

# Judicial Appointments Commission

## Strategic Plan 2016–20

### incorporating the Business Plan 2016–17

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## Section 1: Purpose and Aims

This document sets out what the JAC intends to achieve over the coming 4 years, covering the period 2016–17 to 2019–20 – the Strategic Plan. However, we have focused immediate priorities that we also intend to address during 2016–17, which is the Business Plan. We are also mindful of the internal and external factors that may affect us, such as Ministry of Justice/HMCTS reform, changes to staff and Commissioners (including a new Chairman), new legislation, new ways of working, pay and recruitment controls all within overarching financial spending control limits.

### Purpose

The JAC is an executive non departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Justice. Our purpose is:

- to be an independent selection body for judicial appointments in courts and tribunals in England and Wales and for some tribunals with UK-wide jurisdiction
- to run a selection programme agreed with the Ministry of Justice and respond to individual requests from the Lord Chancellor
- to make selections solely on merit
- to select only persons of good character and
- to have regard to the need to encourage diversity in the range of persons available for selection

### Aims

We will achieve the following aims in order to fulfil our purpose, whilst recognising the government's overall objective to reduce public expenditure:

- flexibly support the evolving business need
- increase confidence in the selection process and selections
- promote and encourage diversity throughout the selection process
- continually improve the candidate experience
- make the JAC a centre of excellence in selection
- be digital by default

## Section 2: Priorities and Objectives

The JAC has developed six major objectives that it intends to deliver in 2016–17. These can be split into two categories:

- A) Core business:** Delivery of high quality selections in a timely, cost effective way, giving due regard to available resources, to fulfil the requirements of the exercise programme, in agreement with the Ministry of Justice, Judicial Office and HMCTS.
- B) Change:** Delivery of remaining and new change projects to support the operation and make improvements to judicial appointments, including implementation of the findings from the Triennial Review published in January 2015.

These priorities are further divided into the following objectives, against which specific actions are set in this Business Plan:

- A1.** Deliver the 2016–17 selection exercise programme, agreed with the Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary and HMCTS, recommending high quality candidates to the Appropriate Authority
- A2.** Direct support to enable delivery of the selection exercise programme
- A3.** Enable full staff engagement and utilise available resources effectively and with due diligence
- B1.** Improve JAC selection processes to ensure they become more effective, efficient, economical and candidate-focused, leading to better quality and more confidence in selections
- B2.** Further develop our online and digital solutions
- B3.** Extend JAC functions to support a wider range of judicial and quasi-judicial appointments

## Plan for addressing priorities

The following detail sets out what is to be delivered in 2016–17, including core business (Section A) and change (Section B).

### A1. Deliver the 2016–17 selection exercise programme, agreed with the Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary and HMCTS, recommending high quality candidates to the Appropriate Authority

Objectives	Timetable
A1.1 Ensure that the programme is delivered with oversight by the Selection Exercise Programme Board according to business need as agreed with the business area. This includes demonstrating flexibility by absorbing changes to the selection programme.	Ongoing
A1.2 Equality proof selection exercise materials, design of process and delivery.	Ongoing
A1.3 Deliver selection exercise outreach Review selection exercise outreach to ensure that as many potential candidates as possible are reached, including in our target groups.	Ongoing
A1.4 Review progression of candidates from key target groups, and take appropriate steps where progression is not in line with level in the eligible pool (where available).	Ongoing
A1.5 Ensure that governance and quality assurance is provided by the Selection Exercise Programme Board and advice provided by the JAC Advisory Group supports the delivery of the selection exercise programme.	March 2017
A1.6 Implement and review the JAC's Welsh Language Scheme.	March 2017
A1.7 Maintain and improve selection process controls to ensure that we maintain the highest possible standards.	March 2017
A1.8 Consider a head-hunting/targeted approach towards recruitment of judicial office holders.	March 2018

### A2. Direct support to enable delivery of the selection exercise programme

Objectives	Timetable
A2.1 External communications: ensuring the JAC website is reviewed, and that social media channels are managed. Publication of the Annual Report for 2015–16 (July 2016). Internal communications: maintaining and reviewing the intranet and organising staff events where issues are discussed. Strategic communications: producing the Communications Strategy (June 2016), and general advice to JAC staff.	Ongoing
A2.2 Support the Chairman and other Commissioners to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities as set out in statute and the Framework Agreement.	Ongoing
A2.3 Provide security and records management advice, covering: IT security incident management; security returns; security training; and all aspects of the MoJ document storage systems (Trim and J Store – October 2016).	Ongoing
A2.4 Handle all complaints in order to fulfil our statutory obligations to address concerns from candidates, and all requests under the Freedom of Information Act.	Ongoing
A2.5 Maintain high calibre panellists by regular reviews of availability and performance, working towards staggered appointments, incorporating a recruitment exercise in the year (March 2017), ensuring that they are regularly trained to reach the necessary standard to undertake their duties. Continue to provide support required for panellists to fulfil their role.	Ongoing

