



Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission Equality Monitoring – 2024-25

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36 appointments made from **413** applications in respect of **6** legal and **1** lay recruitment schemes



Females made up **57%** of those applying and **78%** of those recommended for appointment.



Applications: **65%** Catholic, **27%** Protestant and **8%** Other/Neither/Not Indicated. Of those **recommended** for appointment **64%** Catholic, **25%** Protestant and **11%** Other/Neither/Not Indicated.



Those aged 40 or under made up **23%** of those **applying**, those aged 41-50 **36%** and **41%** were 51 or above. Of those **recommended for appointment** **44%** were 40 or under, **39%** aged 41-50 and **17%** were aged 51 or above.



4% of **applications** came from applicants not identifying as White and they made up **0%** of those **recommended for appointment**.



7% of **applications** came from applicants identifying as having a disability and they made up **3%** of those **recommended for appointment**.



The east coast of Northern Ireland (Antrim, Belfast and Down) provided the majority of **applicants** **76%** (by residence) and **85.7%** (by business location) and the majority of **recommendations for appointment**, **80%** and **86%** respectively.



Analysis of Data

The purpose of the report is to provide NIJAC's diversity data as part of the respective Annual Report & Accounts for the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

The Analysis of Data and attached annex provide information regarding NIJAC's applicant pools and recommendations for appointment in respect of the year 2024-25 (**Annex 1**). In providing these figures we also set them in the context of historical data (Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency ('NISRA') Report 2007¹, NISRA Report 2011², NISRA Report 2021³, the make-up of the judiciary as of 15 September 2025⁴ and the available Census data from 2011⁵ and 2021⁶).

NIJAC is statutorily required⁷ to report on five principal characteristics⁸ in relation to how '*reflective of the community*' are the applicant pool it attracts and the recommendations for appointment that it makes⁹. These characteristics are; Gender, Community Background, Age, Ethnic Origins and the part of Northern Ireland (if any) with which the individuals applying for judicial office regard themselves as most closely associated.

NIJAC has historically also monitored and reported¹⁰ Disability as a characteristic and that data is included in this report. Those six characteristics constitute the substance of the report.

There are a number of instances where the holder of one office is by courtesy of that role, also the holder of another (or more than one other) judicial office and there are other instances where one individual holds more than one judicial office courtesy of success in more than one appointment scheme¹¹.

¹ NISRA: The Judiciary in Northern Ireland: 2007 Equity Monitoring Report

² NISRA: The Judiciary in Northern Ireland: 2011 Equity Monitoring Report

³ NISRA: The Judiciary in Northern Ireland: 2021 Equity Monitoring Report

⁴ NIJAC's own data

⁵ NI Census 2011 (NISRA - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2011-census>)

⁶ NI Census 2021 (NISRA - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2021-census>)

⁷ Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 (as amended): Sch 2 s5 (3)

⁸ All figures (in all metrics) expressed as percentages have been rounded to the nearest single decimal point. Where this results in a cumulative total of 99.9% no change has been made. Exact numeric figures are provided in Annexes 1-3 covering the individual period under review years.

⁹ Those offices listed in Schedule 1 to the Justice (NI) Act 2002

¹⁰ Through its Annual Report & Accounts

¹¹ Data is from NIJAC's Judicial Database on 15 September 2025. This includes 34 judicial office holders who hold multiple offices courtesy of one specific judicial office, e.g. County Court Judges being appointed as



There are 103 individuals who each hold *two* judicial offices; there are 20 individuals who each hold *three* judicial offices and there are 7 individuals who each hold *four* judicial offices. No data has been altered to remediate any impact multiple office holding may have on the breakdown of the judiciary.

NIJAC made 36 appointments from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The 36 Recommendations across the period under review have been made from 413 applications submitted in relation to 7 separate appointment schemes.

The 7 Recruitment schemes were (a) 6 Legal schemes (including - District Judge (Magistrates' Courts), Master (Taxations & Enforcement of Judgements Office, Legal Members of the Appeal Tribunals, Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunal President, Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunal Employment Judges, Lega Member of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal; and (b) 1 Lay Scheme (Ordinary Member of the Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal).

For those unfamiliar with the breakdown of judicial offices in Northern Ireland it may be valuable to note that almost half of all judicial offices do not require a legal qualification, with approximately one third being 'Medical' roles and the remainder requiring that the applicant to occupy a Lay role.

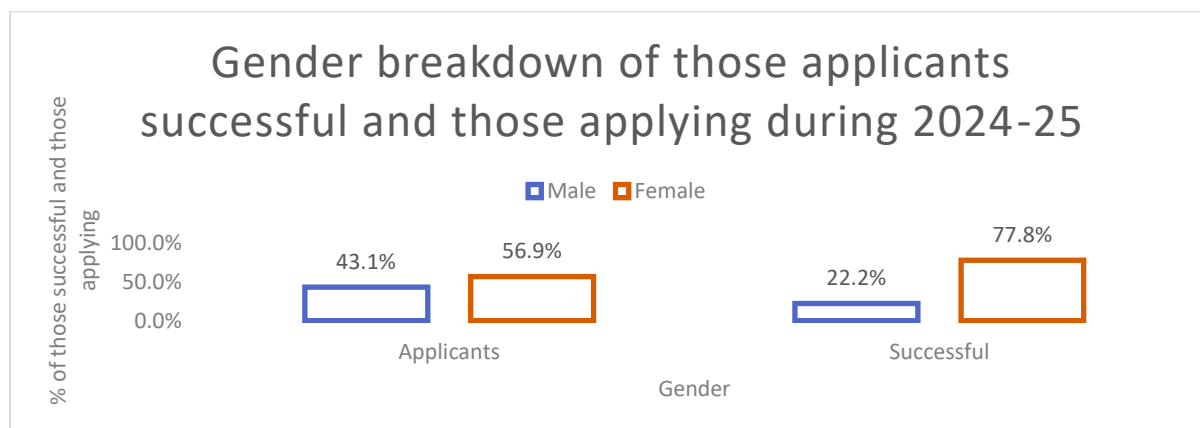
This number of appointments in 2024-25 stands in contrast to the recent trend of increasing numbers of appointments over the last four years (49 individual recommendations being made in 2020-21, 60 in 2021-22, 65 in 2022-23 and 81 in 2023-24 respectively). There is no known specific reason for this however it may be that the increase in the judicial retirement age to 75 in 2022 may have led to a reduction in the number of offices becoming vacant.

What has become apparent and may only be observed in the Equality Monitoring Report which succeeds this present report, is the increasing unpredictability of retirement age. This has been observed as a significant factor in the determination of NIJAC's business over the last 12 months.

