

Press release: More than 1000 new magistrates recruited in 2018

- national recruitment process launched to speed up applications
- direct applications to sit in the Family Court available nationally for the first time
- a 4% increase in both female and BAME magistrates since 2012

More than 1000 new magistrates were welcomed to the bench last year thanks and there is a concerted effort to attract even more candidates from diverse backgrounds.

A new national recruitment process, designed by HM Courts and Tribunals Service and the judiciary, is already helping to boost the number of new recruits. In addition to this, a number of specialist recruitment advisory committees have been assessing the needs of courts in their area and working with local people to ensure the magistracy better reflects their community.

For the first time nationally, applications can now also be made to sit directly in the Family Court – previously this was only possible after 2 years of sitting in the criminal court. This has increased the range of roles open to newly recruited magistrates, meaning that as well as dealing with cases such as theft and assault, they can be responsible for making life-changing decisions regarding adoption, child protection and issuing court orders to prevent domestic abuse.

Justice Minister, Lucy Frazer said:

Magistrates play a vital role in our justice system, and that's why we are working hard to increase numbers and ensure all walks of life are represented.

If you care about your community and want to give back then I would encourage you to apply to become a magistrate. There are few other opportunities that have such a profound impact on people's lives.

Luke Rigg JP, a magistrate for the past four years said:

Being a magistrate has helped me develop so many skills that I use in my professional and personal life – from communication to persuasion, decision-making and team building to name a few.

We make some of the most life-changing decisions possible – in some cases deciding whether to send someone to prison. It is a privilege to be given the responsibility and opportunity to have my voice heard in the retiring room when I'm deliberating with my colleagues.

Diversity has also increased in recent years, with the number of female magistrates now standing at 55% and BAME magistrates at 12% – a 4% increase for both groups since 2012.

Relationships are being forged with universities and religious centres throughout the country to raise the profile of the magistracy among young people and BAME communities to ensure a wide representation of society.

Evodian Fonyonga has been sitting as a magistrate for 3 years while also working part-time as an NHS Transfusion Practitioner and firmly believes the justice system must represent the community it serves. As a British woman of African origin, she said it was important for “all members of society” to apply.

Dave Mann, a keen lifelong biker who runs a gardening business, said: “We all have life skills and experiences and I wanted to become a magistrate in order to use these for the benefit of my local community.”

Who can apply?

- You can apply if you are over the age of 18 and under 65.
- Applications may be considered for those aged between 65 and 70 but all magistrates must retire at 70.
- You must be aware of social issues, have sound judgement and be of good character (which means you cannot have been convicted of a serious crime or cumulative minor offences, have been banned from driving in the last 10 years or have been declared bankrupt).
- You must be reliable and mature and be able to listen and communicate with others.

[Find out more and apply](#) on GOV.UK.