

Post Selection Day Evaluation and Feedback Report

**00269 - Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal
Property Chamber**

February 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the selection days for Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal Property Chamber as well as to capture general feedback on candidate performance. The report describes how selection days were undertaken by both panels and candidates; including what characterised stronger and weaker demonstrations of the competencies needed to fulfil the requirements of this role.

Competency Framework

At selection day, the role play and competency-based interview were designed to assess the following competencies:

- Exercising Judgement
- Possessing and Building Knowledge (assessed at interview only)
- Assimilating and Clarifying Information
- Working and Communicating with Others
- Managing Work Efficiently

The assessment criteria were developed so that candidates could demonstrate the proficiency and capability transferable to the role from other contexts. The specific behavioural indicators for each competency were designed to reflect the aptitude and faculty that an effective Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal Property Chamber is expected to have. This enabled us to assess candidates in a fair and consistent way.

Additional selection criteria

For this exercise, candidates were required to have three years of substantial experience in landlord and tenant, housing or property law. Such experience was to be gained through one or more of the law-related activities set out in [section 52\(4\)\(a\) to \(h\) of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007](#).

Performance of candidates

In total 194 candidates applied for this exercise. Following the name-blind sift, 93 candidates were invited to selection day, of which five subsequently withdrew. The 33 highest scoring candidates were recommended by the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) to the Senior President of Tribunals for appointment. In making this decision, the Commission took into account all relevant character checks, and all evidence provided by the candidates at selection day as well as the candidates' independent assessments and self-assessment.

Selection day

Selection days were held remotely via Microsoft Teams between 16 February 2026 and 24 February 2026. Candidates who took part in remote interviews were provided [with technical support to get ready for their selection day](#).

Development of the role play

The role play was devised and drafted by a Deputy Regional Tribunal Judge. The role play was designed to simulate a tribunal environment with candidates taking on the role of a judicial office holder.

The role play assesses how candidates deal with the situations they may face and decisions they would have to make if appointed. Candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to meet the competency framework and whether they can maintain their performance under challenge and pressure.

The materials developed for this exercise were reviewed internally by Operations, Policy, and the Diversity and Engagement teams to quality and equality assure the material to ensure it was an effective tool to assess candidates. The teams also ensured that the materials did not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any potential candidates undertaking the selection days on the basis of their diversity characteristic or professional background.

Following this internal quality assurance, the material was then reviewed by the JAC Advisory Group. The Advisory Group is composed of members of the judiciary and representatives of the legal professions and chaired by a lay JAC Commissioner. It offers advice and guidance on the development of selection material, quality assures the material and considers – and mitigates – any negative impacts on diverse groups.

The effectiveness of the role play was assessed by means of two mock assessments with a range of volunteers from relevant candidate groups. This provided an opportunity to trial the test material and make any necessary amendments.

Structure of role play

The role play was designed to assess how candidates deal with decisions they would be asked to make and situations they may encounter if appointed as a Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal Property Chamber.

The role play involved dealing with a tenant's application for a rent repayment order against their landlord. Candidates were required to make reasoned decisions and judgments based on the provided materials, using their required substantial experience in landlord and tenant, housing or property law. There were tests of their ability to manage the hearing and the parties, and to provide appropriate support to an unrepresented party. They needed to identify relevant rules, procedures, standards, and facts, and provide well-reasoned decisions.

Candidates were given information on the background of the role play and any relevant law prior to the selection day. This consisted of the Property Chamber's procedure rules, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 chapter on rent repayment orders and the Housing Act 2004 chapter on the licensing of houses in multiple occupation. On the day, they were provided with the particular scenario, an application, previous directions, and two witness statements.

Marking of role play

A comprehensive marking guide and checklist were provided to the panels to guide them in what to look for under each competency.

Assessment of candidates' responses to the role play

The evidence for each competency is assessed as either outstanding, strong, sufficient or insufficient. The panels then make a final overall assessment of candidates as either outstanding, strong, selectable or not presently selectable.

