



## **Second Stage Feedback Report**

**0800: Recorder**

**February 2016**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide general feedback on the scenario based written test used to shortlist candidates in the Second Stage of the 2015 Recorder selection exercise.

The first part of this report describes how the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) developed and structured the scenario based written test which was reviewed alongside the self-assessment. The second provides information on the overall performance of candidates.

A copy of the Qualifying Test Feedback Report for this exercise is also available on the JAC website.

## **Competencies**

The competencies for the post of Recorder used for this selection exercise are published on the JAC website [here](#).

There are two sets of competencies: one for family and one for crime.

## **Structure of the test**

The second shortlisting stage consisted of a scenario based written test, held on 18 May 2015, which was reviewed alongside the candidate's self-assessment. A maximum value of 240 points were available for each element (480 points in total).

To proceed to Selection Day, candidates were required to score a minimum of 90 points in each element.

### Scenario Based Written Test

The written scenario involved a situation a Recorder may face and asked for an answer in direct speech format which would address the situation in no more than 400 words. There were two different scenarios: one for crime and one for family (75 minutes available for each).

Points were awarded on the basis of how well the candidate explained and managed the situation. Candidates were not penalised for the order in which they addressed the issues.

Candidates who applied for crime and family jurisdictions were required to complete both scenario based written tests (150 minutes available).

### Self-Assessment

Candidates submitted their self-assessment as part of the application form. They were asked to provide examples of how they had demonstrated the competencies

required for the post of Recorder. There were six competencies for Crime and six for Family.

For this exercise, each competency attracted a maximum of 40 points attributed as follows:

- Outstanding evidence - 40 points
- Strong evidence - 30 points
- Good evidence - 20 points
- Sufficient evidence -10 points
- Insufficient evidence - nil points

The word limit for each response was 250 words (note form was permissible).

### **Development of the Second Stage**

The scenario based written tests were devised by experienced judicial members from each jurisdiction.

As with all shortlisting tools used by the JAC, the test was subject to an extensive quality and equality assurance process. The JAC Advisory Group, a committee comprised of representatives from the judiciary and the legal professions, also offered advice and guidance during its development.

### **Reference Material**

All candidates were advised to read the [guidance](#) on completing a self-assessment and the competencies being tested before submitting their application.

In advance of taking the scenario test, the drafting judges advised candidates to familiarise themselves with the following areas:

#### Crime

- Appeal against conviction (to the Crown Court from the Magistrate's Court)
- Special measures

#### Family

- Family Procedure Rules PD12J
- Children Law & Practice: B[332]

### **General Comments on Candidate Performance**

#### Scenario Test

The test was designed to assess the candidate's ability to communicate effectively and exercise judgement.

Candidates who achieved higher results were able to demonstrate that they understood the central issues, took a pragmatic approach and concentrated on what

the best action was to take. They effectively utilised the word count with clear and concise points that were relevant to the situation at hand.

A comparison of the overall results for each jurisdiction suggests both scenarios were set at the same level of difficulty.

### Self-Assessment

The panels agreed that many candidates were lacking in specific examples against the competencies. The self-assessments were often too brief, relied on assertion and gave little evidence under the competencies to demonstrate their ability to take on the role or their transferable skills.

Candidates who achieved higher results consistently provided examples that:

- described what the situation was, the objective, the action they took and the result;
- focussed on their actions and their responsibilities – not the situation as a whole;
- clearly and explicitly showed how their experience demonstrated the competencies;
- were concise and to the point; and
- did not rely on assertions.

### **Distribution and combination of marks**

#### Crime

The highest score achieved in the written scenario was 240 points out of a possible 240 points, and the lowest recorded score was 30 points; the average score was 125 points.

The highest self-assessment score achieved was 240 points out of a possible 240 points, and the lowest recorded score was 10 points; the average score was 95 points.

The highest overall score achieved by a candidate was 440 points out of a possible 480 points, and the lowest was 50 points.

