



# Business Plan



2020-2021

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# Vision

Our Vision Statement -

**“Selecting the best people and promoting diversity”**

# Values



## Introduction

The Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) is an independent public body established to bring about an open and transparent system for appointing members of the judiciary in Northern Ireland.

The Commission ordinarily comprises 13 Commissioners drawn from the judiciary, legal profession and other backgrounds. All Commissioners have an equal say in our work and are of equal status.

In addition to Plenary (the executive decision making board) there are three standing committees which have been established to deliver our commitments:

- Policy Committee
- Business Committee
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Commissioners are supported by 12 staff, headed by a Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

This Business Plan outlines our priorities for the period April 2020 to March 2021 and reflects the commitments/objectives set out in the new 5 year Corporate Plan for the period 2020 to 2025.

The draft Programme for Government (PfG) has a framework of outcomes. These provide direction and clarity in delivering public services. NIJAC's business objectives and targets for 2020/21 are underpinned by and reflect the following draft PfG outcomes

No.	PfG Outcome	NIJAC's role
2.	We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment	Promoting the use of digital platforms to conduct our work internally and with our external partners and applicants thereby minimising our environmental impact in terms of hard copy documents and travel.
3.	We have a more equal society	Delivering a recruitment service which places merit at the forefront and which ensures that our processes eliminate disadvantage where appropriate.
5.	We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential.	Keeping pace with technology and social media innovations in our business and community engagement activity and giving the judiciary the widest appeal across society as an accessible, modernised and fulfilling career.
7.	We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other.	Maintaining public confidence in the judiciary through the selection and appointment of skilled and able individuals to the judiciary which enables respect for the law and contributes toward a safe community.
9.	We are a shared society that respects diversity.	Promoting diversity amongst the judiciary and to ensure that judicial opportunities attract interest from across all sections of the community.
11.	We have high quality public services	Delivering a sustainable and effective organisation which prioritises its statutory duties.

## Our statutory responsibilities

1. To select and 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 2020/21 Annual Business Plan will contribute to us achieving our longer-term objectives.

When implementing various activities and outputs, 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 we will measure our success in delivering our business objectives.

## Contact Details

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Theme	Outcomes How we will make an impact	Priorities How we will achieve our outcomes	Annual Business Plan Objectives What we will do this year	KPI / Target Dates
Recognising merit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have judicial appointments based on merit using a range of valid and reliable assessment methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to quality assure existing and introduce new valid and reliable assessment methods.</li> <li>We will engage with those who have independent expertise in assessment and those in judicial office to maximise the validity and reliability of our assessment methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will deliver meritorious appointments via 8-10 schemes</li> <li>Review of Personal Profiles</li> <li>Identify parameters of and engage experts in a review of NIJAC's assessment methods</li> <li>Implement Review of Selection Committee training</li> <li>Assessment complete within 60 working days of the advert date</li> <li>Scheme Evaluations and Lessons Learned Reports to be delivered within 30 working days of applicants being informed of outcome</li> <li>To put in place a new system for the validation of shortlisting assessment tests</li> </ul>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>February 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>October 2020</p> <p>All schemes March 2021</p> <p>All schemes March 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p>

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Reflecting the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have a judiciary which is as reflective of the community as far as is reasonably practicable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will monitor the demographics of the respective applicant pools, those who apply and those who are appointed to identify areas of underrepresentation.</li> <li>We will ensure we have applicant centred processes by identifying and addressing barriers to applications, particularly from underrepresented groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality monitoring and analysis on a scheme by scheme basis to identifying any under-representation</li> <li>Annual Report completed</li> <li>Deliver on key actions arising from QUB research recommendations</li> </ul>	<p>Within 30 days of scheme end</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p>

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Engaging with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have improved understanding of the work of NIJAC using digital platforms to share information and increase applications for judicial office.</li> <li>To have increased levels of engagement with stakeholders to maximise the impact of our work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to collaborate with the Departments of Justice and Health and other interested parties to identify and address the barriers to interest in judicial appointment for medical consultants.</li> <li>We will focus our engagement with the professional and other relevant bodies to maximise the numbers of applications for senior judicial appointments.</li> <li>We will continue to modernise our work through the use of digital platforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing engagement with Health, Justice and RCPsychNI</li> <li>Ongoing engagement with LS, BC and Judicial Councils to maximise applications by Oct 2020</li> <li>Fully implement and optimise the usage of Huddle</li> </ul>	<p>October 2020</p> <p>October 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p>

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Valuing our people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have people with the knowledge and skills, together with the direction and motivation, to address challenges and deliver our longer-term business objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will review how work is organised and delivered so that staff work within team roles that are optimally aligned to NIJAC's core business and long term organisational needs.</li> <li>We will develop a staff Wellbeing programme, demonstrating our genuine interest in their welfare and our desire to provide support in the workplace and beyond where possible.</li> <li>We will address our specific skills and knowledge needs in our Learning &amp; Development plan (including our Commissioners) so that our people feel equipped to meet NIJAC's present and future challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the delivery of and act to implement the review of staffing structure</li> <li>Scope a suitable performance framework which meets the needs of NIJAC's business and is aligned with its values</li> <li>Revise and implement suitable internal arrangements for HR support to NIJAC's operations.</li> <li>Develop systems and processes which support the wellbeing, and facilitate the voice of, NIJAC staff</li> <li>Develop a training programme for staff and Commissioners providing the skills and knowledge with which to discharge their duties and develop their capabilities</li> </ul>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>May 2020</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>February 2021</p>

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<p><b>Delivering sustainability and accountability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have a sustainable funding model in place for the Commission.</li> <li>• To have an organisation that is open, transparent and maintains public confidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop a funding model that ensures sustainability for the Commission's work.</li> <li>• We will deliver a quality public service through our partnership agreement.</li> <li>• We will innovate, modernise and deliver efficient and effective services within our risk appetite parameters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to make in year monitoring round bids to achieve full cost recovery within operating budget in year.</li> <li>• Collaborate with TEO to identify options for a sustainable funding model</li> <li>• Manage and monitor expenditure to ensure operating within 1.5% tolerance level.</li> <li>• We will complete within timelines monthly, quarterly and annual returns to TEO</li> <li>• We will start to digitalise our invoice processing</li> </ul>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>October 2020</p>