



The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council

Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025

Annual Update 2022

Table of contents

1. Foreword	3
By Lord Reed, President of the UK Supreme Court	
2. Progress Updates	
Objective 1	4
Objective 2	6
Objective 3	9
Objective 4	11
Objective 5	14

Foreword

By the President, Lord Reed



In May 2021 we published our first [Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025](#). The aims of this strategy are to support the progress of underrepresented groups into judicial roles and to further build an inclusive and respectful working environment for the Justices and staff of the Court where differences are valued.

This update report gives details of the first steps we have undertaken to meet the five objectives in the strategy. As this report shows, we have had an active first year.

A particular highlight was working in partnership with Bridging the Bar to offer the opportunity for eight lawyers from underrepresented groups to join the Court for a paid internship programme. One of the interns said of the programme, “This experience has intensified my love for law and desire to be a barrister. It has raised my aspirations and given me self-belief. Most importantly it has demonstrated that it is not merely lip service when the profession speaks on improving diversity and inclusion”.

This is exactly what we are setting out to achieve in all our work delivering this strategy. It is essential that the Court attracts the best qualified candidates for appointment and the Court will continue in its efforts to support and encourage lawyers from all backgrounds to see themselves as potential candidates and to put their names forward. At the same time, it is important that the Court and our Justices lead by example by fostering a working culture in which everyone feels included and valued.

I am strongly committed to this strategy. There remains a great deal more to be done and we will continue to play our part in building a legal profession in which there is equality of opportunity, and in which diversity is valued and respected.

Progress Update

Objective 1: To support and build an inclusive and respectful culture and working environment at the Court, where all Justices support the strategy and lead the way

Activity	Due date	Status	
We will provide training on bias awareness for Justices	May 2021	Justices attended training in 2021.	
We will provide reverse mentoring opportunities for Justices	December 2021	There was a small element of reverse mentoring as part of the Bridging the Bar internship and mentoring opportunities will be further developed in year 2 of the strategy	
Justices will continue to discuss ways of working to ensure that everyone feels included and valued	Ongoing	Ongoing	
We will provide a buddy system for new Justices so that they feel supported, included and valued for the experience they bring to the Court	April 2021	Successfully implemented and will be embedded in the induction of all new Justices	
We will address any gaps in diversity and inclusion training so that Justices gain a deeper understanding of diversity and inclusion, and promote positive behaviour and a culture of respect that is sensitive to difference and intolerant of any discrimination	November 2021	Ongoing and will be further developed in year 2 of the strategy	
We will continue to ensure that Justices have access to workplace support and reasonable adjustments	Ongoing	Ongoing	

Achievements since 2021

In 2021, Justices undertook training on bias awareness delivered by leading experts in organisational psychology. The training session on *'The Biased Mind' – Fairer Decision Making and Greater Inclusion* enabled Justices to foster a deeper understanding of bias and its impact on decision making and inclusion. We will continue to assess existing barriers to diversity and inclusion and any gaps in training throughout the coming year so that future training can be tailored to best support Justices in building an inclusive and respectful culture. We will continue to work with other Courts to discuss the development of training and other initiatives currently underway within the judiciary.

A buddy system has been introduced to support newly appointed Justices in their first months at the Court. This initiative provides an informal support network where new Justices can ask any questions that may arise as they settle into the new working environment at the Court. Positive feedback has been received from those who took part in the initiative. In particular, it was valued for providing a flexible and friendly channel to discuss working practices, especially where they may differ from other courts. The buddy system will continue to be offered to all new Justices. Justices also hold regular discussions on ways of working as part of ensuring an inclusive respectful working environment.

The Court remains committed to ensuring workplace support and reasonable adjustments are in place for all Justices and staff members with a disability, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Objective 2: To support the progression of underrepresented groups into judicial roles

Activity	Due date	Status	
We will launch a paid internship scheme in partnership with Bridging the Bar	October 2021	Successfully implemented and will be repeated in year 2 of the strategy	
We will build links with organisations that represent underrepresented groups so as to better understand and learn from their lived experience	Ongoing	Ongoing and will be developed further in year 2 of the strategy	
We will maintain links with the Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Office to work with them on shared diversity and inclusion initiatives	Ongoing	Ongoing and has included collaboration on diversity videos	
We will build links with the Government Legal Department and the Judicial Appointments Commission to support a more diverse judiciary	December 2021	Ongoing and has included speaking events and regular meetings	

Achievements since 2021

In November 2021, the Court launched its first paid internship programme in collaboration with Bridging the Bar, a charity committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and diversity at the Bar of England and Wales. This programme enabled eight interns from underrepresented communities at the Bar to complete a weeklong placement with the Court in November 2021.

The programme had four main objectives:

1. Provide participants with an insight into the work of the UK Supreme Court.
2. Intellectually stimulate and challenge participants.
3. Facilitate reverse mentoring.
4. Encourage and support participants to pursue a career in law.

