

News Release

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The Judicial Appointments Commission publishes its annual report

The Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) today publishes its first annual report, '**Committed to Selection on Merit**'. The report sets out the JAC's progress in its inaugural year.

During its first year, the JAC has concentrated on:

- the design and implementation of a new selection process, including developing a definition of merit;
- undertaking extensive activity to reach the widest range of eligible applicants.

JAC Chairman, Baroness Prashar, said:

"We have made a good start, particularly in defining merit, introducing a new streamlined selection process and our extensive work to encourage a wide range of eligible candidates to apply. In its final report in March 2006, the Commission for Judicial Appointments (a body which was charged with reviewing appointments run by the then Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA)) criticised the High Court selection process for failing to make use of interviews and the system more generally for continuing to use automatic consultation. I am very proud of the fact that within a year the JAC has introduced an altogether new, open, fair and accountable selection process and that our efforts are beginning to show results.

"There are very early signs of increases in overall applications received. Furthermore, figures based on a very small number of selection exercises show an increase in the proportion of women and solicitors who are being recommended for appointment. Progress on minorities is slow and we are making concerted efforts to improve this. However, to succeed in our objective of diversifying the judiciary it will require a legal profession that is itself diverse. We are aware that both the Law Society and the Bar Council are making efforts towards this goal.

"I believe that we have laid the foundations on which we will build confidence in the new independent JAC."

The first year of the JAC was a transitional year, during which the Commission ran a selection exercise programme inherited from the then DCA, as well as starting a new programme. Seven selection exercises were completed in the year by the JAC, ie the Commission's recommendations were accepted by the Lord Chancellor and the candidates informed.

Judicial Appointments Commission

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) selects candidates for judicial office on merit, through fair and open competition, from the widest range of eligible candidates. The JAC was established by the Constitutional Reform Act (CRA) in 2005 to enhance the independence of the judiciary.

Responsible for the independent selection of candidates for appointment to judicial positions, the JAC is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The JAC comprises a Chairman, 14 Commissioners and staff. The Commissioners come from a variety of judicial, lay and professional backgrounds.

The selection exercise programme for 2006/07

1. Selection exercises run since the JAC was established in April 2006 fall into four categories. They are:
 - i. exercises retained by the Lord Chancellor and run entirely under DCA processes;
 - ii. exercises started by the then DCA and finished by the JAC and run under DCA processes but with small changes to comply with the CRA;
 - iii. exercises started by the JAC before October 2006 and run mostly under DCA processes but with more significant changes required to comply with the CRA;
 - iv. exercises started by the JAC after October 2006 and run under our new processes.

Decisions on appointments relating to the first category of selection exercises were made by the Lord Chancellor without recommendations by Commissioners. Recommendations on categories ii, iii and iv were made by Commissioners.

2. The Annual Report only gives details of the selection exercises completed by the JAC in 2006/07 ie where the Lord Chancellor has accepted the Commission's recommendations and the individual candidates know the results. There are seven exercises in this category; a diversity breakdown for all but the smallest exercises is given in the Annual Report.

3. In order to draw out the full picture for the year, an aggregate table showing the diversity breakdown of the 58 recommendations arising from the seven exercises is set out below. Further information is available on our website at www.judicialappointments.gov.uk

Gender	No	%	Ethnic Back-ground	No	%	Disability	No	%	Professional Background	No	%
Men	30	51.72	White	54	93.10	Disabled	1	1.72	Solicitor	24	41.3
Women	28	48.27	BME	3	5.17	Not disabled/ not provided	57	98.27	Barrister	30	51.72
Not provided	0	0	Any other	0	0				Salaried judicial post holder	4	6.89
			Not provided	1	1.72				Other/ unknown	0	0

Other recommendations made in 2006/07

4. In the transitional year, Commissioners also made recommendations for appointment from reserve lists created from selection exercises completed by the then DCA.

5. Two recommendations for appointment to the Court of Appeal were also made by a specially constituted committee of the Commission, as set out in Section 80 of the CRA. Both candidates recommended were salaried judicial office holders, one a solicitor, one a barrister.

Statistics on these recommendations are available on our website.

MoJ statistics

6. Aggregate information on all selection exercises run by the then DCA during 2005/06 can be found on their website at www.dca.gov.uk/judicial/

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For all public enquiries regarding selection exercises and the work of the JAC please contact: 0207 210 0123 or visit www.judicialappointments.gov.uk

All media enquiries please contact:

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