



**NIJAC**

*Northern Ireland Judicial  
Appointments Commission*

# Business Plan

2019-2020

**Introduction**

**Our Statutory Responsibilities**

**Key Focus for 2019/20**

**Contact Details**

**Business Plan Objectives 2019/20**

## Introduction

The Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) is an independent public body established to bring about an open and transparent system for appointing members of the judiciary in Northern Ireland.

The Commission ordinarily comprises of 13 Commissioners drawn from the judiciary, legal profession and other backgrounds. All Commissioners have an equal say in our work and are of equal status.

In addition to Plenary (the executive decision making board) there are three standing committees which have been established to deliver our commitments:

- Policy Committee
- Business Committee
- Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Commissioners are supported by 12 staff, headed by a Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

This Business Plan outlines our priorities for the period April 2019 to March 2020 and reflects the commitments/objectives set out in the Corporate Plan for the period 2017 to 2020.

The draft Programme for Government (PfG) has a framework of 14 outcomes. These provide direction and clarity in delivering public services. NIJAC's business objectives and targets for 2019/20 are underpinned by and reflect the following draft PfG outcomes:

- 7) We have a safe community where we respect law, and each other
- 8) We care for others and we help those in need, and
- 9) We are a shared society that respects diversity.

## **Our statutory responsibilities**

1. To select and appoint and recommend for appointment, in respect of all listed judicial offices up to and including High Court Judge.
2. To recommend applicants for appointment 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 judicial office 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 whenever we are 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.

## Key Focus for 2019/20

The diagram identifies four key work areas, each of which interact with the other and work towards our key aim of meritorious, reflective appointments.



The 2019/20 business plan is outcome focussed, it delivers on key priorities and targets, which include the management of risk and through monitoring and reporting, measure our success in delivering our business objectives.

## Contact Details

Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission  
Headline Building  
10-14 Victoria Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 3GG

Telephone: 028 9056 9100  
Text phone: 028 9056 9124  
Email: [judicialappointments@nijac.gov.uk](mailto:judicialappointments@nijac.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.nijac.gov.uk](http://www.nijac.gov.uk)

## Business Plan Objectives 2019/20

What Will We Do	How Will We Do It	Outcomes	Key Milestones/Targets
<b><u>Recruitment &amp; Selection</u></b>			
<b>We will strive to meet our statutory duty to ensure a reflective judiciary which is appointed on merit.</b>	1. We will develop, implement and deliver a programme of action to attract applications from the widest possible pool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence based programme of action successfully delivered on time and within allocated budget</li> <li>• Identification of social media platforms to enable wider reach through engagement</li> <li>• In-year review of programme of action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted outreach plan for medical consultants by May 2019</li> <li>• Analysis and dissemination of QUB research findings by March 2020</li> <li>• Establish baseline for Twitter followers by October 2019 having benchmarked against JAC and JABS, aiming for 50 followers on Twitter by March 2020</li> <li>• Review the programme of action by December 2019</li> </ul>
	2. We will deliver a programme of appointment schemes that meet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme of appointments schemes agreed according to business need, delivered on time and within allocated budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a minimum of 8 schemes by March 2020</li> </ul>

What Will We Do	How Will We Do It	Outcomes	Key Milestones/Targets
	business needs and supports continuity in Courts and Tribunals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment Schemes will be quality assured through the Lessons Learned reports and Scheme Evaluations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 month Liaison Meetings completed in May 2019 and October 2019</li> <li>NIJAC will complete assessment within 60 working days of the advert date in line with KPIs</li> <li>Scheme Evaluations and Lessons Learned Reports to be delivered within 30 working days of applicants being informed of outcome in line with KPIs</li> </ul>

What Will We Do	How Will We Do It	Outcomes	Key Milestones/Targets
	<p>3. We will review and benchmark what we do and implement an evidence based plan of action to deliver good practice in judicial appointments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence based Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) delivered on time and within allocated budget, having appropriately benchmarked with JAC and JABS</li>   <li>• Recruitment and assessment policies due for review in 2019/20 approved on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (RENAP) Assessment Methods recommendations to June Plenary by June 2019</li>   <li>• (RENAP) Literature Review to Plenary by December 2019</li>   <li>• Review Overarching Guiding Principles of Appointment by June 2019</li>   <li>• 7 Policies/Guidance documents due for review by March 2020</li> </ul>

