to be reformed.

In her resignation statement Dame Lowell referred to a

“legacy of failure” which had been hard to shake off, adding that it would have been better to have started afresh.

Richard Scorer, an abuse lawyer at Slater & Gordon Lawyers (UK), who represents 50 abuse survivors in the inquiry, says the new chair will need to ensure that the inquiry's nature and purpose is better communicated to the public at large. “In the public mind the inquiry has become overly conflated with some of the more lurid abuse allegations featured in the media,” he says.

According to Scorer, because the chair exercises judicial powers, he or she probably needs to be a lawyer, preferably a judge. “Technically, a



Goddard: Third time unlucky

statutory inquiry does not require a legal chair. However, given the gravity of the issues being considered by the inquiry, and the likely resistance from some of the institutions under scrutiny, a

lawyer is probably required. But equally, the new chair needs to have a background in issues relating to child abuse, otherwise he or she would face an impossibly steep learning curve,” he says.

The Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, has confirmed that the inquiry's work will continue without delay and that its success remains a priority for the government. Issue papers asking for comments on the effectiveness of the criminal compensation and the civil justice systems for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in England and Wales are live on the inquiry's website (www.iicsa.org.uk). The closing date for submissions is noon on 29 September 2016.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Correction

A recent news story “Malicious prosecution extended” (NLJ, 22 July 2016, p 4) stated that the decision in *Willers v Gubáy* was made with a 5:2 majority when it was in fact a 5:4 majority. Also, as Mr Willers' appeal was against a strike out it proceeded on the basis of assumed facts. The news story and related feature, “A firm foundation?” (NLJ, 29 July 2016, p 16) have been corrected to reflect this. Our apologies for any confusion.

Hold the date

Halsbury's Law Exchange, an independent legal think tank, is holding a panel discussion on the future of legal aid and litigants in person on 22 September. Chaired by Joshua Rozenberg, the event will bring together leaders and representatives from the government, the judiciary, the profession and the pro-bono and legal aid community to discuss reforms to legal aid and the priorities for the future. Register for this free event at www.halsburyslawexchange.co.uk (6.30pm register for 7pm start, followed by drinks, canapés and networking).

Wanted: low value PI case studies

The Law Society has put out a call for case studies to help prepare its response to the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ's) forthcoming consultation on the small claims limit for low value personal injury cases.

The consultation is likely to include proposals to raise the small claims limit for personal injury claims from £1,000 to £5,000 as well as the removal of the right to general damages for minor soft tissue injuries:

both options are opposed by Chancery Lane.

Cases involving road traffic accident/ employer's liability and public liability matters from £1,000.01 to £5,000 and up to £25,000 where liability is admitted, and road traffic accident/ employer's liability and public liability matters from £1,000.01 to £5,000 and up to £25,000 where liability is in dispute, are of particular interest.

The society hopes that the information it receives will illustrate the impact that the proposed changes could have on those seeking to bring a genuine action for injuries sustained through no fault of their own, as well as illustrate the important role that solicitors play in ensuring access to justice.

Personal injury case study forms can be downloaded from the Law Society website (www.lawsociety.org.uk).

Awards to recognise next generation of women trailblazers

The First 100 Years, the ground-breaking project charting the journey of women in the legal profession, has launched its Inspirational Women in Law Awards to identify and celebrate 10 women pioneers that will inspire the next generation of lawyers.

Nominees from across the legal profession are sought and

can include practising lawyers or judiciary members, including but not limited to in-house legal counsel, CMA magistrates, and members of CILEX, the Institute of Paralegals, the Institute of Barristers Clerks and the Chartered Institution of Legal Librarians.

Nominees should also have less than 10 years' experience

of working in the legal profession and be working in the UK.

The deadline for nominations is 16 September 2016 and can be made via the project's at: <http://first100years.org.uk/inspirational-women-in-law-award>. The first cohort of winners will be announced in November.