



NIJAC

*Northern Ireland Judicial
Appointments Commission*

**NORTHERN IRELAND JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS
COMMISSION**

BUSINESS PLAN 2010-2011

Contents

Background	3
Commission's roles and responsibilities	4
Our work to date	5-6
Key Focus 10/11	7-9
Contact details	10
Objectives	11-23
Appendix A – Membership of the Commission	24
Appendix B – Staffing Structure	25

BACKGROUND

The Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission

The Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (the Commission) was established on 15 June 2005 under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Acts 2002 and 2004. This legislation implements the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice Review.

The Commission is an independent Non-Departmental Public Body comprising 13 members who were appointed by the Lord Chancellor and drawn from the judiciary, the legal profession and members of the public who are not qualified lawyers (Appendix A). The Chairman is the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Sir Declan Morgan.

The Commission is supported by a secretariat of 18 staff, headed up by Edward Gorringe (Appendix B).

The Commission's roles and responsibilities

The Commission has five key roles:

1. To conduct the appointments process and select and appoint, or recommend for appointment, applicants in respect of all listed judicial offices up to and including High Court Judge.
2. To recommend applicants solely on the basis of merit.
3. To engage in a programme of action to secure, so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so, that appointments to listed judicial offices are such that those holding such offices are reflective of the community in Northern Ireland.
4. To engage in a programme of action to secure, so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so, that a range of persons reflective of the community in Northern Ireland is available for consideration by the Commission whenever it is required to select a person to be appointed, or recommended for appointment, to a listed judicial office.
5. To publish an annual report setting out the activities and accounts for the past year.

Our work to date

Since being established we have concentrated on our very demanding programme of appointments and re-appointments. This involved developing, implementing and delivering Scheme Outreach Plans for each post.

At the same time, we have carried out an extensive consultation and review of our appointments policies and procedures. This has led to new policies and processes being developed during the year, all of which are now available on our website.

In October 2008 we published research into the barriers and disincentives to judicial office. This independent research was carried out by the School of Law, Queens University Belfast (QUB) and the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA).

The main part of the research was conducted by survey and then complemented by discussions with key individuals and focus groups to explore findings.

The research is used to inform the Commission's programme of work.

This led to the launch of the first ever Judicial Shadowing Scheme (open to lawyers, doctors and land valuation professionals) in Northern Ireland and the publication of NIJAC's Guide to Judicial Careers.

In the last year the Commission has delivered over 16 dedicated outreach events, and has been represented at many more; encompassing the legal profession, land valuation experts and the wider community/ voluntary sector. This is to raise awareness about our work and judicial offices and to encourage more people, both lay and professional, to apply.

We continue to engage with the Lord Chief Justice's Office, the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), the Bar Council and the Law Society of Northern Ireland in Outreach and Communication work.

We look forward to continued relationship building with law student bodies and other professions, in particular medical, to promote the various Courts, Tribunals and judicial offices for which we recruit.

Since our establishment on 15 June 2005 213 people have been recommended and appointed to judicial office. 39 competitions have been advertised, 2539 application packs have been issued and 860 applications have been received and assessed. We have also recommended 486 office holders for re-appointment since our establishment.

Key Focus for 10/11

Our primary focus will continue to be to meet the very demanding programme of appointments and re-appointments. Our best estimate is that we will commence around 11 competitions this year (with an associated outreach plan for each) but invariably this figure changes throughout the year as new information comes to light. In addition we shall concentrate on four related key areas:-

- To continue to review our policies and procedures following our public consultation and our scheme by scheme analysis. Specific focus will be on further development of our assessment methods, including the continued piloting of the use of role plays and further analysis on the marking process.
- To continue to use the research findings into the identification of barriers and disincentives to applying for judicial posts for the legal profession, plus information forthcoming from scheme evaluations, to help plan, inform and target our work, including outreach.
- To continue implementation of the research review and associated action plan, through working in partnership with interested parties.
- To ensure a smooth transition under devolution, including the transfer to another sponsor department, securing corporate/support services, agreeing framework documents, settling terms and conditions for staff and introducing the new roles and responsibilities included in the Northern Ireland Act 2009.

