



**Judicial  
Office**

# **Judicial Office Business Plan 2024-25**

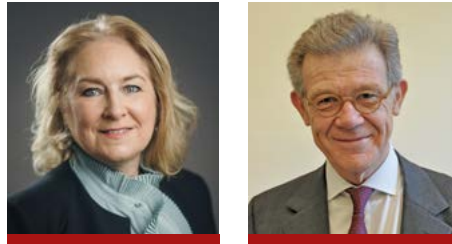


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# Foreword

by the Lady Chief Justice  
and the Senior President  
of Tribunals



The Judicial Office plays a vital role in supporting the judiciary, as the third branch of the State, in upholding judicial independence and the rule of law, and improving the effective and efficient administration of justice. These, in turn, are fundamental to a thriving democracy, society and economy. Each member of Judicial Office staff should be proud of the important contribution that they make to this purpose.

The conditions across crime, civil, family and tribunals justice remain challenging this year, with large backlogs compounded by resourcing and capacity constraints across key parts of the system. We welcome the Business Plan's pursuit of three key judicial priorities, that will focus the Judicial Office's resources on helping to address these challenges and seize important opportunities: (1) recognise and promote the judiciary's strengths; (2) build judicial unity; and (3) reduce court and tribunal backlogs, improve timeliness and maintain quality. We would also highlight the particular importance of the Judicial Office's

involvement in the work to improve diversity and inclusion in the courts and tribunals; and in support of reform of the role of the Senior President of Tribunals.

The underpinning workstreams represent an ambitious but achievable plan of work to help the judiciary deliver our priorities and objectives. But tackling these challenges, and others that may arise this year (and beyond), will require a cross-system effort. It will be essential for the Judicial Office to continue to deepen its collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, His Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS), and the many other organisations operating in the justice sector.

We are very grateful to Judicial Office staff for their hard work and dedication in supporting all our judicial office holders in the vital work that they do. We welcome Michelle Crotty as the recently appointed Chief Executive for the Judicial Office and wish her well in her new role.

*Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill*

Lady Chief Justice of England and Wales, The Right Honourable the Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill, DBE

*Keith Lindblom*

Sir Keith Lindblom, Senior President of Tribunals

# Foreword

by the Chief Executive,  
Michelle Crotty



I was delighted to take up post as Chief Executive of the Judicial Office in April and am committed to strengthening our role in supporting the judiciary. I look forward to meeting and working with all our staff across the country, and to working with the Lady Chief Justice and her senior judges to deliver her priorities for the judiciary.

I am committed to fostering an inclusive and stimulating workplace that attracts, develops and retains high-performing individuals and teams. Our corporate themes – on purpose, collaboration, capability, inclusion and wellbeing – will also help to keep building a thriving Judicial Office, where we can all deliver our services effectively and efficiently.

The plan for this year is deliberately ambitious. It does not aim to reflect the totality of the work that we are pursuing, though this work is itself essential. It is focused instead on workstreams to support the senior judiciary’s key priorities for the administration of justice. Some will be concluded this reporting year, whilst other workstreams will continue into the following year(s).

Based on any significant changes in demand for services during the year, we may need to set up new workstreams and change the scope of, or pause effort on, others. We will need to be responsive, and harness technology and data-driven insights to help us meet new challenges and seize the opportunities that may arise in our evolving justice system.

Successful implementation of this Business Plan will require an organisation-wide collaborative effort, ever-closer working with the judiciary, and joint working with many government departments and other organisations. I look forward to renewing relationships with people that I previously worked with in the justice system, building new ones, and empowering staff to strengthen their own networks and deliver high quality services.

I want to thank all our dedicated staff for their hard work and commitment to the Judicial Office and the judiciary and for the warm welcome they have given me as I have taken up this new role.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Crotty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Crotty, 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 Judicial Office 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 Lady 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 our judiciary 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 23,000 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.

# High-performing organisation

The Judicial Office has grown quickly in recent years as we have taken on responsibilities and staff from other parts of the justice system. We will continue to embed these new teams throughout this reporting year.