A total of 121 candidates applied for the Bridging the Bar Judicial Internship Programme at the Court. 8 candidates were successful and received an offer to participate in the internship programme, of these:

- 6 were female and two were male. One intern identified as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.
- 3 interns identified as White (British/Irish), 3 as Black (African/Caribbean/Black British) and 2 identified as of Asian/Asian British ethnicity.
- All 8 interns attended state school for all or most of their education, and 5 were the first generation in their family to attend university.

All eight interns said that their views and perceptions had changed dramatically during the internship, which allowed time to reflect on different styles of advocacy and consider the role of the Justices in a way that they had never done before. More information on the programme and testimonials from the interns can be found [here](#). A short [video](#) featuring two of the interns discussing key lessons from their internship and their views on the importance of diversity within the legal profession was also shared on the UKSC's website and social media channels. It was warmly received.

In partnership with Bridging the Bar, the Court will be running the programme again in 2022.



Bridging the Bar Interns, 2021

The Court has continued to build links with a number of representative organisations to help us better understand the lived experience of underrepresented groups. It is our hope that as we continue to establish these relations and broaden our understanding of the current barriers to diversity and inclusion within the judiciary, we can direct our efforts and resources to ensure maximum impact.

The Court has participated in quarterly diversity and inclusion meetings with the Ministry of Justice, the Judicial Office and the Judicial Appointments Committee to gain an understanding

of work currently underway in the judiciary and to facilitate collaboration on diversity and inclusion initiatives. In partnership with the Ministry of Justice, we released three short videos in which Lord Sales, Lord Hamblen and Lady Rose spoke about [the qualities of Justices](#), [tips for aspiring Justices](#) and [diversity in the judicial profession](#).

We have also built closer links with the Government Legal Department. Over the past year, Lady Rose took part in a conversation with the Solicitor General for an online audience of lawyers at the Government Legal Department and Lord Hodge gave a lecture to the Government Legal Service for Scotland on ‘Statutory Interpretation: A Collaboration between Democratic Legislatures and the Courts?’

Objective 3: To support an increase in the number of well-qualified applicants from underrepresented groups for the role of Justice

Activity	Due date	Status	
We will use digital and other outreach tools to attract and encourage applications, promoting selection exercises widely and beyond the conventional career routes	Ongoing	Ongoing and successfully implemented in the most recent selection exercise	
We will continue to advertise that we offer flexible and part-time working patterns for Justices	Ongoing	Ongoing and successfully implemented in the most recent selection exercise	
We will maintain regular contact between the President of the Court and other judges in a fair and inclusive way to support and encourage career development for judges	Ongoing	Ongoing	
We will offer pipeline events for prospective candidates	As part of every recruitment exercise	Ongoing and successfully implemented in the most recent selection exercise	

Achievements since 2021

We have continued the practice of regularly inviting senior judges from lower courts to sit on cases at the Supreme Court and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC), so as to provide a more diverse bench and broaden and cement strong relations with the appellate courts. This practice serves to break down barriers and provide experience of working at the Court. In 2021-22, we welcomed 15 serving judges from other courts and jurisdictions, 5 of whom were women.

In November 2021, Lord Reed addressed Court of Appeal judges to explain the appointments process and to encourage applications. He also met with the lead judge on diversity and inclusion at the Royal Courts of Justice, to understand barriers to applying to the Supreme Court.

The Court recognises that change requires not only encouraging a more diverse group of people to consider becoming judges, but also supporting early and mid-career lawyers to

organise their careers in a way which makes that a realistic ambition. In January 2022, the Court held a [webinar](#) on Career Pathways to becoming a Supreme Court Justice, which provided early- and mid-career professionals with an opportunity to learn more about the appointment process and the necessary skills and experience required to become a Justice. Career pathways beyond the conventional routes to the Supreme Court were also discussed during the session. Just under 400 people attended the webinar and it is now approaching close to 2000 views on the Court's YouTube channel. The webinar attracted a diverse audience from across the legal profession. Over 60% of those who registered to attend were women, whilst 40% of attendees who completed the feedback survey were from a minority ethnic background. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive.

We continue to offer flexible and part-time working for Justices. These arrangements can support the requirements of an operational court while still ensuring flexibility, smarter working and a good work-life balance. The option for flexible and part time working has been advertised in the Justice candidate information packs provided during all recruitment exercises. As part of the most recent recruitment exercise, prospective candidates were also invited to visit the Court and had the opportunity to meet current Justices.

