

SENIOR CIRCUIT JUDGE - DESIGNATED CIVIL JUDGE

JOB DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE OF OFFICE

1. The purpose of judicial office is to administer justice in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.
2. Circuit Judges swear the judicial oath (or affirm) that they “will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second Her Heirs and Successors according to law” and “will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth the Second in the Office of a Circuit Judge and [I] will do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this Realm without fear or favour, affection or ill will”.
3. Senior Circuit Judges (Circuit Judges in Pay Band 5) are expected to carry out the full duties of a Circuit Judge together with additional leadership and administrative duties. They are also expected to hear particularly demanding or specialist cases.
4. Should they have the authorisation under section 9(1) of the Senior Courts Act 1981 to allow them to do so, the judge will be expected to assist from time to time with the work of the High Court, including Chancery, Mercantile, Technology & Construction and Queens Bench. Whilst the Designated Civil Judge (DCJ) may, subject to the approval of the Presiding Judges, sit from time to time in another jurisdiction (e.g. crime), he or she will be expected to devote the vast majority, if not all, of their sitting time to civil work in their designated court.
5. Judicial colleagues could include Specialist Civil Judges hearing cases in the Chancery, Mercantile, TCC and Administrative Court lists, with permanent S9 authorisations to sit in the High Court; and the Designated Family Judge, who is responsible for Circuit and District Judges exercising the Family jurisdiction, as well as magistrates sitting in Family Proceedings Courts. The DCJ will be expected to liaise with the Specialist Judges, Designated Family Judges and HMCS on matters of judicial deployment, judicial and administrative resources and other matters of mutual interest.
6. The DCJ will exercise a leadership role in relation to all other judges who hear civil work at their designated court and/or area. These include a number of judges who are authorised to hear High Court civil work, other Circuit Judges and Recorders. They also include District Judges, who are divided into specialist teams, and Deputy District Judges. There will be High Court Judge civil sittings, during which the DCJ will liaise with the visiting High Court Judge and usually sit “back-to-back” with him or her to dispose of heavy QB work (other than work in the Specialist lists, in which the High Court Judge may nevertheless be asked to sit from time to time).
7. The sittings for which the DCJ is responsible will take place within the designated court. Some sittings may, however, be held elsewhere when the business demands it e.g. when a secure court is needed. In addition to the hearings already mentioned, the DCJ may be responsible for managing and co-ordinating work relating to:
 - civil appeals;

- the Court of Protection, to which a number of Circuit and District Judges have been authorised; and/or
- the Administrative Court, to enable suitable claims to be issued and heard at the court. The DCJ should be of the quality to merit authorisation to conduct released Administrative Court claims.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

8. The main administrative responsibilities of DCJs are as follows:
 - Under the guidance of the Presiding Judges, to take responsibility for the overall strategy for civil justice within a group of courts. Accordingly they should always sit for the greater part of their time in civil work, afford that work absolute priority in their deployment and sitting time, and visit regularly each of the courts within their group.
 - To oversee the allocation of business within their group of courts, ensuring that there are arrangements in place for the proper dispatch of all civil business.
 - To promote the application of sound case management principles in line with the spirit of the civil justice reforms and the overriding objective.
 - To promote consistency of approach by judges within their group of courts and eliminate local practices that do not conform to the Civil Procedure Rules.
 - To hear major procedural appeals from the district judges within the group, to disseminate among the circuit and district judges judgments given on such appeals, and to nominate judges to hear appeals not dealt with by them.
 - To ensure that appropriate policies are in place for the allocation of work between District Judges and Circuit Judges, both at specific courts and between courts within the group, and that appropriate arrangements are in place for the allocation of work between District Judges at specific courts and between all District Judges within the group.
 - To set policies with court managers, diary managers and listing officers at the local courts in general, and specifically in relation to the case management and trial of fast-track and multi-track cases, in order to ensure consistency in listing, in particular with regard to back-to-back listing arrangements (where appropriate and where resources permit).
 - To work closely with the Circuit/Regional Director or Area Director of HMCS and diary manager to make best use of judicial resources to meet the respective demands of cases allocated to the fast-track, multi-track and small claims track.
 - To take overall responsibility for the dispatch of the business of the courts in the group including: monitoring the progress of and hearing

appeals from District Judges or delegating the hearing to judges specifically nominated for that purpose; visiting and sitting at the local courts at least once a year, and on occasion attending local court-user meetings; acting in close liaison with the Presiding Judges to ensure that the needs of civil work are given equal priority with those of family work and crime; in conjunction with the District Judges and practitioners, and in accordance with national guidance, setting applicable hourly rates each year liaising with the Presiding Judges to ensure that there are no undue delays in the delivery of reserved judgments; ensuring co-ordination of and co-operation in listing, and other necessary arrangements, with any specialist Mercantile, TCC or Chancery Judges within his group of courts and facilitating appropriate arrangements for Alternative Dispute Resolution.

- To deal with a wide range of more serious procedural applications, including: applications for Group Representation Orders; applications for Freezing Orders and Search Orders under arrangements agreed with the Presiding Judges; appeals from District Judges in civil matters in the High Court, under arrangements agreed with the Presiding Judges.
- In conjunction with the Specialist Judges, to liaise with local legal practitioners and other groups and organisations concerned with the administration of civil justice with a view to promoting civil justice and facilitating the efficient dispatch of civil business.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF DESIGNATED JUDGES

Leadership

The general responsibility of DCJs is to provide, under the overall responsibility of the Presiding Judges, leadership to the Judiciary, full or part time, within the court centre or group of courts for which they are responsible, in particular in respect of the judicial work of that centre or group.

Allocation and dispatch of the business of the Court

DCJ's have the general responsibility, subject to the guidance of the Presiding Judges, within the court centre or group of courts for the allocation of civil judicial work to ensure the just and efficient dispatch of the business of the court or group of courts.

The judicial team

There is a general responsibility for the judicial team.

Deployment of judges to the Court

The DCJ is responsible for the deployment of judges to the Court.

The Court administrative staff

The DCJ will be expected to meet regularly with HMCS staff to discuss the administration of the Court.

Presiding Judges

The DCJ has the responsibility for liaising with the Presiding Judges regularly on the business of the court or group and informing them of any concerns or problems which cannot be dealt with locally.

Liaison work

The manner of co-ordination of representation, liaison and similar responsibilities as between the judges within each Area will be determined by the Presiding Judges.