It is vital that the Judicial Office is properly resourced with staff who have the motivation, skills, knowledge and experience to deliver high-quality, efficient and reliable support to the judiciary. Our leadership team is committed to providing an inclusive and stimulating workplace that attracts, develops and retains high-performing teams, including through the work of our five corporate groups:

- **Purpose:** We will promote a greater understanding of the Judicial Office's role in supporting the judiciary and strengthening justice, to enable our staff to appreciate the value of their work, to attract the best talent to join us, and to ensure that those we engage with externally understand what we do, why we are important and when they should engage with us and the judiciary.
- **Collaboration:** We will foster positive, effective and collaborative relationships between teams and with other organisations to help deliver our priorities. Our focus will be on four workstreams: getting the basics right; good information and communication channels; effective use of technology; and embedding a collaborative culture.
- **Capability:** We will develop a programme of activity to raise capability and enable individuals and the Judicial Office to thrive by helping managers to identify and support potential, help individuals to identify appropriate development, identify our high potential staff and place an onus on development for all.
- **Inclusion:** We will continue to support and promote initiatives that foster an inclusive environment, such as the JO sponsorship scheme, and our Fair Treatment Advisers.
- **Wellbeing:** We will ensure staff can access an enriched pool of in-house and external services and resources to improve their mental, physical and financial wellbeing; and that our leaders are willing and able to identify and support their teams' and colleagues' wellbeing issues.



We will focus our response to the 2023 People Survey on three main themes:

1. **leadership and managing change**, to ensure collaborative, open and visible leadership that inspires confidence across the Judicial Office,
2. **a workplace that champions inclusion**, where staff feel supported, regardless of their background or where they work, and
3. **workload and resources**, so that our structure and resources align to our organisational priorities and are effectively managed to maximise delivery and minimise strain on staff.

Grade 6/7-led working groups will support delivery of key workstreams on these themes, working closely with the corporate groups.

We will support staff to transition smoothly to the new Civil Service office attendance policy. We plan to implement it in a way that helps us all to deliver our services and to realise the benefits of working together in person, including learning from each other, sharing experience, generating ideas, pastoral support and wellbeing; as well as maximising use of taxpayer-funded buildings. We will also maintain the benefits of flexible working that allows some time working from home.

The Judicial Office will embed its newly expanded Corporate Services Team that will provide additional capacity and capability for the organisation. This will strengthen and professionalise financial management throughout the Judicial Office and provide increased support in the people services it provides to our staff.

Our Programme Management Office will continue to increase the delivery capability of our staff by developing its online Delivery Hub and providing foundation and intermediate-level training for staff. It will support our new Programme Boards to ensure successful implementation of this Business Plan.



# The senior judiciary's priorities

The Judicial Office is focused on pursuing the senior judiciary's three medium-term priorities and associated objectives. We have developed high-level workstreams to support them; some will be concluded this reporting year, whilst other workstreams will continue into the following year(s). Based on any significant changes in demand during the year, we may need to set up new workstreams and change the scope of, or pause effort on, others.



## Priority 1: Recognise and promote the judiciary's strengths

### Objectives

We will support the judiciary to:

