

Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission



Annual Business Plan
2024 – 2025

Contents

Introduction	3
The draft Programme for Government	4
Our Statutory Responsibilities	4
Contact Details	5
List of Outcomes, Actions and Measures	6

Introduction

By Tonya McCormac, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC)



During the last year, NIJAC has continued to work, in partnership with others to make meritorious appointments to Judicial Office in Northern Ireland. We continued to progress at pace a number of key pieces of planned work linked to organisational development and a commitment to continuous improvement, despite a challenging financial environment for the public sector in Northern Ireland.

This new planning year will see NIJAC continue to focus on achieving its two long term outcomes:

- Contributing to confidence in the judiciary through meritorious appointments and reflecting the community (as far as it is reasonably practicable to do so).
- NIJAC is recognised as an open, transparent and well run organisation and valued by stakeholders.

Through this Outcomes Based Accountability approach, NIJAC will continue to demonstrate the impact of our work and measure our success as a public body in Northern Ireland.

This business plan continues to set the framework for our work and is underpinned by NIJAC's corporate values. This document is the final annual business plan within the 5-year corporate strategy 2020-2025. During this year the Commission will develop its new 5-year corporate strategy 2025-2030 ensuring a clear vision and setting the strategic direction for the future of the Commission.

I would like to thank the NIJAC Chair, Board, staff, and our stakeholders for their continued commitment to the work of the Commission and for their support during the last year. I am looking forward to continuing to work with all during the next year as we continue to make meritorious appointments across our Courts and Tribunals in Northern Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tonya McCormac".

NIJAC VALUES



This Plan incorporates the outcomes we aspire to as an organisation. It includes key actions and measures for the period April 2024 to March 2025. These will tell us if we are delivering our business well and allow us to implement changes and make improvements, ensuring value for money.



The Programme for Government

Following the restoration of the Executive in February, a Programme for Government has not yet been agreed. This plan has been prepared based on the most recent draft Programme for Government (PfG) framework which aimed to provide direction and clarity in delivering public services in Northern Ireland. NIJAC's outcomes, actions, and measures for 2024/25 have been developed primarily taking account of the following outcome in the draft PfG:

- Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other;

NIJAC play an important role in working with others to ensure citizens in Northern Ireland have access to justice at all levels. When a Programme for Government is agreed we will review our plan to ensure we continue to align with the Executive's strategic priorities.



Our Statutory Responsibilities

1. To select, 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.

This 2024/25 Annual Business Plan will contribute to us achieving our longer-term outcomes. When implementing the various actions within the plan, we will be identifying and managing any potential risks to achieving these and providing assurances to our stakeholders that these risks are being effectively managed by our people, systems and various controls. Through ongoing monitoring and reporting of our performance, we will continue to measure our success in delivering our outcomes.



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

Website: www.nijac.gov.uk

Twitter: @NIJACNews

LinkedIn: NI Judicial Appointments Commission

Theme	Outcomes <i>(Description of intended impact)</i>	Actions <i>(How we will achieve our outcomes)</i>	Measures <i>(How we will measure success)</i>
Recognising Merit	To have judicial appointments based on merit using a range of valid and reliable assessment methods.	<p>Full implementation of the new Judicial Profile across all schemes.</p> <hr/> <p>Use valid and reliable Rating Scales to determine Merit.</p>	<p>Completion of a post project evaluation on the new Judicial Profile by December 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Completion of a Review of the Rating Scales by March 2025</p>
Reflecting the Community	To have a judiciary which is as reflective of the community as far as is reasonably practicable.	<p>Collate, analyse, and report on diversity data arising from recruitment schemes, applicant pools and those holding judicial office.</p> <hr/> <p>Maintain effective and informative data reporting structures which inform Commissioners of the outcomes of NIJAC's assessments.</p>	<p>Completion of a Review of data collation and reporting by August 2024</p> <p>Devise and implement new diversity data management and reporting structures by December 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Completion of the design and implementation of new data management and reporting structures relating to the outcomes of assessments by March 2025.</p>
Engaging with Others	To have increased levels of engagement with stakeholders to maximise the impact of our work.	<p>Implement the final year of NIJAC Communications Strategy 2020-25.</p> <hr/> <p>Informing internal and external audiences of the outcomes of our work.</p> <hr/> <p>Conducting outreach activities with potential applicant pools and those with an interest in judicial appointments.</p>	<p>Completion of a Review of its Communications Strategy 2020-25</p> <p>Completion of the design and launch of its new Communications Strategy 2025-30 by March 2025</p> <hr/> <p>Design and implement new reports informing Commissioners, applicants, stakeholders and staff of scheme outcomes and the impact of our work by December 2024.</p> <hr/> <p>Completion of a review of scheme outreach activities by March 2025.</p> <p>Establishment of new opportunities and platforms to reach out to potential applicant pools by December 2024.</p>
Valuing our People	Commissioners and staff are engaged, work effectively, have good physical and mental wellbeing, and feel supported and fairly treated.	Strengthen staff engagement through improved communication and feedback from staff on key employment issues, in line with our	Design and develop 2-3 new opportunities for staff to feedback and improve internal communication by September 2024.