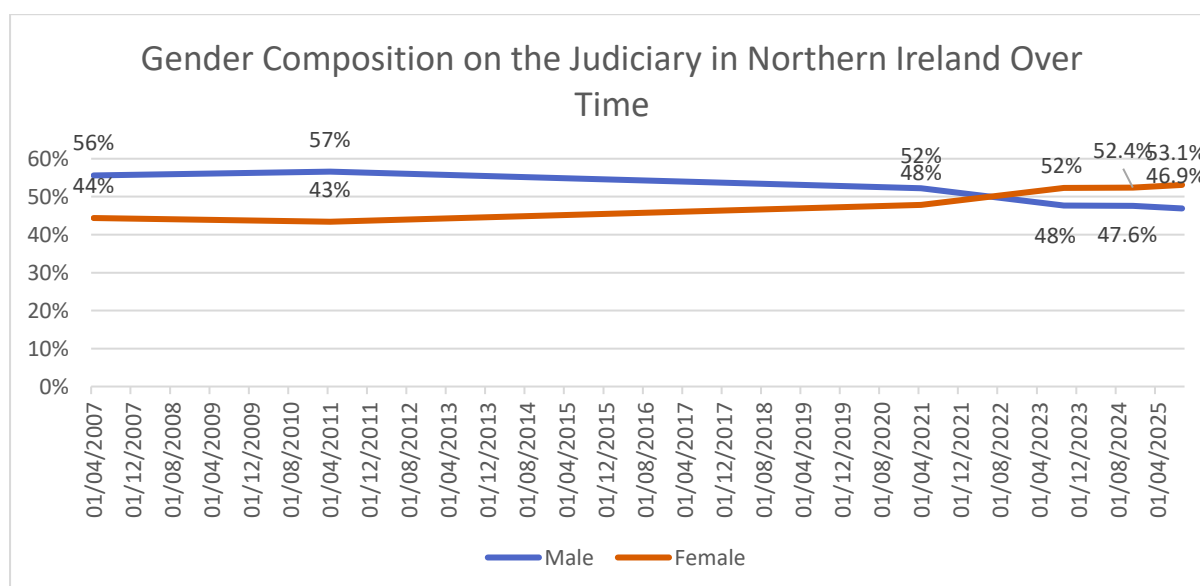


Gender

Of the 413 applications made during the period under review a small majority (56.9%) came from females, that share increasing significantly to 77.8% of those recommended for appointment.



In 2007 there was a majority of males (55.6%) in Judicial Office. By 2011 that majority was 56.6% and by 2021 this majority had reduced to 52.2%. As of 15 September 2025¹² the gender breakdown of the judiciary in Northern Ireland is 53.1% female and 46.9% male.



¹² NIJAC analysis of data 15/9/25.



The 2021 Census results for Northern Ireland show a general population majority of females of 50.81%. Within that broader breakdown the 2021 Census also identifies that the 'Professional Occupations'¹³ group shows a female majority of 56.5%.

This historic data indicates that judicial office has seen a steadily increasing proportion of female office holders since 2011 which (as of September 2023) resulted in female judicial office holders (across all offices) becoming the majority. This 2024-25 percentage is broadly in keeping with the general population and the specified group in 'Professional Occupations'. Therefore, the pattern of applications and recommendations for appointment of females over the last 12 years remains in keeping with the general shift in applicant and appointee numbers.

However, it remains important to note that the percentage of females in salaried senior judicial roles (Court of Judicature and County Court) has risen to 26.5% remained at 21.2% for some time and therefore attracting female applicants to senior judicial offices remains a strategic priority for NIJAC. The wider picture as far as the salaried judiciary is concerned (Courts and Tribunals) is more encouraging with female representation having risen to 45% amongst all salaried judicial roles as of 15 September 2025.

Community Background

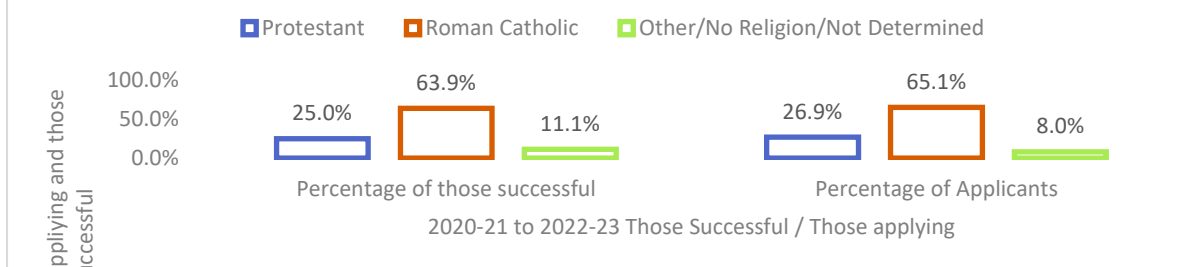
Of the 413 applications during the period under review 65% have been from Catholic applicants, 27% from Protestant applicants and 8% from applicants who identify as having an 'Other' background, 'Neither' background, or who have 'Not Indicated' their background (Other/Neither/Not Indicated).

Of the 36 recommendations for appointment 63.9% have been of Catholic applicants, 25% of Protestant applicants and 11.1% of applicants who identified as Other/Neither/Not Indicated.

¹³ As defined by Office for National Statistics: Standard Occupational Classification 2020.

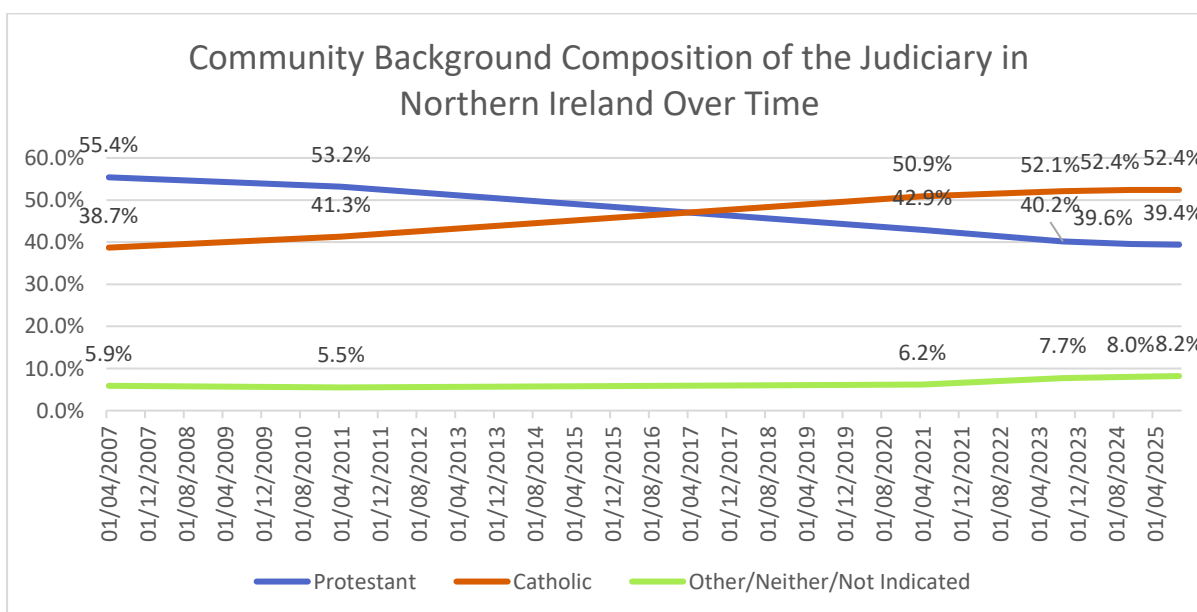


Community Background of those applicants applying and those successful during 2024-25



