

Judging Your Future

The monthly e-newsletter from the
Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC)



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Welcome to the March edition of Judging your Future. Our highlight this month is an interview with Her Honour Judge Frances Kirkham. Frances is of course a JAC Commissioner as well as a judge, but in this short Q&A she provides some practical advice and insight for those wishing to embark on a judicial career.

This newsletter also provides dates, venues and booking information for our next round of career roadshows events.

If you have any queries or would like to receive further information about anything featured in this newsletter, please email us at judgingyourfuture@jac.gsi.gov.uk.

0.1 Current selection exercises

Applications for the following selection exercises are currently being accepted:

Senior Circuit Judge – Central Criminal Court

Closing date: 29 March 2007

Location: London

Vacancies / 1

Resident Judge (Crime)

Closing date: 29 March 2007

Location: Birmingham, Cardiff, London and Leeds

Vacancies / 4

Please ensure that you check the eligibility criteria for each role on our website.

Further information about the selection exercises can be found at -

<http://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/current/current.htm>

0.2 Forthcoming selection exercises

We are committed to providing as much information as we can about selection exercises that are scheduled to commence.

However, we can only announce selection exercises when we have received an official vacancy request from our customers at Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCS) and the Tribunals Service. The vacancies detailed below have had an official vacancy request and are due to commence in March.

Please be aware that scheduled commencement dates are provisional and subject to change.

President – Competition Appeal Tribunal

Provisional launch date: w/c 26 March 2007

Location: London (the Tribunal is based in London but may sit anywhere that is convenient)

Vacancies / 1

Disability Qualified Members – Social Security and Child Support Appeal Tribunals

Provisional launch date: Early April 2007

Location: South East England and Scotland

Vacancies / 12

Senior Circuit Judges (Chancery)

Provisional launch date: Early April 2007

Location: Cardiff and London

Vacancies / 2

District Judges (Magistrates Court)

Provisional launch date: Mid April 2007

Location: across England and Wales

Vacancies / 21

Specialist Medical Members - Mental Health Review Tribunal

Provisional launch date: Mid April 2007

Location: across England

Vacancies / 24

Please ensure that you check the eligibility criteria for the roles on our website when the selection exercises are open for application.

0.3 Judicial career roadshows

We are pleased to confirm the details of our second round of careers roadshows, aimed at everyone thinking about beginning or furthering their judicial career. Current judicial office holders and JAC staff will be on hand to guide delegates through the new JAC application procedures, provide practical tips, advice and guidance and answer questions about both applying for and holding judicial office.

Date	Location	Address
9 May	London	Clive House London, SW1H 9EX
15 May	Cardiff	Cardiff University Law School Cardiff, CF10 3AX
4 June	Liverpool	Liverpool Civil and Family Court Liverpool, L2 1BX
6 June	Newcastle	Newcastle Combined Court Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE1 3LA
3 July	Nottingham	Strathdon Hotel Nottingham, NG1 5FT
10 July	Exeter	Exeter Combined Court Exeter, EX1 1UH
11 July	London	Clive House London, SW1H 9EX

To register your place at an event or one to one session, send an email to outreachevents@jac.gsi.gov.uk or call 020 7210 0173.

If registering by email please include your postal address and telephone number, and of course the event that you would like a place at!

If you have a colleague who you feel would like to attend an event please do pass on the details of the events to them.

0.4 Profile of a Judge

This month's interview is with **Her Honour Judge Frances Kirkham**.

Frances has been a commissioner at the Judicial Appointment Commission since January 2006. She became a solicitor in 1978 and in October 2000 she became a Senior Circuit Judge and is the designated Technology and Construction Court judge in Birmingham. She founded the West Midlands Association of Women Solicitors and is a founder member of the UK Association of Women Judges.

1) How long have you been a judge?

I was appointed in October 2000 as the designated TCC judge in Birmingham, so I have served for just over 6 years.

2) Why did you decide to choose a judicial career?

I had been in practice as a solicitor for over 20 years, and had very much enjoyed sitting as a recorder (doing mainly civil and family work, though with some crime as well.) A full-time judicial career would give me the opportunity to tackle something new. It is very refreshing to take on a new job, which is challenging, stimulating and fun, especially if - like me - you have reached your fifties.

3) What are the best aspects of your role?

I would highlight four things:

- 1) I discovered the pleasure of playing a very small part in developing areas of law. (As a solicitor, one has a much wider role, and there seem to be fewer opportunities to concentrate on the law).
- 2) As a judge, one has much more control over one's working life, and most of us find that we have a better work life balance than we did in private practice.
- 3) Supportive colleagues and a non-competitive environment. And, above all,
- 4) It is a great privilege to be a judge and to have the opportunity to help people resolve difficulties, put disputes behind them and move on in life.

4) What are the worst aspects of your role?

Making difficult decisions in hard cases. Our adversarial system is such that there is usually a loser as well as a winner, and it is sometimes hard to send someone away disappointed.

5) What advice would you give to someone considering a judicial career?

Start early! My only regret is that I did not begin much earlier. This is easily the best job I have ever had.

0.5 Any questions?

As always we welcome your questions and comments. Please send them in to judgingyourfuture@jac.gsi.gov.uk

Do pass on details of Judging Your Future to your colleagues. They can access it via our website but to receive it via email they will need to register with us at the same email address.

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