



**Judicial
Office**

Judicial Office Business Plan 2023–24



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Foreword

by the former Lord Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals



The courts and tribunals operated at full stretch last year. The work to reduce outstanding caseloads has reinforced the importance of the Judicial Office's (JO) efforts to maximise judicial capacity; support the recruitment and induction of new judges; strengthen the welfare support on offer; advise on deployment; and support leadership judiciary in carrying out their responsibilities.

Work to improve the efficiency of the courts and tribunals will continue to be a focus over the next year, and the JO's support for judge-led initiatives is important in driving this forward. Close collaboration between the JO, the Ministry of Justice and HMCTS should ensure policy and operational efforts are well aligned.

Increased efficiency, digitisation, and modernisation go hand-in-hand. Good communication and tailored training continue to support judges and magistrates in adopting new systems and working practices, while balancing high workloads. The JO's support with this work is vital and can

also help ensure that the judicial experience is used to shape further improvements.

This year all judges will receive training designed to promote an inclusive working environment in all courts and tribunals. The JO plays a key role in the development and delivery of this training, which is central to meeting the objectives of the judiciary's diversity and inclusion strategy.

The JO also plays an important part in supporting the judiciary's engagement with government, parliament, and the public. Through this work, together we nurture a better understanding of the central role played by an independent judiciary in maintaining the rule of law, which in turn underpins a successful economy and stable society.

We are immensely grateful for the commitment shown by JO staff in these endeavours and in all their work in support of the judiciary.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Burnett".

**The former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales,
The Right Honourable Lord Burnett of Maldon**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Lindblom".

Sir Keith Lindblom, Senior President of Tribunals

Foreword

by the Chief Executive,
Andrew Key



Last year was one of significant organisational change for the JO. The chamber presidents' offices, providing support to leadership judges in the tribunals, joined the JO from HMCTS. Good progress was made on the transition to a new delivery model for magistrates' training. And the human resources support for judges was further strengthened through teams of advisers in each region, as well as a more streamlined approach to handling enquiries.

It was also one for improvements to our digital platforms. Judicial College Learning (JCL) provides a new platform for judges and magistrates to book training and access learning materials. A redesigned website offers more accessible, up to date information about the judiciary to the public. A new Judicial HR data platform will provide an authoritative source of information on judges and magistrates to underpin a wide range of other HMCTS and MoJ systems.

Work on both fronts continues this year. We aim to complete the transition to the new delivery model for magistrates training, ensure that newly recruited

magistrates are trained in good time, and continue to enrich the training available to all magistrates. We are working to bring the support for courts leadership judges into the JO, mirroring the arrangement for chamber presidents' offices.

Further improvements are underway to digital systems. But perhaps more important is to ensure that the way data is managed and used ensures that leadership judges have access to timely and reliable management information and analysis, and that the data flows through to other systems to support digitised processes throughout the courts and tribunals.

These organisational nuts and bolts are of course just one part of what we need to do to support judges and magistrates effectively: it is above all our people that make the difference. So we continue to foster a strong, shared sense of purpose and spirit of collaboration, promote an inclusive workplace, and to invest in the development of skills and support the wellbeing of all our staff. Their dedication to the work of the office and the support of the judiciary deserves no less.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Key". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Andrew Key, Chief Executive

Our purpose

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



Our role

The JO is a unique branch of the Civil Service, independent from the machinery which supports the Government. We are dedicated to supporting the judiciary as the third arm of the state, and answer to the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales and the Senior President of Tribunals as we help them to fulfil their responsibilities.

We promote and safeguard judicial independence to maintain confidence in the rule of law. We are proud that our work serves to reinforce the pre-eminence of the judiciary of England and Wales and maintain the UK's position as a leader in legal services, a position which allows the UK to thrive and benefits every part of society.

