



JUDICIAL OFFICE

Judicial Office Business Plan

2020-21



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Foreword

By the Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals

These are extraordinary times for the judiciary and for the country as a whole, as we deal with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The judiciary is making every effort to keep the justice system running, by using audio and video technology to hear more cases remotely, and through creative use of space in courts and hearing rooms to ensure the safety of all participants.

This experience has brought home the benefits of modernising the courts and tribunals through the digitisation of our processes. In areas where reform is more advanced, we have been able to keep more of our work going through the pandemic. More technology is being installed across the country now, which is already enabling us to hear more cases. We will need to continue to ensure judges are well supported in adopting new technology, as well as learning from the current experience to shape the next steps of modernisation.

Work in other areas does not stand still. The judiciary continues to lead work to increase the efficiency of the courts and tribunals, and to provide the leadership needed at all levels for a modern



▲ Lord Burnett, Lord Chief Justice and Sir Ernest Ryder, Senior President of Tribunals

judiciary. Recruitment of significant numbers of judges continues, and we must ensure we draw from the widest possible pool of candidates to attract the best lawyers to the judiciary. Training must be provided, especially for new judges, adapted for circumstances where spending days together at close quarters is not feasible.

In all these areas and more we depend heavily on the Judicial Office for support. We are extremely grateful for all that they do, not least in the unprecedented conditions in which we are all working to maintain the administration of justice and uphold the rule of law.

The Rt. Hon. The Lord, Burnett of Maldon Lord Chief Justice

Sir Ernest Ryder,
Senior President of Tribunals

Foreword

By the Chief Executive, Andrew Key

We start this financial year in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, and so in a very uncertain context. Setting out a business plan for the year in some ways seems slightly artificial. In other ways it is as vital as ever to set the direction for the work of the organisation.



Our highest priority at this time is to support the leadership of the judiciary as they work to keep the justice system running through the pandemic, adapting to a radical increase in use of audio and video technology for hearings, ensuring that hearings requiring physical attendance can be held safely, and preparing to address the backlog of cases as quickly as possible when conditions allow. This will require a concerted effort across many teams, applying the aims set out in many sections of the plan to tackle the challenges presented by the pandemic.

Our wider priorities remain important, including support for leadership and communication of reform. Indeed, the current crisis has demonstrated just how that investment in the modernisation of the courts and tribunals is more important than ever. We will also work hard to make best use of additional resource secured to strengthen and restructure the human resources support we provide in support of the leadership of a modern judiciary.

Our ability to deliver these objectives will depend on how events evolve. In many areas we will deliver the same support in different ways. In those that have depended primarily on face to face events, the programme of activity will change considerably, delivered through digital technology wherever possible. Some activities may need to be delayed or cancelled.

Judicial Office staff have already shown incredible commitment and creativity in their response to the pandemic, adapting quickly to working remotely. I am immensely grateful to them all, and to the management board for its support in the collective leadership of the organisation. We are all determined to give our teams the support they deserve in these extraordinary times.

Our purpose

Strengthening the rule of law and improving the administration of justice by supporting the leadership and governance of the judiciary



Our role

- Facilitating judicial leadership of reform
- Providing legal, policy and handling advice on issues arising from the statutory functions of the senior judiciary
- Supporting judicial governance structures
- Advising on relationships and communication with the Government, Parliament and other UK legal jurisdictions
- Supporting communication with the public including through the media, and internally within the judiciary
- Providing human resources services for the judiciary
- Developing and delivering training
- Investigating disciplinary matters
- Providing legal information and library services
- Promoting the courts and tribunals and supporting the rule of law internationally.

Outcomes we will deliver in 2020-21

Pandemic response

The leadership of the judiciary is effectively supported by the whole of the Judicial Office in its handling of the impact of Covid-19 to maintain the administration of justice, through the functions set out below.

External relations

Improved public understanding of the role of the judiciary, their independence and the rule of law, helping to foster continued public confidence in the judiciary:

- Judicial work, independence and the rule of law are reported fairly and accurately
- Incorrect media reporting is challenged and factual reporting is promoted
- Younger people better understand the work of judges, including through extended outreach to schools
- Judges are provided with key information from the senior judiciary/Judicial Executive Board about developments affecting them

- Communication channels are continually evaluated, tailored and improved
- Parliament and the public are informed of the work of the judiciary through the annual reporting cycle
- Increased transparency through broadcasting of crown court sentencing remarks and the expansion of live streaming from the court of appeal

The judiciary's values and interests are promoted internationally through effective relationships and activities.



