

Press release: New programme to boost judicial diversity

- government-funded judicial education programme
- greater support for eligible lawyers applying to be a judge
- joint initiative between the government, judiciary and legal professional bodies

Developed using government funding, the programme is the first joint initiative from the Judicial Diversity Forum (JDF), which aims to encourage diversity within the judiciary.

The Pre-Application Judicial Education (PAJE) programme will help lawyers develop their understanding of the role and skills required of a judge, before they apply. The programme will provide advice to applicants on how to prepare for the next step in their career as well covering a range of topics necessary to being a judge including judgecraft, ethics and resilience.

It will deliver a mixture of online resources and discussion groups led by judges, allowing participants to explore perceptions of the barriers to a judicial career. Targeted participants from underrepresented groups will have access to judges who will share their insight into the realities of being a judge and the ways in which participants can try to overcome perceived barriers.

Lord Chancellor, David Gauke, said:

Encouraging diversity is important in fostering a legal system that better reflects and represents the range of voices in our society.

The PAJE programme is a positive step forward to support lawyers from all backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups as they aspire towards a judicial career. We are strengthening our world-renowned justice system by drawing on a greater diverse range of knowledge and expertise.

The Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, Lord Burnett, said:

This programme is an important part of the support offered to talented and diverse lawyers with judicial aspirations.

Promoting diversity and appointing on the basis of merit are mutually reinforcing because the wider the pool the greater the availability of talent, the greater the competition for places and the greater the quality of appointments.

Lord Kakkar, Chairman of the Judicial Appointments Commission and the Judicial Diversity Forum, said:

Taking the first step towards a judicial role can feel like a big decision. This initiative, which gives priority to those from currently under-represented groups, will help potential candidates understand what is required and be better prepared for judicial appointment.

The Judicial Appointments Commission is pleased to be part of this and looks forward to reporting on its impact in future years.

Notes to editors

- JDF is made up of the Judiciary, Ministry of Justice, Judicial Appointments Commission, The Bar Council, The Law Society and the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives
- Those who wish to take part in a discussion group are invited to complete an application form. Priority will be given to lawyers from underrepresented groups: women, individuals from BAME backgrounds and those with a disability. Lawyers with a non-litigation background (including solicitors and chartered legal executives) will also be encouraged to apply.
- The PAJE programme has 2 elements:
 - online learning, that has launched today (24 April 2019), which is available to all participants on an unlimited basis
 - targeted judge-facilitated discussion group, that will launch September 2019, with four courses running this autumn
- Information on the [PAJE programme](#) and access to the online learning platform will be available on the judiciary website. It will include a link to the digital resources and will hold information about the discussion groups as well as details on the application process.