Our specialist teams support 22,000 judicial office holders in an evolving justice system. Our work includes providing legal, policy and handling advice to the senior judiciary on the fulfilment of their statutory functions. We advise on relationships with government, Parliament and other UK and international legal jurisdictions and support communication with the public. We provide human resources, training, and library and information services to the judiciary.

A thriving organisation

Delivery of this plan is only possible through the people who work in the JO. Our leadership team is committed to providing a stimulating, supportive, innovative and inclusive workplace, where everyone understands how they contribute to a shared purpose.

To support the delivery of all outcomes, we will strengthen the organisation in the following ways, incorporating actions from the People Survey. We will integrate new teams in dispersed locations into the JO and seize the opportunities created by organisational changes to deliver more effectively.

- **Capability:** we will ensure consistently good management throughout the JO; support increased professionalism; improve financial management skills; and increase understanding of the judiciary and the justice system.
- **Collaboration:** we will ensure teams develop positive and effective working relationships within the JO and more widely, welcoming challenge and innovation.

- **Inclusion:** we will ensure the JO is a place where staff are treated fairly and can challenge unfair behaviour, involving them early in issues and decisions that affect them.
- **Purpose:** we will increase the understanding of our unique role and purpose, helping to attract and retain high quality people from diverse backgrounds.
- **Wellbeing:** we will provide easy access to an increased range of resources to support the mental, physical and financial wellbeing of staff.



Medium-term goals

This business plan sets out in more detail the outcomes the JO aims to deliver this financial year under four goals:

1. Promoting the role of the judiciary in upholding the rule of law and supporting judicial independence
2. Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the administration of justice
3. Ensuring the right numbers of judges are in place, with the right skills, resources and support
4. Strengthening effective leadership in a modern judiciary at all levels



Outcomes for 2023–24 financial year

- 1. Promoting the role of the judiciary in upholding the rule of law and supporting judicial independence**
 - Public confidence in the judiciary is enhanced by providing timely information through varied channels and challenging inaccurate media reporting.
 - Awareness in schools and universities of the role of judges is raised, including by supporting the work of diversity and community relations judges and magistrates.
 - Respect for the independence of the judiciary in parliament and government is strengthened by supporting judicial engagement with ministers and parliamentarians as well as through effective relationships with officials.

- The judiciary's interests and values are promoted internationally by supporting bilateral and multilateral judicial engagement, including hosting major conferences.
- The rule of law is fostered through judicial engagement and support for training in partner jurisdictions.

2. Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the administration of justice

- Judges are well prepared for HMCTS reform implementation by providing effective training, supporting the adoption of new ways of working and leadership of change.
- Measures to improve efficiency are designed, piloted, implemented and evaluated; complemented by new working practices guidance based on common principles.



- The design of an end-to-end digital justice system is developed with MoJ, building the case for HM Treasury funding, and supporting the new Online Procedure Rule Committee.
- Changes to magistrates' leadership and governance are designed that will align more closely with judicial structures.
- Government departments understand the implications for the administration of justice of its financial, policy and legislative proposals.

3. Developing the framework for a modern judiciary

- 'One Judiciary' is advanced through consultation on statutory reform of the Senior President of Tribunals role and use of flexible deployment.
- A plan is agreed with MoJ on how to achieve the optimal balance of salaried and fee-paid judges and a consultation conducted on a limit on total fee-paid sitting.
- An actionable assessment is produced with HMCTS of the impact of technology and legislation on future judicial workloads.

- A revised Judicial Skills and Abilities Framework is developed for use in selection, training and appraisal.

4. Ensuring the right numbers of judges are in place, with the right skills, knowledge, resources and support

Human Resources

- Improved forecasting and planning, working with HMCTS, JAC and MoJ, informs decisions on recruitment, deployment and induction that better address future needs.
- Appointments and authorisations are processed promptly and accurately and judges and magistrates are supported effectively as they take up office.
- Judges can access timely and expert information, services and advice through centralised HR provision and regional HR professionals.
- Implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan, informed by survey results, improves welfare support. Expert HR advice ensures health and welfare cases are dealt with effectively, sympathetically, and in line with policy.

