



JUDICIAL OFFICE

# Judicial Office: Business Plan

2015-16

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# Foreword

## By the Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals

The landscape of the justice system is changing. Reform is imperative. It is the collective responsibility of judges across the courts and tribunals system to seize and shape the opportunities now before us. Our commitment is simple: judges, tribunal members and magistrates must and will be leaders of reform; and, wherever possible, the judiciary will be a driving force for reforms which encourage access to justice, support the judiciary in its essential work (both in and out of court and hearing rooms), and above all, protect its constitutional independence, for the benefit of society.

What do we have in mind? Of course, plans may adjust over time, to take into account the rapidly changing world we live in, particularly as a result of government, political and international events. But at the core of our vision is:

- a judiciary which continues to attract and retain the best, but is also more diverse, and better able to respond flexibly to changing work
- a modernised court and tribunal estate which provides excellent facilities for users of the justice system, and the judges and staff who are at its heart
- rules and procedures that ensure that the right work is carried out proportionately by the right judge, and which use technology to ensure that cases are dealt with efficiently, speedily and above all justly
- a system for supporting leadership judges which acknowledges and strengthens the work they do, and enables them in turn to support colleagues throughout the system
- a better understanding amongst the public, the government and parliament, of the importance of justice, and its centrality to our prosperity as a nation, and to fairness in a democratic society

In achieving these aims, the work of the Judicial Office is essential. We are delighted to see outlined in this business plan the range of activities which Judicial Office staff will be undertaking over the next year – along with HMCTS and others in the justice system – in support of our vision. We, along with all members of the judiciary, look forward to working with them in taking forward this shared agenda. The judiciary is extremely fortunate to have the support of dedicated, hard-working and fiercely independent civil servants. Their commitment to supporting an independent judiciary, and more generally the rule of law, is remarkable, particularly given the challenging circumstances in which they carry out their work.



**Rt.Hon. Lord Thomas**  
**Lord Chief Justice**



**Rt.Hon. Sir Jeremy Sullivan**  
**Senior President of Tribunals**

## CEO Introduction

Last year, with the agreement of the Judicial Executive Board, we set ourselves five priorities – supporting the Judiciary in relation to improving diversity, performance management, judge-led reform of the justice system, as partners in reform of HMCTS and in managing relationships with Government and Parliament. In support of these goals, we published six judge-led reviews, delivered 450 training courses for more than 19,000 judicial office holders including leadership and management training for more than 350 judicial office holders, ran 5 outreach events for potential candidates for judicial office – and a great deal more besides. I'm pleased at the progress made in all of these areas, which has only been achieved by collaboration within the Judicial Office, with the Judges whom we support and with partners across the justice system.

There remains much to do in all of these areas, so these same priorities continue for the year ahead. We take this work forward in a challenging context. The recent Judicial Attitude Survey indicates that while judges are rightly proud of the roles they carry out for the benefit of society, the majority of judges feel that too much change has been imposed on the judiciary in recent years. One of our tasks this year is to support the senior judiciary in their actions in response to the survey. We will do all that we can in the Judicial Office to support the judiciary in managing change to improve the justice system, for the benefit of society as a whole.

In terms of the way we work in the Judicial Office, there are a number of cross-cutting themes in our Business Plan this year, aimed at helping staff to work more effectively in the provision of our core services. We will continue to look for more effective ways to deliver our services through digital solutions. Continuous improvement provides an important set of tools for us, helping us improve the efficiency of our front line activities and supporting functions alike. Raising our capability as an organisation will be another important theme for 2015/16, as we will be supporting the development of our people through a more structured approach to learning and development. And finally, on staff engagement, we will build on the positive lessons of the 2014 survey, so that the JO continues to be a great place to work.



**Jillian Kay**  
**Chief Executive, Judicial Office**

## Judicial Office

The Judicial Office (JO) was established following the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. It is answerable to the Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals and also carries out some functions related to the judiciary on behalf of the Lord Chancellor. The JO delivers a wide range of functions for the senior judiciary and to c33,000 judicial office-holders including training (through the Judicial College), communications, human resources, welfare, legal and policy advice. Through the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office, it deals with complaints about the conduct of judicial office-holders. The JO also provides support to the Chief Coroner and to the Judge Advocate General.

**Status:** The JO is an Office of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). It is funded by the MoJ and is accountable through the Permanent Secretary for financial propriety and regularity.

**Purpose:** To support the judiciary in upholding the rule of law and delivering justice impartially, speedily and efficiently in the interests of society as a whole.

## Strategic Objectives

- A:** Support and enable leadership and governance for the judiciary
- B:** Support the effective administration of the courts and tribunals
- C:** Support the judiciary in its responsibilities for justice and constitutional matters
- D:** Support the delivery of high quality training which meets the needs of courts and tribunals judiciary
- E:** Promote public confidence in the judiciary through the effective handling of complaints about the personal conduct of judicial office-holders
- F:** Build and maintain effective relationships while widening understanding of the role of the independent judiciary among the public and those with whom we work
- G:** Provide an effective and professional HR service that meets the needs of the judiciary and supports its diversity
- H:** Develop our people and continuously improve our efficiency and effectiveness

## The role of the judiciary

The judiciary is one of the three branches of state. The judiciary, the executive and the legislature have distinct roles and are independent of one another. The role of the judiciary is to uphold the rule of law and to deliver justice in disputes between citizens, businesses and the state fairly and efficiently.

The principle of judicial independence underpins this and has been recognised for many centuries. The democratic health of a nation requires that individual judges and the judiciary as a whole are impartial and independent of all external pressures and of each other. This allows litigants and the wider public to have confidence that their cases will be decided fairly and in accordance with the law, including those to which the executive is a party.

Judicial independence has been underlined in recent years by the enactment of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. The Lord Chief Justice has responsibility under the Act for representing the views of the judiciary of England and Wales to Parliament and Government; for their welfare, training and guidance and for the deployment of judges and allocation of work in courts in England and Wales. The Act also places a duty upon both the Lord Chief Justice and the Lord Chancellor to take such steps as each considers appropriate for the purpose of encouraging judicial diversity. The Act recognises the constitutional principle of the rule of law and places an explicit statutory duty on all government ministers and those with responsibility for matters concerning the judiciary or the administration of justice to uphold the independence of the judiciary. It also places the Lord Chancellor under a specific statutory duty to take particular account of the need to defend judicial independence. Finally, it bars government ministers from any attempt to use such special access to the judiciary that they might have as a means to influence judicial decisions.

Under the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, the Senior President of Tribunals is responsible for the leadership, guidance and training of the tribunals' judiciary. The Senior President's responsibilities extend to reserved tribunals in Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as to England and Wales. The Act also extends the protection of judicial independence as set out in the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 to tribunals' judges.



As well as delivering their functions hearing individual cases, all judges play an important part in improving the operation of the justice system through their leadership and engagement in judicial reform based on practical experience. Much of what is done beyond the courtroom is done in their own time. The work of the Diversity and Community Liaison Judges is one illustration of leadership by judges in the local community. It is also important to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by the 22,000 magistrates who deal with 95 per cent of all criminal cases in England and Wales and a substantial amount of non-criminal work. As unpaid volunteers, magistrates epitomise social responsibility; and they are an integral part of the wider judicial family.

## Priorities

Our priorities for 2015/16 are:

- Delivery of the judiciary's diversity strategy, supporting the Lord Chief Justice's Diversity Committee
- Supporting the judiciary as partners in the HMCTS reform programme
- Strengthening arrangements for the judicial role in the performance management of courts and tribunals
- Supporting the implementation and development of judge-led reforms of the justice system to increase quality and efficiency and to maintain public confidence
- Ensuring the judiciary is well placed to build and maintain appropriate relationships with the Executive and Parliament

## Plan for addressing priorities

### A: Support and enable leadership and governance for the judiciary

Much of the activity sitting under this objective is led and coordinated by seven Private Offices providing research, analysis and administrative support for the senior judiciary and its governance bodies. This includes supporting the Family and Civil Justice Councils in their statutory functions. The Communications Team plays a key role in raising awareness and understanding of the governance arrangements and supporting the cascading of key messages from the senior leadership judges. Action 5 is supported by the International Team.

Actions	Start	End
1. Support a co-ordinated, strategic and corporate approach to judicial decision-making through effective advice and support to governance bodies principally the Judicial Executive Board (JEB), the Judges' Council and its sub-committees, the Tribunals Judicial Executive Board (TJEB) and the Judicial College Board.	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
2. Support effective communication of decisions, information and actions from the JEB, TJEB and Judges Council, making recommendations to the LCJ and JEB as appropriate	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
3. Support judicial involvement in wider work to reform the justice system, including through the Criminal Justice Board, Family Justice Board, Civil and Family Justice Councils and Rules Committees	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
4. Provide appropriate advice and support for judicial involvement in governance structures for specific projects, such as the HMCTS reform programme	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
5. Support judicial involvement in international activity through effective advice and support for the European Committee of Judges' Council and the Judicial College International Committee	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>

## B: Support the effective administration of the courts and tribunals

Much of the activity falling under this objective is led and coordinated through the direct and personal support and advice provided by the Private Offices to the senior leadership judges.

Actions	Start	End
1. Support effective judicial participation as partners in the HMCTS reform programme, ensuring appropriate and timely consultation and communication across the judiciary	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
2. Support the Technology Executive Board, working with HMCTS and as part of the HMCTS reform programme, to facilitate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the development of operational IT systems that support the judiciary</li> <li>• the pilot and roll-out of e-judiciary (including within the JO as appropriate)</li> </ul>	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
3. Continue to support the development and implementation of judge-led reforms in criminal, civil, chancery, tribunals and family justice and monitor their impact on efficiency and effectiveness. This will include, but is not restricted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the implementation of the PQBD's review of the efficiency of criminal proceedings</li> <li>• the roll-out of Transforming Summary Justice across the magistrates' courts</li> <li>• the continued implementation of the Chief Coroner's three-year plan</li> <li>• reforms to the Military courts system</li> <li>• the consideration of further options arising from the modernisation of the family courts</li> </ul>	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>

## C: Support the judiciary in its responsibilities for justice and constitutional matters

Much of the activity falling under this objective is led and coordinated through the direct and personal support and advice of Private Offices providing support to the judiciary in responding appropriately and effectively to policy and legislative developments (including legislative developments in Wales) that will affect the delivery of justice. The international dimension is managed by the International Team.

Actions	Start	End
1. Support the LCJ and SPT in their statutory responsibilities to communicate the views of the judiciary to Parliament and to the Executive	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
2. Support the LCJ and SPT in their responsibilities for Wales and continue to build on the relationship between the judiciary, Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and the Welsh Government	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
3. Maintain and develop the relationship between the LCJ and SPT, the Lord President of Scotland and the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland and the President of the Supreme Court	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
4. Provide a coordinated support function for all judges with lead roles in international matters, including supporting judicial international and European relationships	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
5. Provide strategic advice on international and European policy developments, and scope what is required to support a coordinated judicial approach to prioritising judicial international activities	<b>Scoping by December 2015</b>	

## **D: Support the delivery of high quality training which meets the needs of courts and tribunals judiciary**

The Lord Chief Justice, the Senior President of Tribunals and the Chief Coroner have statutory responsibility for training judicial office holders. The Judicial College develops and delivers the College Strategy and training programmes for judicial office holders.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
1. Deliver core training programmes for courts, tribunals and coroner jurisdictions and provide training which is responsive and flexible to changing demands which arise as a consequence of reforms and developments	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
2. Support the College Strategy 2015-17 by reviewing and revising (as appropriate) existing policies for all judicial office holders to ensure they meet current judicial training needs and incorporate future planning within available resources e.g. impact of Miller and O'Brien for 2016-17 onwards	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
3. Support Course Directors and Training Leads in designing and producing at least 15 interactive e-learning modules by March 2016 and explore use of alternative training methods such as forums and webinars as part of a wider range of methods of judicial training made available to judicial office holders	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
4. Continue to develop the Judicial College Learning Management System (LMS) and extending its use throughout all jurisdictional areas of the judiciary, particularly for tribunals and magistrates, to facilitate access to training materials and improve the efficiency of the administration of training events	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
5. Ensure the timely and efficient provision of training for newly recruited and newly authorised judicial office holders	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
6. Deliver a range of leadership and management training in collaboration with experienced judicial leaders, including both core cross jurisdictional training such as the Leadership and Management Development Programme and tailored seminars (such as One to One Conversations, Appraiser training, Mentor training and Strengthening Resilience, Bench and Family Chairman's courses and Training and Development Course)	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
7. Support the judiciary in devising and delivering its training strategy and objectives taking account of developments on future devolution for Scotland and Wales	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>

Plan for addressing priorities

Actions	Start	End
8. Support the College Strategy 2015-17 by designing, marketing and delivering training programmes and materials specifically for international use, particularly in judicial conduct and ethics, judicial skills and training the trainers	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
9. Introduce a charging scheme for the delivery of international training where appropriate, ensuring in any event that all international training is delivered on a cost neutral basis over the three year period 2014-2016	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
10. Build and maintain collaborative working relationships across the Judicial Office and with wider stakeholder groups in order to plan, deliver and review high quality and timely training that meets the needs of judicial office holders	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>

## **E: Promote public confidence in the judiciary through the effective investigation of complaints about the personal conduct of judicial office-holders**

Work sitting under this objective is carried out by the Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office (JCIO). The JCIO provides advice to the Lord Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor jointly and remains accountable to both under a statutory framework. In conducting its investigations the JCIO remains independent of both the JO and the MoJ.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
1. Implement any rule amendments arising from the recommendations of the 2014 rules evaluation exercise	<b>October 2015</b>	
2. Develop the quality of investigations through a programme of continuous improvement training for staff	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
3. Continue to improve the JCIO's level of service to both customers and stakeholders (including guidance and support) and respond to lessons from JACO investigations	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
4. Undertake outreach work with courts and tribunals to increase awareness of the JCIO, its remit and processes	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
5. Develop the business case and detailed requirements for a new case management IT system	<b>April 2015</b>	
6. Analyse complaint data and trends to inform training and outreach work, sharing information with JO colleagues to inform their work programmes where relevant	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
7. Conduct a review of the information contained on the JCIO website with a view to improving the information provided	<b>October 2015</b>	

## **F: Build and maintain effective relationships while widening understanding of the role of the independent judiciary among the public and those with whom we work**

Delivery of the activities sitting under this objective is primarily the responsibility of the Judicial Office Communications team but relies on the support and guidance of other teams across the Judicial Office. Teams across the Judicial Office work closely with the internal communications and Press Office teams to ensure that the judiciary, the media, the public and key stakeholders are provided with information through appropriate channels and in the most suitable format.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
1. Develop Judicial Office digital communications, taking a proactive approach to the use of video, audio and Twitter to inform and engage users	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
2. Explore the development of Judicial Intranet personalisation to deliver targeted communications for the judiciary	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
3. Provide professional communications support to advance understanding of the work and value of the judiciary directly and through the media	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
4. Promote to the senior and wider judiciary an understanding of the ways to make use of the press office and wider communications teams	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
5. Develop strategic communications plans for judge led activities, reviews and reports	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
6. Build and maintain collaborative working relationships across the Judicial Office and with wider stakeholder groups including key officials at the Ministry of Justice in order to raise understanding and awareness of the role, status and governance arrangements for Judicial Office	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>



## G: Provide an effective and professional HR service that meets the needs of the judiciary and supports its diversity

Work in this area is led by Judicial HR which works closely with a number of other teams within the Judicial Office to enable delivery. Key partners from across the Judicial Office this year include the Professional & Technology team leading on the development of the new e-HR system and the International Team which will help with scoping work on the identification of good judicial HR practices from other nations.

Actions	Start	End
1. Continue to support the Diversity Committee in the delivery of the Judicial Diversity Strategy, working closely with key stakeholders, including the Diversity Forum, keeping abreast of developments in the diversity field and making best use of available resources to support the delivery	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
2. Support the development of proposals to facilitate the most effective use of the judiciary for the delivery of justice	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
3. Ensure the successful delivery of e-HR and develop the potential of e-HR as a source of statistical and management information to underpin diversity and workforce planning	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
4. Assist and support the Judicial Pensions Committee in considering/assessing the Government's new judicial pensions regime during its first year of application	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
5. Ensure effective support for judicial welfare, including through policy and procedures for managing sick absence, performance, conduct and grievance	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
6. Develop a proposal to embed HR Business partners into the regions with a view to providing more local support to leadership judges on HR matters and in the cascading of messages from the senior judiciary	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
7. Where funded, pilot and introduce schemes of appraisal agreed with the senior judiciary and HMCTS. Work with the Judicial College and Judicial Appointments Commission to develop appropriate links between appraisal, training and appointments	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
8. Support the senior judiciary and the Lord Chancellor in relation to their responsibilities for judicial courts and tribunals appointments	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
9. Support the Lord Chancellor in respect of his/her responsibility for the terms of appointment and conditions of service for judicial officeholders by providing interpretation and advice to the judiciary, MoJ, HMCTS and the wider Judicial Office; and support the judiciary by providing advice to the Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals in response to proposals from MoJ on where reform may be required and how that reform may be made	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
10. Support the Senior Presiding Judge, Lord Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor in fulfilling their responsibilities for magistrates and advisory committees	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>

## H: Develop our people and continuously improve our efficiency and effectiveness

This is a cross cutting objective covering activities and services that enable Judicial Office staff to deliver frontline services and support to the judiciary. It is largely underpinned by a set of actions that will be delivered through the Communications Team and the Business Support Team working closely with other parts of the Judicial Office.

Actions	Start	End
1. Support effective and engaging internal communications in Judicial Office through ongoing review and development of the JO intranet, including migration of the site to the WordPress platform	<b>December 2015</b>	
2. Develop a strategic communication plan for Judicial Office, delivered through a wide range of internal communications activities	<b>May 2015</b>	
3. Deliver a programme of changes and improvements to budget planning and current finance tools, designed to improve their effectiveness whilst also raising finance capability and awareness amongst JO staff	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
4. Implementation of a learning strategy for Judicial Office staff, encouraging the use of Civil Service Learning and staff led activities and embedding of a more structured approach to learning and development across the Judicial Office	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
5. Build on the results of the 2014 Staff Engagement Survey, by considering how we can do even more of what worked well, and by sharing best practice across the whole of the Judicial Office	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>
6. Build and maintain collaborative working relationships across the Judicial Office and with wider stakeholder groups including key officials at the Ministry of Justice in order to identify at an early point how to respond to new business demands	<b>April 2015</b>	<b>March 2016</b>

## Staff headcount

	FTEs
Chief Executive	1.0
Judicial College	61.5
Business Support	9
International	5
Jurisdictional Support	47.6
Judicial HR	40.7
Judicial Conduct Investigations Office	14.9
Press & Communications	7.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>187.6<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> Headcount has increased by one post following the transfer of headcount and budget for a Band E to the Judicial College Tribunals Team based in Glasgow. Further headcount increases are anticipated in the second half of the year arising from activity G6. The headcount is expected to sit with Judicial HR.

## Budget 2015-16

	<b>£000's</b>
Staff costs	8,467.0
Judicial College	11,867.0
Centrally Managed Expenditure	334.0
International	66.0
Jurisdictional Support	122.0
Civil Justice Council	40.0
Family Justice Council	25.0
Judicial HR	273.0
Judicial Conduct Investigations Office	65.0
Press & Communications	156.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,415</b>