



Judicial Appointments Commission Welsh Language Scheme

**2025 - 26 Annual Monitoring Report to the Welsh Language
Commissioner**

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1. Introduction

This is the tenth Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report prepared by the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) and it covers the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The report demonstrates the progress we have made in implementing our scheme since it was endorsed by the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office in May 2016. The scheme is available on the JAC website: <https://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/welsh-language-scheme>.

The JAC was previously covered by the Ministry of Justice's Welsh Language Scheme. We developed this voluntary, specialised scheme to better specify how we treat the Welsh and English languages. It explains how candidates for judicial appointment can communicate with the JAC in Welsh or English, according to their personal choice.

The scheme sets out how we give effect to the principle in Section 5 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 that, in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality. The scope of our commitments should be interpreted as applying to those recruitment activities and services in Wales that we are able to control or influence.

2. Background

The JAC was established on 3 April 2006 under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. The JAC is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice. We select candidates for judicial office in courts and tribunals in England and Wales, and for some tribunals with UK-wide jurisdiction. Candidates are selected on merit, through fair and open competition, and we are committed to attracting applicants from as wide a field as possible. We work with a range of organisations to promote vacancies to eligible candidates.

The JAC launched its Welsh Language Scheme in May 2016, following a public consultation in October 2015. The scheme explains how we will treat the Welsh and English languages when assessing candidates' suitability for judicial appointment in Wales and explains that candidates will be able to communicate with us in English or Welsh, according to their personal choice.

3. Recruitment

The JAC is a London-based organisation of around 100 staff. It does not have a permanent delivery presence in Wales. The JAC's Welsh Language Scheme does not cover JAC staff recruitment as there are no identified Welsh language requirements for staff.

Where Welsh language skills are required for a judicial appointment, we are currently supported by members of the Welsh judiciary who sit on selection panels to assess Welsh language skills. Throughout 2025-26 the JAC has continued to conduct an open recruitment exercise to increase the number of lay selection panel members, and these new members joined the cadre throughout 2025-26, although no Welsh speaking members were appointed this year. Selection exercises where Welsh language skills are required are usually quality assured by the JAC Commissioner with special knowledge of Wales.

During 2025–26, the term of office of the previous commissioner with special knowledge of Wales ended, and a new commissioner, who is also fluent in Welsh, was appointed.

Requirement for an understanding of the administration of justice in Wales

An additional selection criterion is applied for vacancies in Wales, the criterion is approved by the Lord Chancellor. During 2024-25 it was revised and since then states:

“Candidates for posts in Wales need to have an understanding of administration of justice in Wales, including legislation applicable to Wales and Welsh devolution arrangements”.

Where candidates have applied for posts in Wales, a number of questions that are specific to each exercise are asked at the interview stage via a non-live video format, with candidates assessed on their understanding of relevant Welsh issues, including the right to use the Welsh language in legal proceedings.

Selection exercises 2025-26

The JAC reports annually on the number of exercises completed within a reporting year.¹ The Welsh Language Scheme was implemented in May 2016 and was applied to selection exercises that went into planning stages from that time. This section details selection exercises that completed and reported from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 to give an overview of judicial recruitment in Wales.

A total of 34 selection exercises were finalised and reported in 2025–26. The business area, (either HCMTS or Welsh Tribunal Unit) and the judiciary identify Welsh language requirements for vacancies, which the JAC then assesses candidates against. The JAC continues to run

¹ [Corporate publications - Judicial Appointments Commission](#)

selection exercises where Welsh language has been identified as a requirement for one or more posts.

The following selection exercises identified vacancies in Wales that had an essential Welsh language requirement in addition to testing the candidates' understanding of the administration of justice in Wales:

- **Judge of the Employment Tribunals (England and Wales) (00236).** This national exercise for Judges of the Employment Tribunals (England and Wales) launched on 13 March 2025 with 36 vacancies across England and Wales, including one Welsh language post. Those candidates who were interested in the Welsh post were assessed on their understanding of the administration of justice in Wales, alongside their language skills. 36 candidates were recommended, with one of these candidates recommended for the Welsh language post.

The following selection exercises identified vacancies in Wales that did not have a Welsh language requirement but tested candidates' understanding of the administration of justice in Wales:

