



**JUDICIAL  
APPOINTMENTS  
BOARD FOR  
SCOTLAND**

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**FIVE YEAR  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
2018–2022**

## FOREWORD

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**This document sets out the Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland's strategic plan for the next five years, 2018-2022. It documents in detail how we will continue to contribute to justice in Scotland and provides a 'road map' of how we aim to deliver our priorities.**

I am delighted to publish the Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland's Strategic Plan for 2018-2022. I am confident that it will help us to hit our key operational milestones and to achieve our ambitions.

We will continue to make sure our selection processes remain fair, robust and fit for the future.

Whilst always safe-guarding our independence, we will be open and engaged - seeking out ways to improve the way we do our work and implementing changes. We know that we cannot achieve our ambitions without the help and input of others. As we move forward with the delivery of this strategic plan, we will provide regular feedback on our progress and lessons learned.

As we focus on delivery over the next five years, we will also think about our long-term aspirations for judicial appointments in Scotland. We recognise that it is a great privilege to be able to contribute to the democracy of our country, and will continue to do so with energy, commitment, care and transparency.

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**Nicola Gordon**  
**Chairing Member**  
Judicial Appointments Board  
for Scotland

## OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND VALUES

### Our Strategic Objectives

1. We will contribute to furthering justice in Scotland alongside Scottish Ministers, the judiciary and the legal profession.
2. We will make independent recommendations for appointment to courts and tribunals based solely on merit.
3. We will work in a fair and transparent way, which commands the confidence of courts and tribunal users and the wider public.
4. We will encourage diversity in the range of individuals available for selection.
5. We will pursue continuous improvement in the way we do our work.

### Our Values

- **Trust** – our actions justify the faith others have put in us to make recommendations based on merit.
- **Fairness** – our actions and processes are designed to be equitable and to reduce the role of bias in our decision making.
- **Independence** – our systems and processes are independent, open and transparent.
- **Agility** – we are flexible, adaptable and we embrace change where it helps us to streamline our processes.
- **Evolution** – we embrace opportunities to learn and develop through continuous improvement.
- **Inclusion** – we observe, listen, understand and support everyone we work with.

## OUR VISION AND PRIORITIES

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To ensure we meet our strategic objectives, we need to be clear on our priorities for the next five years. Our vision is enduring: we want to attract applicants of the highest calibre, encourage diversity in the range of individuals available for selection and to recommend applicants based on merit through processes that are fair and transparent.

Following a recent refresh of our strategic objectives, we are clearer than ever about where we need to concentrate our efforts.

### **To ensure we can deliver, we will focus on five main areas:**

**1**

Developing our Board and our staff creating the right conditions to enable them to do their best work.

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**2**

Making the best use of our resources including technology and digital connectivity.

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**3**

Our relationships with our stakeholders and partners and how we work with other organisations.

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**4**

Using an evidence-based approach to continuously improve our processes.

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**5**

Taking steps to help encourage a diverse range of applicants.

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As taxpayers fund everything we do, we will also continue to deliver value for money.

Our strategic plan is summarised on the next page. We know that delivering it will be challenging, so we will develop detailed but flexible annual delivery plans each year to set out exactly what we will do.



## OUR VISION



To attract applicants of the highest calibre, encourage diversity in the range of individuals available for selection and to recommend applicants based solely on merit through processes that are fair and transparent.

## PRIORITIES

To ensure we meet our strategic objectives, we need to be clear on our priorities for the next five years. Following a recent refresh of our Strategic Objectives, we are clearer than ever about where we need to concentrate our efforts.

To ensure we can deliver, we will focus on five main areas:



### THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Developing our Board and our staff creating the right conditions to enable them to do their best work.



### FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

Making the best use of our resources including technology and digital connectivity.



### STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Our relationships with our stakeholders and partners and how we work with other organisations.



### POSITIVE ACTION

Taking steps to help encourage a diverse range of applicants.



### USING EVIDENCE

Using an evidence-based approach to continuously improve our processes.



As taxpayers fund everything we do, **value for money** is integral in all five of our priorities

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our strategic objectives define how we will achieve our vision.



### FURTHER JUSTICE

We will contribute to furthering justice in Scotland alongside Scottish Ministers, the judiciary and the legal profession.



### PROVIDE AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

We will make independent recommendations for appointment to courts and tribunals based on merit.



### WORK FAIRLY & TRANSPARENTLY

We will work in a fair and transparent way which commands the confidence of courts and tribunal users and the wider public.



### ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY

We will encourage diversity in the range of individuals available for selection.



### PURSUE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We will pursue continuous improvement in the way we do our work.

## VALUES

The operating philosophies or principles that guide our internal conduct as well as our relationship with our customers, partners, and shareholders.

Our values underpin and inform everything we do.



### TRUST

Our actions justify the faith others have put in us to make recommendations based on merit.