The efficient and effective administration of justice

Judicial priorities are well supported by private offices in each jurisdiction:

- Roles and responsibilities in private offices are well aligned with the priorities of leadership judges
- Support for newly appointed leadership judges enables smooth transitions
- Effective working relationships are in place between Private Offices and the rest of the Judicial Office, particularly on reform



The views and interests of the judiciary on key issues are understood by government, including on:

- Developments in criminal justice, including a Royal Commission
- Implementation of the Service Justice Review
- The planned Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission
- Potential improvements to first instance decision making in departments with an appeal route to the tribunals

Improvements to the administration of justice are advanced, including:

- Better outcomes for children through implementation of recommendations of the Public and Private Law Working Groups
- Timely production of high quality Civil Justice Council reports, including on Periodical Payment Orders and guideline hourly rates subjects
- Good collaboration between partners across the system in support of continued improvement, through effective administration of the Civil Justice Council and Family Justice Council and organisation of successful events
- Improvements to procedure and process in tribunals that lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness, consistent with reform and achieving proportionate justice

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Increased cohesion across courts and tribunals judiciaries:

- A flexible deployment policy between courts and tribunals is finalised and implemented
- A programme of work progressed to ensure HR strategy, policy and process is set within a clearer and more consistent framework

Continued contribution to the development and successful implementation of reform:

- Judges are able to adopt new ways of working, supported through a transition and implementation process aligned with HMCTS plans
- Understanding of the reform programme is increased through support for effective judicial leadership and continued communication with the judiciary through the change
- Reform team resources are allocated effectively as the programme moves from design to implementation

Development of a considered judicial approach to the collection, use and protection of data in a digital age:

- Judicial data collection requirements are taken up by HMCTS, with suitable governance and data control in place



An enhanced Judicial HR service

A new structure for Judicial HR, with more resources, will be put in place, delivering better support for judges, including:

- More access to professional HR advice for leadership judges
- Greater capacity to provide advice on HR policy and strategy, informed by more accurate data
- Improved forecasting and workforce planning to inform decisions on recruitment and deployment
- More efficient processing of large numbers of appointments
- Continued focus on judicial welfare and morale, with sensitive welfare, security and litigation cases handled effectively



The senior judiciary are well supported in their leadership of a modern judiciary:

- The use of appraisal is further embedded, and extended to Section 9(4) Deputy High Court judges
- Salaried judges at all levels are offered conversations with their leadership judges about their work and their aspirations
- A package of support is developed for judges leading through change
- Proposals are put to government to reward leadership responsibilities more consistently, within a clear structure
- Job descriptions are agreed for judicial roles in a consistent format

Diversity support programmes and outreach continue to bring forward the best possible diverse candidates to judicial appointment competitions:

- The Diversity Committee Action Plan is implemented, with effective schemes in work-shadowing, mentoring, and pre-application support, evaluated and accordingly improved
- Judicial efforts are well complemented by the MoJ, JAC and the legal profession, through participation in the Judicial Diversity Forum, including on a joint data report

Essential operational services

High quality training delivered to budget through a combination of digital and face-to-face learning, publications and on-line materials supports judges in the efficient and effective administration of justice through:

- Timely induction for newly appointed and authorised judges
- Understanding of new legislation, including that arising from the UK's withdrawal from the EU
- Use of new digital products, especially for courts and tribunals reform
- Appreciation of changing social context and unconscious bias
- Leadership skills, resilience and wellbeing

Efficient library services under well managed new contracts:

- The judiciary and legal advisers receive the timely and current legal information needed for their work, measured by agreed KPIs
- Efficient publication supply is maintained through a smooth transition to new contracts
- Revision of the protocol for the provision of publications ensures judges have access to information in the most appropriate format

- Better service is provided to judges through continued improvement of internal processes, based on more effective engagement with the judiciary

Effective handling of complaints and conduct issues:

- Key performance indicators for handling of complaints are met or exceeded
- Recommendations delivered to the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice from the JCIO review to increase the efficiency of the complaints and conduct system

