

# **Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission**



**Annual Business Plan  
2022 – 2023**

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## Introduction

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



During the last year, despite the continued impact of the global pandemic, both our Commissioners and staff have maintained delivery 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 investment in our People.

This planning period includes a shift in NIJAC's approach toward Outcomes Based Accountability in keeping with the approach undertaken within the Programme for Government and the business planning approach of our sponsor department, The Executive Office. This will allow NIJAC to demonstrate the value of our work and measure our success as a public body in Northern Ireland.

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 all during the next year as we deliver our statutory responsibilities and work collaboratively to deliver positive outcomes and increase confidence in NIJAC as an open, transparent and well run organisation.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tonya McCormac". The signature is written in a cursive style.

# NIJAC VALUES



This Plan incorporates the outcomes we aspire to as an organisation. It includes key actions and measures for the period April 2022 to March 2023. These will tell us if we are delivering our business well and allow us to implement changes and make improvements, where necessary.

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## The Programme for Government

The Programme for Government (PfG) framework of draft outcomes is presently awaiting confirmation. These outcomes will provide direction and clarity in delivering public services in Northern Ireland. NIJAC's outcomes, actions and measures for 2022/23 have been developed primarily taking account of the following draft outcome in the draft PfG:

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

NIJAC also seeks to support other outcomes in the draft Programme for Government through how it acts and impacts on Northern Ireland as an open, transparent and well-run public body.

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## 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 2022/23 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 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 measure our success in delivering our outcomes.



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## Contact Details

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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>
<b>Recognising Merit</b>	<p>Making the assessment process equally accessible and fair for all</p> <hr/> <p>Identifying meritorious applicants</p>	<p>Establish a baseline for satisfaction levels among applicants</p> <hr/> <p>Review the Personal Profile for Judicial Office, consult with stakeholders and implement amendments for the Profile as agreed</p>	<p>Achieving 70% satisfaction among responding applicants by 31 March 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Complete a Review of the Profile by 30 September 2022</p> <p>Complete consultation with stakeholders by 31 December 2022</p> <p>Implement the amended Profile by 31 March 2023</p>
<b>Reflecting the Community</b>	<p>Reducing barriers affecting access to and interest in recruitment to judicial office</p> <hr/> <p>Achieving agreement across stakeholders that the process is fair and inclusive</p>	<p>NIJAC will engage with applicants and stakeholders to identify procedural and other barriers to application from underrepresented groups</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will establish a baseline for satisfaction levels among stakeholders on the fairness and inclusivity of NIJAC's appointments process</p>	<p>Completed by 30 October 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Achieving 80% overall satisfaction among responding stakeholders by 31 March 2023</p>
<b>Engaging with Others</b>	<p>Working effectively with stakeholders to share knowledge, learn and improve business outcomes</p>	<p>NIJAC will plan its business in collaboration with key partners across government</p> <hr/> <p>Conduct market intelligence (Census and post-pandemic) to inform and underpin future work on diversity and applicant engagement</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will complete and analyse Annual Stakeholder Survey</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will host the Justice Committee at an information/engagement seminar</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will consult upon and agree the Sitting in Retirement process</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will work with stakeholders in respect of understanding and overcoming difficulties in the recruitment of medical members</p>	<p>Annual scheme plan developed by May 2022</p> <p>Bi-annual meetings in September 2022 and March 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 31 March 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 31 March 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 30 September 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 31 July 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 30 November 2022</p>

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>
<b>Engaging with Others (continued)</b>	Increasing awareness and confidence in the work of NIJAC	<p>As part of the wider review of key processes there will be a review of guidance and information provided to applicants through the web and social media</p> <p>NIJAC will continue to deliver on its Communications Strategy, maximising engagement and stakeholder involvement</p> <p>NIJAC will undertake a range of targeted engagement and outreach informed by the range of recruitment schemes to be delivered e.g. legal, medical and other</p> <p>NIJAC will establish a baseline for awareness and confidence levels in the Commission's work</p>	<p>Completed by 31 March 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 31 March 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Across 8-10 schemes by 31 March 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Achieving 80% positive confidence levels amongst responding applicants and stakeholders with how NIJAC operates</p>
<b>Valuing our People</b>	<p>Commissioners and staff are engaged, work effectively, have good physical and mental wellbeing, and feel supported and fairly treated</p> <hr/> <p>Commissioners and staff have confidence in management</p> <hr/> <p>There is high morale and low staff turnover</p>	<p>NIJAC will undertake a review of the People Strategy and implement action plans</p> <p>NIJAC will design an integrated approach for Commissioner Appraisals, Skills Audit and Board Development, including the use of Personal Development Planning</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will put in place a series of 'Bite-size' information sessions for Commissioners supported by Staff</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will review its key HR processes</p>	<p>Completed by 30 June 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 30 September 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Agreed by 30 June 2022 Delivered by 31 March 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 31 December 2022</p>
<b>Delivering Sustainability and Accountability</b>	Making appointments effectively and efficiently	<p>NIJAC will complete 8-10 appointment schemes</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will determine the future of the Renewals of Appointment process and the potential implications of Tribunal Reform and its resourcing impact</p>	<p>Completed by 31 March 2023 All schemes completed within 60 days (from advert to end of selection stage)</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 31 December 2022</p>

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>
<b>Delivering Sustainability and Accountability (continued)</b>	Public funds are used effectively	<p>Establish a tracker and ensure that responsibilities under the new Partnership Agreement with TEO are discharged</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will complete a full review of its processes across the organisation</p>	<p>Tracker in place by 31 May 2022 Partnership Agreement/Annual Engagement Plan implemented by 31 March 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Processes and procedures mapped by 31 December 2022</p>
	Continually improving and streamlining the organisation through innovation	<p>NIJAC will introduce regular Cyber Security Bulletins and Awareness Session for Commissioners and Staff</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will agree a 3-year Transformation Strategy and associated implementation plans (transformation, digital solutions and quality management) for the years 2022-2025</p>	<p>Awareness Session delivered by 30 June 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Agree its Transformation Strategy 22-25 and produce associated plans by 31 December 2022</p> <p>Complete and make recommendations in respect of a Digital Solutions Review by 31 December 2022</p> <p>Design and implement a data management system which enables good quality management by 30 September 2022</p> <p>Implement the first phase of its identified Quality Management System by 31 March 2023</p>
	Having sufficient resourcing and effective planning to undertake its work efficiently	NIJAC will continue to make the case for a sustainable funding model to be adopted with respect to NIJAC	<p>By 30 June 2022, 30 Sept 2022 and 31 Dec 2022 secure sufficient funding in the monitoring rounds to meet the Core requirements of the business for 22-23</p> <p>By March 2023 secure an Opening Budget position that meets the Core requirements of the Business for 23-24 and future years</p>
	Having effective risk management procedures and embedded functional risk management across its work	<p>NIJAC will review and fully integrate functional risk management across its work</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will provide training for Commissioners and Staff in its revised Risk Management process</p>	<p>Completed by 30 June 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by 30 June 2022</p>