



NIJAC

*Northern Ireland Judicial
Appointments Commission*

Annual Business Plan

2021-2022

Contents:	Page:
Introduction	3
The Programme for Government	4
Our statutory responsibilities	4
Contact Details	4

Introduction



Tonya McCormac
Chief Executive, NIJAC

We are living and working in unprecedented times. During the last year, despite the impact of the global pandemic, both our Commissioners and staff have continued to deliver our core business, that of making meritorious appointments to Judicial Office in Northern Ireland. We have progressed at pace a number of key pieces of work linked to organisational development and improvement.

I would like to thank the NIJAC Board, staff and our stakeholders for their commitment and support during the last year. I am looking forward to continuing to work with you all during the next year as we deliver our statutory responsibilities and work collaboratively to ensure NIJAC is an effective public organisation delivering on its outcomes and providing value for money.

Our 2020-2025 Corporate Plan sets out the strategic framework for our work. This document is the second annual business plan within that 5-year corporate strategy. It continues to be underpinned by our core values.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tonya McCormac".



This Plan incorporates the outcomes we aspire to as an organisation. It includes key actions and measures for the period April 2021 to March 2022. These will tell us if we are delivering our business well and allow us to implement changes and make improvements, where necessary.

The Programme for Government

The Programme for Government (PfG) framework of draft outcomes is currently out for consultation. These will provide direction and clarity in delivering public services in Northern Ireland. NIJAC's outcomes, actions and measures for 2021/22 have been developed taking account of the following draft outcomes in the draft PfG:

- Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other;
- We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect;
- We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment.

Our statutory responsibilities

1. To select, appoint, and recommend for appointment, in respect of all listed judicial offices up to and including the High Court.
2. To recommend applicants for appointment solely on the basis of merit.
3. To engage in a programme of action to ensure, 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 ensure, 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 2021/22 Annual Business Plan will contribute to us achieving our longer-term outcomes. When implementing the various actions within the plan, we shall be identifying and managing any risks to not 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 measure our success in delivering our outcomes.

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Theme	Outcomes <i>How we will make an impact</i>	Actions <i>How we will achieve our outcomes</i>	Measures <i>How we will measure success</i>
Recognising merit	Contributing to public confidence in the judiciary through the meritorious selection of judicial office holders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective allocation of resources to meet the recruitment needs of Northern Ireland's courts and tribunals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver meritorious appointments via 8-10 schemes by March 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmark Assessment methods with appropriate external organisations to quality assure our assessment methods against best practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify 3 suitable organisations to benchmark against by June 2021. Exercises to be complete Oct 2021 Recommendations to be adopted and agreed by March 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Occupational Psychologist, review Personal Profiles and assessment methods and deliver bespoke assessment method for Ordinary recruitment, and apply learning to NIJAC's assessment approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed by September 2021 and apply learning to NIJAC assessment approaches to schemes by March 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable assessors to recognise merit and apply a fair and transparent assessment process by reviewing Selection Committee training and develop an e-learning refresher module. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated E-learning module by October 2021 Initial Review other SC training by June 2021, if required review in light of VPB learning by March 2022 SC member post-scheme training evaluations 90% satisfaction level attained.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a pilot of an online testing tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By September 2021 with agreement on tool and evaluated in relevant live schemes by January 2022.
Reflecting the community	To have a judiciary which is as reflective of the community as far as is reasonably practicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new reporting system on diversity data/ stats and commentary for Plenary and for publication on the NIJAC website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New reporting system by September 2021 Data on Website by October 2021 Tailored action plans devised in response to any under-representation identified by March 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with Courts and Tribunal service to design a survey and circulate to the Judiciary, determining baseline disability data for serving members of the judiciary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and analyse baseline information for serving judiciary declaring a disability by January 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake focused engagement with the professional and other relevant bodies to maximise the numbers of applications from females for senior judicial appointments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in applications from women who are under-represented at senior roles by March 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce webinar capability within NIJAC to increase audience participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By June 2021

