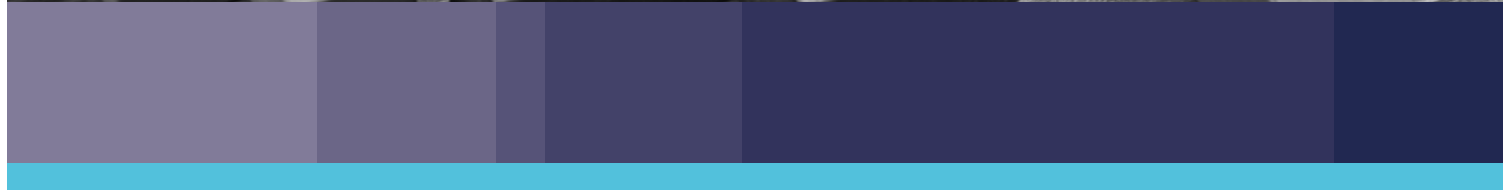




**Judiciary of  
England and Wales**

# **Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Update 2024**





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# Foreword by the Lady Chief Justice

In November 2020 we published the first Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which sets out an ambitious framework for action until the end of 2025. I am pleased to provide you with this update on the progress that we have made to date, and what we plan to do going forward.



The pursuit of diversity and inclusion requires a sustained effort on all fronts, and it is right that we should continue to pursue these objectives. I look forward to the final year of the Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy as we begin to consider how to frame the next one. We will also publish a review of the overall progress across the entirety of the Strategy for 2020 to 2025.

These annual updates allow us to be open and transparent regarding our progress on the commitments that we made, and we will continue to provide these following the publication of the Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2026 to 2030.

Each year our knowledge and understanding of diversity and inclusion increase and the work that we undertake changes and evolves with it. I do not underestimate the challenges ahead, but I remain positive about our progress so far and confident that we will continue to achieve change.

We will carry on working closely with the Ministry of Justice, Judicial Appointments Commission, and the representative bodies of the legal profession. I look forward to continuing this engagement through the Judicial Diversity Forum.

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

## Summary by Lady Justice Whipple



This update provides a summary of the work undertaken over the last year towards implementation of the Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. It provides an overview of the range of different activities being undertaken by judicial office holders at all levels across the judiciary.

This update marks the end of my first year as lead judge for diversity and inclusion, leadership development and wellbeing. By combining these important areas of work into a single role, we can focus on embedding and normalising our diversity and inclusion work across all that we do as judicial office holders.

Last year I indicated my keenness to hear ideas and celebrate achievements of fellow judicial office holders. I have enjoyed hosting diversity and inclusion round tables to enable me to engage with colleagues across the judiciary and attended a number of conferences and meetings of different judicial office holders. I plan to continue this approach and aim to meet as wide a cross section of judicial office holders as possible.

Work has got underway on the two areas of focus that were highlighted in last year's annual update. The first is that we now have a better understanding of the level of engagement of black lawyers in our outreach activity and have plans in place to extend targeted outreach further. I do not underestimate the work ahead to achieve a more representative judiciary in this regard. The second is to assess the systems and processes in place to deliver workplace adjustments for disabled judges. Early indications are that there is a great deal of good work in hand, which is described in this update. Delivering disability inclusion is a responsibility we share with HMCTS. Together, we are continuing to remove barriers and provide adjustments for all disabled judicial office holders that require them.

Progress has been made with the delivery of inclusion training, which is now embedded in induction and continuation training. The induction and continuation training draws on the Equal Treatment Bench Book (ETBB) which was substantially reviewed in the summer.

Support to strengthen mechanisms for career development of existing judicial office holders has continued this year. These mechanisms cover career conversations, peer mentoring and further development of flexible deployment. Training is in place to support judicial leaders in their progress towards an inclusive style of leadership, which includes a focus on developing the careers of judicial office holders for whom they are responsible.

Last year a statement was issued by senior judiciary to advocates, encouraging greater participation of junior counsel in courts and tribunal hearings. Anecdotal feedback suggests that this is having the intended impact and that junior counsel are more regularly addressing senior courts and gaining valuable experience and exposure to judges and clients in that way.

Again, this year, we have had many examples of outstanding outreach and inclusion work through the activity of leadership judges and our Diversity and Community Relations Judges (DCRJJs) and Magistrates (DCRMs). I am grateful to them for their energy and enthusiasm. I am keen to ensure examples of good practice are shared across the whole of the judiciary..

We continue to offer a programme of outreach activities for prospective applicants for judicial appointment. For example, the judiciary has hosted seminars ahead of selection exercises and has engaged with specific audiences such as the Chartered Institute of Legal Executive members. Mentoring and shadowing opportunities are also available. A review indicated that good numbers of black lawyers are participating in these events, but further work is planned to enhance this engagement.

Judicial office holders provide valuable input to other outreach activity delivered by our partners. These include the Pre-Application Judicial Education programme and the Judicial Appointment Commission's targeted outreach programme which supports candidates from under-represented backgrounds.

Offering internships to aspiring lawyers from under-represented backgrounds through the Bridging the Bar Academy scheme has now become a regular event in the Court of Appeal and High Court. This scheme offers valuable experience to interns and provides an element of reverse mentoring for the judges involved in overseeing them. Separately, the reverse mentoring programme heads into its third year, this year with over 70 mentoring pairs established.