- **Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal (00203).** The national exercise for Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal launched on 18 June 2024 with 166 vacancies. Those candidates who were interested in a Welsh post were assessed on their understanding of the administration of justice in Wales. A total of 166 candidates were recommended, with 11 candidates recommended as suitable for appointment to posts in Wales. Deployment decisions are the responsibility of the judiciary.
- **Judge of the First-tier Tribunal (00210).** The national exercise for Judges of the First-tier Tribunal launched on 15 October 2024 with 100 vacancies across England and Wales. Those candidates who were interested in a Welsh post were assessed on their understanding of the administration of justice in Wales. A total of 72 candidates were recommended, with seven candidates recommended as suitable for posts in Wales. Deployment decisions are the responsibility of the judiciary.
- **Circuit Judge (00212).** The national exercise for Circuit Judges launched on 10 September 2024 with 37 vacancies across England and Wales. Those candidates who were interested in a post in Wales were assessed on their understanding of the administration of justice in Wales. A total of 37 candidates were recommended, with five candidates recommended as suitable for appointment in Wales. Deployment decisions are the responsibility of the judiciary.
- **Recorder (00227).** The national exercise for Recorders launched on 05 November 2024 with 87 immediate vacancies across England and Wales. Those candidates who were interested in a Welsh post were assessed on their understanding of the administration of justice in Wales. A total of 87 candidates were recommended, with five candidates recommended as suitable for appointment in Wales, in this reporting period. Deployment decisions are the responsibility of the judiciary.

- **District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) (00234).** The national exercise for District Judge (Magistrates' Court) launched on 30 January 2025 with 50 immediate and 86 future vacancies across England and Wales. Those candidates who were interested in a Welsh post were assessed on their understanding of the administration of justice in Wales. A total of 136 candidates were recommended with two candidates recommended as suitable for posts in Wales. Deployment decisions are the responsibility of the judiciary.
- **President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales (00254).** This exercise for a President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales launched on 28 January 2025 with one vacancy. All candidates were assessed on their understanding of the administration of justice in Wales. One candidate was recommended as suitable for appointment to this post.

The following selection exercises identified vacancies in Wales that did not have Welsh language requirements, and did not test candidates' knowledge of the administration of justice in Wales:

- **Fee-paid Specialist Member of the Upper Tribunal assigned to the Administrative Appeals Chamber (Disclosure and Barring Jurisdiction) (00269).** The national exercise for Fee-paid Specialist Member of the Upper Tribunal assigned to the Administrative Appeals Chamber (Disclosure and Barring Jurisdiction) launched on 8 May 2025 for 7 vacancies. In light of the specific knowledge required for the role, the JAC decided that additionally testing candidates' knowledge of the administration of justice in Wales would not add further value to the selection process. A total of 7 candidates were recommended.
- **Fee-paid Medical Member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales (00286).** This exercise for Fee-paid Medical Member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales launched on 25 June 2025 with 20 vacancies across the whole of Wales. In light of the specific knowledge required for the role, the JAC decided that additionally testing candidates' knowledge of the administration of justice in Wales would not add further value to the selection process. A total of 13 candidates were recommended.

Section 83 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 allows the Welsh Government to seek assistance from other public bodies. The JAC assisted the Welsh Government with the following exercise:

- **Lay Members for the Welsh Language Tribunal (00249).** The exercise for Lay Members for the Welsh Language Tribunal launched on 26 November 2024 with two vacancies in Wales. The requirement to assess candidates' understanding of the administration of justice in Wales was waived for this exercise. One candidate was recommended for appointment.
- **Fee-paid Vice President of the Residential Property Tribunal for Wales (RPT) (00259).** This for a Fee-paid Vice President of the Residential Property Tribunal for Wales exercise launched on 26 February 2025 with one vacancy in Wales. All candidates were assessed on their understanding of the administration of justice in Wales. One candidate was recommended for appointment to this post.
- **00308: Legal Members of the Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW) (00308).** This exercise for Legal Members of the Adjudication Panel for Wales launched on 07 October 2025 with three vacancies in Wales, including one Welsh language post. All candidates were assessed on their understanding of the administration of justice in Wales. No candidates were suitable for appointment for the Welsh language position, so the Welsh Government amended the request to three vacancies with no Welsh language skills required. Three candidates were recommended for appointment.

4. Monitoring the Welsh Language Scheme

Selection exercises

The JAC's Welsh Language Scheme applies to selection exercises with posts in Wales that went into planning stages on or after May 2016. External advertising is only used by the JAC in exceptional cases. The 'advertising' section of our Welsh Language Scheme outlined provisions for any cases in which external advertising was used. External advertising was not used in any selection exercises which had posts in Wales over 2025-26.

Over the period 2025–26, we published Welsh translations of selection exercise material in the following exercises:

- Judge of the Employment Tribunals (England and Wales) (00236). This exercise launched on 13 March 2025
- District Judge (00262). This exercise launched on 07 October 2025
- Fee-paid Medical Member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales (00286). This exercise launched on 25 June 2025
- Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal (00287). This exercise launched on 21 October 2025
- Fee-Paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber (00289). This exercise launched on 16 September 2025
- Circuit Judge (00291). This exercise launched on 20 January 2026
- Judge of the First-tier Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber (00292). This exercise launched on 20 November 2025
- Regional Tribunal Judge of the First-tier Tribunal, Social Entitlement Chamber (00295). This exercise launched on 27 November 2025
- Judge of the First-tier Tribunal (00296). This exercise launched on 13 January 2026
- Fee-paid Medical Member of the First-tier Tribunal, Social Entitlement Chamber (00297). This exercise launched on 26 March 2026
- District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) (00298). This exercise launched on 10 March 2026
- Legal Members of the Adjudication Panel for Wales (00308). This exercise launched on 07 October 2025
- Salaried Judge of the Employment Tribunal (00335). This exercise launched on 12 March 2026

Enhancements of the website over the year enable Welsh and English language information pages to be in the same format and to enable the easy and prominent ability to switch between the languages, as required. The Welsh language application form, which was developed during the 2023-24 report period, continues to be embedded and further developed based on candidate feedback received throughout the year.

