



April 2015

DIVERSITY PLAN

The Civil Justice Council (CJC) aims to reflect the diversity of the population of England and Wales – both in its membership and in the issues and concerns it addresses in its programme of work, as laid out in its annual business plan.

In conducting recruitment campaigns and making recommendations for the appointment of new members to the Lord Chancellor, the CJC and its Secretariat do not discriminate against anyone (checked against the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act) and, where possible, promote equality of opportunity,

The direction and purpose of this work are threefold:

1. Recruitment

The CJC will continue to make its appointments on the basis of merit, fairness and openness as laid out in the Code of Practice of the Public Appointment Commissioner with due regard for the need for diversity.

The overriding principle of selection to membership of the CJC is merit and the CJC will make every effort, alongside the Public Appointments team at the Ministry of Justice, to provide sifting and interview panels with a choice of high quality candidates drawn from a strong and diverse field from across England and Wales, with skills experience and qualities meeting the criteria of each particular post.

However, it is recognised that some groups are under-represented in the Council's membership, and the Council is committed to improving the diversity of its membership. To this end, targeted efforts will be made to draw vacancies to the attention to professional and other bodies serving under-represented groups. Selection panels will always include members who have received formal equality and diversity training.

The CJC will make particular efforts to ensure that its recruitment campaigns are advertising as widely as possible, utilising available budget to advertise in the national press, but also utilising contacts with other professional bodies, both legal and non legal, such as the Bar Council, the TUC, the Association of Asian Women Lawyers, the Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association, the Black Solicitors Network and the Society of Black Lawyers.

The CJC will also pay attention to the membership of its sifting and interviewing panels, again with the intention of reflecting as much as is possible the constituency that it represents.

The CJC will also encourage regional participation in its committees and sub-groups, in order to reflect the experiences of those involved in the civil justice system from across England and Wales.

2. Work programme

As well as drawing on the advice and knowledge of its membership, the CJC will continue to seek out evidence of groups of court users whose concerns merit further investigation and work by the Council by, for example, conducting discrete pieces of research on the experiences of different group of court users, or the claimants and defendants in particular areas of law, types of case or in different areas of the country. In so doing, the Council will be particularly mindful of the needs and concerns of those individuals with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2012 – that is, age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3. Public sector equality duty

The CJC will continue to act in the spirit of the public sector equality duty, and

‘consider at the formative stage the potential consequences of the decision for people who share protected characteristics and to take these consequences into account before the decision is finalised.’

One key aspect of this area of its work is in conducting its own equality impact assessments in relation to its own research, consultations and recommendations and also in keeping a keen eye on the equality impact assessments produced as part of the consultations of Government departments and other public bodies when responding to those consultations.

This plan was approved and published by the CJC in April 2015 and will be reviewed annually.