

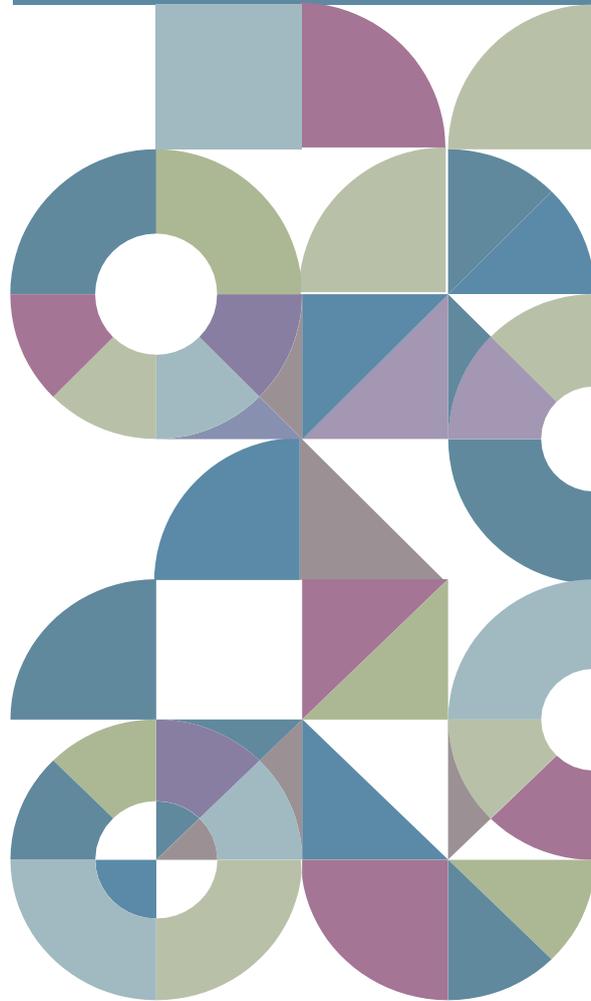


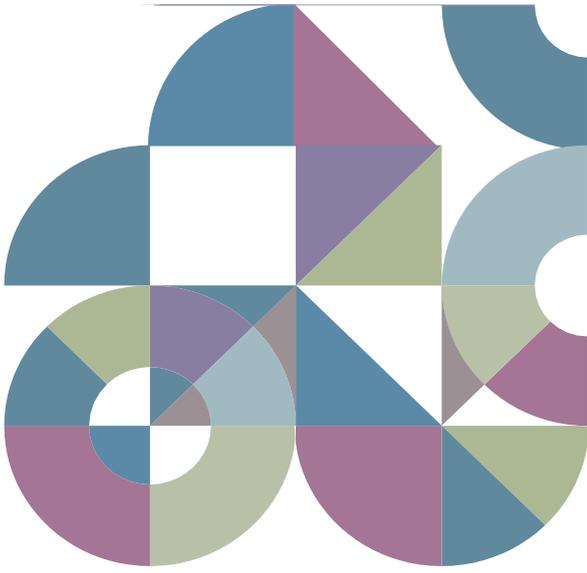
JUDICIAL
APPOINTMENTS
BOARD FOR
SCOTLAND

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

2021





Laid before the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Ministers under section 18 of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008.

March 2022
SG/2022/10

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland
Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD

E-mail: mailbox@jabs.gov.scot

This publication is only available on our website at www.judicialappointments.scot

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1. OUR AIMS

JABS is an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body ('NDPB'), operating under the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008. This is supported by a Framework Agreement which outlines the respective responsibilities of Scottish Ministers, to whom we make recommendations on judicial appointments; the Scottish Government that fully funds us (we do not generate funds); the Board and the Chief Executive. Our aims derive from statute and are:

1. To attract applicants of the highest calibre, recognising the need to encourage diversity in the range of those available for selection.
2. To recommend applicants for appointment to judicial office on merit through processes that are fair, transparent and command respect.

2. CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland for the period April 2020 to March 2021.

This has been a challenging year for the Board, not least because, as with all justice partners - and indeed all of civic Scotland - the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic hit us at the very beginning of the financial year, affecting all of the operational plans we had in place. I am grateful to my colleagues on the Board and the JABS staff for their adaptability and resilience as we inevitably changed our working practices whilst ensuring we delivered on the recruitment competitions the Scottish Government had requested us to run before the lockdowns hit. I became the Board's interim Chairing Member at the end of the reporting period, following Nicola Gordon's departure, and have appreciated members' ongoing support and flexibility as the pandemic has continued to significantly affect our work.

This year, JABS recruited members of the Social Security Chamber for the first time, alongside holding shrieval and senatorial competitions. Sifting and interviewing are intense periods of full-time work for our panels. All stages require analysis of huge volumes of information, distillation of that for assessment against our scoring criteria, and very often the taking of difficult decisions between very close candidates operating at the top of their professions. Every member of the Board feels this responsibility keenly, and understands the disappointment felt by a candidate who doesn't progress through a stage of a competition or is unsuccessful after interview.

This year I am pleased to report that we further enhanced our benchmarking and quality assurance protocols, which are so important to ensuring our ability to assess all candidates fairly and consistently. This included using an internal moderator to review assessments and promote consistency.

Learning lessons from last year - and reflecting on candidate feedback - we also designed and implemented enhanced sifting and feedback practices during these competitions. We hope this improved approach will better support applicants to develop in recommended areas and, in due course, be ready for judicial office consideration again.

The past year has also seen enhanced engagement with key partners, such as the Scottish Government and Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, as plans for the transfer of tribunals into, and expansion of chambers within, the Scottish Tribunals progress. In parallel, we developed our model for tribunals appointments and refined the skills and competencies for these important roles. Over a period of three months, we trained our new Lay Assistants. Together, this work has ensured we will be ready to respond to requests to run competitions as policy plans for the transfers - and in the case of the social security chamber, the expansion of the chamber - crystallise.