So far as the make-up of the judiciary is concerned, progress has been made in increasing the personal and professional diversity of the judiciary across some areas and in relation to some groups, but the update highlights several areas where more sustained work is necessary. It is acknowledged that the profile of black, Asian and minority ethnic judicial office holders has not increased this year compared to last and that the 1% profile of black judges remains an issue. Our focus in this area will continue.

There is much to do. Like the Lady Chief Justice, I feel positive about progress to date and confident that there is much more to come. I thank her for her support and commitment to this work.

**Lady Justice (Philippa) Whipple,**  
**Chair of the Judicial Diversity Committee of the Judges' Council**

# The Judicial Diversity Committee

The Committee strongly supports work to evaluate the impact of action to promote diversity and inclusion, to understand the effectiveness of initiatives undertaken and to inform future priorities. They will continue to oversee the work of the Judicial Office diversity team to design and monitor effective ways to evaluate and understand the impact of our programmes.

The implementation of this strategy is supported and overseen by the Judicial Diversity Committee. Its work has been enhanced through the appointment of judicial office holders to lead on particular aspects of inclusion. Portfolios include links with the Judicial College, and oversight of the DCRJs and outreach work. The Chair of the Committee is reviewing portfolio areas to ensure they best support the aims of the diversity and inclusion strategy.

The Committee recognises the importance of good data in informing priorities for action. Declaration rates and diversity profiles are reviewed annually to inform further action and priority areas. Work continues on the commitment made in 2020 to encourage judicial office holders to self-classify against a wider range of diversity characteristics. As well as informing priorities, there will be greater transparency in published profiles of the judiciary once standard thresholds have been reached.

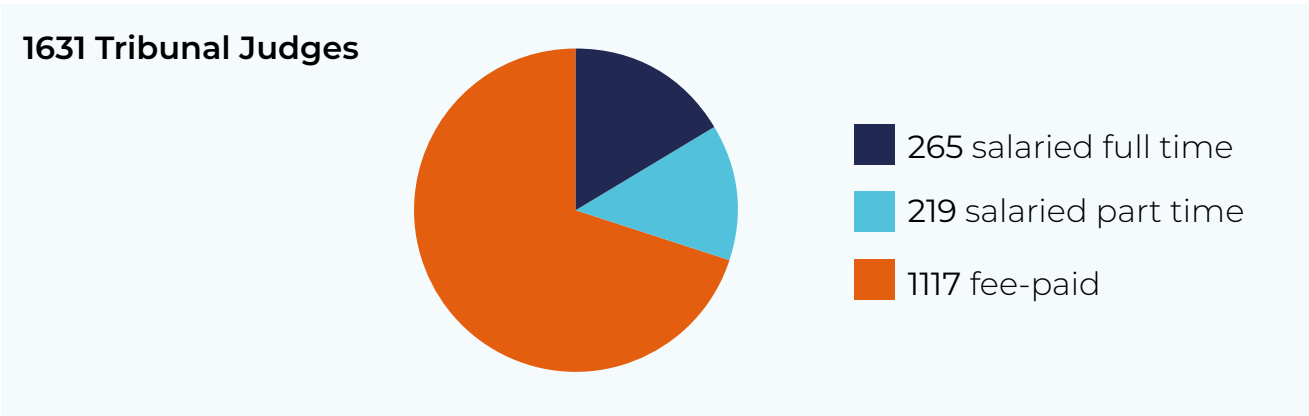
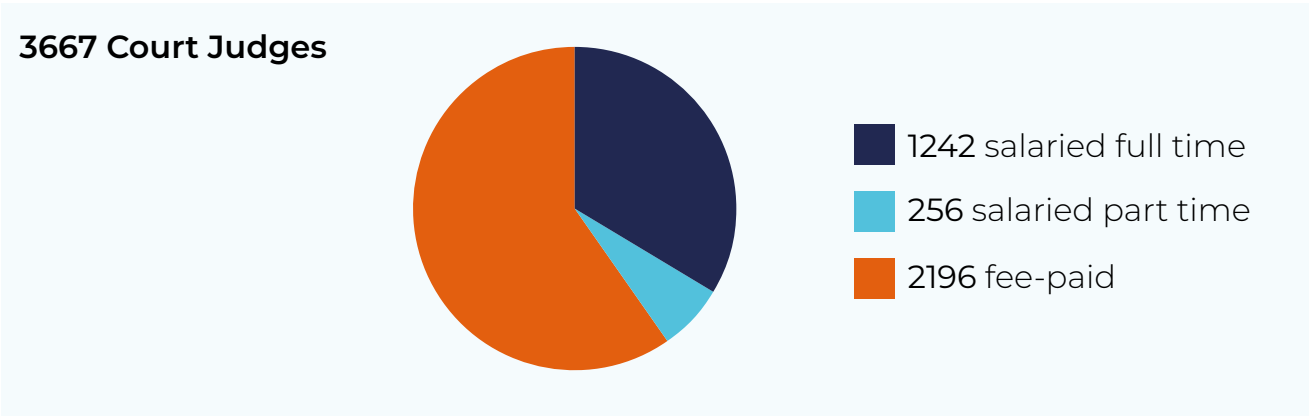