Outstanding evidence included:

- fully understood the brief and the parties' submissions

- identified all key issues and acted quickly and decisively
- gave clear, logical reasons and treated both parties fairly
- asked relevant questions, listened well, and showed a clear analytical skill
- communicated calmly, clearly, and sensitively, maintaining confident authority
- managed time exceptionally well, kept a good pace, and handled interruptions smoothly
- allowed ample time for a clear, structured final judgment

Strong evidence included:

- understood most key issues and scenario details
- made all major decisions with generally sound reasoning
- covered most required analytical points but missed some nuanced ones
- communicated clearly and maintained control, with only minor lapses
- responded well to cues and generally kept structure
- managed time effectively overall and moved the hearing through required stages
- experienced small issues with timing or clarity but performed competently overall

Sufficient evidence included:

- understood some key parts of the scenario but missed others
- made some necessary decisions but overlooked others or gave incomplete reasons
- showed partial or inconsistent analytical understanding
- communicated adequately but sometimes lacked structure or clarity
- was slow at times to manage the parties or maintain control
- managed time inconsistently and sometimes spent too long on preliminary matters
- rushed parts of the judgment or compressed key sections

Insufficient evidence included:

- did not grasp the main issues from the brief or the parties' submissions
- missed necessary decisions or made incorrect or ill-reasoned ones
- offered weak, unclear, or unsupported reasoning
- communicated unclearly, insensitively, or with weak authority
- failed to control the hearing environment
- managed time poorly: spent too long in some areas, lost structure, or ran out of time
- left the final judgment incomplete or omitted essential points

Feedback from panels on the role play

What successful candidates did well:

- made correct and timely decisions, supported by focused questioning and effective time management
- demonstrated a solid understanding of the papers, the key legal tests, and the relevant issues
- listened carefully to the parties, responded to oral submissions, and maintained firm but courteous control of the hearing
- had a clear plan for the hearing, while remaining flexible, helped candidates manage proceedings confidently

- followed the suggested judgment structure, and clearly signalling transitions during the hearing improved clarity and communication

Where unsuccessful candidates struggled:

- insufficient reasoning: decisions were given without clearly explaining the rationale or referencing the relevant law and rules
- some showed an incomplete grasp of the briefing material, key facts, procedural rules, or the scope of the applications
- poor engagement with the parties was common, including interrupting, cutting parties off, ignoring cues of confusion or accessibility needs, and showing a lack of sensitivity towards litigants in person
- several failed to ask necessary clarifying questions or focused on irrelevant details, which distracted from the key issues
- weak control of the hearing and poor time management led to rushed proceedings and, in some cases, failure to deliver a judgment
- inconsistent treatment of the parties and an unclear understanding of how to conduct the hearing undermined credibility

Suggestions for future preparation:

- read and fully digest the briefing material, including factual detail, procedural rules, and any adjustments needed for the parties
- articulate clear, structured decisions that explain why an outcome has been reached, with explicit reference to the law and rules
- consider likely outcomes based on pre-reading but remain flexible and responsive to matters that emerge during the hearing
- focus on the key issues and relevant evidence, avoiding unnecessary detail that consumes time
- employ active listening skills and maintain a courteous, sensitive approach, particularly when dealing with litigants in person
- manage hearings carefully so there is sufficient time to deliver a clear, structured judgment

Competency-based interview

Each candidate then had a competency-based interview. Here the panel was seeking further evidence and examples from the candidate of the required competencies and in the context of the role of a Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal Property Chamber.

No candidate demonstrated outstanding evidence for any competency during the interview. The difference between an outstanding and strong grade would have been determined by the complexity and relevance of the examples provided, the clarity and structure of the answer and the lack of prompting or probing carried out by the panel in order to obtain evidence at a level commensurate with the role on offer.

