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**Family Justice Council**

**SENIOR BARRISTER (FAMILY SILK)**

**MAGISTRATE MEMBER**

**CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK**

**Location:** The FJC meet in London with the option to join remotely via MS Teams

**Number of vacancies:** Senior Barrister – 1 post

 Magistrate Member – 1 post

**Term of appointment:** Three years

**Time commitment:** Four Council meetings per year plus contribution to workstreams.

**Remuneration:** These roles are unremunerated

**Closing date for this post is: 12 noon on Friday 18 March, 2022**

**Applications should be submitted via:** **fjc@justice.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.

**Kim Webb**

**Deputy Secretary to the Family Justice CouncilAbout the Family Justice Council**

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 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.

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 of the Family Justice Council**

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

* Participate in quarterly Council meetings using their experience and expertise;
* Monitor the progress of the work programme and the operation of its working parties;
* Chair, convene, or participate in time-limited working parties relating to agreed topics as required, and depending on availability
* Consider and contribute to the Council’s responses to proposals for reform and consultations relevant to family justice
* Act as ambassadors for the Council where appropriate
* Ensure that the Council does not exceed its powers or functions.

**Role Descriptions and Essential Criteria**

**Essential Criteria**

**Barrister member:**

* Substantial experience as a practising senior barrister (Silk) specialising in family work.

**Magistrate Member:**

* Substantial experience as a Magistrate, preferably as a Family Court Chairman, in the Family Proceedings Court or Family Court.
* Good knowledge and understanding of the family justice system both nationally and locally.
* Ability to develop a good working relationship with the local Designated Family Judge and the Local Family Justice Board and develop and maintain a link with the Magistrate’s Association Family Court Committee.

**All Members:**

* Evidence of contribution at a strategic level, including contribution to a strategic board/committee, and an analytical ability in dealing with complex issues.
* 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.
* Effective interpersonal and communication skills.
* A demonstrable commitment to understanding and valuing diversity in the family justice system.

**Desirable Criteria**

* 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.

**Time Requirements, Renumeration, Appointments and Appraisal**

Members will be expected to commit to:

* Attend four Council meetings per year. These are usually held in London, with the option of attending via MS Teams, if attendance in person is not possible. These normally take place on a Monday from 11am until 2pm.
* Attend working group meetings related to agreed work stream topics. These are time-limited working parties. Meetings usually take place around 4.30pm, depending on availability.
* Members will be expected to read and draft papers outside meetings as required. Meetings will be fixed well in advance as much as is possible. Meeting frequencies can vary to accommodate the priorities of the work coming before the Committee.

**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 two terms, 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 nine 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**

The performance of each member is assessed at least once a year based on the essential criteria for the role. Members will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will be sent to the acting chair of the Council for consideration.

**The appointment process and timeline**

**Advert date**: Monday 21 February 2022

**Closing date**: 12 noon, Friday 18 March 2022

**Candidates informed of outcome of sift**: by Monday 28 March 2022

**Interviews held**: w/c 4 April and w/c 11 April 2022

**Provisional appointment start date**: May 2022

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;
* Please note that it is not possible to provide specific, individually tailored feedback following the sift but we will provide, on request, feedback to those who are interviewed.
* If you accept an invitation to interview, we will take two references in advance of the interview. By providing the details of two referees you are consenting to us approaching them in this way.
* If you are invited to interview and cannot attend on the date and time mentioned in the letter, please advise us as soon as you can. It may, exceptionally, be possible to arrange an alternative date at the discretion of the Panel. Please note that we do not pay travel expenses for attendance at interviews.
* Interviews are intended to take place via MS Teams, in early April 2022.
* 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. You may be asked to start the interview with a short presentation. If required, this will be confirmed in your invitation to 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:**

Chair: Mrs Justice Theis

Panel member: Maria Kavanagh, Secretary to the Family Justice Council and the other member will be confirmed shortly

**Diversity and Inclusivity**

We encourage applications from all candidates regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity. We particularly welcome applications from people with minority ethnic backgrounds.

We want to explore the widest possible pool of talent for this important position, including those, who have not previously held public appointments.

**Arrangements for candidates with a disability**

An offer of an interview will be given to candidates with disabilities who, in the view of the sifting panel, meet the minimum selection criteria for the role. Please complete the Disability Confident Scheme Declaration below.