# Current Levels of Representation

## The Judiciary at 1 April 2024:

3115 non legal members of tribunals

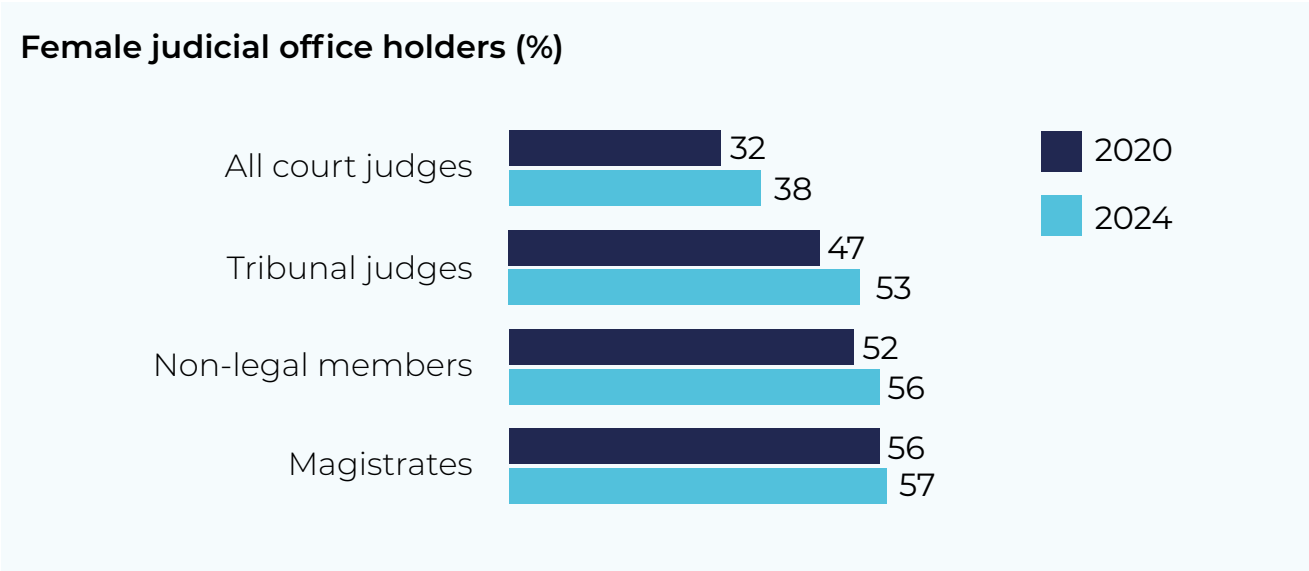
14576 magistrates



Change in representation since 2020:

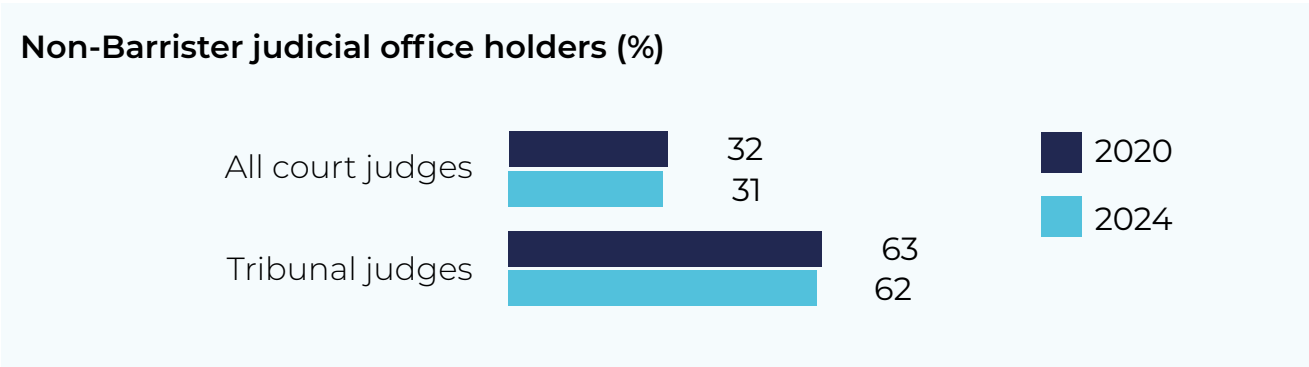
Female judicial office holders

6% increase in court judges, 6% increase in tribunal judges, 4% increase in non-legal members, 1% increase in magistrates



