



JUDICIAL OFFICE

Judicial Office Business Plan

2018-19



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Foreword

By the Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals

The Judicial Office business plan sets out a comprehensive set of objectives to deliver our priorities for the year.



▲ Lord Burnett, Lord Chief Justice and Sir Ernest Ryder, Senior President of Tribunals

Over the last year the courts and tribunals reform programme has started to demonstrate the sort of improvements to the administration of justice available through the use of up to date technology and streamlined processes. The coming year will see further changes, and we hope soon to see in parliament the legislation needed to underpin the programme.

It is vital the judiciary shapes the next steps in modernising the courts and tribunals. This year we want to see a step change in communication with the judiciary, ensuring all judges, panel members and magistrates understand what reform means for their work and have a chance to feed in their views. The communication exercise on Judicial Ways of Working is central to that.

We have also made a start in communicating better to a wider public audience the role of the judiciary and the importance of the rule of law. We need to do more this year, reaching wider and more varied audiences, such as schools in areas where children have fewer career opportunities.

It will be an important year for some of the issues that must be addressed if we are successfully to tackle judicial morale. The SSRB will report to the government on judicial pay and pensions. Critically, we need to play our part in recruitment and induction of new judges as the JAC run more and larger recruitment exercises than ever before. We will need to keep pressing for action to improve the estate.

We are, however, equally determined to make progress on the issues that are more directly in our gift, for example through the career discussions leadership judges will have with judges in their areas, through the welfare support they can provide and by developing our judicial leadership training.

This is a flavour of just some of the higher profile issues on the Judicial Office's agenda. Across the Office, we are immensely grateful for the dedication and professionalism of Judicial Office staff in the work they do to support the judiciary.

Thank you.

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Burnett of Maldon,
Lord Chief Justice

Sir Ernest Ryder,
Senior President of Tribunals

Introduction

By Andrew Key, Chief Executive Judicial Office

The Judicial Office achieved a lot in 2017-18. We supported the senior judiciary in important developments in the administration of justice, including the Jackson review of fixed costs, and the review of alternative dispute resolution in civil justice. We also supported the launch of the Business and Property Courts, and supported the Chief Coroner in responding to a series of tragic terrorist incidents.

In human resources, career discussions were developed, appraisals launched for recorders and new welfare support put in place. We also carried out a review of support for the magistracy and have started to implement the resulting recommendations. Across the board, we made progress in making more use of digital technology in communication, training, library and information services and handling complaints.

The senior judiciary also asked us to secure consultancy support for their engagement with and communication of courts and tribunals reform. We welcomed a team in November who are now advising on and supporting a step up in judicial communication.



For the coming year, we continue to work towards the medium-term goals set a year ago. This business plan sets out the specific outcomes we aim to achieve in the course of this financial year, developed with the context and priorities set out in the introduction by the Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals firmly in mind.

Between them, EU exit and courts and tribunals reform will create significant new work for the Judicial Office as we support the judiciary through the changes involved, including through training. The large increase in numbers of judicial appointments also creates pressures on the appointments process and on training. We will need to put in place the right people and resources to deliver this new and increased work alongside our existing core services and support.

In addressing this, we will continue to make more use of digital technology to deliver support and services efficiently and to a high standard. Over the year we expect to see: an increasing amount of training delivered or supported online; a new case management system for handling complaints; and roll-out of a “single sign on” for many of the applications used by the judiciary.

I am proud to work with such a committed team of people in the Judicial Office as we take on this agenda. We continue to work through “A Brilliant Judicial Office” to make sure they in turn have the tools and support needed to work at their best.

Our purpose

Strengthening the rule of law and improving the administration of justice by supporting the leadership and governance of the judiciary



Our role

- Facilitating judicial leadership of reform
- Providing legal, policy and handling advice on issues arising from the statutory functions of the senior judiciary
- Supporting judicial governance structures
- Advising on relationships and communication with the Government, Parliament and other UK legal jurisdictions
- Supporting communication with the public including through the media, and internally within the judiciary
- Providing human resources services for the judiciary
- Developing and delivering training
- Investigating disciplinary matters
- Providing legal information and library services
- Promoting the courts and tribunals and supporting the rule of law internationally.

