

JDF cover statement to sit alongside JDF action plan and priorities

Since its inception, the Judicial Diversity Forum (JDF) has been committed to understanding and addressing the barriers that exist at all levels to achieving a judiciary that better reflects the society it serves.

Through the collective efforts, insights and expertise of the legal professions, Ministry of Justice, Judiciary, Judicial Appointments Commission and the Legal Services Board who make up the Forum, a wide programme of work aimed at supporting greater judicial diversity is being delivered. We have published a one-year update to the 2020 JDF action plan that sets out the range of actions taken, both collectively and by individual JDF members.

However, the JDF recognises that there is more to do to improve the rate of progress of under-represented groups, specifically women; individuals from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups; those with disabilities and those from non-traditional professional backgrounds. Prompt action is required at all stages of the process and from all members of the JDF. We have therefore also published the priorities for the year ahead identified by each member for further action to address the barriers that exist.

Collectively and as individual members, the JDF remains strongly committed to taking action that will improve diversity in the judiciary. To achieve this we are:

- **Placing transparency, data, evidence and insight at the heart of our activities.** We will explore opportunities for strengthening our data reporting and collection and undertake further qualitative research and analysis to ensure that we understand the stories behind our numbers and can take evidence-based action. We commit to continued transparency and clarity in our reporting; developing common frameworks to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of our diversity initiatives and shape our future JDF action plans. We will seek to ensure that the value of our activities and initiatives can be more accurately assessed and use those findings to continue strengthening and shaping our future support for underrepresented groups.
- **Delivering development programmes and directing support to diverse candidates.** We are providing support and interventions at every career stage, from recruitment and retention activities within the legal professions and the expansion of professional development programmes to pre-application support and career development opportunities for those within the judiciary. We will be making greater use of digital channels and tools to reach more potential candidates and targeting our outreach at underrepresented and non-traditional candidate groups.
- **Communicating clearly and consistently with, and listening carefully to, under-represented groups.** We will provide accurate and timely information about career development opportunities, the judicial application process and sources of support, and tailor this information to ensure maximum impact. We will be seeking to better understand the barriers that candidates face and provide them with the information and support they need to have confidence in the selection process and to apply when they are ready.
- **Amplifying the voices and experiences** of legal professionals, judges and successful judicial applicants from underrepresented groups to help inform and inspire prospective, current and future judicial office holders. We will highlight different judicial pathways and the experiences of diverse role models. We will use the learning and knowledge shared through feedback channels to review and improve our approaches and will look for opportunities to work with, and learn from, the experiences of stakeholders outside of the JDF.

Above all we commit to continue working together to put diversity at the heart of our activities and providing strategic leadership and direction to overcome the barriers to career progression, appointment and judicial advancement impacting underrepresented groups.