Professional background

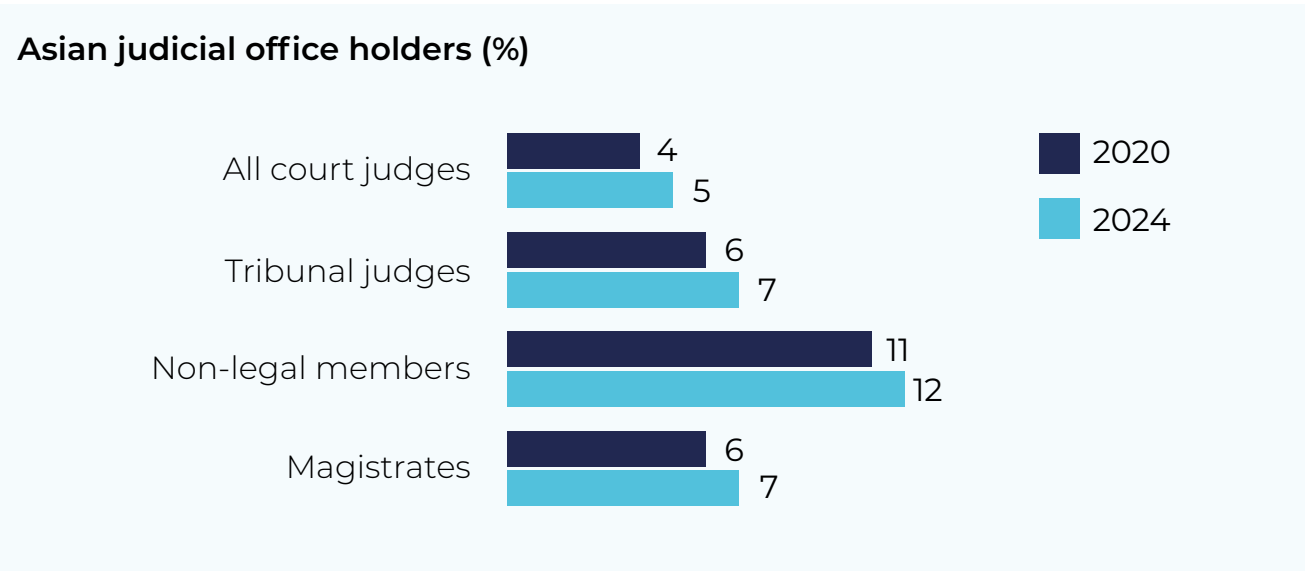
1% decrease in court judges from non-barrister backgrounds, 1% decrease in tribunal judges from non-barrister backgrounds



Black, Asian and minority ethnic judicial office holders:

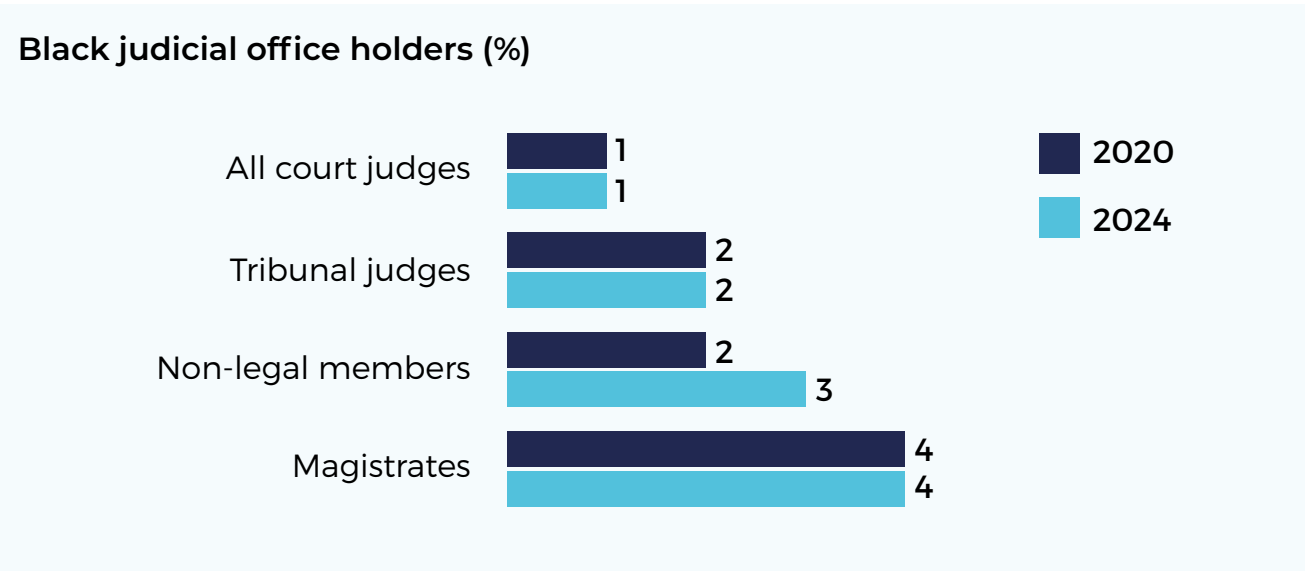
Asian ethnicity

1% increase in all court judges, tribunal judges, non-legal members and magistrates