On 1 April 2007 the religious breakdown of the existing judiciary was 38.7% from a Catholic background, 55.4% from a Protestant background and 5.9% who identified as Other/Neither/Not Indicated. By 1 April 2011 the religious breakdown of the existing judiciary was 41.3% from a Catholic background, 53.2% from a Protestant background and 5.5% who identified as Other/Neither/Not Indicated. By 1 April 2021 the religious breakdown of the existing judiciary was 50.9% from a Catholic background, 42.9% from a Protestant background and 6.2% of applicants who identified as Other/Neither/Not Indicated.

As of September 2025 the community background breakdown of the judiciary in Northern Ireland is 52.4% Catholic, 39.4% Protestant and 8.2% Other/No Religion/Not Determined.



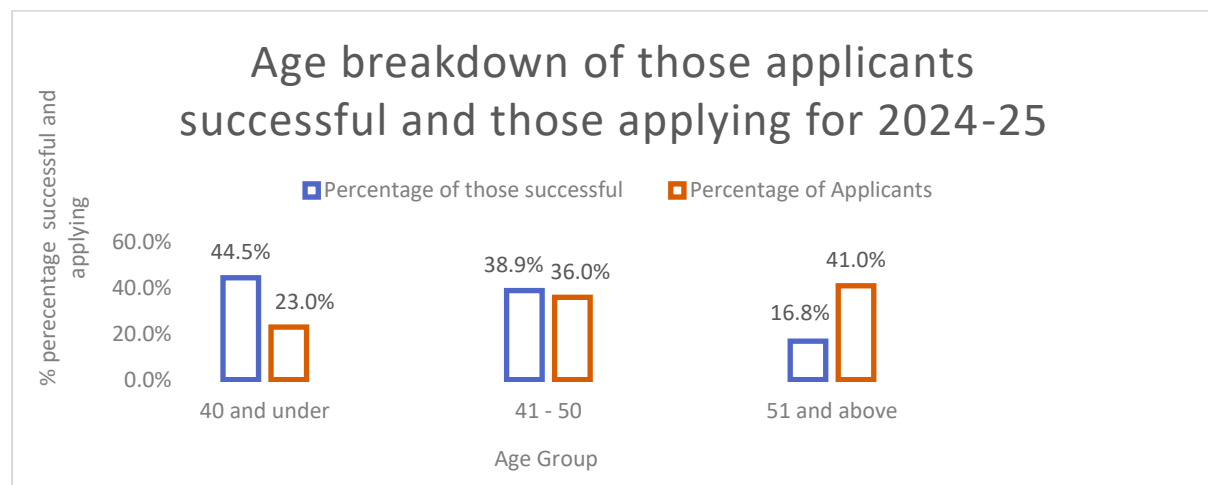


This compares with the 2021 Census results¹⁴ for the Northern Ireland general population showing proportions of 45.7% Catholic, 43.5% Protestant and 10.8% Other/No Religion. Within the Legal Professionals portion of the community these proportions are 57.6% Catholic, 36.2% Protestant and 6.2% Other/No Religion.

When we narrow that assessment against the age range for judicial office holders (18-74) we find that the working age population figure is 46% Catholic, 44.6% Protestant and 9.4% Other/No Religion.

Age

Of the 413 applicants in the period under review 23% were under 40, 36% between 41 and 50 and 41% were 51 or above (that breakdown of applicants has remained consistent over the last two years). Of the 36 recommendations for appointment made 44.5% were of those aged 40 and under, 38.9% between 41 and 50 and 16.8% were aged 51 or above (this demonstrated increasing success rates for applicants 40 and under in comparison with previous years).

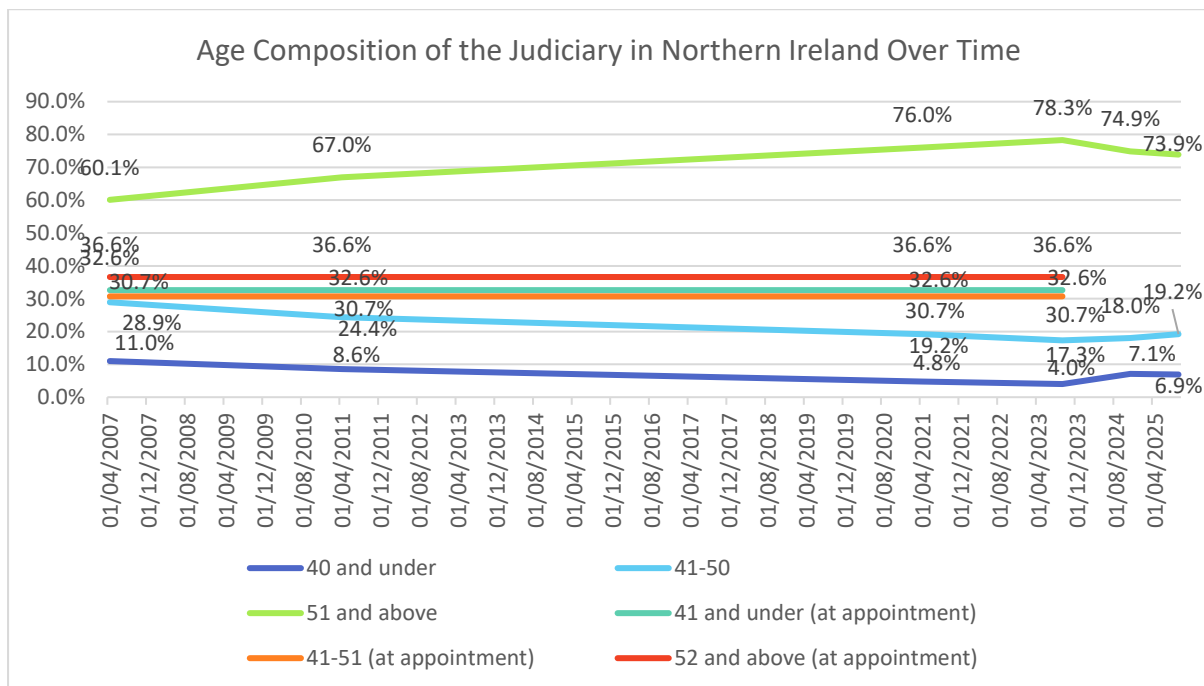


In 2007 11% of existing judicial office holders were aged 40 and under, 28.9% were aged 41 to 50 and 60.1% were aged 51 and above. By 2011 there were reductions in the percentages of both those 40 and under and those aged 41-50 (to 8.6% and 24.4% respectively). By 2021 those percentages had reduced further to 4.8% and 19.2% respectively. As of September 2025 those percentages now stand at 6.9%