Exercising Judgement

Strong evidence included:

- clear, detailed, and well-developed examples, often drawn from notably challenging situations

- demonstration of integrity and independence of mind, including adherence to fairness even where this disadvantaged the candidate's own client
- evidence of careful weighing of relevant factors in finely balanced decisions
- correct application of the law to provide reasoned advice, supported by sound judgement
- examples that tested decision-making and professional courage, rather than routine or straightforward scenarios

Sufficient evidence included:

- examples that were generally relevant and addressed the question, but which lacked depth, complexity, or challenge
- useful background context, although candidates did not always clearly explain their own actions or the impact of their decisions
- some evidence of considering the facts and attempting to ensure fairness, though this was not consistently well articulated
- instances of challenging decision-making, but without fairness or independence always being made explicit
- examples of routine work or team management issues, which did not sufficiently demonstrate difficulty or fine balance

Insufficient evidence included:

- poorly developed examples that relied heavily on the self-assessment or lacked any meaningful challenge
- reliance on prepared examples that did not answer the question asked
- descriptions of decisions that were obvious or inevitable, showing little evidence of difficulty, judgement, or balance
- misunderstanding of the question, or a failure to demonstrate integrity or fairness
- examples where, despite prompting, relevance remained unclear, with excessive context but no clear link to the competency being assessed

Possessing and Building Knowledge

Strong evidence included:

- clear enthusiasm for learning and for keeping legal knowledge up to date
- recent, detailed, and well explained examples
- demonstrations of effective research skills, including researching complex or unfamiliar legislation and case law using a range of sources
- clear explanations of the steps taken to acquire new knowledge and how that knowledge was later applied in practice
- examples demonstrating the ability to apply specialist knowledge to resolve challenging or unfamiliar issues
- active sharing of learning with others, reinforcing the candidate's own understanding and development

Sufficient evidence included:

- examples that were relevant and addressed the competency, but which were routine, brief, or inconsistent in depth

- demonstration of sound knowledge and expertise within the candidate's own area of specialism
- appropriate application of specialist knowledge, for example in possession cases, supported by reading case law, textbooks, or articles
- generally clear context, although explanations of the candidate's own actions or learning methods were sometimes vague or limited
- limited evidence of developing understanding in unfamiliar areas of law, or of sharing knowledge with others
- some reliance on self-assessment scenarios without expansion into further detail, which reduced the impact of otherwise relevant examples

Insufficient evidence included:

- failure to demonstrate enough depth or breadth of specialist legal knowledge
- poorly chosen examples that were unclear or difficult to follow
- inability to identify an unfamiliar area of law or explain how knowledge was developed in that area
- little or no explanation of how new knowledge was acquired or maintained
- misunderstanding of the question posed, for example discussing a new process rather than new law
- responses that were unstructured, overly confusing, or failed to explain what the candidate personally did, even after prompting

Assimilating and Clarifying Information

Strong evidence included:

- examples involving complex, high-risk, or high-value matters that required judgement and careful analysis
- clear explanations of how uncertainty was identified and resolved, risks were clarified, or conflicting information was addressed
- analysing substantial volumes of technical or disorganised information, often under time pressure
- examples demonstrating a clear focus on identifying key issues, avoiding being distracted by background detail
- step-by-step reasoning that made the candidate's thought process easy to follow
- in some cases, effective use of technology (such as spreadsheets or summaries) to manage and analyse information successfully

Sufficient evidence included:

- relevant examples demonstrating the ability to assimilate information, identify issues, and make decisions
- evidence of reviewing material under time pressure and identifying important findings or inconsistencies
- some analytical ability, including weighing conflicting evidence and explaining why one view was preferred
- examples lacked depth, challenge, or complexity, with excessive context but not enough explanation of the candidate's own actions or reasoning
- answers that were sometimes poorly structured or focused on information assimilation without much analysis or evaluation

Insufficient evidence included:

- failure to answer the question, or providing examples that were irrelevant to the competency
- routine or low challenge examples that showed little indication of risk, complexity, or pressure
- lack of explanation as to how key issues were identified, conflicts analysed, or conclusions reached
- unstructured or confusing responses that made it difficult for the panel to understand the example
- overreliance on prepared examples that did not demonstrate critical analysis
- in some cases, failure to describe the candidate's own actions or thought process, despite prompting

Working and Communicating with Others

Strong evidence included:

- detailed, well-developed examples demonstrating sensitivity to the needs of different individuals
- examples showing the ability to defuse tension, work collaboratively, and maintain professionalism under pressure
- practical application of an understanding of diversity, with approaches adapted to meet individual needs.
- clearly recognising when people required support, without the need for prompting
- composure in challenging situations, alongside thoughtful and respectful communication

