

# **Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission**



**Annual Business Plan  
2023 – 2024**

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## Introduction

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



During the last year, NIJAC has continued to work, in partnership with others to make meritorious appointments to Judicial Office in Northern Ireland. We continue to progress at pace a number of key pieces of work linked to organisational development and a commitment to continuous improvement.

This planning period continues to focus on achieving NIJAC's two long term outcomes:

- Contributing to confidence in the judiciary through meritorious appointments and reflecting the community (as far as it is reasonably practicable to do so).
- NIJAC is recognised as an open, transparent and well run organisation and valued by stakeholders.

Through an Outcomes Based Accountability model in keeping with the approach undertaken within the draft Programme for Government (PfG), NIJAC is able to demonstrate the impact of our work and measure our success as a public body in Northern Ireland.

During 2022/23 we conducted a mid-term review of our 5 year Corporate Plan 2020-2025. This plan continues to set the strategic framework for our work. This document is the fourth annual business plan within the 5-year corporate strategy. It continues to be underpinned by our core values.

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 core business.

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 2023 to March 2024. 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 draft Programme for Government (PfG) framework of 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 2023/24 have been developed primarily taking account of the following 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.



### **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 2023/24 Annual Business Plan will contribute to us achieving our longer-term outcomes. When implementing the various actions within the plan, we will 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 continue to measure our success in delivering our outcomes.



## 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>	Responding to the needs of the courts and tribunal service of Northern Ireland	<p>NIJAC will deliver a minimum of 8-10 new recruitment schemes, subject to available funding.</p> <hr/> <p>Conduct Quality Based Reviews of Feedback and Shortlisting.</p> <hr/> <p>Review of the Role &amp; Responsibilities of Co-opted Members.</p> <hr/> <p>Conduct a post project evaluation on the development and implementation of the new Judicial Profile.</p>	<p>Completed by March 2024 All schemes completed within 60 days (from advert to end of selection stage)</p> <hr/> <p>Review completed and recommendations made by September 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Report and recommendations made by March 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Report and recommendations made by March 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by March 2024</p>
<b>Reflecting the Community</b>	Reducing barriers affecting access to and interest in recruitment to judicial office	<p>Continue to publish diversity data and statistics for Judicial Appointments in NI.</p> <hr/> <p>Conduct market intelligence (Census and post-pandemic impact on legal profession) to inform and underpin future work on diversity and applicant engagement.</p>	<p>Completed by December 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by March 2024</p>
<b>Engaging with Others</b>	Increasing awareness and confidence in the work of NIJAC	<p>NIJAC will undertake a mid-term review of its Communications Strategy, including a review of stakeholder analysis.</p> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will undertake a range of targeted engagement and outreach initiatives to support planned recruitment/scheme activity during the year.</p>	<p>Completed by September 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by March 2024</p>
<b>Valuing our People</b>	Commissioners and staff are engaged, work effectively, have good physical and mental wellbeing, and feel supported and fairly treated.	Review Commissioner Skills Audit tool and conduct 2023/24 audit.	Completed by May 2023

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>Valuing our People (continued)</b>		<p>Create a NIJAC Skills / Abilities Framework to support individual staff development.</p> <hr/> <p>Commission NISRA to conduct Survey of staff attitudes, aligned with Bi-annual NICS Survey.</p> <hr/> <p>Carry out review of Staff Structure as recommended by BCS Report.</p> <hr/> <p>Annual L&amp;D Core and Mandatory Training for all staff completed in line with policies.</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to review and implement quarterly, the staff health and wellbeing programme.</p>	<p>Completed by September 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by September 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by March 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by March 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by March 2024</p>
<b>Delivering Sustainability and Accountability</b>	<p>Continually improving and streamlining the organisation through innovation</p> <hr/> <p>Having sufficient resourcing and effective planning to undertake its work efficiently.</p> <hr/> <p>Public funds are used effectively</p>	<p>NIJAC will continue to improve and transform how it works through a number of initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reviewing of Digital Solutions.</li> <li>- Mapping of key organisational processes.</li> <li>- Seeking external accreditation of Diversity Mark.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>NIJAC will continue to make the case for a sustainable 5-10 year funding model to be agreed and adopted.</p> <hr/> <p>Provide organisational assurance and good governance through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- completion of monthly and quarterly assurance reports.</li> <li>- implementation of any recommendations that emanate from the Internal and External Audit schedule.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>Monitor and implement NIJAC and TEO responsibilities under Partnership Agreement.</p>	<p>Completed by March 2024.</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by March 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by March 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Completed by March 2024</p>

\*Outcomes refers to NIJAC's short term Outcomes, which links in with the Outcomes in the 5 year Corporate Plan and NIJAC's two longer term Outcomes.