**Reasonable Adjustments**

If you have a disability and require any arrangements or adjustments for any part of the recruitment and selection process or if appointed to the FJC, contact Daphna Wilson - Daphna.wilson@justice.uk

**The MoJ is disability confident employer, further information can be found on gov.uk website here:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

**Other important appointment information**

**Standards in Public Life, Conflicts of Interests and Political Activity**

**Standards in Public Life**

Candidates must also confirm that they understand and uphold the standards of conduct required of public appointees outlined in the “Seven Principles of Public Life” drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

**Conflict of Interests**

Public bodies are expected to maintain a register of members’ interests to avoid any danger of a memberbeing influenced - or appearing to be influenced – by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties. **Candidates invited to interview will be questioned about any real or perceived conflicts of interest.** **These do not constitute an automatic bar to appointment, but they must be manageable.**

**All candidates must declare potential conflicts of interest in their application**. All potential conflicts of interest and how they might be managed will be discussed with an individual at interview. A potential conflict should not preclude a candidate from being shortlisted/appointed provided that appropriate arrangements are made.

Given the nature of public appointments, it is important that those appointed as members of public bodies maintain the confidence of Parliament and the public. If there are any issues in your personal or professional history that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment, or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to the attention of the selection panel and provide details of the issue/s in your supporting letter. In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media. The Panel may explore any issues with you before they make a recommendation on the appointment. Failure to disclose such information could result in an appointment either not being made or being terminated.

More 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;
* Expertise or activity in particular areas, that whilst not precluding appointment may be perceived by the public as a conflict of interest, for instance, it is especially important that associations with legal firms are explored fully;
* Membership of some societies or organisations, for example, dealings with the legal and financial sectors will need to be explored fully;
* Rewards for past or future contributions or favours;
* The activities, associations and employment of relatives or partners.

# 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.

**Political Activity**

Members of the FJC will need to show political impartiality during their time on the FJC and must declare any party-political activity they undertake in the period of their appointment.

Due to the nature of the FJC, it is not appropriate for 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, Scottish Parliament, the European Parliament, is not considered compatible with membership of FJC.

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 will be kept separate from your application and 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 separately in the main body of your application.

**If you are successfully appointed to the post, details of your response to the Political Activity Declaration will be included in any announcement of your appointment.**

**10.** **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 fjc@justice.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. We will tell you if we cannot meet this deadline for any reason and provide an expected reply date.

**Making an Application**

To make an application, please send:

* **A CV** **(maximum two sides of A4)** detailing your qualifications, employment history and any appointments or offices you hold. Please also provide your preferred contact number and email address.
* **A personal statement (maximum two sides of A4)** providing evidence against the role criteria and your suitability for the post, including evidence of leadership qualities and a vision for the organisation. Please consider the role and criteria carefully in preparing your statements. Information from previous selection panels indicate that applications which offer specific and tailored examples against the criteria, making clear the candidate’s role in achieving an outcome are often the strongest. Structuring the statement around the criteria using relevant headings also aids clarity.

Please also complete and return the following supporting documents:

**Conflicts of interest form**

* **Note of public appointments** – please list any appointments currently held;
* **Referee details** – please give names/contact details of two referees (who will be contacted if you are shortlisted for interview);
* **The political activity declaration form** (attached below) – In line with the Governance Code for Public Appointments, details of any declared activity will be made public if you are appointed. This form will be kept separate from your application and will only be seen by the Panel prior to interview; and

Please send your CV, personal statement and supporting documents to: fjc@justice.gov.uk

**If you have any questions** about any aspects of this post, you are welcome to contact Kim Webb - kim.webb@judiciary.uk

**Please complete and return the following documents:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Documents to be completed and sent** | **Tick**  |
| Personal Statement |  |
| A copy of your CV |  |
| Completed Supporting Documents* potential conflicts of interest;
* public appointments held;
* the names and contacts details of two referees (who will be contacted if you are shortlisted for interview);
* the political activity declaration form; and
 |  |

**Personal Information**

Your data will be stored for up to two years and processed for the purpose of the recruitment process, diversity monitoring and, if successful, your personal record. If appointed, your data will be stored for the duration of your tenure.

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/>

Should you wish your data to be removed from our records, please contact: fjc@justice.gov.uk

Family Justice Council

February 2022

**Disability Confident Scheme Declaration**

MOJ is committed to be an equal opportunities employer. We value and welcome diversity. MOJ actively encourages applications from disabled people. As part of this, MOJ along with several departments have committed to the Disability Confident scheme. One of our commitment is to offer an interview to all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the role(s).

By ‘minimum criteria’ we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you meet all the ‘**essential criteria’** as set out in the candidate information pack.

To apply via the Disability Confident scheme, you must have a disability, as defined by the [Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6). Such as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Further definition can be found on the [Cabinet Office website.](https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/recording-whether-or-not-you-have-a-disability/)

If you are applying under the Disability Confident scheme, please complete this form and return it with your application.

If you require **reasonable adjustments** to enable you to attend for interview, please advise us when you return your application

I wish to apply under the Disability Confident scheme on the understanding that an interview is offered if I meet the minimum criteria ​☐ [please tick]

Name:

Date:

**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 [[1]](#footnote-1) |  |
| 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.

**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’. |  |

(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** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)