¹⁴ All figures in this paragraph based on Census Classification by 'Religion or Religion Brought Up In'



who are 40 and under, 19.2% aged between 41 and 50 and 73.9% are aged 51 and above.



Given the breakdown those recommended for appointment in the period under review the overall judiciary figure should be considered in the context of ‘ageing effect’¹⁵, whereby the composition of the subject population changes over time due to their ageing.

Given the impact of ageing effect, it is also important to consider the age at which judicial officers have been appointed. Analysis in September 2025 shows that of all the existing judiciary, 33% were first appointed when they were 40 or under, 30.5% between 41 and 50 and 36.6% were aged 51 and above when originally appointed.

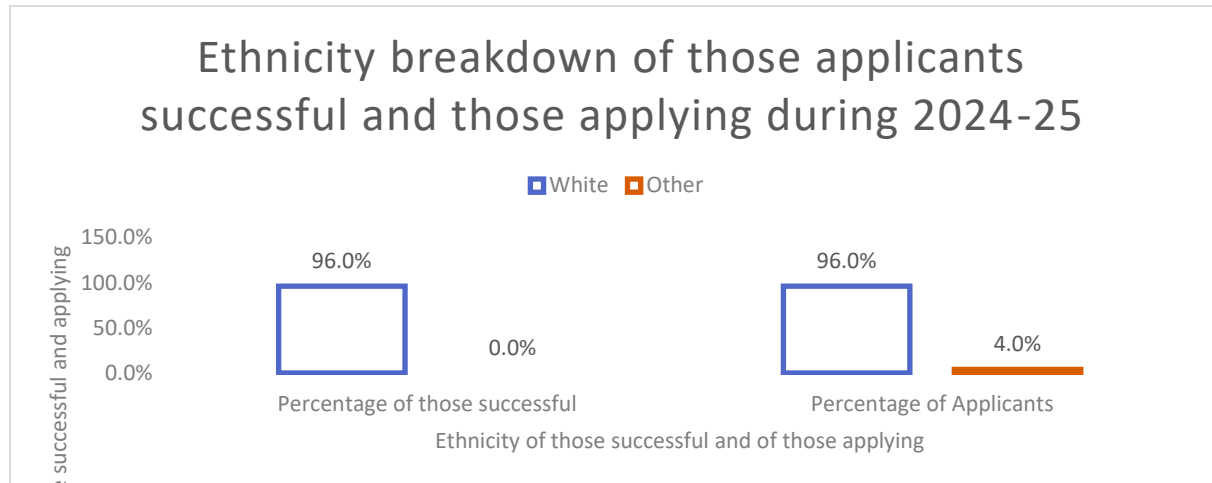
This indicates that across all judicial offices recommendations for appointment have been made at broadly similar rates across the three age groupings and that the period under review has shown a departure from that collective pattern, toward those younger groups with particular impact in those 40 and under. Future monitoring will continue to observe this pattern to see if a trend is developing.

Ethnic Origin

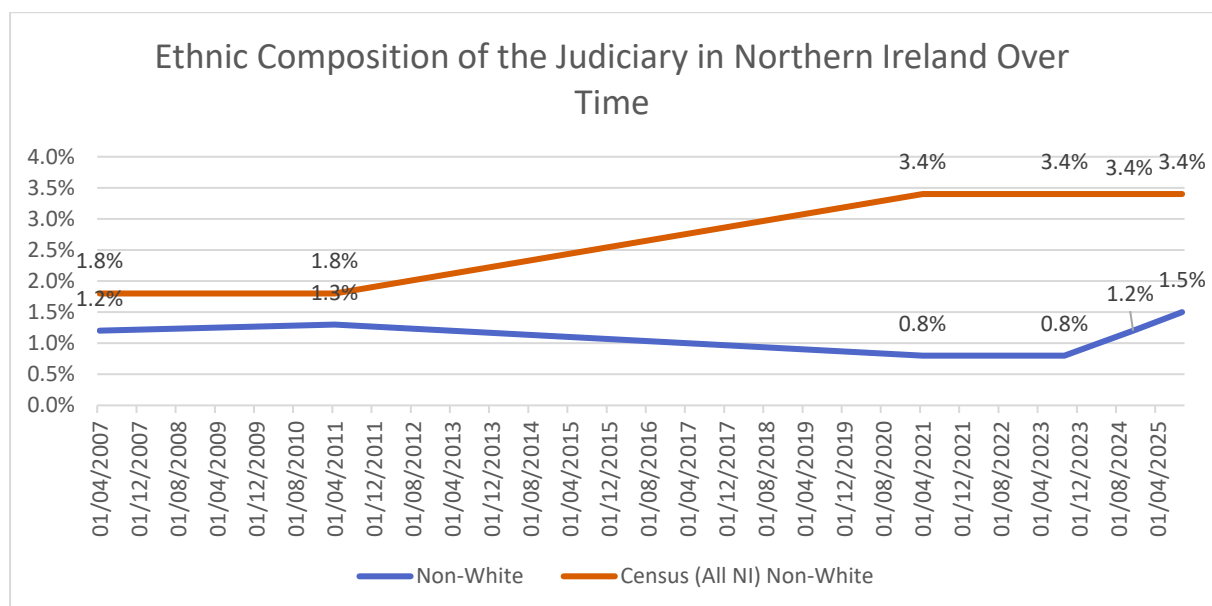
¹⁵ For example a judicial office holder recommended for appointment at the age of 39 in 2011 is now (in 2023) aged 51 and has moved up from the lowest age bracket to the highest in the data comparison.



Of the 413 applications during the period under review 96% have been from applicants identifying as White and 4% from applicants identifying as other. Of the 36 recommendations for appointment during the period under review 100% have been of applicants identifying as White.



