



Family Justice Council

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK FOR:

MAGISTRATE

LEGAL ADVISER

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1. Key Information

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

Number of vacancies: two positions available

- Magistrate Member – 1 post
- Legal Adviser – 1 post

Term of appointment: Three years

Time commitment: Four Council meetings per year plus contribution to Working Groups.

Remuneration: These roles are unremunerated

Closing date for this post is: 16.30 on 30 April 2025

Applications are to be submitted to: fjc@justice.gov.uk

Full details are below.

2. Introduction from the FJC Secretary

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 work of the Council, and the following pages will tell you more. I do hope you will consider applying for this important position.

We encourage applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences to apply. We want to explore the widest possible pool of talent for these important roles.

If after reading the material below you have further questions about any aspect of this appointment or would like to ask a question of the current Magistrate or Legal Adviser, then you are welcome to contact us at fjc@justice.gov.uk.

If you believe you have the experience and qualities we are seeking, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Secretary to the Family Justice Council

3. About 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.

The Council meets four times a year and much of its work is undertaken by its working groups.

Further information on the Council and its membership can be found at:

[About the Family Justice Council - Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#)

Council Terms of Reference: [Terms of reference - Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#)

4. Role Description and Essential Criteria

Role of Council Members:

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 groups 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.

Essential Criteria

Magistrate Member:

- Substantial experience as a Magistrate, preferably as a Presiding Justice, in the 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.
- Evidence of ability to recognise the challenges that court users may face.

Legal Adviser

- Employment by HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) as a Justices' Legal Adviser with substantial experience in family proceedings.
- Evidence of ability to recognise the challenges that court users may face.

All Members:

- Evidence of working, through interdisciplinary consensus, to deliver timely and improved outcomes for families and children who are involved with the family justice system.
- Evidence of analytical ability in dealing with complex issues.
- A demonstrable commitment to understanding and valuing diversity and inclusion.
- Effective interpersonal and communication skills.

- Ability to contribute at a strategic level (preferably including contributions to a strategic board/committee) and experience of working collaboratively in that context.
- Availability and willingness to give sufficient time to prepare for and attend four (hybrid) meetings per year in London and to participate fully in the work of the Family Justice Council and its working groups.
- Willingness to publicise the work of the Family Justice Council among relevant networks.

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.
- Ability to contribute to Family Justice Council responses to Government and other family justice agencies' consultations.

5. Time Requirements, Remuneration, 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 are usually remote and 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 frequency can vary to accommodate the priorities of the work coming before the Committee.

Remuneration, allowances and abatement

The post is unremunerated. Reasonable travel expenses to meetings will be paid.

Appointment and tenure of office

Members are appointed by the President of the Family Division.

Appointments are for an initial term of three years. Members may be offered re-appointment for a further three-year term, 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 conflicts of interest must be declared.

Performance appraisal

The aim is for each member to be appraised annually based on the essential criteria for the role. Members will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will then be sent to the Deputy Chair of the Council for consideration.

6. The appointment process and timeline

Overview:

Closing date: 30 April 2025

Candidates are expected to be informed of the sift outcome by 30 May 2025

Interviews expect to be held (remotely): w/c 16 June and w/c 23 June 2025

Next meeting of the Council: 7 July 2025, 11.00 to 13.00 (Remote). This will be an open meeting that all are welcome to attend, details will be on the website shortly.

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 word limit provided in the application form and no more than a two page CV.
- Please note that it is not possible to provide specific, individually tailored feedback following the initial sift but we will provide, on request, feedback to those who are interviewed.
- If you accept an invitation to interview, we will contact your two professional references. 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.
- Interviews will take place via MS Teams.
- 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 will be asked to start the interview with a short presentation, the topic 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 via email formally appointing you as a member.
- If your application is unsuccessful you will be contacted by email by the Council's secretariat.

Selection panel:

Will include the Deputy Chair of the Family Justice Council, Mr Justice Keehan.

7. Making an Application

To make an application, please send:

1. **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.
2. **An application form (maximum 250 words per question)** [\[Supporting Document 1\]](#) 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 each criteria, making clear the candidate's individual role in achieving an outcome are often the strongest.

