

## **Administrative Justice Council - Business Plan 2018-2019**

The Business Plan sets out the strategic objectives of the Administrative Justice Council and the activity to meet these objectives for 2018-2019. Each objective falls under our overall principles listed below.

### **Objectives**

The Administrative Justice Council ('the Council') has the following objectives:

- To keep the operation of the administrative justice system under review;
- To consider how to make the administrative justice system more accessible, fair and efficient;
- To advise the Lord Chancellor, other relevant ministers, and the judiciary on the development of the administrative justice system;
- To share learning and areas of good practice across the UK;
- To provide a forum for the exchange of information between Government, the judiciary, ombudsman, academics and those working with users of the administrative justice system;
- To identify areas of the administrative justice system that would benefit from research; and
- To make proposals for reform.

### **Principles**

The Council's purpose will be to help make the administrative justice system increasingly accessible, fair and effective by:

- playing a pivotal role in the development and sharing of good practice;
- promoting understanding, learning and continuous improvement; and
- ensuring that the needs of users are central to the operation and ongoing reform of the system.

<b>Strategic Objective 1:</b> To keep under review the operation and delivery of the administrative justice system, and to make recommendations for improvements				
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To bring together key stakeholders in administrative justice to identify problems and propose solutions to the most pressing issues	Identify areas for review and report on possible reforms to improve the system	Pro Bono Panel, Academic Panel, Advice Sector Panel, Steering Group and Council	Ongoing	That grievances would be resolved in a fair, timely, open and proportionate manner, and with a continuous search for improvement at every stage of the process
	Engage with groups who represent users of the system to help shape the views of policy makers and influence reform	Council, Pro Bono, Academic Panel, Steering Group, Advice Sector Panel	Ongoing	
	Identify and respond to relevant bills, consultations and calls for evidence on administrative justice as appropriate.	Council	Varied	To ensure that the AJC responds and contributes to policy making by adding expert views on proposals
	Annual roundtable discussion with relevant stakeholders	Secretariat	July 2019	

<b>Strategic Objective 2: To consider how to make the administrative justice system more accessible, fair and efficient</b>				
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To strengthen and promote good quality decision- making by public bodies, identifying the costs and assessing the impact of those affected	Workshop with relevant representatives to discuss and identify key issues	Academic Panel/ administrative decision-making working group	November 2018	Those taking administrative decisions do so on soundly-based evidence and with regard for the individual needs of those affected
	Working group focusing on decision-making and procedures	Academic Panel/ administrative decision-making working group	October 2018	
	Explore a new one-way fee in tribunals, where the state party pays a fixed sum to HMCTS where its original decision is found to have been unlawful and impose stricter rules on state parties to tribunal decision-making	Pro Bono Panel	Report – January 2019	Cost saving to HMCTS by reimbursing unnecessary proceedings
To consider impact of modernisation of tribunals on litigants in person	Monitoring the development and effectiveness by HMCTS and others of “Stage 1” (Briggs) automated triage and information / guidance and research whether users of the new online interface can navigate the system effectively with the assistance available (including “assisted digital”)	Pro Bono Panel/Academic Panel	Report - January 2019	Litigants are able to navigate and use the system more effectively

	Working group on tribunals modernisation	Academic Panel, tribunals modernisation working group	October 2018	
	Workshop to discuss the modernisation issues with relevant stakeholders	Academic Panel/working group	December 2018	
To work towards making Ombudsman schemes more accessible, effective and efficient	Working group on Ombudsman reform	Academic Panel/ Ombudsman reform working group	September 2018	Government engagement on the re-introduction of a Public Services Ombudsman Bill
	Ombudsman reform roundtable event with academics, lead members of the ombudsman profession and policy-makers	Academic Panel/ Ombudsman Reform working group	January 2019	
	Keep the draft Public Ombudsman Bill on the government's agenda and contribute to further consultation	Council, Secretariat, working group	Ongoing	

<b>Objective 3: To advise the Lord Chancellor, other relevant ministers, and the judiciary on the development of the administrative justice system</b>				
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To advise on tribunal reform and, in particular, on issues arising out of the £1bn HMCTS Reform Programme of courts and tribunals, so as to ensure that the new tribunal structures better facilitate access to justice for those without legal representation	Research and advise on the effectiveness of the online appeals form in the Social Security Tribunal	Council	Draft Report – January 2019	Advice helps to inform government policy
<b>Objective 4: To share learning and areas of good practice across the UK</b>				
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Bodies</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To exchange information with similar oversight bodies, government departments and NGOs	Communication and engagement with Civil and Family Justice Council, NGOs and government departments	Secretariat, Council	Ongoing	An increased awareness of good practice across government and oversight bodies
To share areas of best practice across the separate UK jurisdictions	Information sharing across UK devolved administrations  To agree arrangements that enable the AJC to operate effectively as a UK wide body	Council	Ongoing  September 2018	Improvements to the administrative justice system across the United Kingdom
To share learning between ombudsman schemes and tribunals	Set up a familiarisation programme between Ombudsman and tribunals	Ombudsman Association/working group/Academic Panel	Ongoing	Shared understanding, best practice with potential for cross-referrals

<b>Strategic Objective 5:</b> To provide a forum for the exchange of information between government, the judiciary, ombudsmen, academics and those working with users of the administrative justice system				
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To bring together key stakeholders in administrative justice	Bi-annual Council meetings  Workshops and events bringing together key members of the administrative justice system	Secretariat	Ongoing  Ongoing	Have a broad reach engaging with stakeholders from all parts of the administrative justice system
To promote the work of the AJC	Sharing the work of the Council with government departments, among the tribunal judiciary, Ombudsman, and in user representative organisations	Secretariat	Ongoing	Increased visibility and transparency of the Council's work
<b>Strategic Objective 6:</b> To identify areas of the administrative justice system that would benefit from research				
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
To exchange ideas between the Steering Group, Academic panel, Pro Bono Panel, Advice Sector Panel and the Council	Meetings of the panels, Steering Group and Council	All	Ongoing	Research informs government policy.
To carry out research on specific areas of the system and to provide recommendations to improve it.	Academic, Pro Bono Panel and Advice Sector panels present research to the Council for consideration	Academic Panel/Pro Bon Panel/Advice Sector Panel	Ongoing	Increased evidence-based research into how the system could work better.