In the last quarter of 2020-21 Collette Paterson joined us from Judicial Office for Scotland as our new Chief Executive. The Board's key advisor, she brought 15 years of experience in solicitor and judicial regulation, education and recruitment in Scotland. Together we worked on developing plans that ensure that we will have a new strategic plan in place for the period from April 2023, when our current strategic plan ends. As part of this, we will undertake an independent review of the organisation. There is information about '10 years of JABS' in last year's annual report.

I would like to thank my colleagues, the Board and our staff for their considerable efforts during this challenging year. In particular, I would like to thank Nicola Gordon for all her work until she stepped down in March 2021 after over three years as the lay Chairing Member of the Board. I would also like to thank Sheriff O'Grady and Eilidh Wiseman for their contribution to JABS, before they left the Board in July 2020 and March 2021 respectively. As provided for in statute, Eilidh continued to play a full part in the Sheriff recruitment round that had begun while she was still a Board member. That round concluded in mid-2021, and so will be covered in next year's report.

Deirdre Fulton, Interim Lay Chairing Member
August 2021

Note to readers:

This report has been prepared later in the year than would normally be the case. Although we always endeavour to present our report as soon as possible, 2021 has been a period of significant workload and considerable personnel change within JABS, which has created pressures it is important to acknowledge. Since March, the Board has been operating with only ten members while we await the appointment of a new solicitor member and lay

Chairing member, and since August, a new lay member; and our Chief Executive departed shortly after the reporting period, in August. I am grateful to all members and staff for their hard work throughout this period of flux. We look forward to beginning the new year with enhanced resource, laying the foundations for a long-term operating model.

December 2021

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S FOREWORD

I would first like to thank my colleague Angela Simpson, Head of the Business Management Unit, for her work as Interim Chief Executive in the period leading up to me joining the organisation in January 2021.

My focus in the last quarter of the year in which I was in post was working with the Chair to assess the health of the organisation, assessing the work on the horizon with our partners, making recommendations to the Board and consequently commencing implementation work on a few important areas.

The first was improving our ability to be lean and efficient in our ways of working internally and with candidates, in particular empowering our team of skilled staff to support the Board, including through re-shaping of roles. The second built on these foundations and was agreeing with the Board how we are going to 'scale up' as an organisation to meet the demands ahead, including how we are going to tailor our appointments models and operations to the bespoke needs of the courts, tribunals, and our new responsibilities for the Parole Board for Scotland (under the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019) without loss of standards of rigour. Thirdly, we embarked on a piece of work to standardise and streamline our policy making process to bring clarity to policy making as well as how we manage what we learn from our quality assurance and continuous improvement loops when it comes to re-shaping policy and improving what we do.

JABS plays a critical role in ensuring that the judicial bench represents the society it serves, and we continue to receive feedback that there is work for us to do on the transparency of our decision making. The Board is committed to reviewing its appointments policy during the next strategic period, including how the pursuit of our diversity statutory duty interplays with our statutory duty to appoint solely on merit. Work in this area will continue in 2021-2022 and beyond.

I hope you enjoy reading about the work of JABS in a bit more depth in this annual report.

Collette Patterson, Chief Executive
August 2021

4. PURPOSE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland was established following the implementation of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008 (the 2008 Act). The Board became an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body on 1 June 2009. This means that we operate independently of Scottish Ministers, and have our strategic direction set by the Board. Our day-to-day operations are led by our Chief Executive. Our members of staff are civil servants, assigned to the Board by the Scottish Government.

Whilst the strategic direction is set by the Board, section 9 of the 2008 Act lays out the statutory functions:

- To recommend to members of the Scottish Government individuals for appointment to judicial offices within the Board's remit, and
- To provide advice to members of the Scottish Government in connection with such appointments.

The 2008 Act also places the following responsibilities on the Board, in relation to section 9:

- Selection must be solely on merit;
- The Board may select an individual only if it is satisfied that the individual is of good character; and
- In carrying out its functions, the Board must have regard to the need to encourage diversity in the range of individuals available for selection to be recommended for appointment to a judicial office.

The judicial offices within the Board's remit are set out in section 10 of the 2008 Act, but include:

- Senator of the College of Justice
- Chair of the Scottish Land Court
- Temporary Judge (with a number of statutory exemptions)
- Sheriff Principal
- Sheriff
- Part-time Sheriff
- Summary Sheriff
- Chamber Presidents of the Scottish Tribunals
- Member of the Scottish Tribunals

Members

There are twelve Board members: six judicial and legal members (a Senator of the College of Justice, a Tribunal President, a Sheriff Principal, a Sheriff, a member of the Faculty of Advocates and a Solicitor) and six lay members, one of whom is the Chairing Member. The Board membership during the period covered by this Annual Report was as follows:

Lay Members



Mrs Nicola
Gordon



Ms Neelam
Bakshi



Mrs Elizabeth
Burnley, CBE



Mrs Deirdre
Fulton



Mrs Alison
Mitchell



Professor
Stephen
Tierney

Judicial and Legal Members



The
Honourable
Lady Wise, QC



The
Honourable
Lord
Minginish, QC



Sheriff
Principal
Marysia Lewis



Ms Eilidh
Wiseman



Ms Morag
Ross, QC



Sheriff
Michael
O'Grady, QC
(until July
2020)



Sheriff David
Young, QC
(from August
2020)

Note: Nicola Gordon served as the Chairing Member until she stepped down in March 2021, and Deirdre Fulton became the interim Chairing Member.