Complaints

The JAC did not receive any formal complaints directly in relation to the Welsh Language Scheme.

Progress against action plan

The reporting standards previously established for the JAC Welsh Language Scheme remained the same over 2025–26: availability of the Scheme; advice and guidance; digital capability; new and revised policies and monitoring and review.

Updates to the action plan over 2025–26 are in bold below.

Theme and reference	Activity	Target Date	Progress	Status
Availability	Publish the Scheme on the JAC website and intranet	March 2016	Complete	Complete. Publication delayed by the pre-election period for the National Assembly for Wales 2016 election, and published on 23 May 2016.
New and revised policies	Consider the impact of new and revised policies in the Welsh Language Scheme.	Ongoing	Implementation will be monitored on an ongoing basis	Ongoing. Candidates are now able to provide any narrative section in a Qualifying Test in Welsh, which is then translated.
Advice and guidance	Develop internal guidance to accompany policy including assessment of language skills and knowledge of divergence in law, devolution arrangements etc.	March 2016 initial publication. Review of relevant policy documents ongoing	Complete Complete	Complete – guidance available to all staff from March 2016 A training session was held for operational staff in April 2016 prior to implementation. Refresher training sessions have also been undertaken during the period 2021-22. The guidance was reviewed and expanded by the Welsh Matters Committee in October 2021.

Theme and reference	Activity	Target Date	Progress	Status
Digital capability	New JAC Digital Platform has been developed and enhanced throughout 2023-24.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Following the introduction of Welsh language application forms last year. The digital capability has increased throughout 2023-24. Exercises are able to launch with a consistent Welsh and English language versions of the exercise information page in the same format and easy and prominent ability to switch between the two languages. Whilst this is further tested throughout 2024-25 and taking on board candidate feedback to consider further refinements.
Monitoring and review	Prepare an Annual Monitoring Report for the Welsh Language Commissioner which will be made available to the Commission Board and Executive; MoJ Welsh Language Co-ordinators, MoJ Sponsorship and Welsh Liaison Judge	Annual	Implementation will be monitored on ongoing basis	Complete: Annual Monitoring Report 2016–17 published October 2017 Annual Monitoring Report 2017–18 published November 2018 Annual Monitoring Report 2018-2019 published December 2019 Annual Monitoring Report 2019-2020 published November 2020 Annual Monitoring Report 2020-21 published September 2021 Annual Monitoring report 2021-22 published September 2022

				Annual Monitoring report 2022-23 published September 2023 Annual Monitoring report 2023-24 published September 2024. Annual Monitoring report 2024-25 published September 2025. Annual Monitoring report 2025-26 published September 2026.
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5. The Welsh Matters Committee

The Welsh Matters Committee is a sub-committee of the JAC Commission Board. The Committee was comprised during this period of JAC Commissioner with special knowledge of Wales the Rt. Rev. Dr. Barry Morgan as chair of the Committee, with Commissioners Tribunal Judge Noel Arnold and Tom Cross KC as Committee members. Rt Rev. Dr Barry Morgan's term of Commissioner came to an end in November 2025, and so he stood down from the committee at the end of his term in November 2025. Siwan Davies was appointed as JAC Commissioner with special knowledge of Wales in December 2025 and has fulfilled the role of chair of the Committee since.

The inaugural meeting of the Welsh Matters Committee was held on 9 March 2017, and the Committee sits every other month.

The primary purpose of the Committee is to monitor the potential impact of devolution in Wales on the appointments process for judicial posts across England and Wales, and to ensure that the wider Commission is aware of the needs of Wales.

Over the reporting year, the Committee has:

- In September 2025, Dr Morgan met remotely with Sir Gary Hickinbottom, President of Welsh Tribunals to discuss Welsh language issues and Welsh Tribunal exercises.
- In October 2025, Dr Morgan met with Welsh Language Liaison Judge, HHJ Mererid Edwards to discuss Welsh language issues.
- In January 2026, Siwan Davies held an introductory meeting with Welsh Language Liaison Judge, HHJ Mererid Edwards.
- In February 2026, Siwan Davies held an introductory meeting with Welsh Presiding Judges, Mr Justice Nicklin, Mrs Justice Morgan & Mrs Justice Stacey.
- Continued the monitoring of developments of the Wales Training Committee to make sure the JAC testing of Welsh knowledge takes account of the Judicial College's work in dealing with the training implications of devolved legislation.
- Monitored the delivery of selection exercises in Wales.