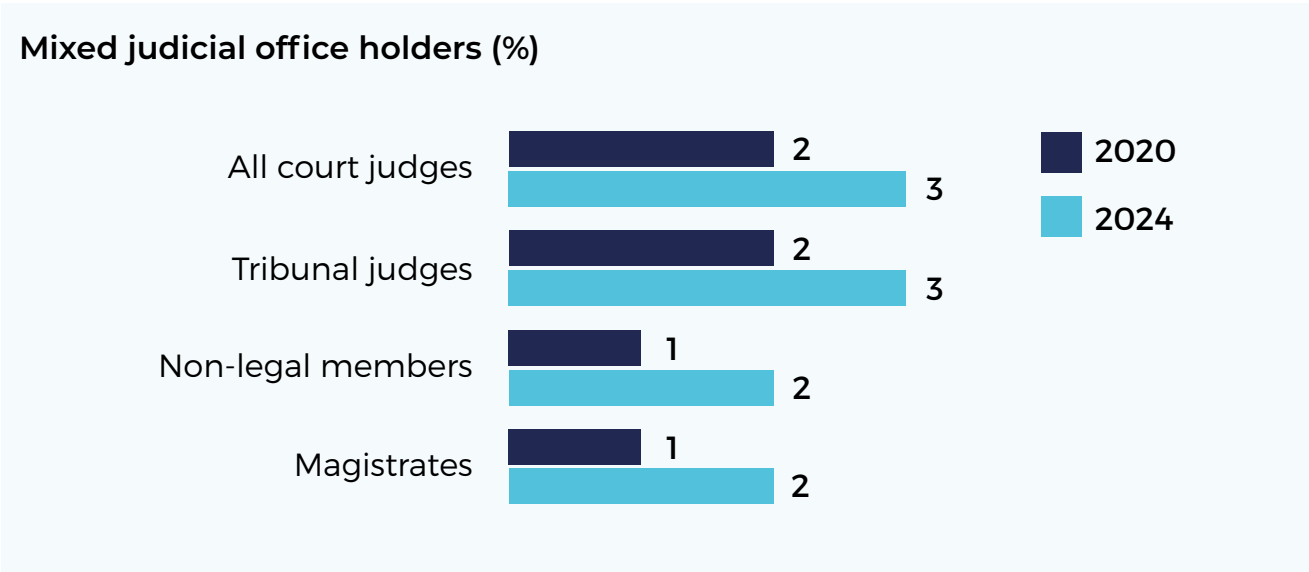
Black ethnicity

No change for all court judges and tribunal judges, 1% increase in non-legal members and no change in magistrates



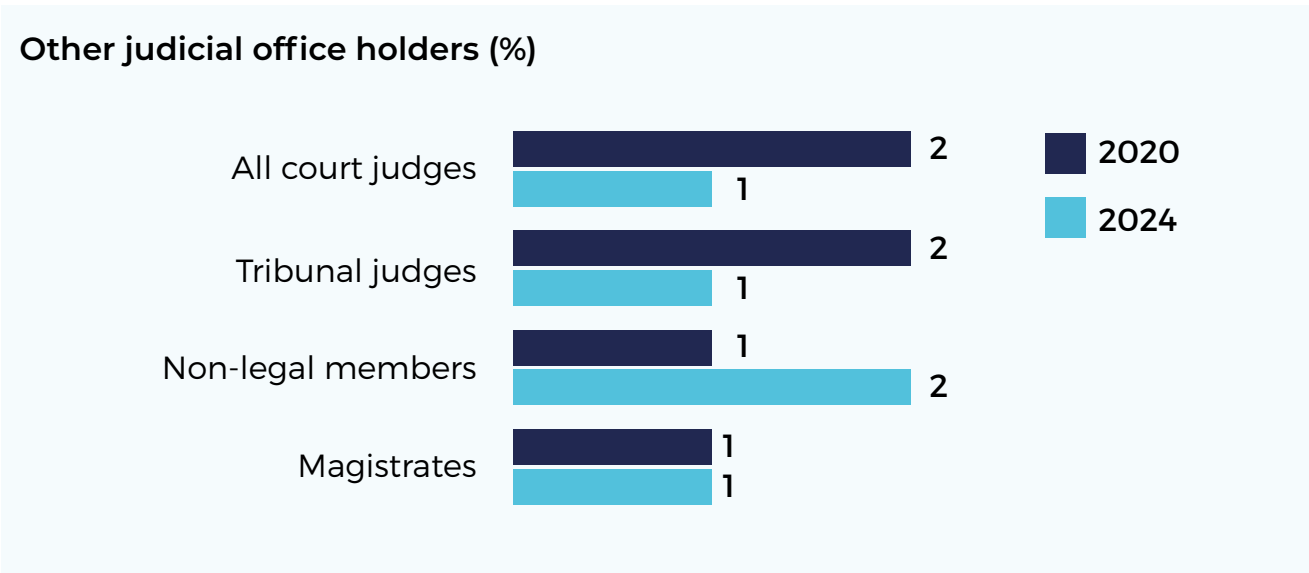
### Mixed ethnicity

1% increase in all court judges, tribunal judges, non-legal members and magistrates



### Other ethnicity

1% decrease for all court and tribunal judges, 1% increase in non-legal members, 1% decrease for magistrates



# **Objective 1: Creating an environment in which there is a greater responsibility for and reporting on progress in achieving diversity and inclusion**

Responsibility for progress in, and reporting on, achieving greater diversity and inclusion is a requirement of all judicial office holders in leadership and management positions. Leadership Judges will be supported in their efforts to promote a respectful and inclusive working environment, encouraging a wider, more diverse pool of talented lawyers to apply for judicial roles in the area for which they have responsibility, and supporting the progress and development of those who are appointed in their area.

## **Achievements in 2024**

Mechanisms for reporting on local action plans have been further developed in 2024. This has enabled sharing of good practice across regions. Work continues on maximising the use of these good practice examples, such as including them in induction for new Presiding Judges to help inform future plans for achieving diversity and inclusion within their leadership areas.

Judicial leadership roles, across all jurisdictions, have developed and grown in recent years. Building on the training completed last year for judicial leaders, this year the College continued to deliver leadership training for those new to leadership through the Essential Leadership Programme, with five such courses being delivered in 2023-2024. This training aims to provide judicial office holders with the appropriate tools for their advancement within the judiciary and to support a more diverse leadership cohort.

The Senior President of Tribunals Diversity Taskforce audit of diversity and inclusion initiatives in the tribunals has enabled sharing of good practice throughout the tribunals.

Training for new leadership magistrates was reinvigorated, with inclusion and diversity as key and constant themes throughout this core leadership training.