Lay Assistants

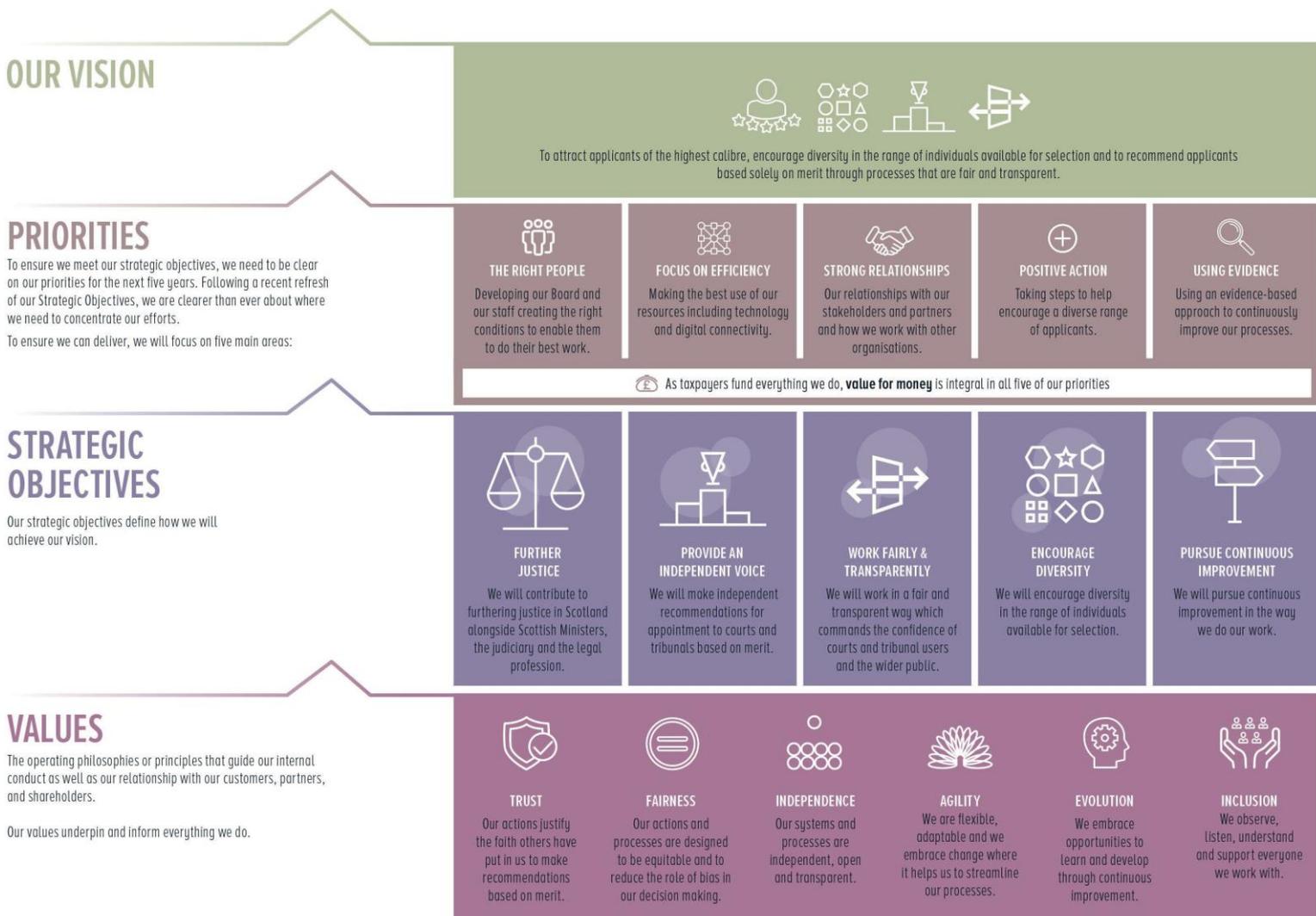
With the introduction of the Tribunals Scotland Act 2014, the Board made use of the statutory provisions within the 2008 Act to appoint Lay Assistants to help the Board to deliver its workload.

The Board Lay Assistants are:

- Mr John Cummings
- Ms Marieke Dwarshuis
- Dr Geoffrey Garner
- Professor Paul Gray
- Mr Gordon Macmillan
- Mr Peter McGrath

5. FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2018 we published our Five Year Strategic Plan. This set out how we will continue to contribute to justice in Scotland and provides objectives of how we aim to deliver our priorities. The Plan details our Vision, Priorities, Objectives and Values.



The full Plan is available on our website: www.judicialappointments.scot

The Plan sits at the heart of our operations, helping to focus our work and shape our priorities as we strive to ensure our processes remain fair, robust and fit for the future.

In 2020-21 the Covid-19 pandemic has challenged us to deliver our objectives against the backdrop of unprecedented and constantly evolving circumstances. To realise our priorities and strategic objectives in this context, we have:

- Rapidly transitioned to a new operational model in which all Board business, selection panels and interviews are conducted remotely, facilitating alternative ways of working for both Board members and staff.
- Flexibly adapted operational plans to accommodate the initial constraints of lockdown for justice partners.
- Worked closely with Judicial Office and the Scottish Government to plan new recruitment rounds to meet the needs of the Recover, Renew, Transform programme, responding to the increased backlog of cases and pressures faced by the Judiciary.
- Trained five newly-appointed lay assistants, to support Board members deliver recruitment rounds.
- Refreshed and re-focused our regular engagement and activity with key stakeholders, to foster positive relationships and support joined-up planning.
- Reviewed many of our corporate governance policies to ensure they are robust, and prepared for an independent review of our organisation, furthering our continuous improvement programme.

6. JUDICIAL SKILLS AND QUALITIES

The Board is committed to the principle of appointment solely on merit, and we work closely with our partners in the justice family to make sure the skills and qualities on which we assess applicants are a reflection of what makes a good judge.

