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Information Pack:

00360: Regional Chairman - Social Security and
Child Support Appeals Tribunal

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INTRODUCTION

The Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) is now inviting applications for two posts as Regional Chairman - Social Security and Child Support Appeals Tribunal. There is one post in Nottingham and one in Leeds. The closing date for applications is 27 March 2008.

This pack contains the information that you need about the appointments. It includes eligibility criteria and the job description. It also describes the selection process that the JAC will follow, with relevant dates and advice on how to prepare for the various stages of this process.

Before you can be considered for appointment, there are eligibility requirements that you must meet. The JAC is also required to assess your character. Before applying you should read these requirements and the guidelines that the JAC uses to assess character. These can be found on our website (www.judicialappointments.gov.uk) along with outline terms and conditions of service.

These are not the only criteria and candidates will need to demonstrate the qualities and abilities required for this office.

The independent JAC selects candidates for judicial office. It does so on merit, through fair and open competition, from the widest range of eligible candidates.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for appointment as Regional Chairman - Social Security and Child Support Appeals Tribunal (SSCSAT) you must meet the following requirements.

Statutory requirement

Under paragraph 1 of Schedule 3 of the Social Security and Child Support (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations 1999, the statutory requirement for appointment as a Chairman of the SSCSAT is to:

- (a) hold a general qualification within the meaning of section 71 of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990; or
- (b) be an advocate or solicitor in Scotland.

Under section 71(3)(c) of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990, a "general qualification" means a right of audience in relation to any class of proceedings in any part of the Supreme Court or all proceedings in the county courts or magistrates' courts. In order to meet the statutory qualifications for appointment, a solicitor (or a salaried judicial office holder who was formerly a solicitor) must appear on the Roll.

Previous service in a judicial office

The Lord Chancellor expects that, before being considered for salaried appointment, individuals must normally have served as a fee-paid judicial office holder for at least two years or to have completed 30 sitting days since appointment in a fee paid capacity.

Age

There is no upper or lower age limit for candidates for this post apart from the statutory retirement age of 70 for all judges. The age at which someone is appointed must allow for a reasonable length of service, usually about three years.

Nationality

You must complete a declaration of your nationality in the Application Form. In order to qualify for this post, you must be a citizen of:

- the United Kingdom or
- another Commonwealth country or
- the Republic of Ireland.

Character

The JAC is required by statute to appoint only persons of good character. In order to make these assessments we have developed Good Character Guidance which you can find on our website at www.judicialappointments.gov.uk. You can also write to us to request a copy (see the 'Contacts and Further Information' section of this Information Pack for our contact details).

The Good Character Guidance gives you some indication as to whether anything in your past conduct or present circumstances might affect your application for judicial appointment. You should read it carefully before completing the Application Form.

Good character questions and declarations

You are required to answer a number of questions related to good character in the Application Form and must make appropriate declarations as requested.

Applicants for judicial appointments are not protected by sections 4(2) and 4(3) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Any convictions, which would normally be regarded as having expired under that Act should therefore be declared in writing (Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975). You must provide details of all offences for which you have been convicted or cautioned. Details should include the nature of each offence, date of conviction or caution and the penalty imposed.

Where proceedings of any kind are pending, you should give details of the offence with which you have been charged or the disciplinary process you are subject to and, if known, the date when the case or action may be heard. It is important that you inform us of the outcome of any case or action concluded while your application is under consideration. Similarly, if you are charged with any offence or any action is brought against you after submitting your application you should inform us immediately (see the 'Contacts and Further Information' section of this Information Pack).

In all cases, please provide as much detail as you can and indicate if there are any mitigating factors that you think the JAC should take into account in assessing your good character.

Good character checks

The JAC will also carry out checks on all candidates whom it intends to recommend for appointment. Further information about these checks will be provided separately to relevant candidates.

Failure to have declared any matters that come to light from these checks may prejudice the outcome of your application.