On 1 April 2007 the Ethnic Origin breakdown of the existing judiciary was 98.8% identifying as White and 1.2% identifying as Other. By 1 April 2011 1.3% identified as Other. By 1 April 2021 0.8% identified as Other, by September 2025 that has increased to 1.5%. This increase does act to temper the result from 2024-25 and it is expected that this same report for 2025-26 will include those appointments which are responsible for the increase in 'Other' representation.





By comparison the Census in 2011 recorded an overall population figure of 1.8% Other and the 2021 Census a figure of 3.4% Other. Within the 'Professional Occupations' grouping the 2021 Census recorded the proportion of Other within that population at 4.8% and 1.8% within the 'Legal Professionals' sub-group of 'Professional Occupations'.

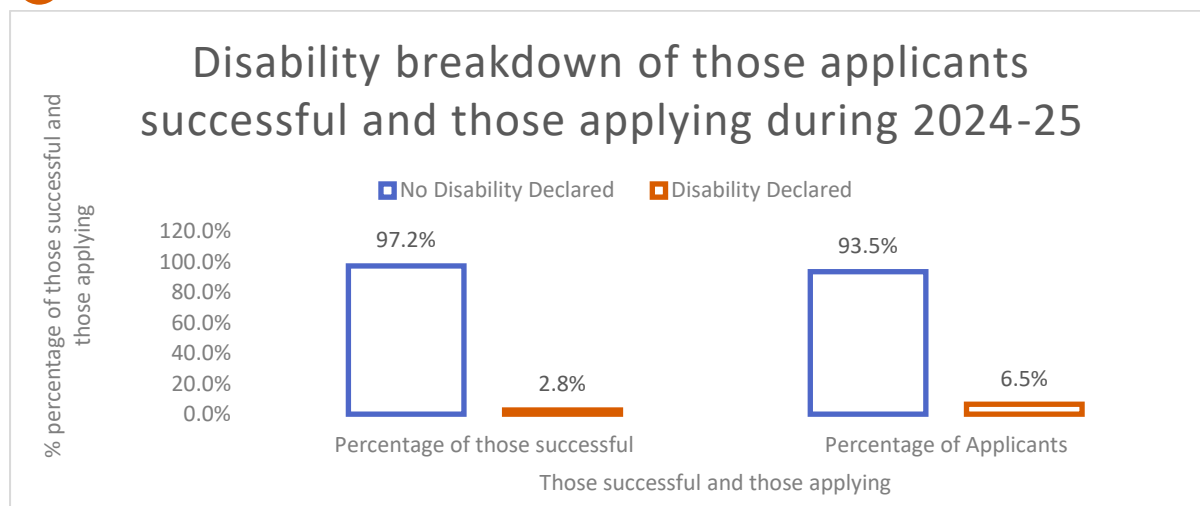
NIJAC is conscious of the recommendations laid out in The Executive Office's 'Guidance for Equality Monitoring in the Public Sector' (September 2023) and in particular the need for more available data on minority ethnic groups to facilitate the removal of barriers to racial equality. NIJAC is reviewing the questions it asks as part of its equality monitoring in keeping with these recommendations.

NIJAC has committed to closer examination of the representation of ethnic diversity in its applicant and appointee pools during the 2025-26 business year. Amongst those considerations will be the adoption of the recommendations of the Executive Office's 'Guidance for Ethnic Equality Monitoring in the Public Sector', and whilst those recommendations may not be implemented so as to change the format of the 2025-26 report, they will provide NIJAC with future data which reflects better the ethnic diversity data of those who apply for judicial selection and those who are appointed.

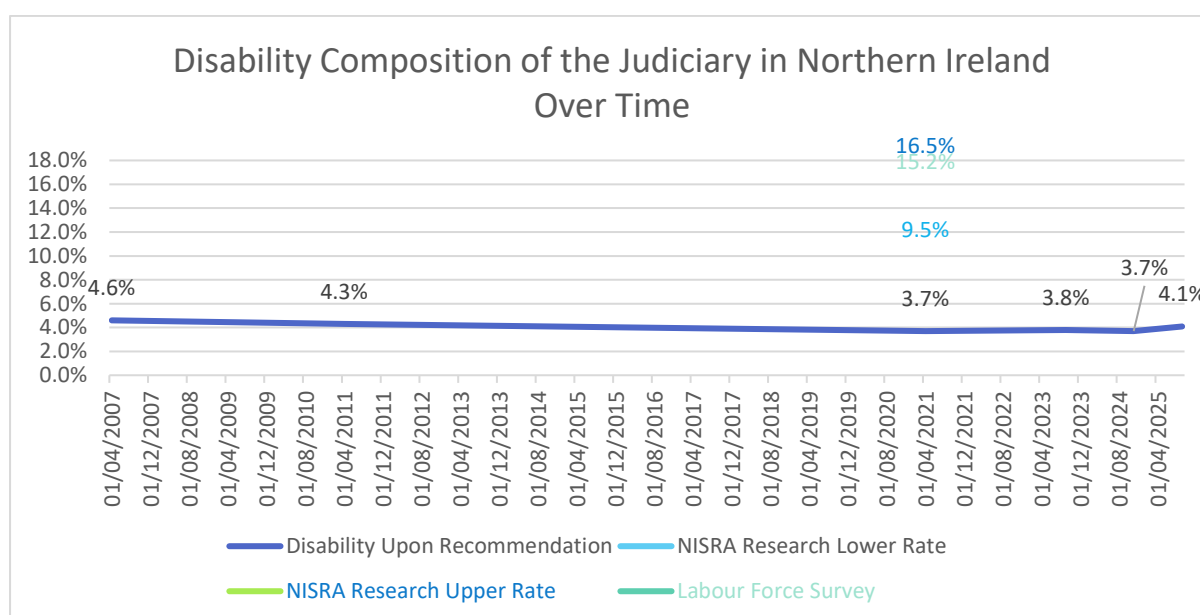
Disability

Of the 413 applications during the period under review 7% were from applicants identifying as having a disability.

Of the 36 recommendations for appointment during the period under review 2.8% were from applicants identifying as having a disability.



On 1 April 2007 the Disability breakdown of the existing judiciary was 95.4% identifying as not having a disability and 4.6% identifying as having a disability. By 1 April 2011¹⁶ 4.3% identified as having a disability. By 1 April 2021¹⁷ 3.7% identified as having a disability. As of September 2025 these figures¹⁸ now stand at 95.9% identifying as not having a disability and 4.1% identifying as having a disability.