These six skills and qualities relate to the offices of Senator of the College of Justice, Sheriff Principal, Sheriff and Summary Sheriff. In assessing candidates and reaching recommendations for judicial office, the Board considers these attributes in the round.



More detail on each of these skills and qualities is published on our website, at: <https://www.judicialappointments.scot/resources/what-were-looking-for>

For tribunal appointments, we look at a common set of core skills and qualities, supplemented by any specific competencies required by specialist members. The common core skills and qualities are: mind-set and motivation; managing work efficiently; exercising judgement; communicating effectively; and working with others. The details of the skills and qualities required for each role are published on our website when vacancies are advertised.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JUDICIAL APPOINTMENT

During the year 2020-2021, the Board made recommendations for the following offices:

Judicial Office	Number of Applications	Number recommended for appointment
Senator of the College of Justice	23	3
Social Security Chamber	196	164
The Office of Sheriff	89	12
The Office of Summary Sheriff	58	5
Total	366	184

Further recruitment rounds for the Offices of Summary Sheriff and Sheriff were launched in early 2021, but concluded in 2021-22 and so will be reported on in the next period.

In order to ensure that we meet our statutory obligation to have regard to the need to encourage diversity in the range of individuals available for selection, we ask all applicants to complete a Diversity Monitoring questionnaire. This is voluntary and applicants can complete all, some or none of it.¹

This questionnaire is separate from the application form and it is not seen by Board Members. The Business Management Unit collates the statistical information and presents reports to the Board to allow the consideration and identification of any changes in the pool of applicants.

Note that we do not publish diversity monitoring information that could identify an individual. This means that not all statistics are reported for every role, because if the number of applicants answering a question was very low the responses could lead to the identification of an individual.

¹ As a result, on occasion percentages given in the diversity stats in this report may not total 100, if some applicants did not answer all questions.

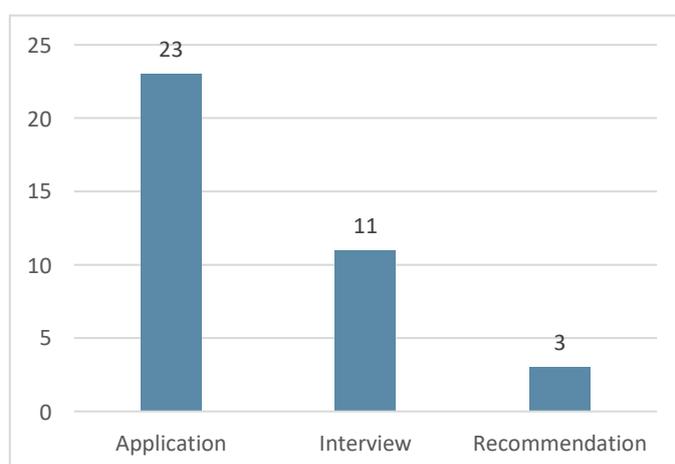
Recommendations for Senator of the College of Justice

In September 2020, we invited applications from those eligible for appointment to the office of Senator of the College of Justice. The advert was for three vacancies. We received 23 applications.

All applications were assessed by a Panel consisting of three lay members and three judicial and legal members. The Panel Chair was a lay member.

Of the 23 applicants, 11 were invited to interview. One candidate withdrew from the interview process, taking the number of candidates for interview to 10.

The table below provides statistical information on these applications.

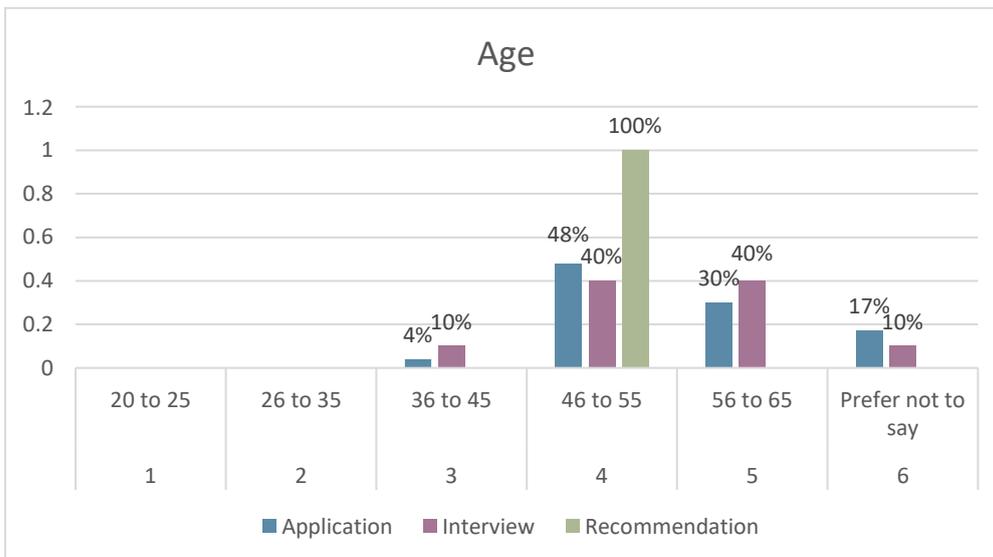
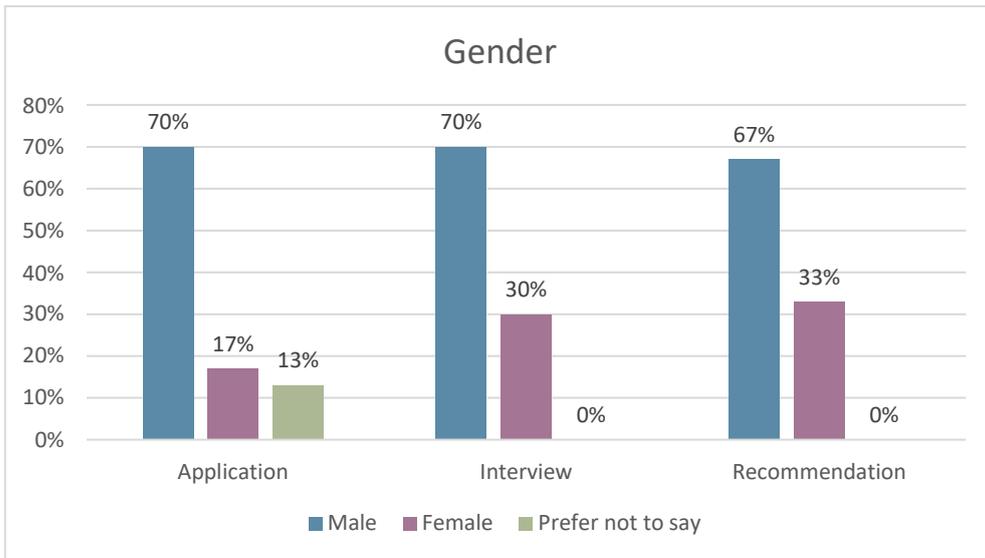


