



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, the CJC and its Secretariat does not discriminate (see the nine protected characteristics, per sections 4-12 of the Equality Act 2010), but seeks, wherever possible, to 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 to the need for diversity.

The overriding principle of selection to membership of the CJC is merit. 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 whose skills, experience, and qualities meet the criteria of each particular post, and who are drawn from a strong and diverse field from across England and Wales.

It is recognised, however, that some groups are under-represented in the CJC's membership. 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 of 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 advertised as widely as possible, utilising its available budget to advertise in: the national press; professional bodies, both legal and non-legal, such as the Bar Council, the Law Society of England and Wales and its various representative groups and bodies, the Association of Asian Women Lawyers, the Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association, the Black Solicitors Network and the Society of Black Lawyer, the TUC, and the CBI.

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

The CJC will also encourage regional participation in its Working 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 evidence from court users whose concerns merit further investigation. It will, for instance, conduct discrete pieces of research on the experience of different groups of court users, or of 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 sections 4-12 of the Equality Act 2012.

3. Public sector equality duty

The CJC will continue to act in the spirit of the public sector equality duty (Section 149 of the equality Act 2010), 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 scrutinising the equality impact assessments produced as part of Government consultations and those of other public bodies when responding to them.

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

30 April 2015