In 2022 NIJAC commissioned research into its disability data on the existing judiciary by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)¹⁹ in

¹⁶ The Judiciary in NI: 2011 Equity Monitoring Report (NI Statistics and Research Agency – 2011)

¹⁷ The Judiciary in NI: 2021 Equity Monitoring Report (NI Statistics and Research Agency – 2021)

¹⁸ NIJAC's own analysis as of 15/9/25

¹⁹ The resulting report 'The Judiciary in Northern Ireland, Disability Survey 2022' (NI Statistics and Research Agency) provides the data referred to.



acknowledgement that many disabilities are acquired through lifetime and therefore may not have been declared at the date of appointment to the judiciary.

NISRA conducted a survey of existing judicial office holders as part of their research. Following their research NISRA reported that the level of disability within the entire NI judiciary was likely to be in the range of a lower rate of 9.5% and an upper rate of 16.5%²⁰.

By comparison, the NISRA report stated that data from the July – September 2021 Labour Force Survey²¹ showed that 15.2 % of the economically active population (aged 16-64 year with a Degree or equivalent level of qualification – a broadly comparable group) had a disability.

This indicates that the ‘true’ rate of disability within the existing NI judiciary is likely to be broadly reflective of that of a comparable grouping within Northern Ireland.

Location in NI with which they are most closely associated

This characteristic is based upon two identifiable metrics of applicants, their residential postcode and their primary business postcode²².

Residential

Of the 413 applications during the period under review 39.3% resided in Belfast, 14.8% in Co. Antrim, 5.6% in Co. Armagh, 22% in Co. Down, 1.9% in Co. Fermanagh, 7% in Co. Londonderry, 7.5% in Co. Tyrone, 1.9% outside of Northern Ireland and no applicants failed to declare a residential postcode.

Of the 36 recommendations for appointment during the period under review the residential locations of appointees were 38.9% from Belfast, 16.7% from Co. Antrim, 2.8% from Co. Armagh, 25% from Co. Down, 2.8% from Co. Fermanagh, 8.3% from

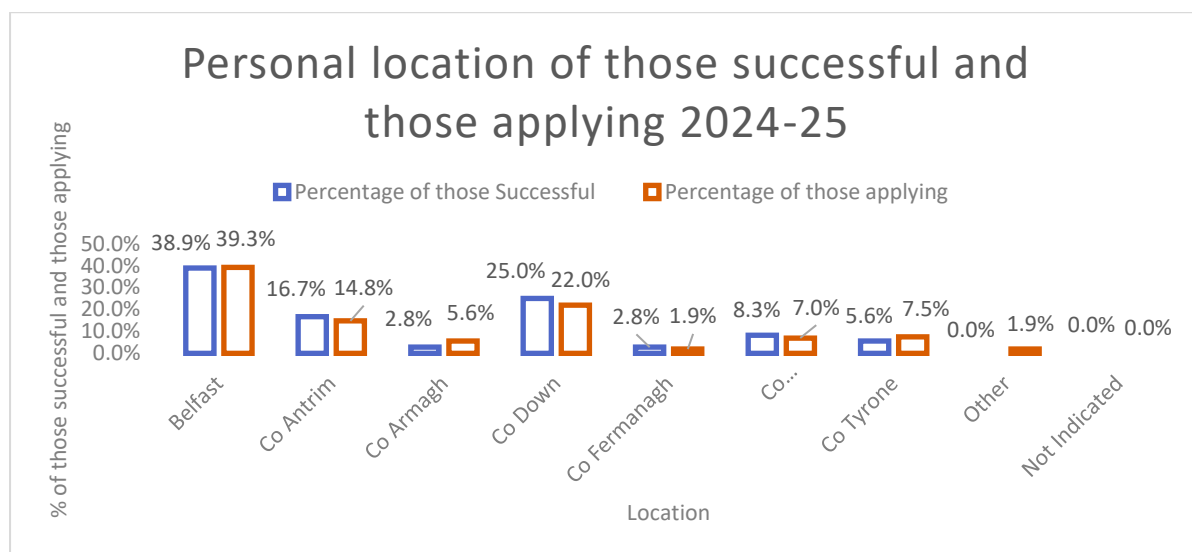
²⁰ The NISRA research and the survey it included were anonymous and therefore NIJAC were not able to update their existing data against individual office holders, hence the current data reported above for 2023 does not reflect the actual likely rate of disability as revealed by the NISRA Research and the Survey included within it

²¹ NISRA <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/topic/labour-force-survey-151?page=2>

²² NIJAC has historically always defined Belfast as a distinct entity in this data, the Co. Antrim and Co. Down figures do not include their respective Belfast data.



Co. Londonderry, 5.6% from Co. Tyrone and none from outside of Northern Ireland and no recommended applicants failed to declare a residential postcode.

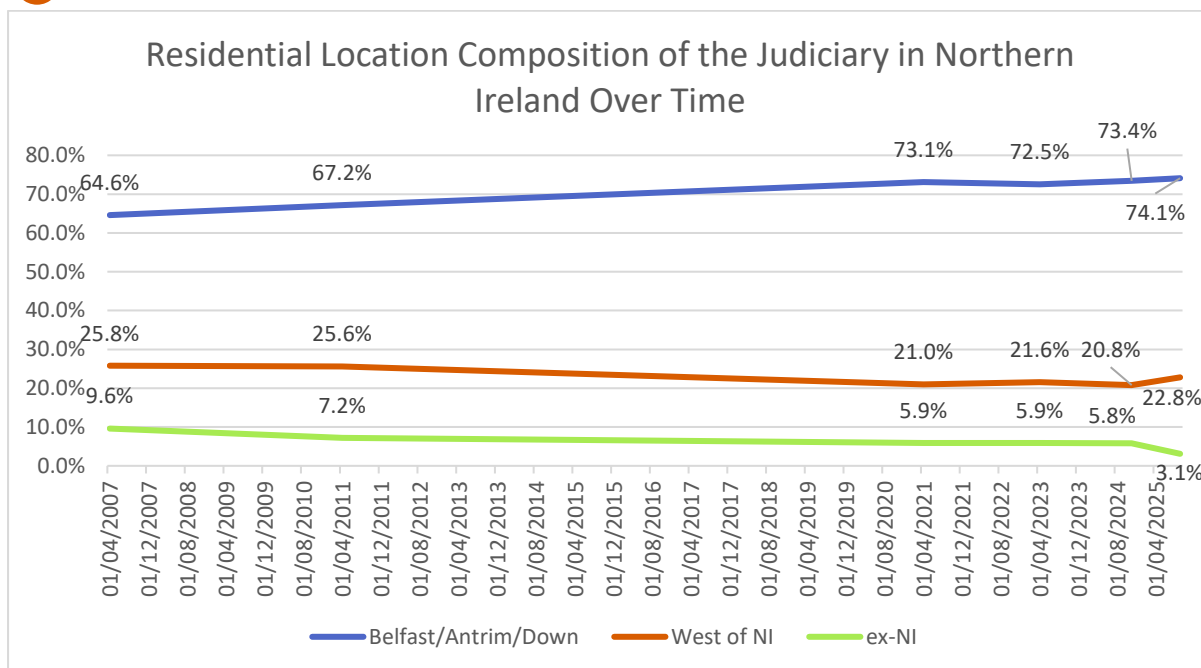


On 1 April 2007 the residential locations of the existing judiciary were 31.7% from Belfast, 13.6% from Co. Antrim, 6.4% from Co. Armagh, 19.3% from Co. Down, 4.3% from Co. Fermanagh, 8.3% from Co. Londonderry, 6.8% from Co. Tyrone and 9.6% from outside of Northern Ireland.