Our goals 2017-2020

Over this spending review period we will contribute to the delivery of the following outcomes:

Reform

- Increased awareness of and strong support for courts and tribunals reform throughout the judiciary, and strong relationships with court and tribunal staff
- New ways of working in place, led by the judiciary as appropriate and aligned with the HMCTS reform programme
- Optimal use of digital services by the judiciary.

Jurisdictional Leadership

- Clear governance structures to support the changes in senior judicial leadership over the coming years, with decisions taken at the right level
- Effective and appropriate oversight of performance across all jurisdictions
- Developments in the administration of justice informed by the judiciary where appropriate.



Talent

- The judiciary attracts the best talent from the widest and most diverse pool possible
- The judiciary continues to develop skills and experience, ensuring it has both the expertise and flexibility to meet evolving demand
- Talent within the judiciary is identified and developed, including through deployment of judges, mentoring and appraisal (where available) to maximise potential.

Morale

- High quality welfare support is provided to the judiciary where needed
- Pay and benefits support the recruitment, retention and motivation of judges
- Practical support for judges including in their workplace to free them for judicial tasks.

External Relationships

- The implications for the judiciary of withdrawing from the EU are understood and taken into account as the executive develops its approach
- Judicial work, independence and the rule of law are reported fairly and accurately, understood and respected by the public
- Government and Parliament understand and respect the constitutional role of the judiciary and take account of the judiciary's views where this is appropriate
- The reputation of the judiciary and courts and tribunals continues to bring international legal business to the UK.



High quality services, delivered digitally wherever possible

- World class training delivered to the judiciary within budget and adapting to changing priorities
- Judges have access to the legal information they need, when and where they need it
- Complaints are handled efficiently and with public credibility, while ensuring judges facing complaints are well supported.

A Brilliant Judicial Office

- Working together across teams, with a clear purpose and priorities, combined with excellence in our policy and legal advice, services and administrative support, leading to improved outcomes
- Better and more consistent leadership across the Judicial Office inspires staff to do their best and leads to increased staff engagement
- Staff have the development opportunities needed to give them the capability and confidence to do their jobs well, and to develop their careers
- All staff receive improved IT during the course of 2017, making it easier to work flexibly; priority improvements to the physical workplace are implemented



- Continual improvements in our budget forecasting, together with robust contract negotiation and management ensure the delivery of savings
- The Judicial Office is respected by the judiciary and has a reputation among Whitehall partners for being inclusive, supportive of staff development and delivering high quality support to the judiciary, helping attract the best staff to work for us.

Outcomes we will deliver in 2018-19

Reform of the courts and tribunals

- A fully implemented strategy for appropriate, relevant and timely reform communication improves understanding of reform
- An effective Judicial Reform Network enables the judiciary as a whole to engage meaningfully with and shape the development of the reform programme
- Judicial ways of working after reform are shaped by leadership judges and the wider judiciary
- Leadership judges at all levels are supported to lead reform change. The judiciary is well prepared for changes implemented in the course of the year.

Jurisdictional Leadership

- Through support to senior leadership judges, the views and interests of the judiciary are understood in government on the key issues for each jurisdiction
- Parliament and the public are informed of the work of the judiciary through the annual reporting cycle of the Lord Chief Justice, Senior President of Tribunals and other leadership judges
- Technical exchanges on Brexit enable the judiciary to inform appropriately the government's approach, and to understand the impacts of Brexit on the judiciary
- Fixed costs are successfully introduced to reduce the costs of clinical negligence cases



- The judiciary, Judicial Office and HMCTS put systems in place to ensure compliance with GDPR
- New leadership structures are developed reflecting recruitment difficulties and put in place across the Upper Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal
- Successful transition to new leadership judges, including the President of the Family Division.

Career Development and Diversity

- Judges at all levels have conversations with their leadership judges about capability and aspirations, giving leadership judges a picture of potential across the judiciary
- Judges with potential and ambition to progress have greater opportunities to gain the experience needed to compete for more senior positions
- Judges are clear about standards expected and feel supported for future development through the use of appraisals, extended to cover recorders in Civil and Family and Section 9(4) deputy High Court judges
- Diversity support programmes and outreach result in more high quality applications and greater diversity at later stages of the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) recruitment process

- Judicial appointments are processed in a timely and efficient manner. The recruitment process is improved, especially for the high court and for magistrates.