Theme	Outcomes <i>How we will make an impact</i>	Actions <i>How we will achieve our outcomes</i>	Measures <i>How we will measure success</i>
Engaging with others	Increasing awareness and confidence in the work of NIJAC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through effective collaboration and planning with key partners in the Departments of Justice, Economy, Communities and Health through bi- annual meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Scheme Plan developed by May 2021 and fully Implemented by March 2022. Meetings completed September 2021 and March 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a range of targeted engagement and outreach informed by the range of recruitment schemes to be delivered e.g. legal, medical and other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted outreach plans in place and delivered across all schemes by March 2022. Tripartite JAC and JABS Sept 2021. Annual Meeting with local politicians by December 2021 Dedicated, targeted engagement with potential applicant pools for Victim Payments Board Ordinary members by October 2021. Four targeted outreach events by Mar 2022, including webinars and videos.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with Key Stakeholders from the wider health sector to identify the barriers to interest in judicial appointment for medical consultants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By January 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with TEO as sponsorship partner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with Annual Engagement Plan by March 2022.
Engaging with others (Cont'd)	Working effectively with stakeholders to share knowledge, learn and improve business outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and analyse Annual Stakeholder Survey results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Annual Stakeholder Survey achieving a 5% increase in response rates, while maintaining overall baseline satisfaction levels.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress a number of benchmarking opportunities to progress key transformation projects including digitalisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a scoping exercise to identify and agree a Corporate Quality Management System. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and review of QMS by September 2021. Scoping exercise on preferred QMS for NIJAC by February 2022. Training delivered to staff and Board on preferred QMS by March 2022.

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Valuing our people	Having people with the right knowledge, skills and abilities, who are inspired and supported to deliver our business outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and embed the new structure, supporting staff in new roles and ways of working to ensure its full benefit is realised in terms of both service improvement and staff satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New structure implemented July 2021 New key work processes refined and embedded March 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a systematic approach to the assessment, planning and delivery of L&D, taking account of the needs of people in new roles and teams, and wider supporting corporate themes on collective leadership and developing improvement capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted L&D Plan 2021/22 set and costed by May 2021. Interval targets through the year on leadership, team & individual skills development; and key corporate development themes that support new ways of working.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a programme for Commissioner Development to support effective Board working and participation in Appointment schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner development based on implementation of Board Development Plan, Commissioner Skills Audit, Appraisal Scheme feedback and on-going work of embedding NIJAC values. Review stages from Sept 2021 to March 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going implementation of actions to reinforce a positive working culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health & Wellbeing Programme 2021/22 agreed May 2021. Values Action Plan updated. Communication and involvement. Staff coaching & mentoring programme. Policy development, including agile working.
Delivering sustainability and accountability	Having a financially sustainable organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with TEO to identify options for a sustainable long-term funding model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Sustainability Options paper to Business Committee by Sept 2021 and to TEO by 31 December 2021.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and disseminate a revised budget/forecasting process for the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit process to Business Committee in June 2021.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to manage and monitor annual expenditure within required tolerance levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 31 March 2022.
	Being recognised as an organisation that is responsible open, transparent and accountable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate best practice in governance and accountability evidenced through implementation of the Partnership Agreement with TEO and the work of Internal Audit, External Audit & ARAC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with the requirements of the Partnership Agreement, Annual Internal Audit Strategy and Plan, NIAO Audit Strategy and the scheduled meetings of ARAC.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure systems are in place to monitor measure and report on Board Effectiveness in line with recommended good practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Effectiveness Review by 31 March 2022.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Planning and Performance Management system using the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training sessions for staff and board members on outcomes and outcome measurement by September 2021 • Design an OBA reporting system by 31 October 2021.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and fully implement a Board Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refinement of system and further training in Q4 of 2021-22 with completion by 31 March 2022 ready for full implementation in 2022-23.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft NIJAC Environmental Policy Statement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By September 2021
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review digital support and delivery solutions in NIJAC with the purpose of maximising combined effectiveness as service delivery solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To complete a review of digital solutions used by NIJAC by March 2022.