By 1 April 2011 the residential locations of the existing judiciary were 34.5% from Belfast, 13.6% from Co. Antrim, 5.2% from Co. Armagh, 19.1% from Co. Down, 4.1% from Co. Fermanagh, 8.7% from Co. Londonderry, 7.6% from Co. Tyrone and 7.2% from outside of Northern Ireland. By 1 April 2021 the residential locations of the existing judiciary were 38.3% from Belfast, 16.3% from Co. Antrim, 4.5% from Co. Armagh, 18.5% from Co. Down, 1.9% from Co. Fermanagh, 8.5% from Co. Londonderry, 6.1% from Co. Tyrone and 5.9% from outside of Northern Ireland.

As of 15 September 2025 those figures now stand at 37.7% from Belfast, 17.7% from Co. Antrim, 4.2% from Co. Armagh, 18.7% from Co. Down, 1.4% from Co. Fermanagh, 8.7% from Co. Londonderry, 5.9% from Co. Tyrone and 5.8% from outside of Northern Ireland (2.2% did not indicate a location).

For the purposes of a simple comparison the individual figures per area have been presented graphically using an 'East/West' split with 'East' containing Belfast, Co. Antrim and Co. Down. This 'East' area contains 63.2% of the Northern Ireland population as per the Census 2021.



This does indicate a clear trend over time whereby those residing in Belfast, Co. Antrim and Co. Down compose an increasing majority of the judiciary in Northern Ireland.

The divergence between the 'West of NI' and 'ex-NI' between 2024 and 2025 is in part but not wholly down to a re-interpretation of some elements of the data.

Business

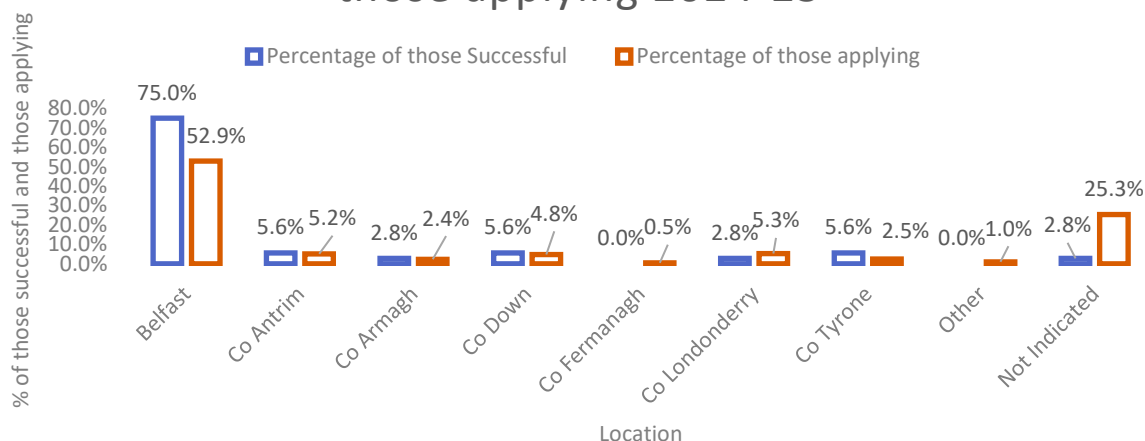
Of the 413 applications during the period under review 77.5% identified Belfast as their business postcode, 3.4% Co. Antrim, 2.2% Co. Armagh, 4.8% Co. Down, 1.2% Co. Fermanagh, 3.1% Co. Londonderry, 2.9% Co. Tyrone, 4.6% outside of Northern Ireland and 0.2% did not declare their business location²³.

Of the 36 recommendations for appointment during the period under review the business locations of appointees were 75% from Belfast, 5.6% from Co. Antrim, 2.8% from Co. Armagh, 5.6% from Co. Down, 0% from Co. Fermanagh, 2.8% from Co. Londonderry, 5.6% from Co. Tyrone, 0% from outside of Northern Ireland and 2.8% had not declared their business location.

²³ While the detailed reasons for such a high return for non-declared cannot be specifically ascertained it is likely to be caused in part by the peripatetic nature of working across a range of the courts and tribunal locations in NI and also a consequence of new working approaches resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.



