

**D03/09            PRESS NOTICE- 30 JUNE 2009**

**JAC figures show rise in numbers applying for judicial posts.**

The Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) today published the results of the 24 selection exercises completed between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009. They show a steeply increased competition for posts.

There were 3,514 eligible applicants, up from 2,535 in 2007-8, an increase of nearly 40 per cent for fewer posts (449 against 458).

The latest statistics include data published in October covering a High Court exercise where five of the appointments were women. The five take the number of women in the High Court to 17, the highest ever.

A selection exercise for District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) attracted 817 eligible applicants for 26 posts. The figures also include Recorder exercises covering the Northern, North Eastern, Wales and Midland Circuits where there were 799 applicants for 169 posts.

For the results published today, the number of candidates is compared to the number in the pool of eligible candidates - the people who meet the job-specific minimum entry requirements.

The results published today show that:

For Fee Paid Legal posts (typically 15-30 days a year):

- 34 per cent of applicants and 30 per cent of those selected were women. The eligible pool is 35 per cent.
- 14 per cent of applicants and 7 per cent of those selected were of black or ethnic minority origin. The eligible pool is 7 per cent.

For Salaried Legal posts:

- 21 per cent of applicants and 24 per cent of selections were women. The number in the eligible pool is 21 per cent.
- 10 per cent of applicants and 4 per cent of selections were of black and ethnic minority origin. The eligible pool figure is 5 per cent.

Baroness Prashar, Chairman of the JAC said:

"These figures show that we received almost half as many applications again as in our first full year (2007-8). The message is getting out that we have put in place a fair and open process which is no longer controlled by an old boy network. The effects of the credit crunch are likely to increase those numbers further.

“There was an expectation that the creation of the JAC alone would automatically make the judiciary more diverse. In fact the establishment of the JAC, while replacing the “tap on the shoulder” with open selection, has helped to highlight that there are many other factors which can prevent women, solicitors and lawyers from ethnic minority groups from achieving their full potential.

“It is encouraging that there is now an increasing awareness that many of these barriers are outside the JAC’s control.

“The Diversity Forum, which we established a year ago, brought together the profession, the Judiciary and the Government, and each is now beginning to take responsibility for what they need to do.

“This month the JAC released comprehensive statistical research commissioned from the British Market Research Bureau with the support of the Law Society and Bar Council to find out what attracted lawyers to a judicial career, or deterred them from applying. On 7 July we are hosting a seminar to discuss the results with a view to encouraging our partners and the under-represented groups themselves to take relevant steps to speed up change.

“This research shows that equal numbers of men and women and more black and ethnic minority lawyers than white lawyers intend to apply to be judges in the future. At the same time many solicitors do not feel they are supported by their firms when they want to become judges.

“More lawyers said they would consider a judicial career if they could apply to become a part-time salaried judge. The number of part-time posts is in the gift of the Lord Chancellor and the Judiciary, not the JAC.

“Last year we asked the Lord Chancellor to consider whether some of the non-statutory minimum entry requirements\* could be removed. We continue to believe that these restrictions limit progress towards a diverse judiciary as they deter some applicants.”

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\*See Annex A for figures relating to non-statutory requirements.

#### **EDITORS NOTES.**

1. For full details of 24 selection exercises at High Court level and below completed in 2008-9 and the summary tables see <http://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/news/news.htm> These tables include recommendations made for specific vacancies and also those selections put forward to the Lord Chancellor as part of a list which does not guarantee appointment.
2. An explanation of the eligible pool is included at the foot of each table where it applies. The JAC is grateful for the support of the Law Society and the Bar Council in developing this data.
3. For details of the 27 exercises completed by the JAC in 2007-8 please see [http://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/docs/JAC\\_COMPLETED\\_SELECTION\\_EXERCISE\\_DATA\\_MARCH\\_2007-APRIL\\_2008.pdf](http://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/docs/JAC_COMPLETED_SELECTION_EXERCISE_DATA_MARCH_2007-APRIL_2008.pdf)
4. Please note that the mix of selection exercises and the balance between legal and non-legal, and between salaried and fee paid selections is different each year.
5. During the year the Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 opened judicial selection beyond solicitors and barristers. From 2009-10 selection exercise data will include, where applicable, Fellows of the Institute of Legal Executives.

## Annex A

### Legal exercises with non-statutory minimum entry requirements for all posts, and those without (%)

In 2008-09 15 exercises to select legally qualified judicial office holders applied non-statutory minimum entry requirements to all posts, and five applied none. (Two exercises applied non-statutory requirements to some but not all posts, and have been excluded from this comparison)

	<b>With</b>			<b>Without</b>		
	Women	BME	Solicitors	Women	BME	Solicitors
<b>Eligible applicants</b>	28	11	35	37	16	63
<b>Selected</b>	24	3	17	40	13	65

Diversity is affected by many factors including the nature of the posts and the eligible pool. The mix of exercises is different every year as indicated in note 4 above. This table is therefore a snapshot of the position in relation to this year's exercises with non-statutory minimum entry requirements where the diversity of both applications and selections from under-represented groups in the Judiciary was greater than those in exercises without such requirements.