

JAC Diversity Forum Seminar – Action Plan

Following the Diversity Seminar hosted by the JAC Diversity Forum in July 2009 the groups on the Forum agreed an action plan, which it will review for progress at each meeting. This action plan is set out below.

Action	Organisation	Comments
More work shadowing	Judiciary	The Judicial Work Shadowing Scheme (started in 1999) was re-launched in October 2008 and received 700 applications in the first year. The scheme has been extended to include the shadowing of High Court Judges, this may be extended further to create a work shadowing scheme for judges to shadow more senior members of the judiciary. A review will be conducted to assess its effectiveness in encouraging potential applicants and widening the pool of candidates who apply for judicial appointment.
Demystify the judiciary among young people Highlight range of work available	Judiciary	Diversity and Community Relations Judges (DCRJJs) were appointed in 2001 to act as an interface between the courts and local communities to help increase local confidence in the justice system. Initiatives include court visits for community and religious leaders, schools and colleges. Employment events to encourage minority groups and others to consider a career in law and the judiciary. Following a review of the scheme the judicial office will provide an e-mail group comprising all DCRJJs to enable judges to send information out and if the website permits information on community groups may be posted.
Work with solicitors to encourage more applications for judicial office.	Judiciary	Members of the judiciary are working to form links with solicitors' firms, both large and small, to see how best to encourage practitioners to apply for judicial office. Dobbs J will be meeting with ILEX to develop ways to encourage and support applications.
Flexible working	Judiciary	The judiciary is considering its own internal structures, to see whether its working patterns can be adjusted to allow greater

		flexibility for those who might currently be unable to apply for office
Spell out benefits of being a judge for candidates and employers	MoJ/Judiciary	MoJ is updating the publication 'Step up to a Judicial Career' for re-issue in the new year
Highlight possible career progression from DJ to dispel myth it is a cul-de-sac for solicitors	MoJ/Judiciary	MoJ is supporting the work of the Advisory Panel on Judicial Diversity, who are looking into career progression, development of a judicial career and dispelling persistent myths concerning about judicial appointments.
More certainty about when appointments, training and deployments will take place to allow planning	MoJ/Judiciary	The MoJ and JAC work in liaison with the Judicial Studies Board during the selection process to align training dates with appointments. There will always be some uncertainty about exactly when appointments take place as practitioner's notice periods vary and can be lengthy, i.e. up to 18 months for partners or academics. That is always subject to individual negotiation and every effort is made to formalise appointments as expeditiously as possible.
More salaried part-time working	MoJ	The Salaried part time working scheme for the judiciary is managed locally by court regions and tribunals, who are responsible for forecasting and deployment. Both the administration and the senior judicial officers are actively involved in the decision making processes and aim to accommodate as many requests for part time working as possible. The administration factor in both in-service interest and suitable vacancies as a key part of their annual forecasting and business planning processes. Numbers of part time working judges have now exceeded 10% of the total salaried judiciary; however some jurisdictions, especially the larger tribunals, can and do accommodate higher levels of part time working. For example, at the time of the 3 year review last year Asylum and Immigration part time working judges represented 29% of the total number of salaried judges there.
Court open days	HMCS/Tribunals Service	These already take place but an increase would be welcome. Attendance at an open day demystifies the courts and the judiciary, so that more people may think a judicial career is 'for them'. Tribunals open days would give an impression of the range of work available.
More resources for diversity groups	Professional bodies	Law Society is increasing resources for their Black and Minority Ethnic Forum.

<p>Encourage career planning by potential candidates</p>	<p>Professional bodies</p>	<p>Bar Council is committed to encouraging this through our Circuit Diversity Mentor Scheme, advertised through Counsel magazine.</p> <p>Law Society is using its career progression groups to highlight a judicial career. They are using recently appointed solicitor judges to promote a judicial career.</p>
<p>Change views of employers, especially solicitors' firms</p>	<p>Professional bodies</p>	<p>An equality and diversity group for city firms has been formed.</p>
<p>Improve retention of under-represented groups in the profession</p>	<p>Professional bodies</p>	<p>This is a priority for the Bar Council. We will continue to review drop-out rates from practice and reasons for drop-out. Guidance developed for those on career breaks and for chambers and clerks managing barristers returning from practice on the website. Offering an annual course for those taking and managing career breaks. Revised Equality Code for chambers to provide improved guidance on retention. This topic is also covered in new diversity training cascade for barristers.</p> <p>The Bar runs an exit survey to track when and why barristers leave the profession.</p>
<p>More mentoring by successful candidates from under-represented groups of potential candidates. There is a need to promote role models, especially in some areas, such as Chancery.</p>	<p>Diversity groups</p>	<p>Identify successful candidates from a range of backgrounds and investigate setting up a buddying system.</p> <p>The Bar Council is developing work with the specialist bar associations, beginning with a pilot with the Professional Negligence Bar Association</p> <p>Law Society is using recently appointed solicitor judges group to promote a judicial career.</p> <p>The JAC will train the new Law Society group of Solicitor Judges in the JAC process.</p>

More outreach events	JAC/professional bodies	<p>The JAC has a limited budget for outreach events and uses this to reach the widest audience in the most cost effective manner to enable more events to be held. By increased working with partner organisations we can deliver more, in a more targeted way.</p> <p>Professional bodies have run outreach events with the JAC and will continue to do so next year.</p>
Model answers to Qualifying Test online	JAC	The JAC is working on ways to increase the amount of helpful information on the qualifying test, and is looking at the possibility of model answers, examiners reports etc.
More transparency and explanation of the process. There is still confusion in the profession.	JAC	The new JAC website provides more information on the process. Working with successful candidates after their selection could hone in on which parts of the website were useful to them and which could have offered more information.
More information to help potential candidates self-assess	JAC	Increased information on the website and the importance of the self assessment is highlighted at all outreach events
More analysis of predictors of success	JAC	The JAC has a full time statistician who is working on more in depth analysis.
Provide candidates with feedback	JAC	Candidates are provided with feedback after the interview stages have been completed. It is not possible to provide feedback to the often very large number of candidates who sit the qualifying test; an alternative would be to produce examiners' reports.
Manage expectations to encourage appropriate timing of applications	JAC/professional bodies	It is for the JAC to offer information and guidance about what level potential candidates should generally be at before applying for different judicial offices. Professional bodies have a role to play in disseminating this information to their members.

Include references to judicial career in legal training	JAC and LSB	The JAC and LSB have already engaged on this and other issues.
Use other bodies and the media to get message out	All	The JAC has sent to all Forum members a briefing with key messages
Link up websites	All	The Diversity Forum page on the JAC website has begun this.
Review what diversity initiatives have worked in the past and which have not	All	
Target those in education	All	Look at linking up with the Pathways Project, the Youth Network the Attorney General will launch in September.
Include judicial skills in legal education	All	JAC to attend a meeting of the SRA in September.