### FAIRNESS

Our actions and processes are designed to be equitable and to reduce the role of bias in our decision making.



### INDEPENDENCE

Our systems and processes are independent, open and transparent.



### AGILITY

We are flexible, adaptable and we embrace change where it helps us to streamline our processes.



### EVOLUTION

We embrace opportunities to learn and develop through continuous improvement.



### INCLUSION

We observe, listen, understand and support everyone we work with.

## THE BOARD

<p>We have 12 Board Members: four Judicial and two Legal Members (a Judge of the court of session, a Chamber President within the Scottish Tribunals, a Sheriff Principal, a Sheriff, an Advocate and a Solicitor) and six Lay Members including the Lay Chairing Member. The Board is supported by our Business Management Unit based at Thistle House in Edinburgh.</p>	<p><b>Our Board Members</b></p> <p>Mrs Nicola Gordon (Chairing Member)  Ms Neelam Bakshi  Dr Michael Ewart  Mrs Deirdre Fulton  Mr James McNeill, QC  The Honourable Lord Minginish  Mrs Alison Mitchell  Mr Alistair Morris  Sheriff Michael O’Grady, QC  Sheriff Principal Pyle  Professor Stephen Tierney  The Honourable Lady Wise</p>	<p><b>The Board is responsible for recommending individuals suitable for appointment to the following judicial offices:</b></p> <p><b>Court</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senator of the College of Justice</li> <li>• Chair of the Scottish Land Court</li> <li>• Sheriff Principal</li> <li>• Sheriff</li> <li>• Part-time Sheriff</li> <li>• Summary Sheriff</li> <li>• Temporary Judge</li> </ul> <p><b>Scottish Tribunals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vice-President of the Upper Tribunal and Chamber President in the First-tier Tribunal</li> <li>• Deputy Chamber President in the First-tier Tribunal</li> <li>• Ordinary Member or Legal Member of the First-tier Tribunal or the Upper Tribunal.</li> </ul>
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## We will contribute to furthering justice in Scotland alongside Scottish Ministers, the judiciary and the legal profession.

An effective, balanced and diverse judiciary is the bedrock of our society. Our ambition is to be a trusted partner in judicial appointments and to make our processes as effective and robust as possible. Through better collaboration and by working across boundaries, we will ensure that we contribute fully to better outcomes for the people of Scotland.

For us to flourish, we will foster a good organisational culture. Whilst recognising our independence, we will continue to develop open and honest working relationships with our peers and improve our communications and engagement in order to inform the shape of our processes.

### Our main priorities will be:



- To ensure that we have well-trained and motivated employees and Board Members so that we are equipped to provide candidates with the support they need to apply for judicial office.
- To increase our effectiveness by building on existing good practice and supporting continuous improvement.
- To step up to an expanding remit, including devolved tribunals and quasi-judicial appointments.
- To promote self-improvement and wellbeing throughout our organisation by looking to the Scottish Government's Vision for 2020 to help us embed a culture that allows our Board Members and our team to flourish.

### We will achieve this by:



- Adopting an agile and flexible project management approach.
- Ensuring a good work-life balance for our staff and creating a culture which celebrates our successes and facilitates alternative ways of working.
- Ensuring our core values are embedded in our operational delivery.
- Actively participating in the Scottish Government's Improvement Collaborative to take forward SG2020 and promote the #greatplacetowork hashtag.

## We will make independent and robust recommendations for appointment to courts and tribunals based on merit.

**Our raison d'être is to deliver a judicial appointments process which is fair, open and independent of external influence. We will strive to improve our efficiency and effectiveness.**

**We will endeavour to better understand the needs of applicants and of our justice colleagues through consultation and research, and deliver operational excellence through processes that are fit for purpose.**

### Our main priorities will be:



- To continue to make recommendations for appointment.
- To engage further with potential applicants and stakeholders.
- To work with our partners towards delivering a regular rolling-programme of recruitment in a robust, timely and cost-effective manner.
- To develop and maximise our online and digital functions for our Board Members, our staff and for applicants.
- To ensure that our governance, assurance and project and risk management processes are appropriate and proportionate.

### We will achieve this by:



- Partnering with key stakeholders to anticipate and plan requirements for new appointments
- Reviewing how we do our work to ensure we become more effective, efficient and economical whilst continuing to maintain the highest standards.
- Developing and modernising our online and digital options to ensure our application processes are more candidate-focused and straightforward.
- Extending our remit where required to support a wider range of judicial and quasi-judicial appointments.
- Creating a timetable of engagement and activity with key stakeholders to help us build trust and reach target groups.



## We will work in a fair and transparent way, which commands the confidence of courts and tribunal users and the wider public.

We recognise that we have a responsibility to the people of Scotland to ensure that our processes continue to be rigorous and the recommendations we make are sound.

It is important that we increase collaborative working and improve our communications and engagement.