Finance

The Commission has been provided, by the Court Service, with a budget for 2010-2011 of £1.66M. It is expected that around 70% of our budget will be

expended on core business, i.e. running appointment schemes and the associated diversity and communications work and around 30% will be expended on corporate planning, resources and governance. The majority of expenditure relates to staff salaries, accommodation costs and support services received. It has been agreed with the NICTS and OFMdfM that any additional funding required will be forthcoming through the supplementary process. Any additional funding requirements flowing from devolution will be the subject of separate discussions with OFMdfM.

Efficiencies

The Commission assesses all its work and expenditure in value for money terms. All appropriate procurement and tendering guidance is adhered to, to ensure value for money is achieved and demonstrated. We formally evaluate the services we receive to ensure high quality standards are maintained. Efficiencies were made in 2009/10 by using electronic communication where possible rather than hard copy publications. The advertising spend was also reduced by occasionally combining various schemes/competitions in one advert. In-house training continues to target areas which will enable staff to carry out roles which were previously undertaken by consultants.

Devolution

On devolution the Commission's sponsorship department changed from the Northern Ireland Court Service to OFMdfM. Devolution of justice has impacted on the Commission in two main areas: firstly the change in sponsorship department will impact upon the provision of corporate/support services and secondly, the new roles and responsibilities the Commission has been tasked with under the Northern Ireland Act 2009. Prior to devolution our corporate services were procured from the Northern Ireland Court Service, which became an agency of the Department of Justice. These services will

continue until the provision of our services in the devolved environment is agreed.

The Northern Ireland Act 2009 amended the post-devolution provision made in the Justice (Northern Ireland) Acts 2002 and 2004, to reflect the political agreement reached by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Under the 2009 Act the Commission took on new responsibilities relating to appointments to and removals from, judicial office. The Commission became both the assessing and appointing body for the vast majority of judicial offices. Recommendations will continue to be made through the Lord Chancellor, for appointment by Her Majesty the Queen, for High Court judges, County Court judges, District Judges (Magistrates' Court) and Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners.

The Bill also places a duty on the Commission to agree with the Department of Justice the maximum number of persons who may hold a listed judicial office at any time. We continue to work closely with NICTS and OFMdfM to ensure a smooth transition under devolution and to ensure that we have the correct resource required to carry out our existing and new roles.

Contact details

Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission

Headline Building

10/14 Victoria Street

BELFAST

BT1 3GG

Telephone: (02890) 72 8551

Fax: (02890) 72 8566

Textphone: (02890) 72 8568

Email: judicialappointments@nijac.org

Website: www.nijac.org

OBJECTIVES

This Business Plan sets out how we will achieve the objectives set out in our Corporate Plan and outlines how these objectives will be delivered and measured, and within what timetable, during 2010/2011

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
<u>Appointments Process</u> To conduct the appointments process and select candidates on merit for appointment, and recommendation for appointment, in respect of all listed judicial offices up to and including High Court judge.	1. To make recommendations to the Lord Chancellor for appointments and re-appointments to any judicial offices listed in Schedule 1 of the 2002 Act where the appointment is made by the Queen and make appointments and re-appointments to any other judicial office listed in Schedule 1 to the 2002 Act.	Compliance with statutory responsibilities under Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002, the Northern Ireland Act 2009 and Equality Codes of Practice and Employment Legislation.	NIJAC fulfil the business needs for the sponsoring department and promote equality of opportunity in the selection methods it adopts.	Meet and deliver recommendations for appointments and re-appointments. NIJAC forecast future schemes linked to workforce planning requirements.	

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
	<p>2. To develop and implement an Appointments strategy following the strategic review and consultation of appointments policies and procedures that will detail the Appointments development work and new initiatives.</p>	<p>Compliance with statutory responsibilities under Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002, the Northern Ireland Act 2009 and equality Codes of Practice / employment legislation.</p>	<p>To continue and implement the project plan and work of the Competency Sub Group.</p> <p>To review and implement the outcomes of the strategic review of consultation.</p> <p>To continue to develop a revised set of appointments policies and procedures.</p> <p>To carry out further research into new initiatives regarding wider assessment methods that are appropriate for judicial office.</p> <p>To carry out small scale pilots of additional assessment methods to assist in developing an appropriate bank of wider</p>	<p>Commission can fulfil statutory duties in adherence to Employment legislation and governing statutes such as the Justice Act and adheres to the spirit of s75 legislation.</p> <p>Commission fulfils its Appointments Strategy.</p> <p>Head of Appointments will develop a project plan for Policy Committee / Business Committee on accredited Recruitment model.</p> <p>Appointments Team will produce a combined report with Diversity Team post competition to analyse</p>	