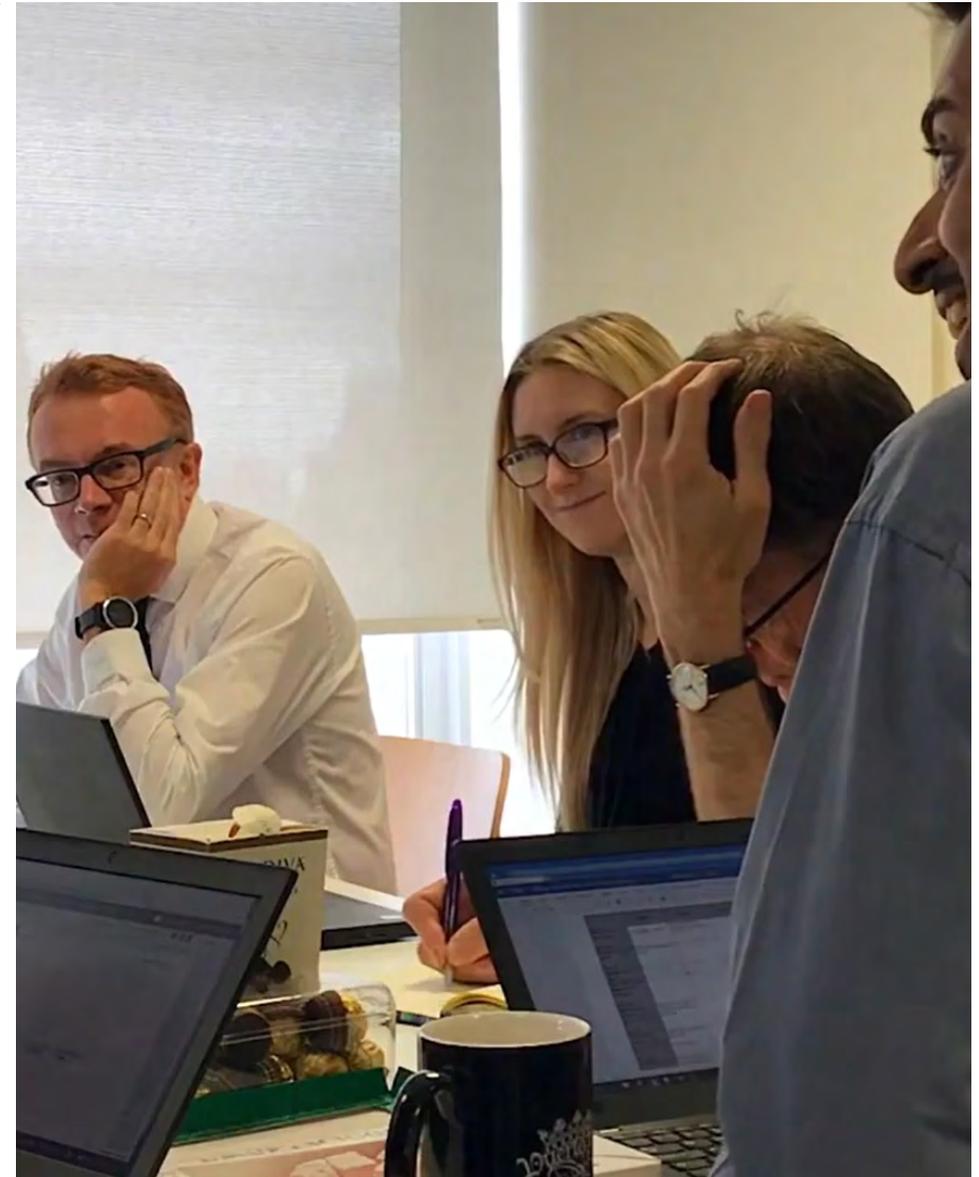
Increased use of digital products:

- eLIS training encourages more use of online legal resources
- Improved communication channels enable judges to receive timely and accessible information and guidance, and to find it easily when needed
- Varied training increases the confidence of judges and staff in using digital technology
- Digital products are continually developed so they are up to date and easy to use

The Judicial Office

We will continue our efforts to make the Judicial Office a great place to work:

- All managers will make good use of the performance management framework, giving constructive feedback and access to learning opportunities to support, motivate and develop staff capability
- Positive, effective and collaborative relationships between JO teams and with other organisations will help to deliver our priorities efficiently
- A clear focus on the JO's unique role and purpose and positive projection of our organisational culture will help to attract high quality candidates to fill vacancies
- Leaders will promote an inclusive working environment where staff are treated fairly, and are empowered to say if they experience unfair behaviour
- Staff will be well equipped to maintain their wellbeing while managing busy workloads, and managers confident in shifting resources to respond to changing priorities.



Resources

Staff headcount 2020-21

FTEs	
Chief Executive & Senior Staff	5.0
Judicial College	69.9
Business Support	13.0
International Relations	4.0
Jurisdictional Support	58.8
Judicial HR	65.5
Judicial Conduct Investigations Office	16.0
Press & Communications	8.5
Judicial Library & Publications	14.0
Core Total	254.7
EU exit	6.6
Courts & Tribunal Reform Team including Senior Staff	12.0
Reform Communications	4.0
College Reform	11.8
Total	34.4
Total	289.1

Budget 2020-21

£	
Core Judicial Office baseline (inc. JAC Inductions)	£36.731m
EU Exit	£3.595m
HMCTS Reform ¹	–
Total	£40.326m

¹ No budget held by the Judicial Office. Costs are claimed from HMCTS on an actuals basis.