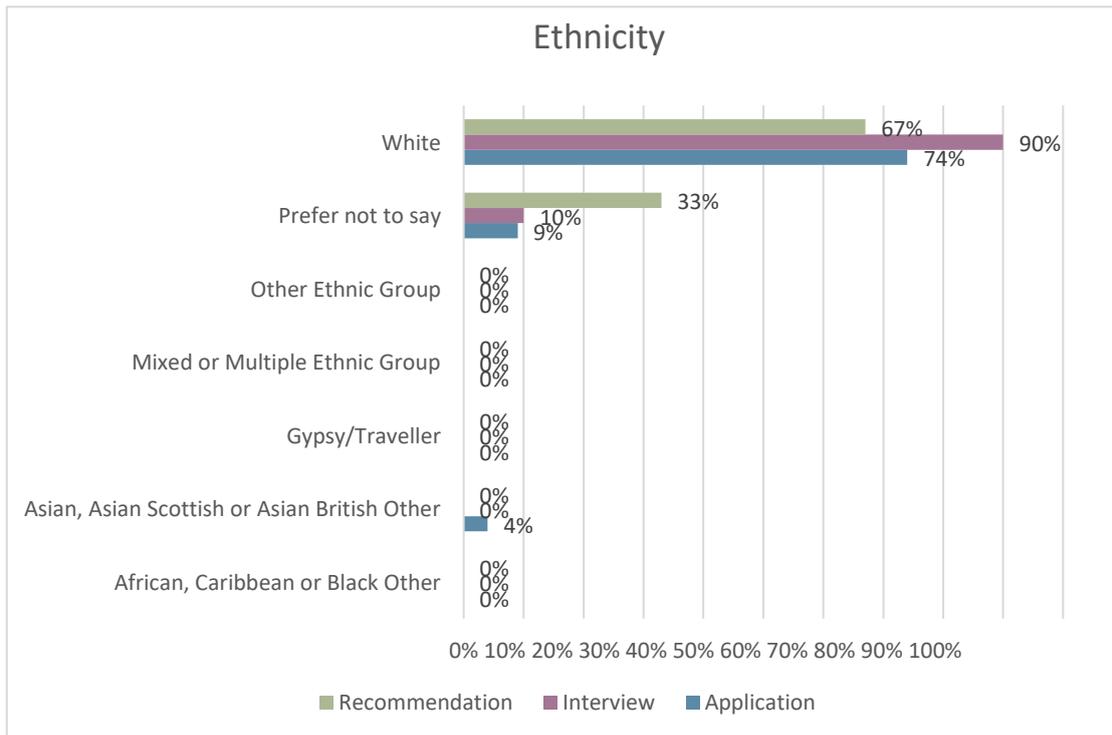
The full Board met on 14 December 2020 and made recommendations to the First Minister for appointment to office. The following appointments were made:

- Ms Shona Haldane QC, now the Hon. Lady Haldane QC, appointed in February 2020;
- Mr Martin Richardson QC, now the Hon. Lord Richardson QC, appointed in February 2020; and
- Mr Craig Sandison QC, now the Hon. Lord Sandison QC, appointed in February 2020.

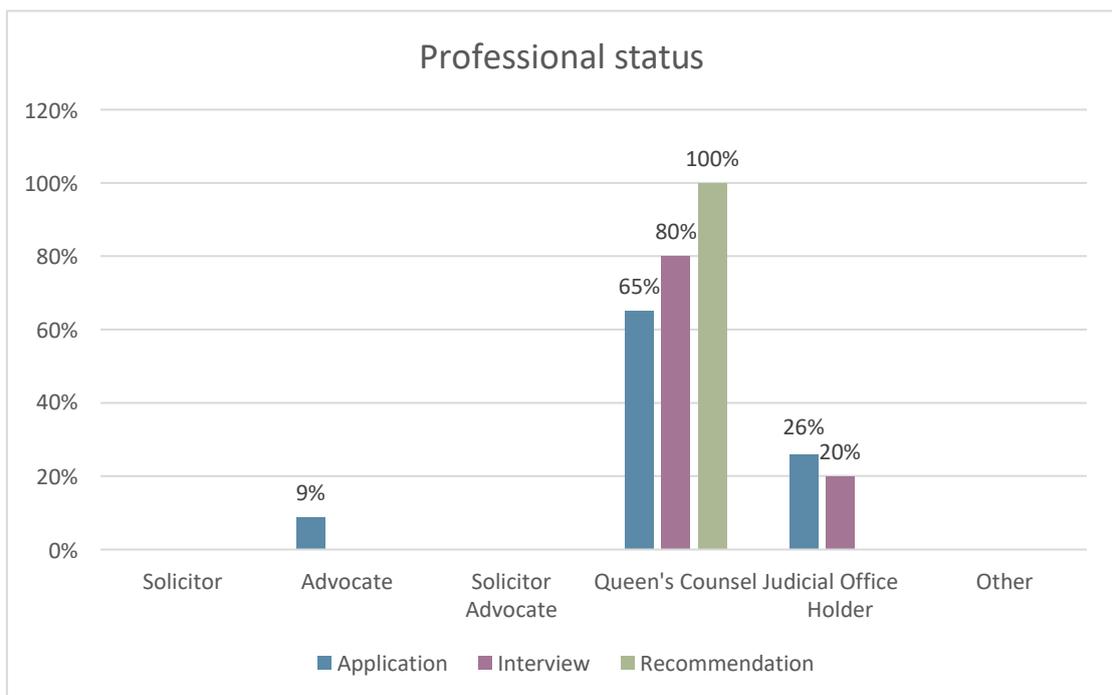
The following tables provide statistical information relating to the diversity of the application pool and those who were recommended for appointment.¹