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
			<p>assessment tools.</p> <p>To work in partnership with the Diversity Team to put in place the foundations for the development of an on line recruitment system to improve internal appointment systems and external communication with the applicant pool.</p> <p>Equality proofing of any new or reviewed policies introduced by the Commission in line with Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998.</p> <p>To carry out a quality assurance exercise with individual Selection Committees post competition to implement an ethos of continuous improvement and identify improvements to the process and tools</p>	<p>and make recommendations for continuous improvement to the selection process.</p>	

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
			<p>employed to meet NIJAC principles.</p> <p>To develop and implement an accredited quality kitemark for the recruitment and selection function.</p>		
	<p>3. To implement a learning and development programme for Commissioners and staff to continuously improve the recruitment, assessment and selection and function.</p>	<p>Compliance with Equality Law and Diversity best practice.</p>	<p>Arranging and/or delivering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and selection training. • Equality and diversity training. • Ensuring Commissioners (and staff) comply with employment & equality legislation and HR/diversity best practice. • Court observations for staff. 	<p>To host training events / one to one coaching sessions for Commissioners and staff.</p> <p>To provide information updates to Commissioners on best practice in selection and recruitment.</p>	

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
<p><u>Diversity</u></p> <p>To engage in programmes of action to secure, so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so, a judiciary in Northern Ireland that is as reflective of our society as can be achieved consistent with the requirement of appointment on merit.</p>	<p>4. To carry out equity monitoring of appointment schemes and produce reports of the findings.</p>	<p>Compliance with statutory responsibilities under Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002, the Northern Ireland Act 2009 and the Data Protection Act 1998.</p>	<p>Collate and evaluate equity information for each scheme.</p> <p>Maintain and check equity information confidentially and in accordance with data protection principles.</p>	<p>Produce reports within 14 days of completion of the selection and assessment process for each scheme.</p>	
	<p>5. To carry out an annual equity monitoring exercise and to produce a report summarising the position regarding applications for judicial appointments during the year, and the position regarding judicial office holders, compared with the applicant pool.</p>	<p>Compliance with statutory responsibilities under Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 and the Northern Ireland Act 2009.</p>	<p>Complete in accordance with approved timetable.</p>	<p>Annual report from NISRA on serving judicial office holders to identify areas of under representation by June 2010.</p> <p>Analysis will be further enhanced due to additional data on lay members and legal branch of profession</p>	

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
				being included.	
	6. Having now completed the NISRA/QUB research, continue implementation of the Research Review and associated action plan.	Compliance with statutory responsibilities under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 and the Northern Ireland Act 2009.	<p>Annually review the Communications Strategy and revise combined Communications and Diversity Statement.</p> <p>Collaboration with the professional bodies.</p> <p>Collaboration with the employing authorities e.g. NICTS and Departments.</p> <p>Conduct outreach to the legal profession and law student population.</p>	<p>For approval by Policy Committee by September 2010.</p> <p>4 meetings.</p> <p>8 meetings.</p> <p>8 events/seminars.</p>	

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
	7. Having shared the desk based research into non-legal posts with the Tribunal Service progress the agreed way ahead		<p>Possibly conduct specific research into the barriers to judicial appointment for the medical profession.</p> <p>Conduct tailored outreach to the medical profession in collaboration with relevant tribunals</p>	<p>Approval by October 2010</p> <p>2 events</p>	
	8. Build upon last years' success with outreach to civic society		Conduct tailored outreach via civic society to promote judicial office generally, and lay posts in particular	2 events	

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
<p><u>Accountability</u></p> <p>To make effective and efficient use of our resources in order to achieve our objectives.</p>	<p>9. To continue to work with the OFMDFM to ensure a smooth transition under devolution, agree SLAs and framework documents with interested parties, settle secondment arrangements for staff to ensure that the Commission can operate effectively and meet its objectives.</p>	<p>Statutory imperative.</p>	<p>Constructive discussion and negotiation with OFMDFM and others.</p>	<p>The Commission's work progresses without interruption upon devolution. New roles and relationships are effectively handled.</p>	
	<p>10. To ensure that the Commission demonstrates the highest levels of information assurance.</p>	<p>DPA, FOIA, best practice and our suite of Information Assurance policies.</p>	<p>Consider ISO 27001 accreditation after move to new ICT provider.</p>	<p>Commission's assets are handled, stored and shared in accordance with best practice.</p>	