- The judiciary is supported in making evidence available to an Senior Salaries Review Body major review.
- The new Judicial e-HR system is developed, and longer-term procurement completed to meet the priority needs of the judiciary, HMCTS and the MoJ, and HR data and insights are used to inform the development of policies and systems.



Training

- High quality induction and continuation training is delivered to budget through face-to-face and digital learning (c.2000 events), publications and on-line materials and evaluated to ensure continued improvement.
- The new model for the delivery of magistrates' training is in operation by summer 2023 and preparation in hand for the abolition of Local Justice Areas. The quality and volume of magistrates' training is enhanced, with additional materials available through more varied channels.
- Training publications and materials are delivered in an accessible way; a revised version of the Equal Treatment Bench Book is published in early 2024.
- The functionality of JCL is increased, including the integration of magistrates' training.

Legal Information

- Judges receive the legal information they need in a timely way, increasingly through digital resources.
- New contracts for legal publications are agreed, providing legal information in the most appropriate format and delivering value for money.
- Judges are supported to ensure judgments are published by The National Archives in a timely way and within a clear policy framework.



5. Strengthening effective leadership in a modern judiciary at all levels

- Leadership judges are better equipped to carry out their leadership responsibilities through training, administrative support, guidance, and professional HR advice.
- Implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy leads to a more inclusive judiciary, including delivery of inclusion training for all judges and support for local action by leadership judges.
- Judges receive information about developments affecting them from senior leadership judges in a timely and accessible manner, via a range of internal communications channels, and have more opportunities to contribute their views.
- Support for career development is available to judges through mentoring, appraisal and career discussions.
- Judicial data is well managed and governed, and timely information and analysis provided to inform decision-making.

Judicial Conduct and Complaints

The Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO) supports the Lord Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor in their joint responsibility for judicial discipline. It sits within the JO for administrative purposes but is operationally independent. It is responsible equally to the Lord Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor and reports annually to Parliament.

The JCIO will deliver the following outcomes:

- Meet published targets for dealing with complaints about judicial office-holders, providing complainants and the judiciary with a high-quality service.
- Implement improvements to the disciplinary system agreed by the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice following the 2020-22 review and public consultation.

Civil Justice Council and Family Justice Council

The JO sponsors the Civil Justice Council and the Family Justice Council ensuring that they remain appropriately accountable to the judiciary, Ministers and Parliament. The JO provides the secretariat to those independent bodies to support them in delivering high quality advice as outlined in their respective business plans, organising conferences and debates, producing guidance and responding to consultations as appropriate. The secretariat will support the Civil Justice Council in the preparation and publication of reports on: Costs, Pre-Action Protocols, and Mental Capacity in the Courts.

Further information can be found on the **Advisory bodies page of the judicial website**.

Resources

Judicial Office Resources

Staff 2023-24	FTE
Chief Executive, Senior Staff and Support Staff	6.0
Judicial College	161.1
Judicial HR	108.5
Business Support	16.0
Private Offices	91.1
International Relations	5.0
Judicial Conduct Investigations Office	21.0
Judicial Communications	17.3
Judicial Library and Publications	14.0
Lawyer's Office	6.8
Strategy Team	10.0
Judicial Digital Services	9.0
Data Team	7.0
Programme, Leadership and Business Change Team	2.0
Core total	474.8

Staff 2023-24	FTE
Strategy and Change Reform	7.0
Programme Leadership and Business Change Reform	1.0
Comms Reform	1.0
College Reform	12.0
Private Office Reform	1.0
Reform Total *	22.0
Total	496.8

Budget 2023-24	£m
Core Judicial Office baseline	50
Additional funding at BV2a	1
Capital budget IMB	1
HMCTS Reform*	-
Total	52

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