Morale

- Development, implementation and regular Judicial Executive Board review of a judicial morale action plan for courts and tribunals judiciary
- Senior leadership judges are supported in visits to meet as many judges as possible, showing that they are listening to concerns raised
- The judiciary know when and how to access a range of welfare support packages, including new “debrief” and resilience training. Sensitive welfare and litigation cases are handled effectively
- Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) and Quinquennial Review recommend improvements to pay and benefits to address recruitment and retention issues. Plans put in place to implement recommendations adopted from its final report
- Judicial leaders at all levels understand and feel supported in their leadership responsibilities, including through new admin support for presiders
- Information for judicial office holders is disseminated effectively through varied channels. Feedback is used to improve the quality and impact of communications.

External communication

- Courts and tribunals judges and judicial bodies have access to support, advice and constructive challenge in handling the press
- Judges are supported in running an enhanced outreach programme with schools and the wider community, aligned as appropriate with charities and government
- Understanding of the rule of law and the role of judges is raised amongst the general public, and new audiences are reached.

External influence

- Understanding of the independence of the judiciary is increased across Government, Parliament, in Local Government and the Police
- Judges are well supported in promoting the worldwide reputation of the judiciary and courts after EU exit, and in building influential international networks
- Actions from the first Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts (SIFoCC) Secretariat are implemented. Second Forum held successfully in New York, with continued leadership by the England and Wales judiciary.

Judicial College

- High quality training programme, based on the 2018-20 strategy, delivered to schedule with course aims and usefulness evaluated at over 90% fully or substantially achieved
- Training programmes incorporate needs arising from courts and tribunals reform and EU exit impacts, revised arrangements for continuation training, and new induction programmes
- Implementation of improvements to the Learning Management System, introduction of webinars, hosting digital training guidance on-line and further development of e-learning, help the judiciary use digital technology more effectively
- Sustainable training programmes and materials suitable for international use developed, aligned with strategic international priorities and deployed on a cost neutral basis
- Overall business is managed to within 2% of the allocated budget, adjusted for any new business.

Judicial Library and Information Services

- Judges, legal advisers and case officers receive timely and current legal information to support them in their day to day work
- Judges increase their use of digital services, supported by improvements to the services, effective training, and single sign on to systems where feasible
- Current contracts are managed in a robust and productive way which maintains a high quality of service and also delivers value for money (including based on RRP)
- A comprehensive commercial strategy – informed by an up to date assessment of the needs of users – is finalised and used to direct contract negotiations.



Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO)

- Complaints about judicial misconduct are dealt with consistently, fairly and efficiently. Complainants and judges are kept informed of progress. Judges know how to access sources of support. Decisions are communicated in plain English
- The JCIO becomes a paperless office through the introduction of a modern case management system. JCIO working practices become more flexible, secure and efficient, leading to improved service levels.

A Brilliant Judicial Office

- An improvement in staff engagement in 2018 across the Judicial Office, as a result of “Brilliant JO” actions being implemented and communicated effectively, and staff contributions being recognised.

People

- Staff share an understanding of what is special about working in the Judicial Office, what we should expect from each other, and how we deliver our work
- Staff can accurately assess their skills and develop their careers, both within and outside the Judicial Office, through learning and development opportunities.

Workplace

- Staff use new technology effectively, enabling them to find innovative, flexible and collaborative ways of working
- Improvements to the office environment encourage staff to work collaboratively and innovatively, and feel valued at work.

Purpose and Reputation

- The judiciary, and key officials outside the Judicial Office, have a better understanding of the role of the Judicial Office and how it relates to the MoJ, HMCTS and JAC
- Staff use engaging and easily-accessible tools to explain and promote their work, leading to increased interest in and job applications to the Judicial Office.

Resources

Staff headcount 2018-19

FTEs	
Chief Executive	1.0
Judicial College	57.0
Business Support	13.0
International	5.0
Jurisdictional Support	52.0
Judicial HR	49.6
Judicial Conduct Investigations Office	15.0
Press & Communications	10.0
Judicial Library & Publications	15.0
Core Total	217.6
Brexit	6.0
HMCTS Reforms	20.0
Total¹	26.0
Total	243.6

¹ Resources includes staff headcount for Brexit and HMCTS Reforms

² Core budget excludes funding for ring-fenced Induction training, Brexit and HMCTS Reforms

Budget 2018-19

£	
Core Judicial Office baseline Budget	27,488
Ring Fenced Induction Training	–
Brexit	–
HMCTS Reforms	–
Total²	27,488