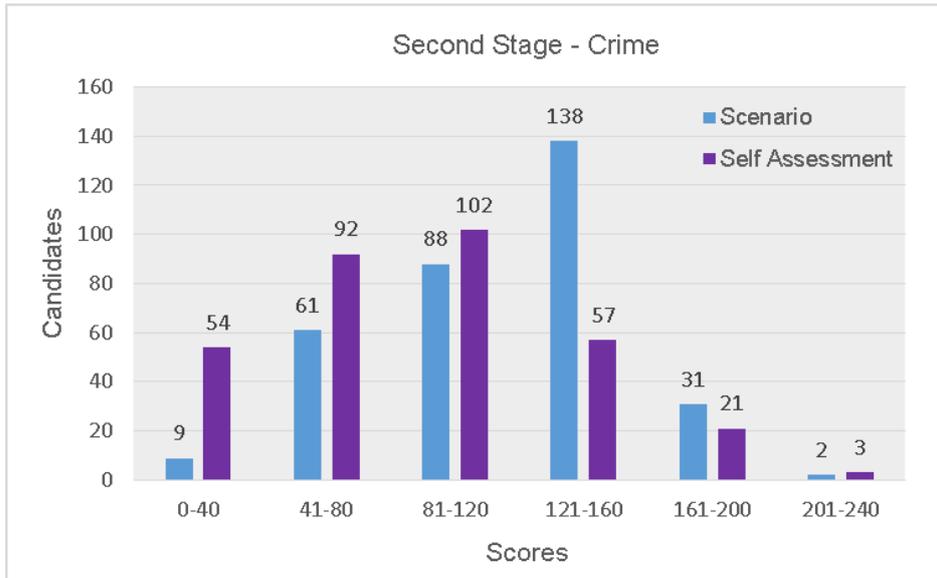


Chart 1 – Distribution of results for the Crime candidates

Family

The highest score achieved in the written scenario was 230 points out of a possible 240 points, and the lowest recorded score was 30 points; the average score was 125 points.

The highest self-assessment score achieved was 200 points out of a possible 240 points and the lowest recorded score was 20 points; the average score was 100 points.

The highest overall score achieved by a candidate was 380 points out of a possible 480 points, and the lowest was 90 points.

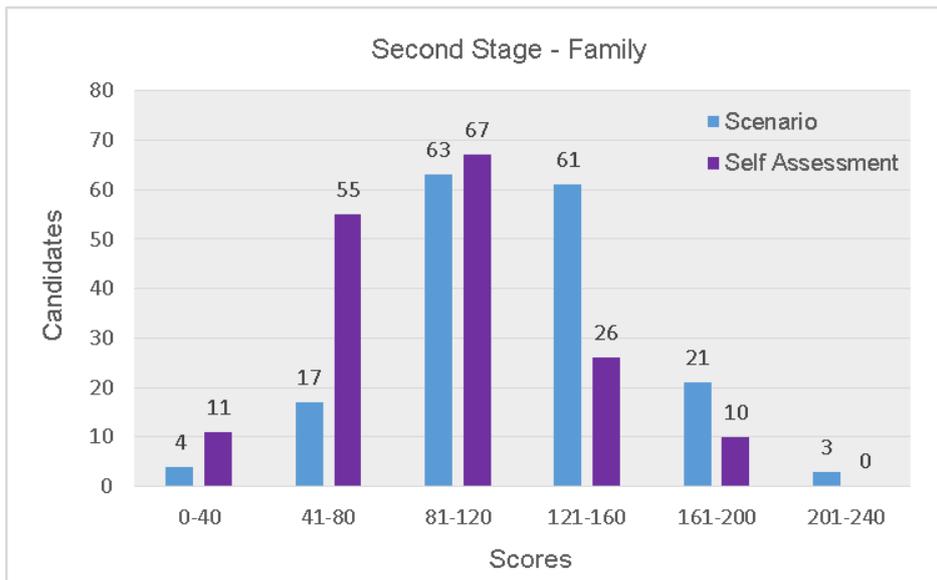


Chart 2 – Distribution of results for the Family candidates

### **Progression to Selection Day**

The most meritorious 204 candidates were invited to attend a selection day. This represented a ratio of 2:1 to the number of vacancies available, and was consistent with the JAC's stated policy of inviting no less than two candidates to interview per vacancy available.