Disqualification

You should note that the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 applies to this office.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The JAC is committed to considering any reasonable adjustments needed to ensure that you can participate in the selection process fairly. The Application Form asks you to identify any arrangements and adjustments you may require. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the information given will not be used in selection decisions.

If you are recommended for appointment, reasonable adjustments will be considered if you have a disability under the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act, as they are for serving judges who develop an impairment or long-term health condition. Any reasonable adjustments to enable you to take up appointment will be discussed separately with you by the Tribunals Service after the JAC has made its recommendation.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The following information has been provided by the Ministry of Justice.

I. Purpose of Office: The purpose of judicial office is to administer justice according to law, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.

II. Jurisdiction: The Regional Chairman has both judicial and administrative duties.

The Social Security and Child Support Appeals Tribunal (SSCSAT) forms part of the Tribunal Service recently created as a result of the reforms implemented following the report of Sir Andrew Leggatt “Tribunals for Users” and comprises a judicial wing appointed by the Lord Chancellor which is supported by an administrative wing headed by a Chief Executive.

III. Main Duties

A Regional Chairman is expected to sit as a tribunal chairman and to make interlocutory decisions.

In addition, Regional Chairmen are responsible for:

- implementing the President’s directions in the overall supervision of listing and judicial work of the Region; to ensure judicial quality and efficiency; attending, as required, Regional Chairmen’s meetings when convened by the President;
- maintaining and improving judicial standards in the Region, including meeting such judicial performance standards as may be set nationally which are consistent with good decision making and the provision of a fair and speedy appeals service;
- the allocation of tickets to legally qualified panel members;
- appraising and monitoring the performance of tribunal members in the District, and making reports and recommendations as required by the Lord Chancellor or the President of appeal tribunals;
- participating in judicial training and management of judicial business within the Region;
- ensuring a close liaison with the administrators;
- investigating complaints against panel members in the Region;
- reporting to the President on the accommodation and judicial needs of the Region;
- carrying out such other duties as may from time to time be allocated to him/her by the President.

IV The Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007- the Future:

The Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act provides for a First-tier Tribunal and an Upper Tribunal to replace a large number of existing tribunals, including SSCSAT. It is expected that SSCSAT legally qualified members will become judges of the First-tier Tribunal within the Social Entitlement Chamber (although the proposals are still under public consultation and Ministers will not make final decisions until early Summer). The proposed content of the Social Entitlement Chamber will also include the jurisdictions of the current Pensions Appeal Tribunals, Criminal Injuries Compensation Panel and Asylum Support Adjudicators. The Social Entitlement Chamber will be one of the first of the five chambers at the First-tier currently proposed (other chambers may be tax; general regulatory; health, education and social care and property and lands). There may be opportunities, once appointed, for those who can demonstrate appropriate skills and experience to hear cases from other jurisdictions.

Residence

A Regional Chairman must live within reasonable travelling distance of the venues at which he or she will sit. No assistance is available from public funds towards any costs incurred (e.g. through a move of house) on appointment as a Regional Chairman.

Part-time Salaried posts and job share posts.

This post is open to candidates who wish to work on a salaried part time basis (minimum of 80% full time equivalent hours).

Further Information

The terms and conditions for this post can be found on the JAC website at www.judicialappointments.gov.uk.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Application form

Details of the qualities and abilities against which you will be assessed are set out in the Application Form. You can draw on your full range of work and personal experience to demonstrate these qualities and abilities including, for example, voluntary work or any publication to which you have contributed. Please be specific in giving information.

Timetable

Closing date for applications	27 March 2008
Provisional date for Interview	7 May 2008

If you are shortlisted, you will be invited to interview. Further details will be sent with your invitation to attend.

References

We may seek information from people who are well placed to comment on how you meet the qualities and abilities. Referees are usually approached before the sift takes place and will be encouraged to draw on appraisal material if it is available. The material provided by referees will usually inform decisions at sift and final selection decisions by Commissioners.