In March 2024, the Judicial College appointed leadership experts to conduct a training needs analysis, evaluate the impact of current leadership training for judges, and make evidence-based recommendations for future judicial leadership training programmes. With the support of the College, a wide cross-section of

leadership judges were invited to participate to ensure a representative sample across different levels, functions and regions. To gain a good understanding of what future leadership training should look like, a range of methods of gathering data, information and insight were utilised.

Following a local initiative in a tribunal chamber, guidance was issued to support leadership judges across all jurisdictions and regions in undertaking local “inclusion checks”. This enables them to assess the local inclusion culture generally and to tailor action at a local level, supporting local responsibility and reporting progress.

Diversity and Community Relation Judges (DCRJJs) are salaried judges drawn from across jurisdictions and throughout England and Wales. It is a voluntary role that is taken up in addition to their judicial roles. They represent the judiciary as they engage with schools, colleges, universities, communities, and members of the legal profession. Additionally, Diversity and Community Relations Magistrates (DCRMs) provide a similar role engaging the public on the work of the magistracy, the importance of the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and seek to bust myths about magistrates.

A review of outreach activity submitted by DCRJJs and DCRMs and a change in approach to reporting has led to richer data being provided, for example the types of schools visited, to enable future planning to prioritise state schools in lower socioeconomic areas. Some impactful examples of practice were presented at an annual DCRJJ conference in July 2024. These included a mentoring scheme for talented black advocates, and engagement with law students at local universities, including connecting students to local legal professionals. This work has led to an opportunity for the Lead Judge for Diversity and Inclusion to give a talk at a Law School based at a Northern non-Russell Group university on diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

Lead Diversity and Inclusion Judges have been appointed in the High Court and Court of Appeal to mirror work being undertaken in other courts and tribunals.

The 2024 Judicial Attitude Survey launched in summer 2024. Questions on leadership, inclusion and wellbeing were included to provide data to allow for better evaluation. Additional diversity monitoring categories were included, which will provide an opportunity to assess whether responses are consistent across different diverse identities.

## **Next Steps**

The 2024 Judicial Attitude Survey responses will be used to assess the impact of a variety of activities intended to extend inclusive practice such as training, provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled judicial office holders, and the impact of local action plans on inclusive culture more broadly.

A review of the remit of DCRJs concluded at end of 2024 with changes to be implemented during 2025. The review is aimed at ensuring the hard work of these judges is having maximum impact and to explore if the evaluation mechanisms in place could be improved upon.

The results of the training needs analysis commissioned by the College identified the strengths of the current training provision while also highlighting additional training needs. Those insights are being used to inform the future development of the College's training provision.

## **Objective 2: Supporting and building a more inclusive and respectful culture and working environment within the judiciary**

We will continue to ensure that all serving judicial office holders feel supported and included, whatever their personal or professional backgrounds. Their lived experience will be better understood, respected, and valued, and will be considered when policies, practices and initiatives are developed.

### **Achievements in 2024**

Disability inclusion was highlighted as an area of focus for 2024 in the Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. To create a baseline and understand key areas for focus a review was undertaken and provided to the Judicial Diversity Committee.

It was clear from the review that a significant amount of existing work is being undertaken to support both new and existing disabled judicial office holders. This includes: information on health, wellbeing and reasonable adjustment support available to those joining the judiciary; a comprehensive infrastructure to support workplace adjustments, including liaison with HMCTS in relation to physical adjustments and auxiliary aides; an escalation process for when workplace adjustments are delayed, or problems occur; workplace adjustment passports (a document to record personal adjustments that judicial office holders can share in advance with court managers); various guidance and awareness raising resources for all judicial office holders; and guidance for judicial leaders so they may better support disabled judicial office holders. We will continue to review throughout 2025.

The Judicial Diversity Committee agreed on further work taking place to enhance support for disabled judicial office holders with particular regard to quicker access to workplace adjustments.

The Workplace Adjustments Working Group (WAWG) provides a route for leadership judges and judicial office holders to escalate concerns about adjustments and to receive support in resolving issues. Throughout 2024, the group has continued to improve awareness of the process and potential benefits in relation to workplace adjustments, and to ensure that the process is easy and efficient. This work has included internal publication of a Q&A document in January 2024.



There has been, and continues to be, cross engagement with the HMCTS working group on workplace adjustments to support consistency of experience across the judicial estate and to raise and address common issues, for example, hearing enhancement equipment for judicial office holders in court. Similar cross engagement with MoJ and the Judicial College has taken place.

Inclusion training was introduced for existing salaried and fee-paid judges, and some tribunal members, in April 2023 and was delivered throughout the 2023-24 training year, with 163 inclusion sessions delivered overall. Inclusion training for new judges and remaining tribunal members continues in the 2024-25 training year. Inclusion training for coroners is also being delivered in 2024-25.

The Judicial College commissioned external experts to do a bespoke piece of research on culture and inclusion within the magistracy. This work was carried out in the first half of 2024.

The Judicial College continues regularly to review the layout, content and functionality of its online learning platform to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The College has designed a standardised set of templates for use with College owned training materials to aid with the creation of accessible content and is in the process of rolling out usage across the training programme.

The Judicial College published a new edition of the Equal Treatment Bench Book (ETBB) in July 2024, following a comprehensive triennial review. The ETBB is an important resource for judicial office holders and aims to increase understanding of the different circumstances of those who come before the courts and tribunals. The aim is to provide the judiciary with clear and consistent guidance to support decision making around inclusive practice that takes into account the needs of those accessing the legal system. The new edition is more up-to-date, concise and user-friendly.

