

Judging Your Future

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



In this issue / July 2007

- 01 Current selection exercises
 - 02 Forthcoming selection exercises
 - 03 JAC annual report 2006/7 – our first annual report was published on 4 July
 - 04 New JAC Commissioner – welcome to Lord Justice Roger Toulson
 - 05 Myth of the month
 - 06 Tip of the month – a new feature!
 - 07 Profile of a Judge – this month we talk to District Judge Charles Newman
 - 08 Any questions?
-

Welcome to the July edition of the Judging Your Future e-newsletter.

This month we feature details of the JAC's first annual report that was laid before Parliament and published on 4 July. Our profile this month is with District Judge Charles Newman, the fifth Commissioner to be placed under the Judging Your Future spotlight, there is also news of our new Commissioner, Lord Justice Roger Toulson.

We also include a new feature – tip of the month – that will work alongside our myth of the month feature as part of our commitment to open and accessible selection processes. And of course we carry details of current and forthcoming selection exercises that you may be interested in making an application for.

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 exercise are currently being accepted:

Charity Tribunal – President

Closing date: 31 July 2007

Location: the administration of the Tribunal is likely to be outside London. Appeals to the Tribunal could originate from any area within England and Wales and hearings will take place across the two countries. Attendance at hearings and visiting the administration centre may require travelling and necessitate an overnight stay

Vacancies / 1

Charity Tribunal – legally qualified panel members

Closing date: 31 July 2007

Location: hearings will take place across England and Wales. Attendance at hearings may require travelling and necessitate an overnight stay

Vacancies / 5

Please ensure that you check the eligibility criteria for these roles 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, or the Ministry of Justice. The vacancies detailed below have had an official vacancy request and are due to commence in the next couple of months.

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

Financially Qualified Panel Members – Social Security and Child Support Appeal Tribunals

Provisional launch date: July 2007

Location: South East England, South West England and Scotland

Vacancies / 3

Please ensure that you check the eligibility criteria for this role on our website when the selection exercises is open for application.

0.3 JAC annual report 2006/7

The JAC's first annual report was published on Wednesday 4 July. The report signifies an important milestone for us as an organisation and is an account of our first year of work, following our launch in April 2006.

During our first year, we have 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.

Speaking about the publication, our Chairman, Baroness Usha 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". She went

on to say "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".

You can view the annual report on the JAC website at - www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/annual/annual.htm

0.4 New JAC Commissioner

The Prime Minister announced the appointment of Lord Justice Roger Toulson as a new judicial Commissioner to the JAC on 4 July. He will take up office from 1 October 2007 on the retirement of Lord Justice Robin Auld from the Court of Appeal and the Commission at the end of September 2007. As a result of this change Lady Justice Heather Hallett becomes vice-chairman of the JAC.

Jack Straw, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, said "Lord Justice Auld has served as a Commissioner on the JAC in the first important year of its existence and I want to thank him for his contribution. I also welcome Lord Justice Toulson and Lady Justice Hallett to their new roles.

"The important work of the JAC will continue to be enhanced by the appointment of such distinguished commissioners, with a breadth of knowledge and experience."

Our Chairman, Baroness Usha Prashar added:

"I am very grateful to Robin Auld for his commitment to the work of the JAC in its inaugural year. As the first vice-chairman, he has been instrumental in helping to set our strategy and forge our independent identity. We have benefited enormously from his experience and expertise as a member of the senior judiciary. He will be missed."

0.5 Myth of the Month

The JAC is committed to dispelling myths about the world of judicial appointments. This month's example is:

Myth – a judge's life is a lonely one.

Fact – life as a judge is only as lonely as you make it. We regularly hear from newly appointed judges about how willing they have found other experienced judges are to help and advise. New judges who had expected to feel lonely and isolated often actually feel that they are working as a team with other judges with different expertise and experience. Many actually feel that their working environment improves, becoming friendlier and more collegiate.

Of course there are lots of support networks - both official and unofficial – to tap into and for some roles (such as Deputy District Judges) there are mentors who offer support and advice.

Finally it is also worth remembering that a large proportion of judicial offices are fee paid or part time in their nature and so can be combined with other things.

0.6 Tip of the Month

Joining our monthly myth is a new feature for Judging Your Future, welcome to our monthly tip for judicial applicants!

Tip number one – don't wait for a selection exercise to open for application before you start work on your application!

You should start approaching potential referees and gather information for the self-assessment section of application forms. If you look at any selection exercise listed on the JAC website – at www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/current/progress.htm - you will find an application form. While each form is tailored to a particular vacancy, it will give you a good insight into what is generally required, and you can start planning information for your application in advance.

0.7 Profile of a Judge

This month's interview is with District Judge Charles Newman. Charles has been a JAC Commissioner since January 2006. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1972 and appointed registrar of the County Court in 1987. He has served as chair of the District Judges IT Working Group. He is currently a member of the Judicial Advisory Group for IT. Until January 2006 he was a member of the Deputy District Judge Selection Panel and chair of the Quality Review Group for that competition.

1) How long have you been a judge?

I was appointed a Registrar of the County Court in 1987. That became the post of District Judge in 1991. I had been a Deputy Registrar for several years before my full time appointment.

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

I was a solicitor in private practice. For both the deputy and full time job I received an "invitation" to apply so in a sense it chose me. At the time of the full time offer I was only just over 40 years old and was concerned that it might be rather flat after the excitement of private practice. In the event family considerations led me to accept the job and I have not regretted a single day. I only regret that I delayed that decision by eight months.

3) What are the best aspects of your role?

I take decisions on a daily basis which impact directly on people's lives. That is a huge responsibility but one which I find challenging and a privilege. Whilst district judges may not influence the development of law in the same way as the senior judiciary they do have a lot of direct contact with a large range of people and that I particularly enjoy. It is not an Ivory Tower.

4) What are the worst aspects of your role?

There are times when the decisions can be hard, for example in child related family work. There are no winners in that area. However it is correct to say that it can also be very rewarding when you achieve a satisfactory outcome. Sometimes the paperwork can be a little overwhelming but I then remind myself what private practice was like.

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

Arrange some work shadowing through your local judiciary. It will open your eyes to what is involved and, I suggest, will convince you of the advantages to the job. You cannot start too early.

0.8 Any questions?

As always we welcome your questions and comments. Please send them in to [**judgingyourfuture@jac.gsi.gov.uk**](mailto:judgingyourfuture@jac.gsi.gov.uk)

Do pass on details of our Judging Your Future e-newsletter to your colleagues. Access and subscriptions to the newsletter are via our website at [**www.judicialappointments.gov.uk**](http://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk)