



Family Justice Council

PRIVATE LAW SOLICITOR

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK
(Revised 6 September 2019)

Closing date for this post is: 12 noon on Monday 14 October 2019

Applications should be submitted via: fic@justice.gsi.gov.uk

For more information about the Family Justice Council please visit:
<https://www.judiciary.uk/related-offices-and-bodies/advisory-bodies/fjc/>

Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Family Justice Council (the Council).

You may already have some idea about the important work of the Council, and the following pages will tell you more.

I do hope you will consider applying for this important position.

If after reading the material you have further questions about any aspect of this appointment, you are welcome to speak to me on 0207 947 7950

If you believe you have the experience and qualities we are seeking, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Paula Adshead
Assistant Secretary to the Family Justice Council

Diversity and equality of opportunity

Applications are encouraged from all candidates regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age and disability.

Arrangements for candidates with a disability

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The Family Justice Council operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) for candidates with a disability. The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Under the GIS a disabled candidate will be selected for interview **if they meet the minimum criteria for the role decided by the selection panel at sift. To ensure fairness, the panel will not be informed of who has applied under the GIS until they have set the minimum criteria at the start of the sift meeting.** If you wish to be considered under the scheme, please complete the **Guaranteed Interview Scheme Declaration** on Diversity Monitoring Form in the supporting documents and send it with your application

Adjustments

If you have a disability and require adjustments to help you attend interview or if you require adjustments to help you in the role of the FJC member, you may wish to contact: Paula Adshead, Assistant Secretary to the Family Justice Council on 020 7947 7950.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (Annex 1)

The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is for monitoring purposes only. By collecting and analysing the data of those applying and obtaining an appointment, we can improve our diversity strategy. This form is not part of the selection process and will be treated in confidence. It will be kept separate from your application and will not be seen by the selection panel.

Background to the Organisation

The Family Justice Council is a non-statutory advisory body established in 2004. It is chaired by the President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane. The Council encourages greater understanding and co-operation between the different agencies in the family justice system and its membership is multi-disciplinary.

The Council monitors the effectiveness of the family justice system through consultation and research and acts as a 'critical friend' by providing advice to the national Family Justice Board (FJB) and the Government. It advises on the reforms necessary for continuous improvement and plays a key role in the modernisation of the family justice system in England and Wales.

Terms of Reference

The Council operates independently of the FJB but, as its critical friend, provides it with expert advice, from an interdisciplinary perspective, on the operation and reform of the family justice system in England and Wales.

The Council's objectives are, in alignment with the priorities established by the FJB, to:

- i) provide independent expert advice, from an interdisciplinary perspective, to the judiciary, the FJB and Government on key family justice system issues referred to it either by the judiciary or by the FJB;
- ii) highlight key cross-system issues for the FJB to consider;
- iii) fulfil a 'critical friend' role in advising how the FJB can deliver its priorities and implement its action plan for system-wide improvement;
- iv) support the FJB in devising and disseminating best practice guidance;
- v) keep informed of current research and advise the FJB and Government on research to be commissioned;
- vi) work with the FJB and Government researchers to inform judges, lawyers, social workers and other professionals of the findings of the latest socio-legal and medico-legal research;
- vii) make recommendations to the President of the Family Division on the need for new, or revised, Practice Directions and guidance for use in family proceedings; and
- viii) advise the FJB on appropriate training and guidance for use by professionals and Local Family Justice Boards.

Further information on the Council and its membership can be found at:

<http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/related-offices-and-bodies/advisory-bodies/fjc/>

Role of Members

Members of the Council have collective responsibility for the operation of this body. See Annex 2 for further details.

Person specification and eligibility criteria

Essential Criteria

1. A minimum of 7 years' post qualification experience practising as a solicitor, with a minimum of 5 years' specialising in private law family work;
2. Evidence of working, through interdisciplinary consensus, to deliver timely and improved outcomes for families and children who are involved with the family justice system. Experience as a team player;
3. An ability to contribute at a strategic level, including contribution to a strategic board/committee and experience and an analytical ability in dealing with complex issues;
4. A demonstrable commitment to understanding and valuing diversity;
5. Effective interpersonal and communication skills;
6. Availability and willingness to give sufficient time to prepare for and attend four meetings per year and to participate fully in the work of the Family Justice Council, including working groups where relevant.

Desirable Criteria

1. Ability to contribute to Family Justice Council responses to Government and other family justice agencies' consultations;
2. A working knowledge of the various agencies delivering services to families and children, and their relationship with the family justice system together with the ability to understand the needs of service users.

Conditions of appointment

Remuneration, allowances and abatement

The post is unremunerated. Reasonable travel expenses will be paid.

Appointment and tenure of office

- Members are appointed by the President of the Family Division.
- Appointments are for a three-year term with the possibility of re-appointment for a further term, at the discretion of the President. Any re-appointment is subject to satisfactory annual appraisals of performance during the first term in the post. If re-appointed, the total time served in post will not exceed ten years.

- It is important that a member's other commitments do not cast any doubt on their ability to act independently and impartially in discharging the role; any potential conflict of interest must be declared.

Performance appraisal

Each member is assessed at least once a year against their performance for each year of their appointment. This is conducted by the Chair of the Council.

Commitment

Council meetings are held four times a year at the Royal Courts of Justice in London. These normally take place on a Monday from 11am until 2pm. Members are also expected to read and consider papers outside of meetings.

Code of practice for Council members

The Council's Code of Practice can be found at Annex 2.

Political Activity

Due to the nature of the Council it is not appropriate for its members to occupy paid party-political posts or hold sensitive, senior or prominent positions in any political organisation. Nomination for election to political office - for example, the House of Commons, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Parliament, the European Parliament - is not considered compatible with membership of the Council.

Subject to the foregoing, members are free to engage in political activities, provided that they are conscious of their general responsibilities and standards for public life and exercise proper discretion.

The Political Activity Declaration at Annex 3 should be completed and returned with your application. This will only be seen by the selection panel prior to interview. However, it is appreciated that such activities may have given you relevant skills, including experience gained from committee work, collective decision making, resolving conflict and public speaking. If, therefore, you have had such experience and you consider it relevant to your application for this post, you should include it in the main body of your application.

Conflict of Interests

Members are required to declare any conflict of interest that arises in the course of Council business. You are required to complete Annex 4 to declare any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with commercial, public or voluntary bodies. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be fully explored by the panel at short listing or interview stage. These do not constitute an automatic bar to appointment, but they must be manageable.

Generally, there are five issues most frequently encountered that could lead to real, or apparent, conflicts of interest:

- Financial interests or share ownership –for example, holding shares in a firm that is considering applying or has licensed body status in relation to Alternative Business Structures could be a particular area of concern.

- Expertise or activity in particular areas, that whilst not precluding appointment may be perceived by the public as a conflict of interest.
- Membership of some societies or organisations –for example, dealings with the financial sector will need to be explored fully.
- Rewards for past or future contributions or favours.
- The activities, associations and employment of relatives or partners.

Indicative timetable and how to apply

Advert date: 2 September 2019

Closing date: 12 noon, 14 October 2019

Candidates informed of outcome of sift: expected to be mid-October 2019

Interviews held: W/c 28 October 2019

Provisional appointment start date: November 2019

How to apply:

Please provide the following information:

- A copy of your CV.
- A supporting letter of no more than two sides that evidences how you meet all the essential criteria. Your supporting letter should provide specific and detailed examples to demonstrate how you meet the essential criteria (including what you did to achieve a specific result).
- Completed supporting documents (at annex).
- Names and contact details of two referees (these will be contacted only if you are shortlisted for interview).

Please ensure you include preferred daytime and mobile telephone numbers, as well as a preferred e-mail address. These will be used with discretion.

The closing date for applications is: Noon on Monday 14 October 2019.

Your personal information

To see the FJC's privacy policy on how we process personal data, please go to: <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/related-offices-and-bodies/advisory-bodies/fjc/data-protection-and-data-rights/>

Next steps

We will deal with your application as quickly as possible (timings below are indicative).

- Once you have submitted your application, its receipt will be acknowledged;
- Your application will be assessed against the essential criteria and experience for the post. It is important that you provide as much detail as possible within the limit constraints of two sides;

- By mid-October 2019 the panel will aim to have decided the candidates who will be invited for interview, taking account of the evidence provided on your application;
- Where a candidate is unable to attend an interview on the set date then an alternative date will only be offered at the discretion of the panel;
- Interviews are intended to take place at Royal Courts of Justice, London in w/c 28 October 2019. Travel expenses will not be payable for attending interviews.
- If you accept an invitation to interview, we will take two references in advance of the interview;
- If invited to interview, the panel will explore with you your experience and expertise to find whether you meet the essential criteria and how you might meet the desirable criteria. Please note that you will be asked to give a short presentation as part of the interview;
- If, in the view of the panel you have the skills for the post and are appointable, your name will be amongst those recommended to the President of the Family Division who will make the final decision on the appointment;
- If you are successful, you will receive a letter formally appointing you as a member;
- If your application is unsuccessful you will be contacted by e-mail by the Council's secretariat.

Selection panel:

Members of the panel will be confirmed shortly.

Complaints Process

If you feel that you have any complaint about any aspect of the way your application has been handled, we would like to hear from you. Please contact the secretariat to the Family Justice Council at ffc@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Complaints must be received by the secretariat within 12 calendar months of the issue or after the recruitment competition has closed, whichever is the later.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt and answered as quickly and clearly as possible; at the most within 20 working days of receipt. If this deadline cannot be met we will inform you why this is the case and when you can expect a reply.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

All Government Departments aim to provide fair and equal access to public appointments and to ensure that all sectors of society are represented. You are requested to complete this form. The questions set out in this form help us to monitor the effectiveness of this policy by gaining a picture of all those applying for and obtaining appointments. They also help us to monitor how we are complying with equality law.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination and promotes equality on the basis of a number of 'protected characteristics'. We ask for information on your 'protected characteristics' in order to help us monitor our performance on equality.

The government's commitment to widening access to public appointments is set out in the Diversity Strategy which can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society> or obtained from the Government Equalities Office.

We may also be asked to provide information – in summary form only that does not identify individuals in response to Parliamentary Questions and other public enquiries and reports on our equality performance.

In line with Government policy, and in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, the information you provide will be held confidentially and can only be used if you give us your consent.

The form will be kept separate from your application form and will not be seen by the sift or interview panel. Assessment of your suitability for the post is made purely on the information you give on the application form and your performance at the interview should you be invited. Appointments are made strictly on merit. We hope that this encourages you to complete the form.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme Declaration

I consider myself to have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010, and I would like to apply under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(please tick if you wish to be considered for the GIS)

I do require special arrangements should I be called to attend an interview. (Please state any such adjustments below if applicable).

If you do not require special arrangements, please leave blank.

Should you have any questions, please contact: fic@justice.gsi.gov.uk

GENDER:

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

AGE:

66+	<input type="checkbox"/>
56-65	<input type="checkbox"/>
46-55	<input type="checkbox"/>
36-45	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-35	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 & under	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prefer not to say

DISABILITY:

The Disability Discrimination Act as incorporated in Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term (i.e. has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Adverse effects may arise from external barriers experienced by people with impairments.

When you answer the question, you should not take into account the effect of any medication or treatments used or adjustments made (for example at work or at home) which reduce the effects of impairments. Instead, you should think about the effect the impairment would have if these were not being used or made.

Taking this into account, do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

Yes: No: Prefer not to say

ETHNIC ORIGIN:

Which group do you identify with? Please tick one box. The options are listed alphabetically.

ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH

Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any Other Asian background (specify if you wish)

BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH

African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any Other Black background (specify if you wish)

MIXED

Asian and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black African and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Caribbean and White	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any other Mixed Ethnic Background (specify if you wish)

WHITE

White

ANY OTHER BACKGROUND

Any other ethnic background (specify below if you wish)

Prefer not to say

SEXUAL ORIENTATION - Do you consider yourself to be:

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman
- Heterosexual

Other (Please state below)

Prefer not to say

RELIGION AND BELIEF - What is your religion?:

- None
- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh

Other (Please state below)

Prefer not to say

SECTORAL BACKGROUND - Is your working background?:

- Mixed
- Mostly Civil Service
- Mostly private
- Mostly Third Sector
- Mostly wider public sector

Family Justice Council

Code of Practice for Council Members

Public Service Values:

The members of the Family Justice Council, an advisory non-departmental body, must at all times:

- ◆ Observe the highest standards of **impartiality, integrity and objectivity** in relation to the advice they provide and the management of this public body;
- ◆ Be **accountable** to Parliament and the public more generally for its activities and for the standard of advice it provides; and
- ◆ In accordance with Government policy on **openness**, comply fully with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Standards in Public Life:

All Family Justice Council members must:

- ◆ Follow the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life;
- ◆ Comply with this Code, and ensure they understand their duties, rights and responsibilities as detailed in “FJC Members’ roles and responsibilities”. They must be familiar with the function and role of the Council and any relevant statements of Government policy. New Council members should consider attending relevant training or induction courses;
- ◆ Not misuse information gained in the course of their service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations; and
- ◆ Not hold any paid or high profile unpaid posts in a political party and not engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of this body. When engaging in other political activities, Council members should be conscious of their public role and exercise proper discretion.

The Role of Family Justice Council Members

Members of the Council have collective responsibility for the operation of this body. They must:

- ◆ Carry out the Council's objectives as stated in its terms of reference;
- ◆ Engage fully collective consideration of the issues, taking account of the full range of relevant factors, including any guidance issued by the Ministry of Justice or by the Secretary of State for Justice;
- ◆ Ensure that the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (including prompt responses to public requests for information) is adhered to; agree an Annual Report; and, where practicable and appropriate, hold at least one meeting a year in public;
- ◆ Respond appropriately to complaints, if necessary with reference to the Ministry of Justice; and
- ◆ Ensure that the Council does not exceed its powers or functions.

Communications between the Council and the Secretary of State will generally be through the chair except where the Council has agreed that an individual member should act on its behalf. Nevertheless, any Council member has the right of access to Ministers on any matter which he or she believes raises important issues relating to his or her duties as a Council member. In such cases the agreement of the rest of the Council should normally be sought.

Individual Council members can be removed from office by the Secretary of State for Justice if they fail to perform the duties required of them in line with the standards expected in public office.

The Role of the Chair

The chair has particular responsibility for providing effective leadership on the issues above. In addition, the chair is responsible for:

- ◆ Ensuring that the Council meets at appropriate intervals, and that the minutes of the meeting, proposals for rule changes or new rules and any reports to the Secretary of State accurately record the decisions taken and, where appropriate, the views of individual Council members;
- ◆ Representing the views of the Council to the general public, where appropriate; and
- ◆ Ensuring that new FJC members are briefed on appointment (and their training needs considered), and providing an assessment of their performance, on request, when members are considered for re-appointment to the Council or for appointment to the board or Committee of some other public body.

Handling Conflicts of Interest:

The purpose of these provisions is to avoid any danger of Council members being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise

of their public duties. All Council members should, therefore, declare any personal or business interest which may, or may be *perceived* (by a reasonable member of the public) to influence their judgement. This should include, as a minimum, personal direct and indirect pecuniary interests, and should normally also include, such interests of close family members and of people living in the same household¹. The register of interests should be kept up-to-date and should be open to the public. A declaration of any interest should also be made at any Council meeting if it relates specifically to a particular issue under consideration, for recording in the minutes (whether or not the member also withdraws from the meeting).

Council members should not participate in the discussion or determination of matters in which they have an interest, and should normally withdraw from the meeting (even if held in public) if:

- ◆ Their interest is direct and pecuniary; or
- ◆ Their interest is covered in specific guidance issued by the Council which requires them not to participate and/or to withdraw from the meeting.

Personal Liability of FJC Members:

Legal proceedings by a third party against individual council or board members of public advisory bodies are very exceptional. A Council member may be personally liable if he or she makes a fraudulent or negligent statement which results in a loss to a third party; or may commit a breach of confidence under common law or a criminal offence under insider dealing legislation, if he or she misuses information gained through their position. However, the Government has indicated that individual Council members who have acted honestly, reasonably, in good faith and without negligence will not have to meet out of their own personal resources any personal civil liability which is incurred in execution or purported execution of their Council functions. Council members who need further advice should consult the Ministry of Justice.

¹ Indirect pecuniary interests arise from connections with bodies which have a direct pecuniary interest, or from being a business partner of, or being employed by a person with such an interest. Non-pecuniary interests include those arising from membership of clubs and other organisations. Close family members include personal partners, parents, children (adult and minor), brothers, sisters and the personal partners of any of these.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

◆ **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

◆ **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisation that might influence them in the performance of their duties.

◆ **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

◆ **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

◆ **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

◆ **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.

◆ **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Political Activity Declaration Form

All applicants should complete the question below. Please indicate which of the following activities you have undertaken during the past five years by ticking the appropriate box and providing details of your involvement. Name the party or body for which you have been active. If you have been or are an Independent or have sought or obtained office as a representative of a particular interest group, you should state this. You should tick all relevant categories.

Obtained office as a Local Councillor, MP, Devolved offices, MEP etc	
Stood as a candidate for one of the above offices	
Spoken on behalf of a party or candidate	
Acted as a political agent	
Held office such as Chair, Treasurer or Secretary of a local branch of a party	
Canvassed on behalf of a party or helped at election	
Undertaken any political activity which you consider relevant	
Made a recordable donation to a political party ²	
None of the above activities apply.	

Name of Party for which activity undertaken:

Details of your involvement (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

Note: this form is for monitoring purposes only and therefore will be detached from your application and will only be seen by the selection panel if selected for interview. However, it is appreciated that such activities may have given you relevant skills, including experience gained from committee work, collective decision making, resolving conflict and public speaking. If, therefore, you have had such experience and you consider it relevant to your application for this post, you should include it separately in the main body of your application form.

² The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 requires the Electoral Commission to publish a register of recordable donations (donations from an individual totalling more than £5000 in any calendar year, or more than £1000 if made to a subsidiary accounting unit such as a constituency association, local branch, women's or youth organisations). These provisions became effective from 16 February 2001.

Conflict of Interests Form

Please give details of any business or other interests or any personal connections which, if you are appointed, could be misconstrued or cause embarrassment to the Ministry of Justice.

Any particular conflicts of interest detailed here will not prevent you going forward to interview but may, if appropriate, be explored with you during your interview to establish how you would address the issue(s) should you be successful in your application.

Please also provide details if you have every been convicted of, or cautioned for, any criminal offence or have been found guilty of professional misconduct, or if any such proceedings are pending (Please give details, including dates and amount of any fine or other penalty imposed) (NB successful candidates' final confirmation may be subject to basic clearance checks, covering confirmation of identity and right to work in the UK plus a criminal record check).

I confirm I have read and understood the sections in the candidate pack on 'Standards in public life' and 'Political Activity'.	
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(Please tick the above box)

Is this your first public appointment? Yes: No:

Where did you see this appointment advertised?

Public Appointments Currently Held

Please say below if you currently hold any other public appointment posts:

Body	Period of Appointment	Government Department