

Judicial Diversity Forum

Terms of Reference

1 Introduction

1.1 The Judicial Diversity Forum (JDF/'the Forum') replaced the Judicial Diversity Taskforce in 2015 as the body responsible for coordinating efforts to encourage judicial diversity. The format of the Forum was reviewed in 2019.

2 Purpose

2.1 The JDF brings together leaders from organisations from across the legal sector to identify and implement ways of improving judicial diversity.

3. Membership

3.1 The member organisations of the JDF are: The Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Judiciary, the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC), the Bar Council, the Law Society, the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx) and The Legal Services Board (LSB).

3.2 The JDF is chaired by the JAC Chair, Professor Lord Kakkar.

4 Objectives

4.1 JDF members work together in partnership to be both thought and action leaders in the area of judicial diversity. The Forum provides strategic direction in the areas of: challenging structural barriers to appointment, analysing and addressing the reasons behind differential progression, the gathering and use of data and evidence, resolving issues of common concern and the coordination of agreed activities aimed at encouraging greater judicial diversity. Forum members support each other's initiatives and undertake joint projects.

4.2 The Forum's current primary focus is on overseeing the development, delivery and efficacy of two joint initiatives: the Pre-Application Judicial Education programme (PAJE); the combined statistical report; and the evidence base on the impact of programmes designed to improve judicial diversity. This focus will be reviewed every 18 months.

4.3 The Forum works in the spirit of open and supportive collaboration while respecting the independence and differing views of members. The Forum recognises that these differences should not prevent the Forum from taking a joint approach to deliver its broader objective of encouraging judicial diversity.

4.4 The Forum will seek to promote judicial diversity by:

- Maintaining an overarching Progress Log to enable the Forum to take an overview of wider diversity initiatives. This information will help to focus efforts, identify gaps and enable members of the Forum to understand and complement the activities of others.
- Raising awareness of the JDF amongst wider stakeholders and encourage engagement with its work
- Publishing the Terms of Reference and an annual statement alongside the combined statistical publication summarising the collective activity of the group.

5 Frequency of meetings

5.1 The Forum will meet twice a year (usually in May and November).

6 Attendees

6.1 Attendance by the leaders of MoJ, JAC, Judiciary, Legal Services Board, CILEx, Bar Council and Law Society at all JDF meetings is paramount to the effective functioning of the group. If a leader of a member organisation is unable to attend a meeting, the alternative representative will be fully briefed and will have the authority to make commitments on behalf of their organisation. A list of JDF members is at Annex A.

6.2 The professional office-holders have 12-month terms, with the Vice-Chair or Vice-President normally taking the office of Chair or President. In order to provide continuity, the Vice-Chair or Vice-President may attend the JDF meeting prior to the changeover.

6.3 Members of the JDF Officials Group (see point 8), or an alternative senior-level individual, may attend to support their principal member.

6.4 To assist in generating ideas and solutions, when and where appropriate, the Forum may invite guest speakers to a meeting (such as diversity experts, regulatory bodies, representatives from other government departments/organisations or academics).

7 Secretariat

7.1 The JAC provides secretariat support to the JDF.

7.2 An agenda and associated papers will be disseminated to Forum members the week before meetings. Draft minutes will be circulated following meetings.

8 Judicial Diversity Forum Officials Group (JDFO)

8.1 A high-level Officials group comprised of Chief Executive/Director level officials from each of the member organisations supports and progresses the Forum's work. The JDFO are responsible for leading the preparation of JDF agendas, drafting discussion papers, progressing actions and populating activity reports. A list of JDFO members is at Annex A.

8.2 Members of the Officials group may bring a supporting official to meetings.

8.3 The Officials group is chaired by the JAC and will meet at least four times a year, in between the JDF meetings. The JAC will provide secretariat support to the group.

9 Other working groups

9.1 To reflect the current JDF priorities, the work of the Forum will also be supported by the PAJE Delivery Group and the Combined Statistics Working Group. Both groups are chaired by the MoJ and have their own Terms of Reference.