### Our main priorities will be:



- To develop a wider public understanding of the work we do for our justice colleagues and for the people of Scotland.
- To develop a Partnership Strategy to increase partnership working and to enhance relationships with our colleagues across the justice sector.
- To make sure others have clarity on our recruitment processes.
- To build on good practice, learning from our work and from others.
- To continue to lead conversations with applicants and with other interested parties to influence our learning, planning and activity.

### We will achieve this by:



- Creating and implementing an Engagement and Partnership Strategy, which enhances relationships with our stakeholders and informs the future shape of our operations.
- Ensuring that our Board Members and our staff receive the training, support and assistance they require.
- Launching our new website and making sure that it effectively communicates useful and up-to-date information.
- Ensuring strong and proportionate corporate governance and accountability to ensure we maintain performance and efficiency.
- Designing methods to enable us to analyse data more effectively.
- Supporting any changes we make to our systems and processes with data and evidence.

## We will encourage diversity in the range of individuals available for selection.

**We will contribute to the creation of a more diverse judiciary in Scotland - one which reflects the growing diversity in our communities and which helps to build public trust and confidence.**



### Our main priorities will be:

- To understand precisely how diverse Scotland's judiciary currently is.
- To develop and implement a communications plan that ensures we get the right messages to the right people at the right time so that we provide the appropriate level of information and attract a broad range of applicants.
- To collaborate with others in order to encourage judicial diversity within the wider social environment.
- To ensure that our appointment processes help and not hinder the pursuit of diversity.
- To learn lessons from the approach to promoting diversity in other legal systems.
- To provide strong, active and strategic leadership on diversity.



### We will achieve this by:

- Developing and implementing a Diversity Engagement Strategy.
- Making sure our staff and our Board Members understand what diversity means for JABS and for justice in Scotland.
- Working to help meet Scottish Government 5050 by 2020 diversity targets.
- Working with external partners to attract diverse applicants.
- Ensuring our online application process is accessible for all candidates.
- Reviewing how our interview panels work and ensuring that they are diverse in makeup.
- Evaluating how best to support under-represented groups who want to apply to join the judiciary to remove barriers to entry.

## We will pursue continuous improvement in the way we do our work.

**We will ensure on-going efforts to improve everything that we do. Improving our processes relies heavily on constant feedback from applicants and from our partners, so we will ask them to share their ideas with us so that we can implement changes as required.**

**However, we recognise that simply making a change and calling it an improvement is not enough. To achieve real improvement we will test, study and measure the impact of any changes we make.**

### Our main priorities will be:



- To tap into the huge potential offered by new technologies to improve the ways in which we deliver our work.
- To make much better use of the data we collect to improve our processes and to take action quickly when required.
- To work flexibly and in an agile manner to be able to respond to business needs.
- To deliver value for money and to live within our means.
- To make sure our Board Members and our staff have access to the knowledge and skills they need to work at their best.
- To monitor and review our selection processes as a means of introducing improvements and be transparent about how we are doing that.

### We will achieve this by:



- Developing and implementing a research strategy and continuous improvement programme.
- Developing and implementing a proactive and proportionate project management approach to our day-to-day operations.
- Carrying out analysis to help us improve our recruitment processes and using that to inform how we do things.
- Developing a deeper understanding of the way candidates experience our recruitment processes.
- Engaging with others including research communities and other jurisdictions to keep abreast of current appointment processes.

## OUR ENABLERS

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We recognise that our agenda for JABS is ambitious. For us to be successful, we need to respond to the evolving resources available to us to ensure we can deliver the best outcomes for applicants, our justice colleagues and for the people of Scotland.

We believe there are four key enablers that will help us in our endeavours. These are:

### 1. OUR PEOPLE:

Our staff and our Board Members are our greatest asset for ensuring our work is delivered effectively and efficiently. We will support and develop our people to make sure they have the right skills, respect and capabilities for today and in the future. We will involve them in our planning and delivery and make sure that we utilise their energy, expertise and passion. At the same time, we recognise that our people are highly skilled, motivated and innovative. We will make sure that we support them fully by providing them with the tools they need to make robust and meritorious recommendations for judicial office.

### 2. DIGITAL:

Technology and digital communication can help us do our work more efficiently. We will make greater use of technology to help us work in more modern, flexible, effective and efficient ways.

### 3. NETWORKS:

Whilst we recognise we have an important role to play, we are only one cog in a much bigger machine across justice in Scotland. We will play an active role working with other organisations for the benefit of our applicants and for the people who use Scotland's courts and tribunals.

### 4. LEARNING:

We recognise that we can learn from others and are open to new ideas. We will foster an environment for continuous improvement and use research to inform our policies and processes. We will engage with academia and other judicial jurisdictions to develop innovative thinking. We will also develop new tools to measure our performance and seek to share good practice with our colleagues across justice.