

Report of the Annual Activities of Diversity and Community Relations Judges

1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

Introduction by HHJ Kamil:

I have had great pleasure undertaking the role of lead DCRJ over the past few years, and the role of DCRJ for Leeds for over ten years. From their beginnings as Ethnic Minority Liaison Judges in 1997, the DCRJ role has evolved from their initial focus, which was to engage with ethnic minority communities, to increase their confidence in the criminal justice system. After a report was published recognising that in some areas ethnic communities in fact constituted the majority of the area's population, the title of the role was amended to Diversity and Community Relations Judge to encompass any groups depending on the nature of the community in each judge's area. Against the backdrop of a constantly changing environment, the role of DCRJs continues to progress and develop.

It was pleasing to see the hard work of DCRJs recognised in February 2010 in the Report of the Advisory Panel on Judicial Diversity¹, chaired by Baroness Neuberger. One of the report's recommendations is that 'Diversity and Community Relations Judges should have responsibility for organising contacts with institutions and the professions to promote a judicial career among those from underrepresented groups.'² This corresponds with the work that many DCRJs already undertake with schools, universities and the legal professions. Community engagement, the core work of DCRJs, is generally recognised as useful in helping raise the public's confidence. More specifically, however, the work of DCRJs is now seen as playing an important role in encouraging people of all backgrounds to consider a career in the judiciary.

During this reporting period, DCRJs have continued to reach out to their communities by hosting more shadowing placements and by participating in mock trials and court open days. These activities contribute to improving people's understanding of the justice system. The judges carry on giving up their out-of-court time to approach this voluntary role with passion and enthusiasm despite the pressures emerging during this period of financial constraints.

This year has been a busy one for me as I made the most of activities in the community before I retired at the end of 2010. In November 2009 I wrote an article which was published in the Academy of European Law (ERA forum) on 'The role of a judge in a diverse community.' I worked with the Bar Council and Law Society to encourage A level students from various state schools to understand that a career in the law is open to them and indeed to people of all backgrounds. As a member of the Law Society Diversity and Equality Committee,

¹ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/judicial-diversity-report.htm>

² Recommendation 10

I have been able to raise the profile of DCRJs so the Society is better informed about how best to work with DCRJs in its outreach activities. I was also fortunate to be invited in November 2009 to the annual Minorities Forum organised by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) at the United Nations in Geneva, where I was able to promote the unique work of the DCRJs on the world stage. Our work was much admired and our good practise is likely to be incorporated in the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in raising judicial standards in emerging nations.

Although my role as lead DCRJ has come to an end, I hope to continue contributing to outreach work within the community, hopefully in the international arena. I will, however, look forward to hearing about future developments of DCRJ work and I welcome His Honour Judge Marc Dight as my successor.

We received many reports from DCRJs describing their activities for this period. A few examples have been outlined in detail below, followed by a brief overview of other activities undertaken across England and Wales.

Detailed case studies:

HHJ Marc Dight, Central London Civil Justice Centre (CLCJC)

HHJ Dight has successfully established schemes linking the CLCJC with the University of Hertfordshire and the College of Law. These are students from a new university, or students training to become solicitors, both of which are groups under-represented in the judiciary. Parties of law students visit the court for a day. The day consists of sitting in court watching cases, discussing the cases and advocacy they have seen with the judge, and the students then take part in a mock trial.

Feedback from the university has been extremely positive:

“Concepts such as the rule of law and the proper administration of justice may appear somewhat theoretical to the student in the lecture theatre, but they spring to life in a courtroom setting, all the more so when a real judge is able to speak to the students in his or her Chambers.”

Students also have the opportunity for further contact following the day in court as some students who are keen to learn more return to court to spend a few days marshalling the judge. Many students have found the visits to be inspiring and beneficial to their careers. One student made the following comment:

“All in all a fantastic opportunity which has inspired me to want to become a judge some day. I now have a better idea of the career path I will need to take. I also learned a lot about what judges like from counsel and parties, so hopefully I'll be a better lawyer than I would have been!”