<b><u>Our People</u></b>			
<b>We will fulfil our commitments through the efforts of skilled and engaged Commissioners, Co-opted Experts and Staff.</b>	4. We will develop an organisational structure to ensure NIJAC is fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Strategy will be developed to ensure staff are fully trained and engaged, considering areas of L&amp;D and reward &amp; recognition for NIJAC Staff by February 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Strategy developed by Feb 2020</li> </ul>
	5. We will provide continuing professional development for our staff to ensure we provide a high quality public service across appointments and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained and effective staff team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Training Plan delivered by March 2020</li> <li>• Timescales for Performance Reviews met during 2019/20</li> </ul>
	6. We will put in place a Programme of Development to ensure that all Commissioners and Co-Opted Members are clear and confident in their roles and responsibilities and supported to deliver on our commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIJAC Plenary and Committees provide governance and financial oversight and scrutiny</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioner Annual Training Plan delivered by March 2020</li> <li>• Annual Performance Reviews for Commissioners successfully completed by June 2019</li> <li>• 100% of Commissioners and Co-opted members receive</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trained and effective Commissioners and Co-opted Selection Committee members ensure meritorious appointments</li></ul>	recruitment and selection training as required by March 2020.
--	--	--	---

**Working with Others**

<p><b>We will work closely with others to deliver our statutory duties and implement good practice.</b></p>	<p>7. We will engage openly and constructively with key stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the judicial appointments’ programme of action, recruitment and selection and associated matters will be informed by open and constructive engagement with key stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted consultation on 2020 draft Corporate Plan (including 20/21 Business Plan) completed by February 2020</li> <li>• Targeted initiatives delivered in partnership with Royal College of Psychiatrists by October 2019</li> </ul>
	<p>8. We will engage positively with the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) and Departmental representatives to ensure timely appointments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positively influence departmental policy impacting on judicial appointments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted engagement on key policy areas including Renewal of Appointments and Tribunal Fees (Medical Consultants) by March 2020</li> </ul>

**Accountability**

<p><b>We will make judicial appointments while safeguarding public money and making the best use of resources.</b></p>	<p>9. We will manage our resources effectively through sound financial management and controls, while increasing our efficiency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operate within allocated budget within tolerance level of 1.5%.</li> <li>• An evaluation of digital working to enable efficiencies.</li> <li>• Monitoring Round submissions for operating expenditure and capital expenditure requirements in line with TEO timetable</li> <li>• Consumption and cash forecast submissions to TEO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly returns completed by March 2020</li> <li>• 98% of supplier invoices paid within 10 working days.</li> <li>• Appraisal of options completed by September 2019</li> <li>• June 2019, Oct 2019 and January 2020</li> <li>• 12 submissions by March 2020</li> </ul>
	<p>10. We will protect all data held, safeguarding the confidentiality of applicants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All data held and disposed of in accordance with the NIJAC Disposal of Documents Schedule</li> <li>• Annual Internal Audit Assurance Report with a satisfactory assurance rating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing throughout 2019/20.</li> <li>• Received by 31 March 2020.</li> </ul>

	<p>11. We will deliver an effective governance system that will ensure probity and the safeguarding of public funds and provide assurance to our sponsor The Executive Office (TEO).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adherence to all sponsorship and corporate governance processes and practices as stated in the Arms' Length Body Sponsorship Manual and support the TEO Departmental Asset Management Plan.</li>   <li>• Effective risk and fraud detection, monitoring and reporting systems delivered</li>   <li>• TEO Assurance Statements on Internal Control submitted in line with TEO timetable</li>   <li>• TEO ALB Reports submitted in line with TEO timetable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing throughout 2019/20 and reported to Audit Risk &amp; Management Committee.</li>   <li>• Internal and External Audit scheduled agreed and completed by March 2020</li>   <li>• KPMG Governance Recommendations considered by June 2019, those adopted implemented by March 2020.</li>   <li>• Reported to Audit Risk &amp; Management Committee quarterly.</li>   <li>• Quarterly</li>   <li>• Quarterly</li> </ul>
--	--	--	--