Objective 4: To proactively communicate the Court’s support for diversity and inclusion to the legal profession and the public

Activity	Due date	Status	
We will continue to support and build on the outreach, education and engagement work by Justices and will monitor this work to ensure that it is reaching groups currently underrepresented in the legal profession	Ongoing	Ongoing and criteria revised so as to widen participation in the Court’s outreach and education programme	
Justices will attend speaking events at a wide range of universities and schools to ensure that we reach underrepresented groups	Ongoing	Ongoing	
We will deliver targeted speeches by Justices, with the aim of inspiring people to consider a career in the judiciary, publicised to a wide audience	Ongoing	Ongoing	
We will work with the Ministry of Justice digital team to spotlight current Justices and their different career paths	December 2021	Successfully implemented. Videos published in February 2022	
We will expand online opportunities to give people a better understanding of the role of Justices, building on an existing podcast series, to show life as a Justice	Ongoing	Ongoing. Podcasts and videos available on the Court website	

Achievements since 2021

In addition to their work in hearing and deciding cases, the Justices are committed to enhancing public understanding of the role of the Court and its work. Justices contribute to the schools and universities programme. Over the course of the past academic year, Justices participated in 13 speaking events at universities across the UK, 12 Ask a Justice events, 12 Moots and 9 Debate Days.

We have taken various steps over the past year to deepen our commitment to diversity and inclusion by ensuring that we widen participation to reach groups currently underrepresented within the judiciary. In order to achieve this goal, the Court has implemented a set of revised criteria for its education programmes. By doing this, we hope to ensure that the students that the Justices engage with are representative of the UK population and that there is equality of access to our services and programmes.

Moots (2021-22 academic year)

The scoring system for Moots has been amended to ensure that universities from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland participate annually, whilst offering priority to those universities who have not taken part in the Moot programme in the last two years. The court received 26 applications for Moots during the 2021-22 academic year, of which 12 were selected to participate in the programme. A participation rate of 50% from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland was achieved compared to 33.3% in the previous academic year.

Ask a Justice (2021-22 academic year)

The number of Ask a Justice applications increased from 12 to 33 eligible applications this academic year. The scoring system for “Ask a Justice” was amended with the aim of increasing participation from schools in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the top 10 areas of multiple deprivation in England. Throughout the academic year, 83% of schools that participated in the programme were from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, whilst 17% were from the top ten areas of multiple deprivation in England.

Debate Days (2021-22 academic year)

The number of Debate Day applications increased from 13 to 24 over the last academic year. New criteria were implemented with the aim of targeting the top 10 areas of deprivation in England as well as increasing the number of state schools. 100% of schools shortlisted for the 2021-22 academic year were state schools compared to 75% in the 2020-21 academic year and 30% of these schools were from areas of multiple deprivation in England.

We have also made progress in delivering targeted speeches by Justices to encourage careers within the judiciary. In addition to the Court’s career pathways webinar, Lady Rose was a panel member at an online webinar on ‘Demystifying the Employed Bar’ where she spoke about her career. She also gave a virtual talk on ‘Inspiring Women: Inspiring Careers in the Law’ and took part in a conversation with the Solicitor General for an online audience of lawyers in the Government Legal Department.

As part of our effort to expand online opportunities to provide a better understanding of the work of Justices and the Court, we have launched a free online course (MOOC) in partnership with Royal Holloway, University of London. The course is designed to allow the public to learn about the history, cases and role of the Court in an easy-to-access way. Following its launch in February, we have already reached more than 2,500 learners globally, with the potential to continue to reach many more as the course remains available until at least February 2023.

We continue to use our social media presence on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to foster greater awareness of the Court's work and our support for Diversity and Inclusion.

Objective 5: To fulfil our obligations under the Equality Act 2010: As part of the Court's obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Activity	Due date	Status
We will eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010	Quarterly review of the Court's Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy action plan	Ongoing
We will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it		
We will foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it		
<p>We will ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities, named on, to publish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equality objectives, at least every four years • information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty 		

Achievements since 2021

We want every single member of staff to feel a sense of belonging at the Court and to know that everyone can contribute their views and that these will be valued. The Court's [Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy 2021-2025](#) is closely aligned with the Judicial Diversity and Inclusion strategy and sets out our action plan to deliver on this ambition. Progress has been continuously reviewed at our quarterly diversity and inclusion forums, in which all Justices and staff members are invited to participate.

We have delivered a series of forums for court staff which considered different aspects of diversity from the impact of micro-aggressions in the workplace to parenting neuro diverse children.

A new Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Champion was appointed to support the strategy and action plan and provide challenge for the organisation on any relevant issues that may be raised by our staff.

Through the introduction of a Diversity Calendar, we have fostered greater awareness of religious festivals and equality, diversity and inclusion related events throughout the year. We celebrated Pride month with links to various events across the Civil Service and reading lists from an LGBTQ perspective. In addition, events were also organised to mark World Mental Health Day.

An event with the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) was arranged in February 2022 to support greater understanding for those with partial or complete loss of vision. A short British Sign Language course was offered to court staff to help increase knowledge and encourage further learning within the Court. Deaf awareness training was also delivered by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) in January 2022.

In April 2022, the Court became a member of the Business Disability Forum. Through this partnership, we will foster greater awareness of disability in the workplace and develop our policies and practices to advance equality of opportunities for all staff members and court users with disabilities.