¹ Percentages given in these tables are rounded to the nearest whole number. As a result, they may not always total 100%.





We recognise that individuals can fit into more than one category. However, for the purposes of reporting professional backgrounds we utilise the most recent background as self-reported. For example, all of the QC's will also be advocates or solicitors, but in this case, are reported as QC's.



Recommendations to the Office of Sheriff

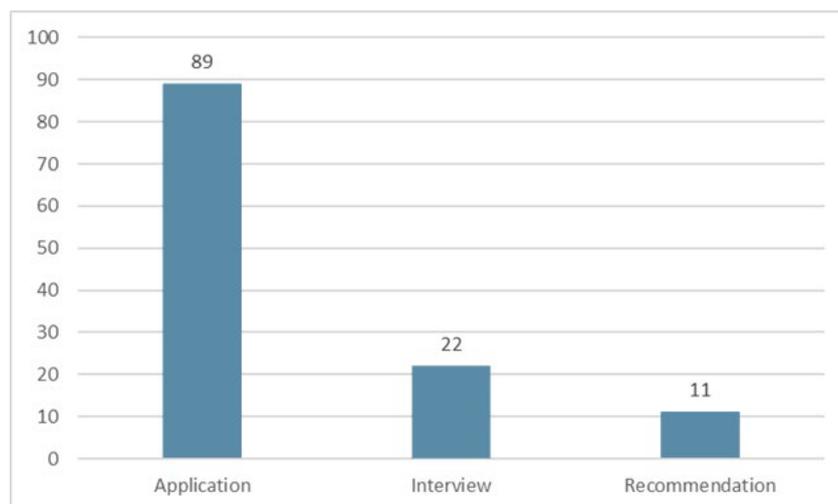
In February 2020, we invited applications from those eligible for appointment to the office of Sheriff. The initial advert was for eight vacancies. During the running of the exercise this increased to 11. We received 89 applications.

All applications were assessed by a Panel consisting of two lay members and two legal members. The Panel Chair was a lay member and the round was moderated by a legal member.

Of the 89 applicants, 22 were invited to interview.

A further request to recruit a Sheriff was received in November 2020. The Board had created a small reserve list following the completion of the competition in July 2020. The Board agreed to draw on this reserve list when asked to make a further recommendation to the First Minister for appointment to the office of Sheriff.

The table below provides statistical information on these applications.



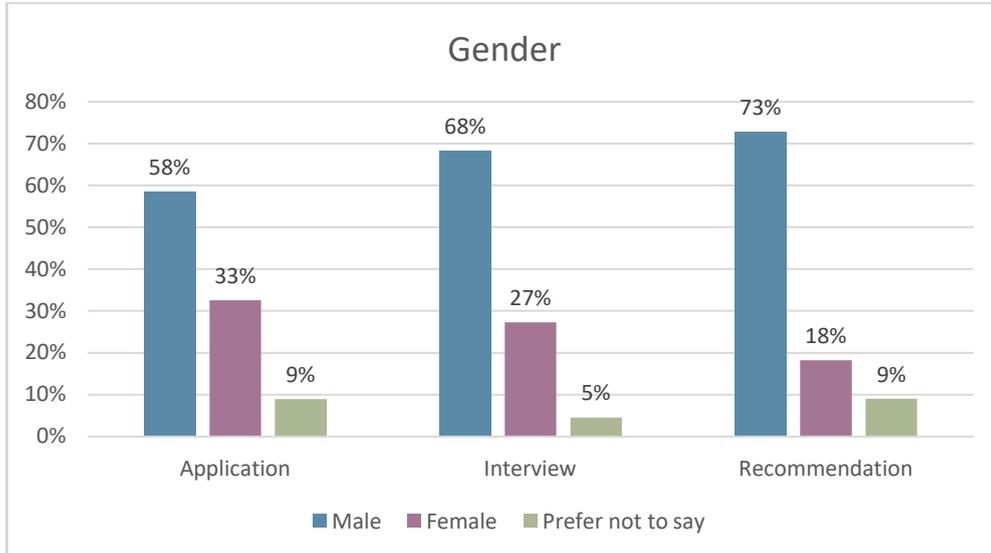
The full Board met on 20 July 2020 and made recommendations to the First Minister for appointment to office.