Theme	Outcomes <i>(Description of intended impact)</i>	Actions <i>(How we will achieve our outcomes)</i>	Measures <i>(How we will measure success)</i>
Valuing our People (continued)		<p>aim to create the environment in which staff do their best work.</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to refine Staff Structure to ensure it is leading to an effective workforce.</p> <hr/> <p>Embed NIJAC's new staff Competency Framework, to support on-going performance monitoring and development.</p> <hr/> <p>Refresh NIJAC's Values and programme for embedding across the workplace.</p> <hr/> <p>Deliver corporate learning and development needs through planned L&D activity on key themes for staff and Commissioners.</p>	<p>Work with NICHs on a number of wellbeing initiatives by December 2024.</p> <p>Implement quarterly programme of activities with H&W by March 2025</p> <hr/> <p>Implementation of BCS desktop review recommendations by April 2024.</p> <hr/> <p>Completion of staff training and workshops on application of Competency Framework by April 2024.</p> <p>Implementation of Framework in 2024-25 Performance cycle by March 2025.</p> <hr/> <p>Completion of refresher workshops for staff and action plans for further embedding NIJAC Values by June 2024.</p> <hr/> <p>Completion of L&D needs assessment by April 2024.</p> <p>Delivery of planned L&D activity by March 2025 including revised Board Development Plan.</p>
Delivering Sustainability and Accountability	<p>To have an organisation that is open, transparent and maintains public confidence.</p> <hr/> <p>Have sufficient resourcing and effective planning to undertake its work efficiently.</p> <hr/>	<p>Implementation of NIJACs internal Quality Management System.</p> <hr/> <p>Carry out monthly re-forecasting exercises during 2024-25 to allow NIJAC to participate fully in TEO monitoring rounds to provide the funding required to achieve 2024-25 Business Plan Outcomes.</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will determine the expected recruitment needs of the NI Judiciary over the period 2025-30 to support the NIJAC Corporate Plan 2025-30</p> <hr/>	<p>Staff trained by September 2024</p> <p>Implementation completed by March 2025.</p> <hr/> <p>Monthly forecasting exercises and monthly Business Plan monitoring at SLT with quarterly reporting of these to Business Committee.</p> <hr/> <p>Completion of a review of the recruitment needs of the judiciary in Northern Ireland for the period 2025-30 by September 2024.</p> <p>Informing the strategic priorities of the NIJAC Corporate Plan 2025-30 through the determination of recruitment needs for that period by October 2024.</p> <hr/>

Theme	Outcomes <i>(Description of intended impact)</i>	Actions <i>(How we will achieve our outcomes)</i>	Measures <i>(How we will measure success)</i>
	<p>Public funds are used effectively.</p>	<p>In collaboration with Stakeholders set the vision and strategic direction for NIJAC for 2025-2030 that will underpin the 5-year Corporate Plan</p> <hr/> <p>Determine the funding requirements that will be required to provide a stable financial basis to successfully deliver the Corporate Plan.</p> <hr/> <p>Ensure the operational processes, Staff and Board resources are in place to support the achievement of the 2025-2030 Corporate Outcomes.</p> <hr/> <p>Produce an outline Accommodation Strategy to inform the corporate plan.</p> <hr/> <p>Produce the 2025-2030 Corporate Plan and 2025-26 Business Plan.</p> <hr/> <p><u>Organisational Assurance & Good Governance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and implement NIJAC and TEO responsibilities under the Partnership Agreement. • Complete monthly and quarterly assurance reports. • Implement all recommendations that emanate from Internal and External Audit. • Provide the necessary information to TEO for the Consolidated Accounts process. • Complete the programme of Quarterly Board and standing Committee meetings to the agreed timetable. <hr/> <p><u>Cyber Security</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement recommendations that emanate from the second IA Report on Cyber Security. 	<p>Vision and Strategic Direction document finalised by 30 November 2024.</p> <hr/> <p>Present to TEO a 2025-2030 financial requirements document that supports the draft Corporate Plan period by 31 December 2024.</p> <hr/> <p>Operational processes reviewed and Staff/ Board resource plans in place by 31 December 2024.</p> <hr/> <p>Produce the outline plan by 30 November 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Corporate Plan 2025-2030 and Business Plan 2025-26 approved by Plenary by 31 March 2025</p> <hr/> <p>The Minutes of Quarterly meetings with TEO Sponsorship Unit confirm all responsibilities have been discharged.</p> <p>All reports submitted in line with the TEO timetable.</p> <p>Internal and External Auditors reports to ARAC confirm recommendations implemented within agreed dates.</p> <p>Required Information provided in line with TEO timetable.</p> <p>Meetings held in line with agreed timetable and all Action Points completed in line with agreed dates.</p> <hr/> <p>Internal Auditors report to ARAC confirms recommendations implemented within agreed dates.</p>