The Judicial Health and Wellbeing Strategy is aligned with this strategy through its focus on the wellbeing benefits of creating inclusivity, and the important role that senior judicial office holders, leadership judges, and Bench Chairs can play in promoting wellbeing and healthy working practices that encourage inclusivity, increase judicial engagement, and help to build a positive workplace culture.

Actions undertaken that are relevant to the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy have included raising awareness and emphasising the importance of supporting mental wellbeing, including promoting national awareness days for example, Time to Talk, Mental Health Awareness Week, and Stress Awareness Month which were all marked in 2024 with internal news items written by judicial office holders. The articles included links to the judicial welfare support and advice on how to access peer support.

The Lady Chief Justice and the Senior President of Tribunals appoint two judges with delegated portfolio responsibility for welfare for the courts and tribunals. These judges provide vital peer support to colleagues and leadership judges and work closely with Judicial HR. In addition, there are also a number of locally appointed welfare judges. In 2024, all welfare judges were offered the opportunity to participate in “Mental Health Champion” level training provided by Mental Health First Aid England.

Guidance produced in 2024 to support judicial office holders and their judicial leaders includes support for judicial office holders with caring responsibilities. This was supplemented by an internally published item written by judicial office holders with caring responsibilities during carers week in June 2024. Guidance on bereavement and guidance to support those diagnosed with a terminal illness was also produced.

A Judicial Reverse Mentoring Scheme provides an opportunity for judges to be mentored by legal professionals from under-represented backgrounds to raise their awareness of the experiences and barriers faced by these lawyers. Previous cohorts have run in 2022 and 2023. The 2024 cohort took on over 70 judges, which is the largest so far.

## Next Steps

Workplace Adjustments Guidance will be updated with better signposting to support, clearer roles and responsibilities and a new escalation procedure within HMCTS for complex reasonable adjustment requirements.

The judiciary continues to collaborate with Judicial Diversity Forum partners to produce an annual judicial statistics report. Work is underway to enable the publication of data for disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic background in 2025. This is reliant on 60% reporting threshold being achieved across all partner organisations.

The Judicial Health and Wellbeing Strategy is due to be reviewed in 2025. This will draw on the results from the Judicial Attitude Survey alongside other wellbeing data to shape the health and wellbeing objectives for the next five years.

Inclusion training for tribunal members and coroners will continue throughout the 2024-25 training year, reflecting their training continuation cycles.

Following research undertaken to support inclusion in the magistracy, work is underway to take forward priority actions.

Within the Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the College is committed to monitoring and reviewing the extent and impact of training in diversity and inclusion regularly through Judicial College governance.

Building on its earlier work, the College restarted the third phase of the Diversity and Inclusion audit in 2024-25. The College has identified its approach and will work with an initial tranche of courts and tribunals jurisdictions to identify what training is being delivered in the area of diversity and inclusion, evaluate the content and delivery methods to address gaps in the College's training and identify priority areas where training should be expanded and developed. This will be supported by internal evaluation aimed at ensuring the training offered adopts best practice and is focused on delivering the strongest possible outcomes.

## **Objective 3: Supporting and developing the career potential of existing judges**

All serving judicial office holders will be supported and encouraged to develop and fulfil their potential whatever their personal or professional background.

### **Achievements in 2024**

Numerous leadership judges have reported having regular careers conversations and encouraging their judges to acquire the skills to sit in new areas to support career progression.

The Judicial Peer Mentoring Scheme, originally launched in 2021, has continued in 2024. It provides an opportunity for judges to be mentored by another judge, helping to improve knowledge in particular areas of skill or law for their own development. Responses from those who have mentored and been mentored have been positive. Greater impact of the scheme is dependent on having a sufficient pool of participating mentee judges. A similar scheme for tribunal judges – the Career Development and Progression Scheme, launched in late 2024 after an initial pilot.

Flexible deployment is being supported to provide alternative opportunities to judicial office holders. Work has progressed to deploy judges flexibly into various jurisdictions to support judges' career development. 12 such exercises have occurred to date in 2024, which have included court judges to sit in various tribunals and tribunal judges have been cross deployed to sit in the courts.

In March 2024, the Senior President of Tribunals' Diversity Task Force contributed to training sessions organised by the Judicial Appointments Commission for lay panel members. The purpose was to ensure that the work of tribunal judges in judicial selection exercises is both understood and valued. Movement between tribunal and court roles should positively impact broader diversity across the judiciary. The session was well received by attendees.

A disability seminar took place aimed at aspiring judges with a disability or those with an interest in this topic, with a focus on the applications process alongside a disability or a mental health issue. The speakers were four judges, from both courts and tribunals, who talked about their career successes whilst being open about their own lived experience.

## Next Steps

A working group will consider how best to evaluate flexible deployment opportunities, building in improvements for future expressions of interest exercises across and between the courts and tribunals.

Building on the existing work to support disability inclusion the Judicial Diversity Committee endorsed some further actions. These include:

- Maximising coverage of positive workplace adjustment outcomes to encourage more judicial office holders to seek support if required.
- Ensure signposting and access to resources in what can be a complex area are as clear as possible.
- Showcasing of areas of disability internally such as neurodiversity to raise awareness.
- Mention workplace adjustment support at any outreach seminars so disabled legal professionals know what is available, should they achieve judicial office.
- Continue working with others (MoJ and HMCTS) who share responsibility for delivery of workplace adjustments..