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
	11. To publish the Annual Report and Accounts 2009/2010.	Statutory imperative.	To receive an unqualified audit opinion from Northern Ireland Audit Office.	To publish Annual Report and Accounts within timetable agreed with NIAO.	
	12. By March 2011 to secure from the sponsorship department the required level of resources to deliver the Commissions 2011/12 objectives.	Comprehensive spending review.	Timetable and processes to be agreed with the sponsorship department.	To have sufficient resources to meet the Commission's 2011/2012 objectives.	
	13. To maintain internal financial and stewardship controls within the Commission, which meet government guidelines.	Managing Public Money and best practice.	<p>Assurances and risks monitored at Audit and Risk Management Committee meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of agreed management information to the Commission. • Financial summaries • Reviews under audit 	Favourable Statement of Internal Control signed by Accounting Officer following Stewardship Statements signed by Business Managers.	

			plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Risk Management Committee updates 		
	14. To demonstrate strong corporate governance at all times.	DFP guidelines and best practice	<p>Arrange meetings of Audit and Risk Management Committee, review audit plan and respond to any audit recommendations made.</p> <p>Implement and update policies and procedures in respect of the Commission's human and other resources, throughout the year.</p> <p>Review and adhere to standing orders and terms of reference.</p> <p>Risk management policy adhered to and risk register monitored and agreed action implemented.</p> <p>Required codes of conduct adhered to throughout</p>	<p>Commission runs effectively while adhering to Government guidance and best practice.</p> <p>Monitor provision of services received under SLAs.</p>	

			<p>year.</p> <p>Relationship with sponsor department, formalised in agreed Management Statement and Financial Memorandum and in agreed SLAs, is reviewed and maintained.</p> <p>Gifts and Hospitality Register maintained throughout year.</p> <p>Fees policy adhered to throughout the year.</p> <p>Assets Register updated and maintained throughout the year.</p> <p>Code of Practice – adhered to throughout the year.</p> <p>Maintain IT Risk Management Accreditation and Documentation Set.</p>		
--	--	--	--	--	--

Corporate Plan Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Driver Measures	Outcome Measures	Targets	Status
<p><u>External Communications</u></p> <p>To communicate helpful information, advice and guidance to targeted audiences to stimulate interest and raise awareness; encourage applications from under-represented groups; improve understanding of the application process and what judicial office entails; demonstrate openness and transparency and that appointments</p>	<p>15. To continue to implement the communication/diversity strategy to include continued website development, including online applications, circulation of articles and publications.</p>	<p>Best practice.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of Commission in external press.</p> <p>Design and possibly print publications, but at least have available online.</p> <p>Test and go live with online recruitment.</p> <p>Upon devolution review literature and web content etc to ensure accuracy</p>	<p>A minimum of 3 articles.</p> <p>Guide to Appointments process available by June 10</p> <p>Upon settlement of our IT services.</p> <p>Within 3 months of impact on NIJAC of devolution</p>	
	<p>16. To maintain a publication scheme as approved by the Information Commissioner's office and respond to all Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act queries</p>	<p>Freedom of Information Act.</p>	<p>Appropriate information made available through website and responses to written queries.</p>	<p>Targets contained in the guidelines are adhered to.</p>	

are made solely on the basis of merit.	within the set guidelines.				
---	----------------------------	--	--	--	--

Membership of the Commission

Chairman: The Right Honourable Sir Declan Morgan, Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland.

Members: Mrs Sinead Burns, Lay Magistrate
The Right Honourable Lord Justice Coghlin, Lord Justice of Appeal
Mr Peter Cush, Barrister at Law
Mr Donal Flanagan OBE, Lay Member
Mr John Gordon, Solicitor
District Judge (Magistrates' Court) Henderson, District Judge
Mrs Ruth Laird, Lay Member
Her Honour Judge Loughran, County Court Judge
Professor John Morison, Lay Member
Dr Raymond Mullan OBE, Lay Member
Dr Nichola Rooney, Lay Member
The Honourable Mr Justice Weatherup, High Court Judge

The judicial members have been re-appointed for a period of 5 years, the lay members have been re-appointed for 4 years and the legal members for a period of 3 years. Profiles of all Commissioners can be found on our website under 'Who we are'.