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
A2.6 Provide digital support and guidance to selection exercise teams and the wider JAC. Service management of the Judicial Appointments Recruitment System (JARS), including the software developer and hosting supplier. Training on JARS, including upkeep of training materials. Reviewing customer feedback, publishing web content, with blog updates on system developments. Management of all IT assets.	Ongoing
A2.7 Review stakeholder engagement and implement a plan to ensure all key stakeholders are appropriately engaged.	December 2016
A2.8 Work with partners to continue to break down barriers to application to ensure as many diverse candidates as possible apply and progress, including through the Diversity Forum.	Ongoing

### **A3. Enable full staff engagement and utilise available resources effectively and with due diligence**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
A3.1 Ensure that JAC has an effective and engaged workforce utilising available resources to meet the overall needs of its business.	Ongoing
A3.2 Provide corporate support to ensure the JAC governance arrangements are robust, including all risk, and support for the Audit and Risk Committee.	Ongoing
A3.3 Production of the full annual accounts, that are subject to audit. Production of the quarterly accounts and monthly management accounts.	Ongoing
A3.4 Liaise with MoJ to agree formal allocations, and quarterly allocations of internal budgets for all aspects of the business.	Ongoing
A3.5 Ensuring all payments are made within payment terms, including invoices, Government Procurement Card, Non-Invoice Payment Authorities, travel and subsistence claims and panellist fees and expenses. Undertaking these within MoJ systems.	Ongoing
A3.6 Production of annual official statistics. Management of legacy Equitas system data and management of requests for related management information.	Ongoing

### **B1. Improve JAC selection processes to ensure they become more effective, efficient, economical and candidate-focused, leading to better quality and more confidence in selections**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
B1.1 Develop, evaluate and refine selection techniques to ensure continuous improvement of the quality and efficiency of selection processes.	Ongoing
B1.2 Review how judicial resource is used in the selection process, so that it is sufficient to ensure the selection of the best candidates, whilst having regard to the need to reduce the burden on HMCTS.	Ongoing
B1.3 Monitor and respond to changes resulting from relevant aspects of HMCTS and judicial reform, including by supporting the use of powers to deploy tribunal judges in the courts.	Ongoing
B1.4 Carry out a periodic review of the Commission's Good Character Guidance for candidates.	September 2016
B1.5 Evaluate and revise as necessary the 'Am I Ready' self-assessment tool, to encourage potential candidates to apply when they have the best chance of progressing in the selection process.	September 2016

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
B1.6 Review the selection process used for section 9(1) exercises.	December 2016
B1.7 Develop performance metrics to help provide a means of evaluating the quality of selections.	March 2017
B1.8 Review the assessment of merit, including implementation of competency frameworks, improvements to the grading system, and the application of the Lord Chancellor's Additional Selection Criteria.	March 2017
B1.9 Review and refine shortlisting tools to ensure high quality candidates progress through to selection days.	March 2017
B1.10 Maintain and improve a system of using dry-run candidates to provide feedback and advice on selection materials. Enhance experience of dry-run candidates.	March 2017
B1.11 Complete a review of the application of the equal merit provision, and implement revised policy as appropriate in response to review findings.	March 2017
B1.12 Explore ways to provide improved quality and meaningful feedback to candidates within resources through development of JARS, using panellists' expertise.	March 2017

## **B2. Further develop our online and digital solutions**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
B2.1 In light of enhanced digital changes, ensure that workforce obtain the relevant skills to fully utilise resources.	Ongoing
B2.2 Build on the initiatives introduced in 2014–15 to enable smarter working in relation to hot-desking and use of IT equipment.	December 2016
B2.3 Develop JARS further to support a wider range of appointments.	December 2016
B2.4 Continue to scope the need to remain within the main MoJ Dom1 system. Explore the possibility of alternative solutions.	March 2017
B2.5 Improve the efficiency of the Selection and Character Committee (SCC) including through development of a digital solution.	March 2017
B2.6 Further development of the JAC website and business application. Management of all aspects of JARS development, including sprint planning, product backlog, testing and implementation.	March 2017
B2.7 Scope options for alternative accommodation, away from the main MoJ offices in Petty France.	March 2018

## **B3. Extend JAC functions to support a wider range of judicial and quasi-judicial appointments**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
B3.1 Continue to explore ways to expand JAC functions, such as International and those of a non-judicial nature (also in the Triennial Review).	Ongoing
B3.2 Continue with charging for JAC services for those non-judicial exercises (also in the Triennial Review).	March 2017

## Section 3: Resources

This sets out the details of resources used over recent years, and those planned in 2016–17:

	2010/11 Actual £m	2011/12 Actual £m	2012/13 Actual £m	2013/14 Actual £m	2014/15 Actual £m	2015/16 Forecast £m	2016/17 Planned £m
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>6.86</b>	<b>5.52</b>	<b>5.12</b>	<b>4.91</b>	<b>4.68</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>4.29</b>
<b>Programme</b>							
Pay	3.97	2.96	2.66	2.67	2.70	2.42	2.50
Selection exercises	1.37	1.16	1.50	0.87	0.69	0.74	1.28
Other	0.05	0.19	0.07	0.12	0.21	0.32	0.22
	<b>5.39</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>4.00</b>
<b>Administration</b>							
Pay	0.52	0.52	0.50	0.38	0.24	0.17	0.19
Other	0.22	0.18	0.19	0.17	0.19	0.07	0.12
	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>0.31</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.13</b>	<b>5.01</b>	<b>4.92</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>4.31</b>
Less income	-	-	-	-	-	(0.02)	(0.02)
<b>Net cash expenditure</b>	<b>6.13</b>	<b>5.01</b>	<b>4.92</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>4.29</b>
Soft charges	2.12	1.89	1.80	1.39	1.40	1.08	1.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>8.25</b>	<b>6.90</b>	<b>6.72</b>	<b>5.60</b>	<b>5.43</b>	<b>4.78</b>	<b>5.29</b>
<b>Capital</b>	-	-	-	<b>0.13</b>	<b>0.55</b>	-	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Total FTE Staff</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>

There are savings planned over the Spending Review, although the position in 2016–17 has initially anticipated an increase in spend when compared to the 2015–16 outturn, due to additional costs in taking on a large Parole Board exercise, and a switch in funds to pay for IT hosting, previously incurred by MoJ. Overall, we do expect a slight reduction in staff, and resulting organisational changes, following the Voluntary Early Departure scheme, but the JAC will still deliver its business and Change activity. The selection exercise costs will depend on the nature of the selection exercise programme we are asked to deliver, but we will remain mindful of the need to seek efficiencies, whilst improving our selection processes.

## Section 4: Measures

Success will be measured through the delivery of the selection exercise programme, as agreed through the MoJ and HMCTS. Summary details of the selection exercise programme (as delivered to the Lord Chancellor) are as provided below, as well as the diversity of JAC selections and the 'end-to-end' appointments process time. The JAC also publishes a wide range of information on its policies, processes, operations, official statistics, annual report and the minutes of all Commission Board meetings.

	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Planned
Exercises	21	25	36	35	30	22	28
Applications	4,684	5,490	4,637	5,591	2,365	2,439	2,500
Recommendations	684	746	597	806	310	308	300
Average applications per recommendation	6.8	7.3	7.8	6.9	7.2	7.9	8.3
Recs – Women %	38	48	48	50	43	45	
Recs – BAME %	12	12	12	11	13	9	
Recs – Disabled %	3	4	3	12	3	3	
End-to-End time *	-	30	24	21	17	23	

\* The end-to-end time is the time from the launch of an exercise to the Judicial Office sending out offer letters.

In line with central government departments we are transparent with information on our operations, where this does not affect personal data of those applying for judicial appointment. For example, we will continue to publish generic reports on performance in qualifying tests to support unsuccessful candidates and inform future applications.

We will continue to manage the operation of the JAC using the measures captured under previous key performance indicators, including diversity of applications, timeliness of exercises and levels of complaints. We will share this information with the Ministry of Justice and publish it on our website. How this information will be published is set out below.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Where</b>
Percentage of applications received from BAME candidates, women, CILEx, solicitors, disabled candidates and by age and those shortlisted and recommended for appointment.	Annually	JAC official statistics – published on website
Number of exercises run, applications received and recommendations made	Annually	JAC Annual Report
Number of complaints received and number upheld by Ombudsman	Annually	JAC Annual Report
Percentage of recommendations from women and those of BAME background	Annually	JAC Annual Report
Average length of selection exercises and timeliness of completion	Annually	JAC Annual Report

## Section 5: Risks

The following sets out the key risks as currently provided in the JAC Corporate Risk Register, which may impact on our ability to deliver the Business Plan.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Action</b>
Candidates from target groups do not progress through the selection process in line with the eligible pool.	Panel briefing and training on diversity and unconscious bias. All materials considered by diversity team. Diversity checkpoints throughout selection process indicate progress of target groups and trigger appropriate action. Application of the Equal Merit Provision.
Staff engagement and morale reduces due to increased workloads.	Monthly meetings with senior leaders to discuss related HR issues and deployment of staff. Annual staff survey and 'Make It Happen' Plan in place to address issues arising.
Sufficient experience and knowledge in staff remains to ensure the business delivers its priorities.	Monthly meetings with Senior Leaders to discuss HR related issues including recruitment and retention of staff. Staggered appointments of Commissioners. Develop staggered appointments for panellists. Succession planning in place for key positions, with appropriate knowledge transfer when staff leave.
Policy and Change Programme does not deliver the intended benefits.	Policy and Change Programme Board meets monthly to review progress and risks, with six monthly discussion with MoJ to discuss performance.
Policy and Change Programme is not delivered in a timely fashion.	Monthly Policy and Change Programme Board meetings held to discuss progress, where each project is looked at in detail. This includes review of highlight reports, risks and milestones. Updates are also provided to the main Board.