Through these actions we hope to ensure support for judicial office holders with existing workplace adjustments and those who may not yet have made requests for adjustments.

Following a review of the 2024 annual judicial diversity statistics, a scoping exercise will take place to determine what interventions may be viable to support progression into more senior judicial positions for judicial office holders from diverse backgrounds.

Further promotion of the Peer Mentoring Scheme and the Tribunals Career Development and Progression Schemes will take place to widen take up during 2025. Learning from the latter will inform the approach to the former going forward. This is to focus on cohort-based mentoring within jurisdictions.

## **Objective 4: Supporting greater understanding of judicial roles and achieving greater diversity in the pool of applicants for judicial roles**

We will make even greater use of online platforms and resources to support and build outreach within schools, local communities and within the legal profession. Targeted activities, steered by stronger data, analysis, and insights, and delivered together with the legal professions, and the Judicial Appointments Commission will reach, support and encourage a wide range of well qualified applicants from diverse personal and professional backgrounds into the judiciary. We will use improved data and analysis to target activities aimed at encouraging greater diversity within the magistracy.

### **Achievements in 2024**

Senior judiciary issued a statement to advocates encouraging greater participation of junior counsel in courts and tribunal hearings. This was intended to give greater opportunity and visibility of female advocates and encourage greater diversity at the Bar. Anecdotal feedback indicates it has been a success, with junior counsel now more regularly heard. Additionally, it has enabled some junior counsel to ask judges for references to support career progression.

The current under-representation of black judges was identified as an area of focus in 2024. A review of black lawyers participation levels in outreach programmes such as mentoring and shadowing opportunities and attendance at pre application judicial seminars has taken place this year. This has indicated that black lawyers are participating at representative levels, when benchmarked against the eligible pool of black lawyers. The review provided insights that will enable further work to be done in 2025 and beyond, such as more targeted outreach with black legal professionals via representative networks. Patterns of interest across different jurisdictions from black lawyers is uneven. Work is underway to understand this and encourage interest in wider jurisdictions to maximise opportunities.

Numerous leadership judges reported examples of offering marshalling (shadowing) opportunities and undertaking outreach. For example, with Muslim Lawyers in the City, Society of British Bangladeshi Solicitors, British Bangladeshi Barristers Association.

DCRJ's and DCRM's produce returns on the activity they have undertaken each year. During the reporting period (April 2023 – March 2024) over 550 schools,

universities or colleges were visited in person or online and 220+ community group engagements took place. DCRJs also undertook circa 200 engagements with legal professionals. Visits by judges and magistrates play an important role in enhancing understanding of the justice system and encouraging future lawyers and judges. As part of the programme of schools outreach, the Lady Chief Justice visited Mercia School in Sheffield in June 2024, and the King's Academy Prospect School in July 2024. During 2024, efforts were made to reach out to schools with diverse pupil populations and/or in areas of socioeconomic deprivation.

In November 2024, 18 internships were again offered to individuals wishing to pursue a career in law from under-represented groups. This was delivered in collaboration with the charity 'Bridging the Bar' which aims to increase interns' chances of securing pupillage/preparing them for professional life at the Bar. Interns were paired with Judicial Assistants in both the Court of Appeal and the High Court and through them access to judges.

A seminar aimed at demystifying the judicial application process took place in March 2024 targeted at Chartered Institute of Legal Executive (CILEX) members. The objective was to encourage CILEX members to consider a career in the judiciary, as currently members apply in very low numbers. Additionally, CILEX has a high profile of female members (77% in 2024).

Seminars run ahead of all judicial selection exercises and provide detail on the process and insight from existing judicial office holders. Lawyers from under-represented backgrounds are particularly encouraged to attend. In 2024 40% of attendees were black, Asian or minority ethnic and 5% identified as disabled or needing an adjustment.

The Pre-Application Judicial Education (PAJE) programme was launched in 2019 by MoJ to support lawyers from under-represented groups to have a better understanding of the role of a judge and the skills/experience required to feel more equipped, confident and prepared when considering applying for a future judicial role. 31 judges provided guided facilitation at the three workshops run during 2024. 43% of 2023 PAJE participants completed a feedback survey. Most agreed the programme had met its overall aim and delivered on expectations.

The Targeted Outreach Programme was piloted in September 2020 by the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC), and has proven to be a success, demonstrating both the progression and recommendation of candidates from the JAC's four target groups (women, ethnic minority people, disabled people, and solicitor candidates) across a range of selection exercises. Female ethnic minority solicitors on the programme are successfully appointed at over twice that of female ethnic minority solicitors applying for legal exercises in the last three years. The judicial guide scheme was launched in 2021 to provide additional support to candidates. 170+ judges act as guides on the programme.

## **Next Steps**

Further work is planned in 2025, which will build on the review of black lawyers participation in outreach activities. This includes promoting mentoring opportunities across a range of jurisdictions as patterns of interest across different jurisdictions is uneven, alongside targeted outreach with black legal professionals.

Discussions are underway to determine how the judiciary can engage with CILEX to support participants in the academy they launched in late 2024. The academy will focus on career progression and planning toward judicial office.

A process map setting out the range of outreach initiatives available from the judiciary and other partners (the Judicial Appointments Commission and the Ministry of Justice) will be made available to support aspiring judges to access the initiatives that are right for them. Better tracking of progress from one scheme to the next and ultimately to judicial application will be explored.











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