When asked about his experience of hosting students, His Honour Judge Dight said “The students are wonderfully enthusiastic and I hope that some of them will keep in the back of their minds the possibility of a judicial office in due course.”

HHJ David Fletcher – North Liverpool Community Justice Centre

HHJ Fletcher played an active role in mock sentencing events highlighting hate crime that were organised in partnership with Merseyside Police. Each event was adapted to focus on a different issue including disability, transgender, race and gypsy traveller issues. Members of the corresponding communities, as well as the wider community, were invited to attend. The half-day events, held on Saturdays, took the form of mock trials with real prosecutors, defence solicitors and a judge, while professional actors played the roles of defendant, witness and victim. After the attendees voted on their choice of sentencing options, the judge explained his role and his decision making process leading to the sentence. Each session was followed by a question and answer session with a panel consisting of a judge and a range of other criminal justice representatives (such as CPS, victim support, witness care unit, police). The events attracted high numbers and successfully engaged the public, leading to some valuable, stimulating sessions.

HHJ Stephen Kramer QC and HHJ Jeremy Roberts QC, Central Criminal Court

In the Central Criminal Court, a good relationship has been forged between the judges, HMCS and the City of London to undertake more effective community engagement work.

HHJ Stephen Kramer QC, HHJ Jeremy Roberts QC and other resident judges have been involved in a ‘Gang Diversion Project’ with the London Criminal Justice Partnership and Charing Cross Police Station. The project includes visits to the court for groups of young people identified as ‘gang members’. The programme consists of a tour of the building, talks by court staff about the role of the criminal justice system and the type of work heard by the court, and a talk with a judge. Arrangements are also made for the groups to sit on a case involving knife or gang crime to allow them to see the potential consequences of such criminal acts. Feedback from the visits has been excellent and so far all participants have stated that the visit has persuaded them not to carry a knife again.

HHJ Anne Molyneux, Isleworth Crown Court

Her Honour Judge Molyneux has been closely involved with a charity called Tomorrow’s People which helps disadvantaged and marginalised long-term unemployed people (including ex-offenders and those with mental health

problems) secure employment. The charity runs a programme for the unemployed which assists them to obtain jobs by working with them to improve CVs, provide interview practice and improve their confidence in the workplace. In November 2009, Judge Molyneux acted as compère for the charity's annual awards ceremony and 25th anniversary held in Plaisterers' Hall, London. The charity's Royal Patron, HRH The Countess of Wessex attended the ceremony to congratulate award winners who were people and groups with exemplary stories of progress and achievements.

HHJ Christopher Prince, Newcastle upon Tyne Combined Court Centre

His Honour Judge Christopher Prince worked closely with Northumbria University to organise two 'You, the Jury' events at the university's School of Law in October 2009.

The first event was attended by 300 GCSE and A level students from local schools. The event started with the enactment of a bank robbery case by real barristers and judges. The case was based on one of the most cited cases in English criminal law, *R v Turnbull*, in which the Court of Appeal ruled that judges must warn juries about identification evidence.

The audience saw evidence and witness testimonies and gained an insight into jury deliberations as well as the sentencing guidelines followed by judges. The students were then given the opportunity to question the judges on their sentences and asked to vote on the severity of the punishment merited by the perpetrators of the crime, using the law school's new voting system.

The second session was a sentencing exercise featuring different situations including:

- a student selling Ecstasy to friends in a nightclub
- a case of taking a vehicle without consent
- assault occasioning actual bodily harm on an A&E worker from the local hospital.

The audience was presented with a range of sentencing options for each exercise and asked to vote for the one they felt was most appropriate.

The event again ran a week later with members of the public invited to attend. Places were much in demand.