Sufficient evidence included:

- awareness of the importance of diversity and fairness
- generally clear examples demonstrating cultural sensitivity, including appropriate engagement with litigants in person or vulnerable individuals
- evidence of collaborative working and effective communication with lay participants
- some example of demonstrating the ability to manage or reduce conflict, for example within a team
- examples lacked depth or breadth, with limited explanation of why actions were effective or what impact they had
- responses that did not always fully address the question

Insufficient evidence included:

- examples that failed to move beyond routine or generic actions and lacked meaningful development
- negative evidence of sensitivity in some responses, including insensitive or disrespectful comments towards others or individuals with protected characteristics
- difficulty explaining how communication was adapted for lay people or how complex information was conveyed clearly
- little or no demonstration of awareness of diversity or of the differing needs of individuals

- poor communication during the interview, including failure to answer the question asked, heavy reliance on preprepared notes, unstructured responses, or digression despite prompting
- examples that were unclear, superficial, or failed to demonstrate the candidate's personal actions or impact

Managing Work Efficiently

Strong evidence included:

- introduction of significant process improvements that delivered clear and measurable benefits, such as saving time, reducing costs, or improving client service
- examples demonstrating significant problem identification and resolution skills, including evaluation of the impact of changes made
- evidence of effective project management skills, with changes carefully planned and seen through to completion
- thoughtful and appropriate use of technology, including AI and digital tools, to improve efficiency
- demonstration of calmness and resilience under pressure, alongside reflection on learning and development over time

Sufficient evidence included:

- ability to prioritise workloads effectively, manage competing demands, and set clear priorities
- routine but competent use of IT systems to manage resources and information
- evidence of delegation, collaboration with colleagues, and support for others, including adjusting deadlines when necessary
- some resilience shown in demanding circumstances and an ability to adapt to change
- examples that were routine, or provided limited detail about the candidate's personal actions or the impact achieved
- potentially strong examples that were undermined by a lack of concision, poor structure, or over-reliance on prepared answers

Insufficient evidence included:

- brief, vague, or irrelevant examples that did not address the competency being assessed
- failure to demonstrate meaningful planning, prioritisation, flexibility, or effective use of resources
- examples focused on basic organisation (for example, use of diaries, generic IT tools, or remote working) without demonstrating improvement or efficiency gains
- little or no evidence of resilience, efficiency improvements, or positive impact resulting from the candidate's actions
- responses consisting largely of background context, with no clear explanation of what the candidate personally did
- inability, despite prompting, to adjust approach or provide enough evidence to meet the competency criteria

Feedback from Candidates

After the selection days, candidates were invited to complete an anonymous candidate survey. 26 candidates responded to the survey. Based on the results of the survey:

The instructions provided beforehand enabled me to prepare for the remote selection day.

- 84.7% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 7.7% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 7.7% of candidates disagreed or strongly disagreed

I understood what was expected on the selection day.

- 80.8% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 7.7% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 11.5% of candidates disagreed or strongly disagreed

The role play, including the setting, scenario and actors, created a convincing situation.

- 88.5% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 7.7% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 3.8% of candidates strongly disagreed

The role play enabled me to demonstrate my suitability for the role.

- 80.8% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 7.7% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 11.5% of candidates disagreed or strongly disagreed

I am confident in the role play as a JAC selection tool.

- 84.7% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 7.7% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 7.7% of candidates disagreed or strongly disagreed

The interview questions gave me the opportunity to demonstrate my skills, abilities, and competence for this role.

- 57.7% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 19.2% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 23.1% of candidates disagreed

I am confident in the interview as a JAC selection tool.

- 65.4% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 23.1% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 11.5% of candidates disagreed

The panel behaved professionally and treated me with respect.

- 92.3% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 7.7% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 0% of candidates disagreed or strongly disagreed

How would you rate the quality of customer service you received from JAC staff on selection day?

- 76.9% of candidates rated it excellent
- 23.1% of candidates rated it good
- 0% of candidates rated it fair, poor or very poor.