

News

Immigration judge alleged to have made racist comments

PAUL PEACHEY
AND LAURNA ROBERTSON

An immigration judge has resigned as a deputy district judge over alleged racist comments he made about a witness in a harassment case.

Peter Hollingworth is now under investigation and faces being barred from sitting as an immigration judge for his alleged comments at a procedural hearing at Preston magistrates' court in October.

He is also currently "refraining" from tribunal duties, the judiciary said.

A prosecutor had been arranging a date for Deepa Patel to attend court, but said she was unsure whether Ms Patel could get time off work and get to court at such short notice, *The Sun on Sunday* reported.

It is claimed that Mr Hollingworth replied: "It won't be a problem. She won't

be working anywhere important. She'll only be working in a shop or an off licence."

Ms Patel, a law student, said: "It's shocking and disgusting for anyone to say that, especially a judge... you would assume that people of this day and age, especially a judge, wouldn't be racist."

She added: "It's right that he's resigned [from criminal work], but it's outrageous that he's still an immigration judge. He needs to resign altogether."

A Crown Prosecution Service spokeswoman said HM Courts and Tribunals Service

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was contacted as the prosecutor considered the judge's words "to be inappropriate".

The Judicial Conduct Investigations Office's immigration and asylum tribunal section is investigating the judge's conduct.

The investigation will look at a number of lines of inquiry including whether the judge's words amounted to racism, a spokesman for the team said.

A spokesman said: "[We] can confirm that Judge Richard Terrence Peter Hollingworth has resigned as a deputy district judge.

"Any finding of misconduct and recommendation of disciplinary action will be subsequently handled by the JCIO in accordance with the rules.

"He currently remains a first-tier tribunal judge at the Immigration and Asylum Chamber; however, he is currently refraining from all judicial duties."



'Sherlock' actors are indie's best

'Sherlock' actors Andrew Scott and Benedict Cumberbatch were winners at the British Independent Film Awards (Bifas) at the Old Billingsgate venue in London. Scott was awarded the Best Supporting Actor award for his role in 'Pride', while Cumberbatch (pictured at last night's ceremony with his fiancée, Sophie Hunter) won the Variety Award AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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