Judge Prince considers such events as an invaluable way of reaching to the community:

"I stress that the purpose is not to justify the criminal justice system. We're here to explain how it works. Whether that increases or decrease public confidence is up to the individual!"

Overview of other activities

HHJ Pamela Badley (Preston Combined Court Centre) has hosted shadowing for law students, court visits for school children which involved question and answer sessions and was involved in a 'You be the judge' event aimed at members of the general public.

HHJ Simon Davis (Inner London Crown Court) has continued to encourage students from a state school in South East London to spend a day shadowing him to find out more about the law and a career in law.

HHJ Sean Enright (Peterborough Combined Court) has hosted several students for work experience each for up to 5 days. He has established a debating competition for young people and encouraged ethnic minority lawyers to consider a career in the judiciary.

HHJ Goldstaub QC (Chelmsford Crown Court) has worked with various groups to maintain the rolling programme of inviting school pupils, police officers and university students to spend time in court.

HHJ Simon Hammond (Leicester Crown Court) – has focused on building his connections in the interfaith network. He has paid several visits to mosques, Hindu and Sikh temples, attended numerous community events including those hosted by St. Philips Centre and the Society for Intercultural Understanding. He also attended the Akwaaba Ayeh's AGM, a mental health project for Black and Asian people with mental health difficulties.

HHJ Mark Horton (Bristol Crown Court) created a resource pack for schools outlining information about court staff, Victim Support and the Probation Service. He wrote to over a hundred schools and colleges in his area inviting them to visit the court and has hosted a number of court visits which include a question and answer session with a judge and moot style questions for students to develop their interest in the court system. He has also liaised with the equality and diversity team at Horfield prison and has taken part in discussions with teachers in the education and skills department of the prison.

HHJ Barbara Mensah (Luton Crown Court) delivered a speech about diversity in the judiciary at the Law Society's Black History Month launch held in October 2009. A copy of the speech can be found here:

<http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/Resources/JCO/Documents/hhj-mensah-law-soc-talk-2009.pdf>.

HHJ Abbas Mithani (Derby Crown Court) has fostered links with the Society of Asian Lawyers by attending events and holding discussions with the Society to encourage lawyers to apply for judicial appointment. He has also given talks on legal issues (wills and debt) to a local mosque and Birmingham University.

HHJ Wyn Rees (Pontypridd County Court), HHJ Milwyn Jarman QC (Cardiff Civil Justice Centre) and HHJ Philip Hughes (Wrexham County Court)

Between 2009-10, the DCRJs in the Wales Circuit have continued to build on the good work they initiated in 2008 [link to 2008 annual report]. The main development has been the publication of leaflets to distribute to schools which encourage engagement with the criminal justice system. The leaflet outlines information for schools regarding learning resources about the criminal justice system, explains how to arrange visits to courts, and gives information about mock trials and information for careers evenings. For further information, please see the 2009 report [link to 2009 report].

HHJ Alice Robinson (Basildon Combined Court Centre) has hosted shadowing for several solicitors who were preparing to apply for judicial office as Recorders, as part of the Appointments Advisory Panel set up by the South Eastern Circuit.³

HHJ Philip Statman (Maidstone Crown Court) has hosted 18 court visits by schools, mature students, women's groups and blind students.

HHJ John Swanson (Sheffield Combined Court Centre) has hosted 16 court visits from a school, a college and universities, each involving a talk with a judge, a tour of the court building, discussions about sentencing, and an overview of the functions of a Crown Court. Students also spend some time observing cases in court.

HHJ Peter Thompson (Ipswich Crown Court) has continued his programme of working with schools in the vicinity of Ipswich. His programme includes a talk about the daily routine and role of a judge as well as the history of judges' robes and wigs. He presents the students with a case study, assigns some students prosecutor and defence roles who prepare presentations. The students receive feedback on their presentations and the judge answers any questions at the end. Feedback is extremely positive.

³ www.southeastcircuit.org.uk