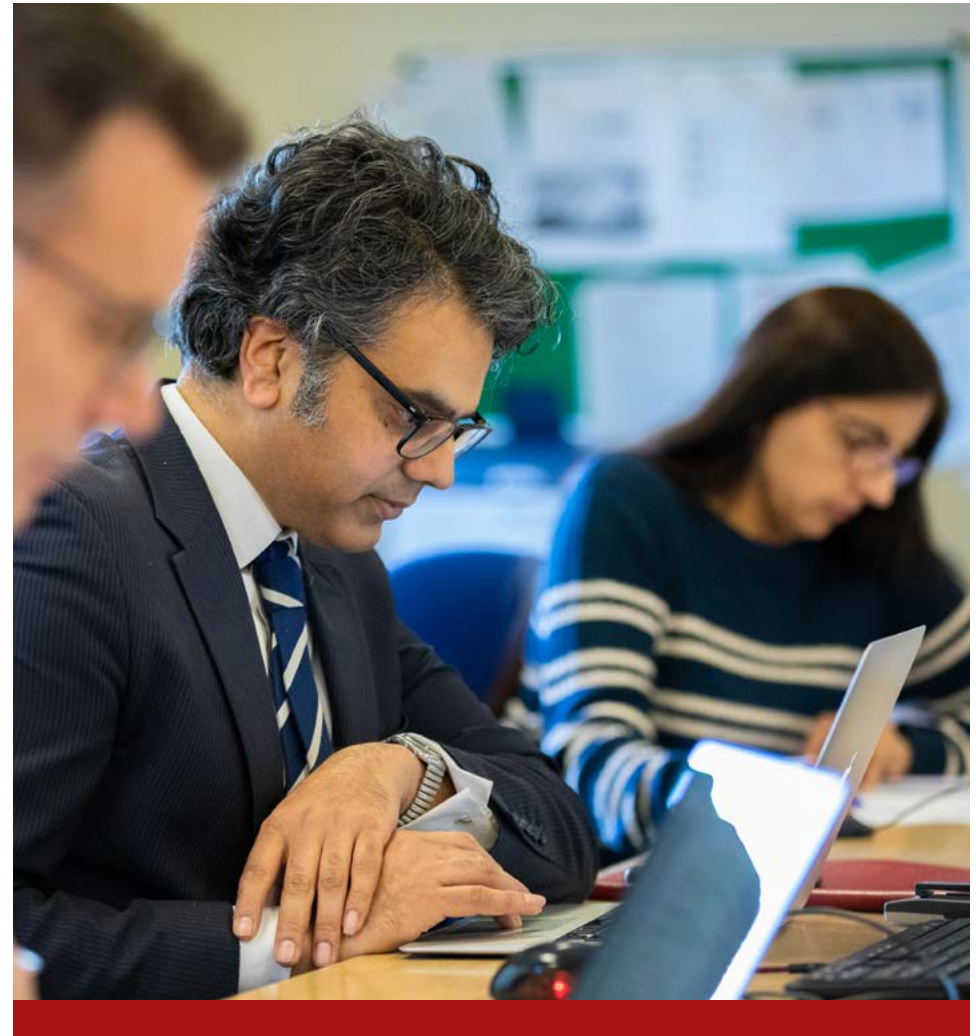
- Uphold judicial independence and constitutional boundaries.
- Increase understanding amongst the public, Executive and Parliament of our first-class, independent judiciary.
- Communicate effectively their vital role in supporting democracy, society and the economy.
- Continue to increase transparency across the jurisdictions.
- Engage with international counterparts to nurture judicial independence and the rule of law overseas.



## Workstreams

We will support the judiciary to:

- **W1.1:** Facilitate engagement by the Lady Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals with ministers and parliamentarians to represent the judiciary's views, build understanding of the separation of powers, and highlight the value provided to the UK by the judiciary.
- **W1.2:** Ensure they receive high-quality legal advice on the impact, if any, of government proposals on the rule of law and the administration of justice.
- **W1.3:** Challenge inaccurate media reporting.
- **W1.4:** Create high-quality, engaging content on the judiciary website and social media to explain the rule of law and role of the judiciary.
- **W1.5:** Enhance public confidence in sentencing.
- **W1.6:** Increase public awareness of their constitutional role, particularly in schools and universities.
- **W1.7:** Progress ongoing work on open justice and transparency in the justice system.
- **W1.8:** Facilitate international judicial engagement and training to strengthen cooperation and foster the rule of law and judicial independence overseas.



## Priority 2: Build judicial unity

### Objectives

We will support the judiciary to:

- Achieve 'One Judiciary' across the courts and tribunals.
- Develop a more inclusive and diverse judiciary.
- Promote judicial welfare/wellbeing.
- Build morale among the judiciary, officials and staff in the courts and tribunals.