Please also complete and return the following supporting documents:

3. [Conflicts of interest form](#) (attached below), **including a note of public appointments** – please list any appointments currently held.
4. **Diversity Monitoring form** (attached below)
5. [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 if you are selected for interview.
6. [Referee form](#) (attached below)– please provide the name and contact details of two referees who know you in a professional capacity. They will be asked to provide evidence based comments on suitability for the role with reference to the criteria. Referees will be contacted if you are shortlisted for interview.
7. [Disability Confident Scheme Declaration form](#), if applicable.

The deadline for applications is **16.30 on 30 April 2025**

To apply, please complete and return the following documents to the FJC at fjc@justice.gov.uk :

	Documents to be completed and sent	Tick
1	Application form	
2	A copy of your CV	
3	Potential conflicts of interest and public appointments held form	
4	Diversity Monitoring form	
5	Political activity declaration form	
6	Names and contacts details of two referees (who will be contacted if you are shortlisted for interview)	
7	If applicable, a Disability Confident Scheme Declaration form	

Application format:

Email Subject Header to include: FJC Application [Name of role applied for]

Application form to be saved as: Application Form - [Name][Role applying for][Date]

If you have any questions about any aspects of this post, you are welcome to contact the FJC secretariat at fjc@justice.gov.uk.

8. Diversity and Inclusivity

We encourage applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences to apply.

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 at fjc@justice.gov.uk.

The MoJ is disability confident employer, further information can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website here:

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

9. Other important appointment information

Standards in Public Life, Conflicts of Interests and Political Activity

Standards in Public Life

Candidates must 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>

Conflicts of Interest

Bodies such as the FJC are expected to maintain a register of members’ interests to avoid any danger of a member being 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 FJC appointments, it is important that those appointed as members maintain the confidence of FJC 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 published on the website.

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 five 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.

11. Personal data

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: [Family Justice Council: Data Privacy Notice](#)

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

*Family Justice Council
2025*

12. Supporting Document 1: Application Form

Name of Applicant:

Part 1: Role-specific essential criteria

Please outline your experience and suitability in relation to the role-specific essential criteria.

Please highlight the relevant role:

☐ **Magistrate**

- Substantial experience as a Magistrate, preferably as a Presiding Justice, in the 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.
- Evidence of ability to recognise the challenges that courts users may face.

☐ **Legal Adviser**

- Employment by HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) as a Justices' Legal Adviser with substantial experience in family proceedings.
- Evidence of ability to recognise the challenges that courts users may face.

Part 2: Evidence against essential criteria

In no more than 250 words per criteria, please provide a specific example against each of the following essential criteria to demonstrate your suitability/experience for the role.

Evidence of working, through interdisciplinary consensus, to deliver timely and improved outcomes for families and children who are involved with the family justice system (250 words)

Evidence of analytical ability in dealing with complex issues (250 words)

A demonstrable commitment to understanding and valuing diversity and inclusion (250 words)

Part 4: Other (optional)

Please use the box below to add any additional information that you would like the panel to be aware of.

13. Supporting Document 2: 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 commitments 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](#). 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](#).

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:

14. Supporting Document 3: Diversity Monitoring Form

Non-statutory advisory bodies are most effective when they reflect the diversity of views of the society they serve.

We collect diversity data about applicants' characteristics and backgrounds, including information about people's professional backgrounds, so that we can make sure we are attracting a broad range of people to these roles and that our selection processes are fair for everyone. Without this information, it makes it difficult to see if our outreach is working, if the application process is having an unfair impact on certain groups and whether changes are making a positive difference.

When you submit your application, your responses are collected by the Family Justice Council. The data is used to produce management information about the diversity of applicants. You can select "prefer not to say" to any question you do not wish to answer. The information you provide in this form will not be seen by the assessment panel who will sift applications and conduct interviews against the advertised criteria.