Candidate nominated

You are invited to nominate up to three referees who know you well either personally or professionally.

JAC nominated

The JAC may also request references from those identified in the section of this pack titled 'JAC nominated referees'.

Please provide the name, title, position and address of your relevant judicial and professional referees. You may also tell us if you do not wish us to approach the relevant professional referee now, but you must give reasons.

Conflict of interest

The Judicial Appointments Commissioners are listed at the back of this pack. You should not nominate a Commissioner as a referee. You should also state in the Application Form if you are in any way related to, or known to, any of the Commissioners and give details.

Outcome of the selection exercise

You will be advised of the outcome of your application in writing.

If you are unsuccessful, you can request a written explanation. You should make this request within six weeks of the date of the letter informing you that you have not been successful. We will aim to respond to your request within four working weeks.

Medical examination

You may be asked to undergo a medical examination before taking up appointment.

Complaints procedure

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the way your application has been handled, please refer to the JAC's published complaints procedure, which is available from our website, or in writing on request.

CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Obtaining an application form

All the information about applying for this selection exercise is available at www.judicialappointments.gov.uk (current selection exercises).

The Application Form for this selection exercise can be obtained electronically by downloading it from the website.

Please contact the Judicial Appointments Applications Service (JAAS) team at the JAC if you wish to request a hard copy of the Application Form or Information Pack, or if you have any questions about submitting your application.

If you need the form and/or pack in a different format, for example Braille, please contact the JAAS team.

Acknowledgement of your application

You should receive an acknowledgement of your application within five working days of receipt. If you do not, please contact the JAAS team by telephone or e-mail.

Contact details

1. JAAS

Reference: 00360 (Please use this reference on all communications)

Judicial Appointments Commission
2nd Floor, Steel House
11 Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9LH

DX 149822 WESTMINSTER 6

E-mail: jaas@jac.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7210 0123

2. Selection Exercise Team:

Chris D'Souza	020 7210 8998	Assistant Director
Peter Owunna	020 7210 0320	Senior Manager
Joyce Joannes	020 7210 0344	Team Manager

E-mail: chris.d'souza@jac.gsi.gov.uk

Fax: 020 7210 0300

3. Director:

Jane Andrews 020 7210 1484

E-mail: jane.andrews@jac.gsi.gov.uk

JAC NOMINATED REFEREES

The JAC may also request references from those categories listed below.

Judicial referees

If you hold a judicial office not in this list, please contact the JAC so that we can consider who should be nominated as your judicial referee.

If you sit on a Tribunal, the Tribunal President or equivalent.

If you are a Recorder, the Resident Judge, the Designated Civil Judge or the Designated Family Judge in the court(s) where you sit most often.

If you are a District Judge or Deputy District Judge, the local Designated Civil Judge.

If you are a District Judge of the Principal Registry of the Family Division or Deputy District Judge (PRFD), the Senior District Judge (PRFD).

If you are a Sheriff Principal, the Lord Justice Clerk.

If you are a Sheriff, the Sheriff Principal.

Professional referee

If you are a solicitor, your managing partner or relevant equity partner.

If you are a barrister, your Head of Chambers.

If you are employed, your line manager or equivalent.

If you are an advocate, the Dean of the Faculty of Advocates.

JAC COMMISSIONERS

Chairman of the JAC

Baroness Usha Prashar CBE

Members

Dame Lorna Boreland-Kelly DBE

Professor Dame Hazel Genn DBE QC

Mr Justice John Goldring

Lady Justice Heather Hallett DBE

Sir Geoffrey Inkin OBE

Her Honour Judge Frances Kirkham

Mr Edward Nally

Ms Sara Nathan

District Judge Charles Newman

His Honour Judge David Pearl

Mr Francis Plowden

Ms Harriet Spicer

Mr Jonathan Sumption OBE QC

Lord Justice Roger Toulson