### Workstreams

We will support the judiciary to:

- **W2.1:** Develop legislative proposals with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to support 'One Judiciary' including bringing tribunals judges in England & Wales under the leadership of the Lady Chief Justice.
- **W2.2:** Facilitate cross-deployment within and between jurisdictions to its full potential to support business need, cohesion, career development and diversity.
- **W2.3:** Work with MoJ to align terms and conditions for courts and tribunals judges.
- **W2.4:** Implement and promote the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, including attracting under-represented groups, with a particular focus on encouraging and supporting black candidates to apply to become judicial office holders.
- **W2.5:** Enhance support for judicial leaders to develop a confident, inclusive and self-reliant leadership culture.
- **W2.6:** Implement the Judicial Health and Wellbeing Strategy to expand the breadth and improve the efficacy of wellbeing resources and welfare support.
- **W2.7:** Enhance communication between the senior judiciary and judicial office holders via multiple channels; including open forums, intranet articles, circuit visits and direct emails, to build morale and foster a sense of community.

### Priority 3: Reduce backlogs, improve timeliness and maintain quality

#### Objectives

We will support the judiciary to:

- Work with HMCTS to secure adequate, sustained funding and resourcing for the courts and tribunals (including the estate and staffing).
- Strengthen judicial governance and clarify leadership reporting lines.
- Improve working practices and efficiency across the system.
- Champion digitisation and modernisation to improve efficiency, access to justice and earlier dispute resolution where appropriate.
- Continue to develop and provide high-quality and modern training to meet the needs of a growing judiciary, reflecting legal, societal and technological developments and evolving work practices.

#### Workstreams

We will support the judiciary to:

- **W3.1:** Work with the MoJ to increase the salaried bench by identifying barriers to attraction and developing appropriate options to address them.
- **W3.2:** Continue to modernise the onboarding and exiting processes to meet the rising needs of the courts, tribunals and magistracy.
- **W3.3:** Process judicial appointments and authorisations promptly and accurately and support judges, magistrates and non-legal members effectively as they take up office.
- **W3.4:** Continue to modernise working practices through judicial guidance on listing, use of authorised officers, technology, training to support innovation and digital confidence, and procedure rule changes.
- **W3.5:** Progress the work of the Crown Court Improvement Group.
- **W3.6:** Assist the MoJ's development of a Digital Justice System across the civil, and family jurisdictions and tribunals, including its delivery of data transfer projects.

- **W3.7:** Provide judicial office holders with an evolving portfolio of high-quality induction, continuation and skills-based training with a focus on leadership, inclusion and contemporary use of technology.
- **W3.8:** Refresh the Judicial Skills and Abilities Framework for use in judicial recruitment, learning and development, and appraisals.
- **W3.9:** Provide high-quality and value-for-money library/information services, increasingly in digital form.
- **W3.10:** Develop a Judicial Data Catalogue to support leadership decision-making.
- **W3.11:** Collaborate with HMCTS to improve alignment of HR data, regularly review accountability and data cleansing to ensure accuracy across digital platforms.
- **W3.12:** Upgrade 'e-Links' so downstream systems receive accurate and timely data to enable the judiciary and officials to work effectively and efficiently.



# Resources

## Judicial Office Resources

Staff 2024-25	FTE
<b>Core FTE</b>	
Chief Executive and Senior Staff	6.0
CEO Chief of Staff	1.0
Judicial College	159.7
Judicial HR	108.8
Business Support	16.0
Private Offices	91.0
International Relations	7.0
Judicial Conduct Investigations Office <sup>1</sup>	21.7
Judicial Communications	20.0
Judicial Library and Publications	13.6
Legal Advisers	7.4
Strategy Team	11.7
Digital and Data Team	15.0
Delivery Unit	4.0
<b>Core total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>483.0</b>

Staff 2024-25	FTE
<b>Illegal Migration Act (IMA) funded staff</b>	
IMA Core	6.4
New staff	16
<b>IMA total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>22.4</b>
<b>Reform funded staff</b>	
College Reform	6.0
Strategy and Change Reform	4.0
<b>Reform Total</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>515.4</b>

Budget 2024-25	£m
Core Judicial Office	53.8
IMA <sup>4</sup>	-
HMCTS Reform <sup>5</sup>	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.8</b>

1. Includes EA post.
2. This includes 6.4 staff whose costs are recharged to the IMA budget.
3. This includes the costs of 6.4 core staff whose costs are recharged to the IMA budget.
4. No budget allocated. Estimated costs to be claimed from the Home Office £2.8m.
5. No budget held. Actual costs for staff claimed from HMCTS.