Business location of those successful and those applying 2024-25

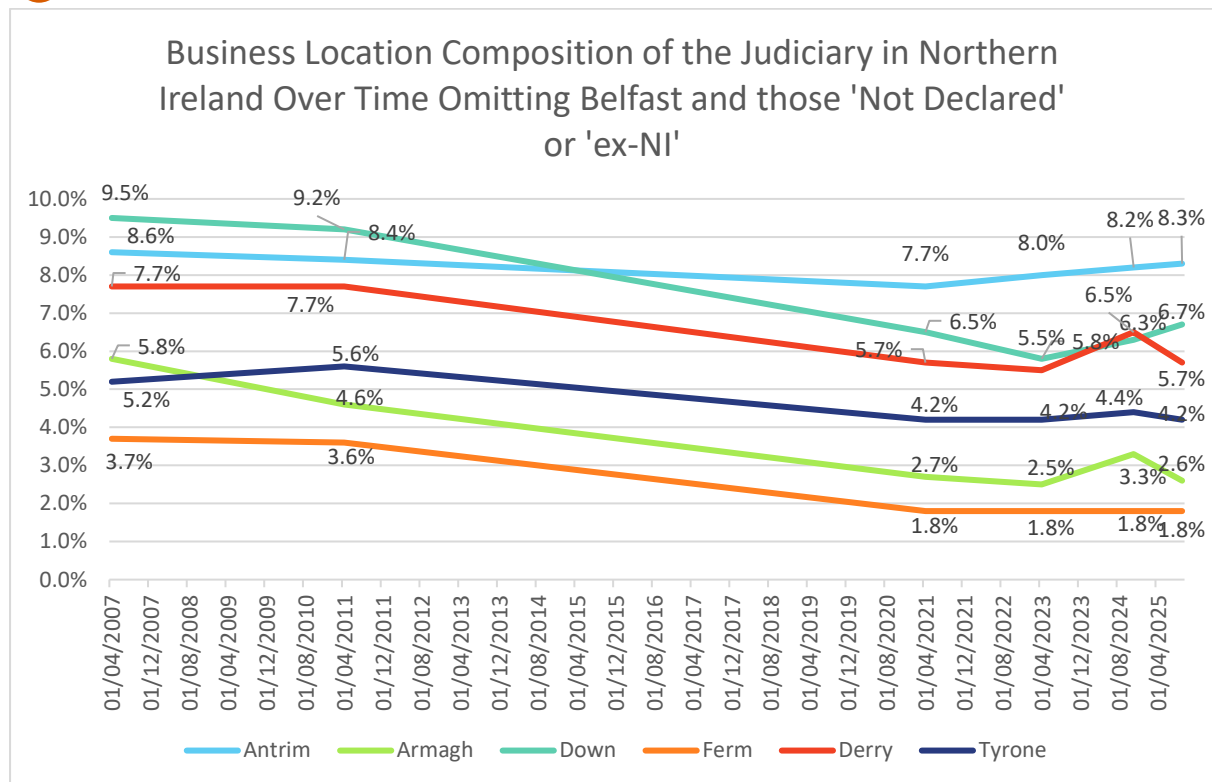


On 1 April 2007 the business locations (on appointment) for the existing judiciary were 43.1% from Belfast, 8.6% from Co. Antrim, 5.8% from Co. Armagh, 9.5% from Co. Down, 3.7% from Co. Fermanagh, 7.7% from Co. Londonderry, 5.2% from Co. Tyrone and 16.4% outside of NI/not declared.

By 1 April 2011 the business locations were 46.4% Belfast, 8.4% Co. Antrim, 4.6% Co. Armagh, 9.2% Co. Down, 3.6% Co. Fermanagh, 7.7% Co. Londonderry, 5.6% Co. Tyrone and 14.5% outside of Northern Ireland/not declared. By 1 April 2021 this was 49% Belfast, 7.7% Co. Antrim, 2.7% Co. Armagh, 6.5% Co. Down, 1.8% Co. Fermanagh, 5.7% Co. Londonderry, 4.2% Co. Tyrone and 22.4% outside of Northern Ireland/not declared.

As of 15 September 2025 these figures²⁴ stand at 48% Belfast, 8.3% Co. Antrim, 2.6% Co. Armagh, 6.7% Co. Down, 1.4% Co. Fermanagh, 5.4% Co. Londonderry, 3.3% Co. Tyrone and 24.3% outside of Northern Ireland/not declared. As with the 'Residence' figure above this data has been simplified into an 'East/West' split. In 2021 the 'East' area was responsible for c.70% of NI Gross Domestic Product. For the purposes of an easier visual display we have removed the 'Belfast' and 'Not Declared / ex-NI' data from the table below to provide a more detailed graphic representation of the distribution of Business Location on appointment with regard to all areas in Northern Ireland with the exception of Belfast.

²⁴ NIJAC's own analysis of 15/9/25



The trends for both residential and business location demonstrate a continuing focus on the east of Northern Ireland of those appointed to the judiciary over time.

When considering the residential and business locations it is also important to note that there has been a significant increase in those who view their practice as peripatetic and in those who are external to Northern Ireland since 2011. Given the continued dominance of the eastern areas as residential locations this would also be indicative of increasing numbers who reside in Belfast, Co. Antrim or Co. Down but who classify their practice as throughout Northern Ireland.

Due to the high level of non-indication of business location at the point of application there are sound reasons for treating the results shown here with caution as that level of non-reporting may skew the result as observed.

Directorate of Appointments & Engagement

Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission

September 2025



Annex 1 – Data for the Period 01/04/23 – 31/03/24.

Recommendations for appointment (including applicant pools) during the Period 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025.

During the reporting period the Commission made 36 recommendations for appointment (Courts 2; Tribunals 34) –

- 1 District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) (74 applications),
- 1 Master (Taxation & EJO) (34 applications received)
- 3 Northern Ireland Valuations Tribunal Ordinary Members (31 applications received),
- 18 Legal Members of the Appeal Tribunals (179 applications received),
- 1 Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunal President (2 applications received),
- 5 Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunal Employment Judges (26 applications received),
- 7 Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal Legal Chairman (67 applications received)

Additionally, there were 9 appointments made during this period from the Medical Generalist Members of the Appeal Tribunals scheme which was reported on last year.

Gender

Note – all % are rounded to 1 decimal point

Gender	Male	Female	Total
Recommendations	8	28	36
%	22.2%	77.8%	100%
Applicant Pools	178	235	413
%	43.1%	56.9%	100%



Community Background

Community Background	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Not Declared	Total
Recommendations	9	23	4	36
%	25.0%	63.9%	11.1%	100%
Applicant Pools	111	269	33	413
%	26.9%	65.1%	8.0%	100%

Age

Age on Appointment / Application	35 and under	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	Over 60	Total
Recommendations	6	10	9	5	3	2	1	36
%	16.7%	27.8%	25.0%	13.9%	8.3%	5.6%	2.8%	100%
Applicant Pools	34	60	73	76	61	55	54	413
%	8.2%	14.5%	17.7%	18.4%	14.8%	13.3%	13.1%	100%

Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin	White	Other	Total	Disability	No Disability Declared	Disability Declared	Total
Recommendations	36	0	36	Recommendations	35	1	36
%	100.0%	0.0%	100%	%	97.2%	2.8%	100%
Applicant Pools	398	15	413	Applicant Pools	386	27	413
%	96.4%	3.6%	100%	%	93.5%	6.5%	100%

Personal Location

Personal Geographic Location				
Location	Recommendations	%	Applicant Pool	%
Belfast	14	38.9%	162	39.2%
Co Antrim	6	16.7%	61	14.8%
Co Armagh	1	2.8%	23	5.6%
Co Down	9	25.0%	91	22.0%
Co Fermanagh	1	2.8%	8	1.9%
Co Londonderry	3	8.3%	29	7.0%



Co Tyrone	2	5.6%	31	7.5%
Other	0	0.0%	8	1.9%
Not indicated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	36	100%	413	100%

Business Location

Business Geographic Location				
Location	Recommendations	%	Applicant Pool	%
Belfast	27	75.0%	320	77.5%
Co Antrim	2	5.6%	14	3.4%
Co Armagh	1	2.8%	9	2.2%
Co Down	2	5.6%	20	4.8%
Co Fermanagh	0	0.0%	5	1.2%
Co Londonderry	1	2.8%	13	3.1%
Co Tyrone	2	5.6%	12	2.9%
Other	0	0.0%	19	4.6%
Not indicated	1	2.8%	1	0.2%
Total	36	100.0%	413	100.0%