

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION MEETING

08 OCTOBER 2009

MINUTES OF MEETING

PRESENT

Commissioners

Usha Prashar (Chairman)

Heather Hallett

Jill Black

Lorna Boreland-Kelly

Hazel Genn

Heather Hallett

Geoffrey Inkin

Frances Kirkham

Sara Nathan

Charles Newman

David Pearl

Francis Plowden

Harriet Spicer

Jonathan Sumption

Staff

Director, Courts Appointments

Director, Tribunals Appointments and
Corporate Accounting and Planning

Director, Strategy and Outreach

Director, Operational Services

Board Secretariat

Private Secretary to Chairman

Apologies and matters arising from the September meeting

1. Apologies had been received from Edward Nally and Roger Toulson.
2. The minutes of the September meeting were approved and the Commission agreed that going forward the minutes of each meeting would be published on the JAC website, once approved by the Commission. Further consideration would be given to the wider publication policy.

Data Sharing (JAC/09/41)

3. Commissioners discussed the implications for sharing data with business partners but felt that better information and further research was required before this could be considered further.

Directors' reports of current issues (JAC/09/42)

4. Commissioners noted key developments highlighted in Directors' reports.
5. A paper on **Qualifying Tests (JAC/09/43)** provided Commissioners with an update on work that was currently under development and fell into two distinct strands. The first considered the use of academics to prepare and mark test papers, both to further improve the testing process and to help to reduce the pressure on judicial resources. The second strand, which was a longer term initiative, would consider the options for introducing different types of qualifying test (e.g. cognitive, critical reasoning).

6. A paper on the '**Review of the selection process**' (JAC/09/47) provided a range of recommendations that had emerged from the Process Review, discussions at the Commissioners Annual Strategic Review and a LEAN event with business partners. It was agreed that this matter should be considered more fully once further information was available.
7. The Commission agreed that the paper outlining progress in developing **SCS Terms and Conditions** (JAC/09/44) for JAC staff, which mirrored those of other Government departments, would be considered out of committee.

Discussions with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA)

8. The Chief Executive of the SRA attended the meeting to outline their regulatory arrangements and discuss the handling of conduct and diversity issues. This was followed by a question and answer session where it was agreed that further consideration would be given by the SRA to the question of providing more weight to the degree of seriousness of complaints and the JAC would write to the SRA regarding proposals for Continuing Professional Development points.

Renewing contracts for panel chairs and independent panel members (JAC/09/46)

9. Following up on discussions at the September meeting, the Commission considered proposals for renewing the contracts for, and appraising Panel Chairs and Independent Panel members. It was agreed that:
 - Panel Chairs would be contacted regarding their future plans and to outline plans to develop the appraisal system.
 - JAC staff would continue to discuss revisions to the appraisal system with Commissioners, reporting back to the full Board with revised proposals; most likely in December 2009.
 - The renewal of contracts and the need to re-advertise any posts would be further considered by the Commission; most likely in May/June 2010.

Discussion of current Courts issues

10. The Director of Courts Appointments provided the Board with background information on recent exercises and planning for the forthcoming Deputy District Judge (Civil) selection exercise.

Transferable Skills (JAC/09/45)

11. Commissioners re-visited the issue of 'Transferable Skills' which were first considered at their strategic review in March 2009. The Chief Executive of Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) was also in attendance to share views with the Commission. Key issues discussed included:

- What transferable skills looked like, how they would be measured and how they could be compared against more traditional demonstrations of the qualities and abilities.
- How to ensure that the planning process and selection exercise process provided for selections to be made with direct reference to transferable skills.
- The consideration of additional training required for successful candidates who had come through the non traditional route.
- The distinction between salaried and fee paid appointments.

It was suggested that a small project group could be established with a representative from the JAC, HMCS, Judicial Studies Board and Judiciary to consider the issue further.

Report from the JAC Working Groups

Audit and Risk Committee

12. The Audit and Risk Committee last met on 17 September and discussed the JAC's organisational restructure, the JAC Pilot and the JAC's record management protocols.

Outreach Working Group (OWG)

13. The OWG met on 24 September and the strategic focus of the group was considered. This included an assessment of where outreach should be concentrated, a review of the advertising strategy and frequency of meetings.

High Court and Senior Appointments Working Group

14. It was noted that the High Court and Senior Appointments Working Group had met on 07 October to discuss the handling of the next High Court selection exercise planned for Spring 2010. It was also noted that outreach options would be considered as part of the planning process.

Quality Assurance Working Group (QAWG)

15. The QAWG had met earlier in the day and discussed delivery teams, geographical preferences and close down reports.

Chairman's report

16. The Chairman provided Commissioners with an update on the meetings she had attended since the last Board meeting. These included giving evidence to the Senior Salaries Review Board (SSRB), a meeting with the Indian Law Minister to discuss the work of the JAC and attending the South East Bar Executive Committee meeting.

Chief Executive's report

17. It was reported that the JAC had received positive feedback from the Ministry of Justice on its information assurance protocols.

Any Other Business

None.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on 12 November 2009.