Our Privacy Notice sets out in more detail how we will use your personal data, and your rights: [Family Justice Council Data Protection and Data Rights - Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#)

The form should only take a few minutes to complete.

We thank you in advance for your support.

Required fields are marked with a *

About me

What is your title? *

What is your first name? *

What is your last name? *

What is your suffix? *

Which appointment are you applying for? *

Required fields are marked with a *

Ethnicity

What is your ethnic group? *

White

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

Asian or Asian British

Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

Other ethnic group

Prefer not to say

Religion

What is your religion? *

No religion

Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)

Buddhist

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

Sikh

Other

Prefer not to say

Physical or Mental Health Conditions or Illness

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? *

More information on disability can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-confident-scheme-for-public-appointments>

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Diversity Questions

Sex and Gender

What is your sex? *

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? *

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

What is your sexual orientation

Heterosexual or straight

Gay or Lesbian

Bisexual

Other

Prefer not to say

Age

What was your age group at your last birthday? *

16 - 24

25- 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65-74

75-84

85 or older

Prefer not to say

Place of Residence

Where is your main place of residence? *

Do you hold any public appointments where you have been appointed by a UK Government minister?

How many other public appointments do you hold? *

This includes all non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), NHS bodies, parole boards and research councils. It does not include sitting as a school governor or any positions within charities.

Yes

No

Prefer not say

Socio-economic background

School type

Which type of secondary school did you attend for the most time between the ages of 11 and 16?*

A state-run or state-funded school

A state-run or state-funded school that selected on the basis of academic ability, faith or other grounds

Independent or fee-paying school. For example, private schools

Independent or fee-paying school, where I received a bursary covering 90% or more of my tuition. For example, private schools

Attended school outside the UK

I don't know

Prefer not to say

Employee, Self-employed or Not Working

When you were aged about 14, was the main or highest income earner in your household an employee, self-employed, or not working? *

Employee

Self-employed with employees

Self-employed or freelancer without employees

They were not working

Prefer not to say

Parental Qualification

When you were aged about 14, what was the highest level of qualification achieved by either of your parents or guardians?*

Degree level or degree equivalent or above

For example, first or higher degrees, postgraduate diplomas, NVQ/SVQ level 4 or 5

Qualifications below degree level

For example, an A-Level, SCE Higher, GCSE, O-Level, SCE Standard/Ordinary, NVQ/SVQ, BTEC

No qualifications

I don't know or cannot remember

Not applicable

Prefer not to say

Thank you for completing this form.

Your responses to questions regarding your gender, if you are disabled, your ethnic group, sexual orientation, your religion or belief, your age, principle residence and professional background will never be made available to the panel considering your application.

We will collect and monitor diversity data, when provided, in order to understand the diversity of applicants and appointees and to satisfy our public sector equality duty (PSED).

15. Supporting Document 4: Political Activity Declaration Form

Significant Political Activity

Significant political activity is defined as being employed by a political party, holding significant office in a party, standing as a candidate for a party in an election, having publicly spoken on behalf of a political party or having made significant donations or loans to a party. Significant loans and donations are those of a size which are reported to the Electoral Commission, in line with a central party's reporting threshold.

Have you undertaken any significant political activity for a political party in the past five years?

No

Yes

If yes, please indicate for which party/parties:

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	
None of the above activities apply.	

Name of Party for which activity undertaken:

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.

Details of your involvement (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

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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.

16. Supporting Document 5: Conflicts of Interests Form

Please give details of any business or other interests or any personal connections or social media post which, if you are appointed, could be misconstrued or cause embarrassment to the Family Justice Council.

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 ever 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'.	
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(Please tick the above box)

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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 public appointment posts:

Body	Period of Appointment	Government Department

17. Candidate Referee Form

Candidates are asked to provide the name and contact details of two referees who know them in a professional capacity [This can be from having worked with them in a paid or voluntary capacity].

Referees will be asked to provide evidence based comments on suitability for the role with reference to the criteria.

Please note that referees will only be contacted if you are shortlisted for interview.

Referee 1			
Title	First name	Last name	Email address
Referee 2			
Title	First name	Last name	Email address