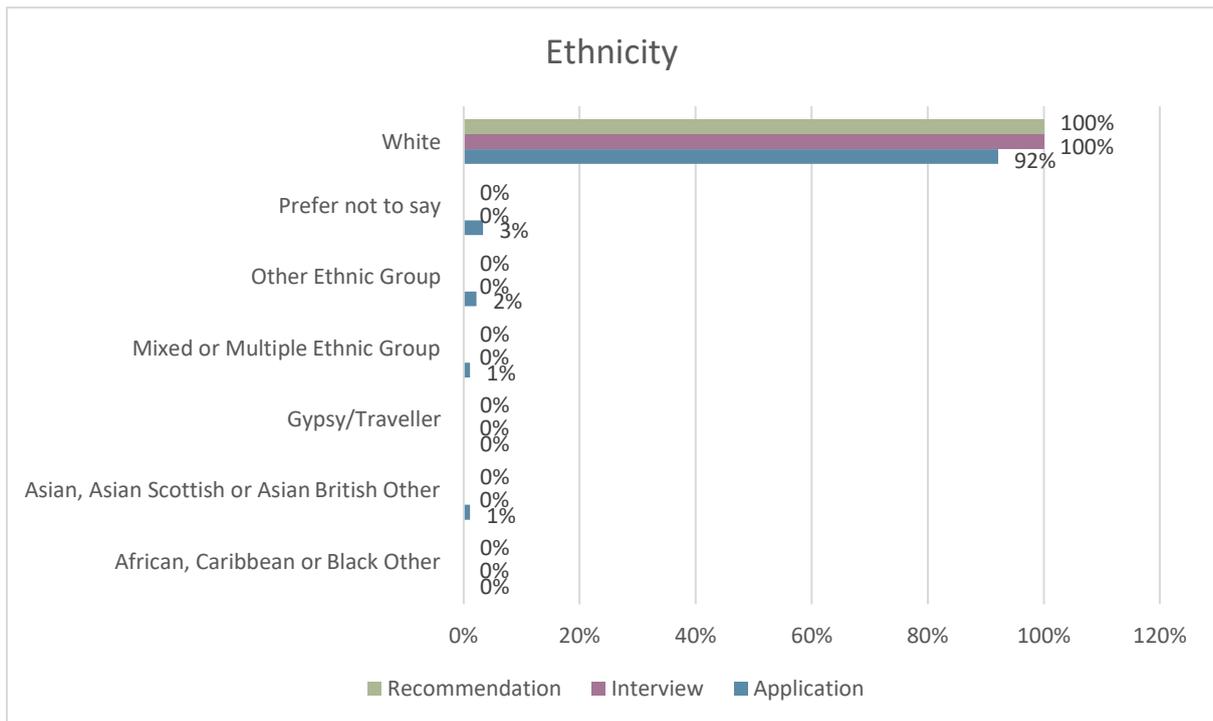
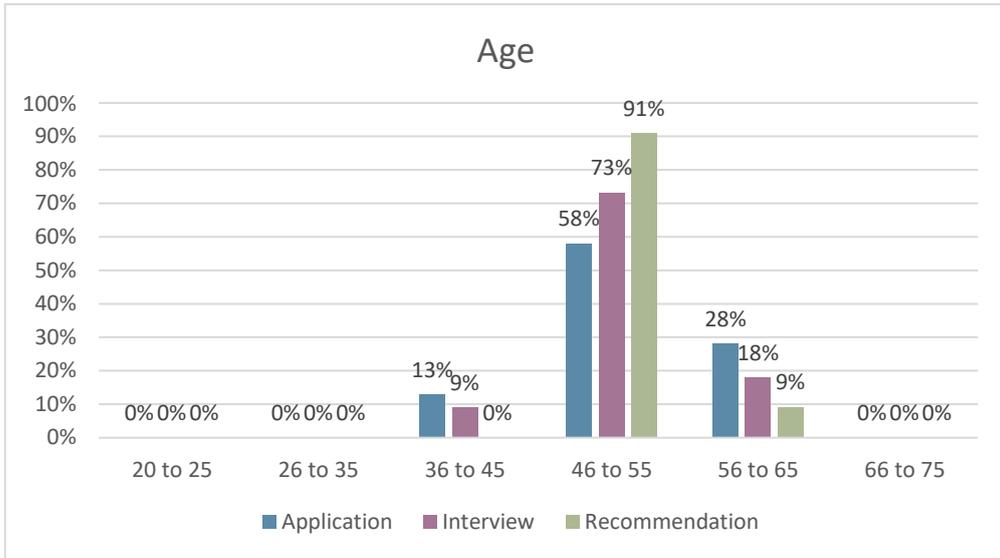
The following appointments were made:

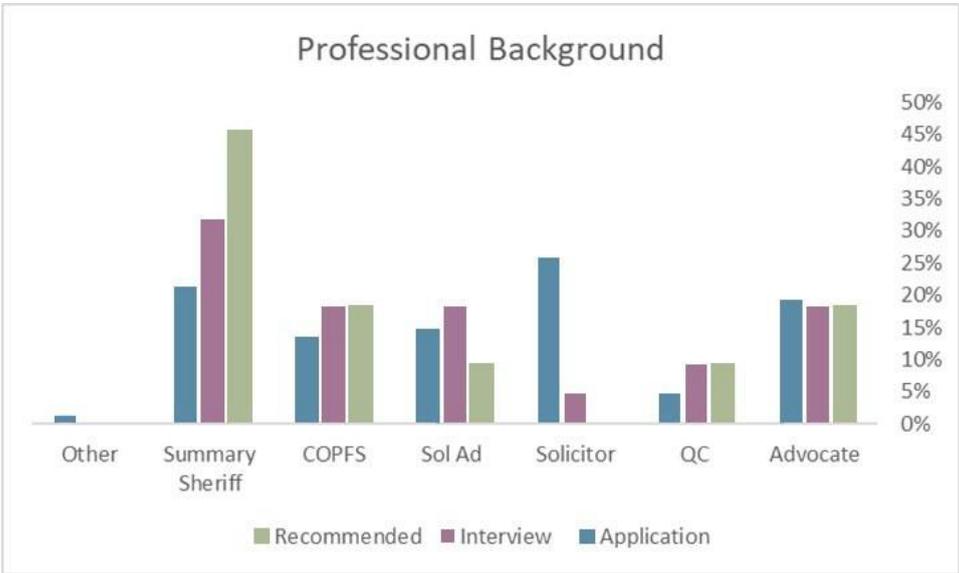
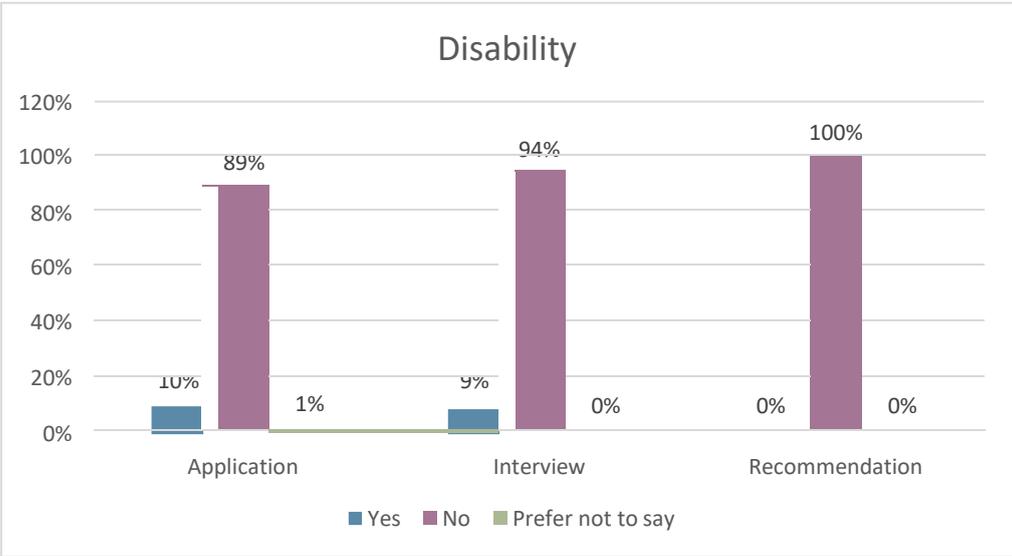
- Sheriff Gerard Bonnar, to the Sheriffdom of Glasgow and Strathkelvin based at Glasgow;
- Sheriff Brian Cameron, to the Sheriffdom of Glasgow and Strathkelvin based at Glasgow;
- Sheriff Kenneth Campbell QC, to the Sheriffdom of Lothian and Borders, based at the Personal Injury Court in Edinburgh;
- Sheriff Gerard Considine, to the Sheriffdom of Glasgow and Strathkelvin based at Glasgow;

- Sheriff Bruce Erroch, to the Sherifffdom of South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway, based at Paisley;
- Sheriff Robert Frazer, to the Sherifffdom of Grampian, Highlands and Islands, based at Inverness;
- Sheriff Douglas Keir, to the Sherifffdom of Lothian and Borders, based at the Personal Injury Court in Edinburgh;
- Sheriff Gordon Lamont, to the Sherifffdom of Grampian, Highlands and Islands, based at Stornoway;
- Sheriff Anthony McGlennan, to the Sherifffdom of South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway, based at Stranraer;
- Sheriff Alison McKay, to the Sherifffdom of Central, Tayside and Fife, based at Kirkcaldy;
- Sheriff Linda Nicolson, appointed to the Sherifffdom of South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway, based in Hamilton
- Sheriff Keith O'Mahony, to the Sherifffdom of Central, Tayside and Fife, based at Falkirk;

The following tables provide statistical information relating to the diversity of the application pool and those who were recommended for appointment.







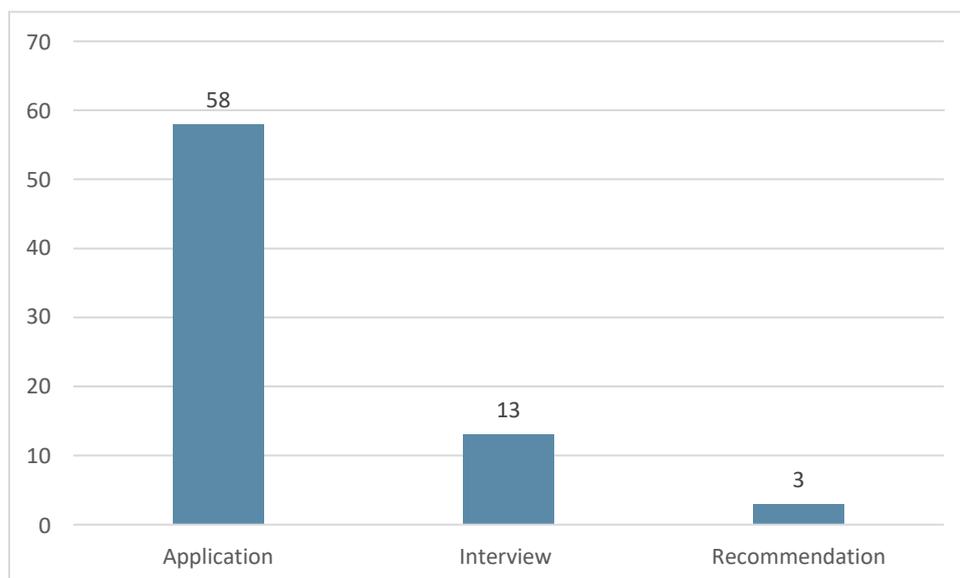
Recommendations to the Office of Summary Sheriff

In February 2020, we invited applications from those eligible for appointment to the office of Summary Sheriff. The initial advert was for two vacancies. During the running of the exercise this increased to three. We received 58 applications.

All applications were assessed by a Panel consisting of two lay members and two legal members. The Panel Chair was a lay member and the round was moderated by a legal member.

Of the 58 applicants, 13 were invited to interview.

The following table provides statistical information on these applications.



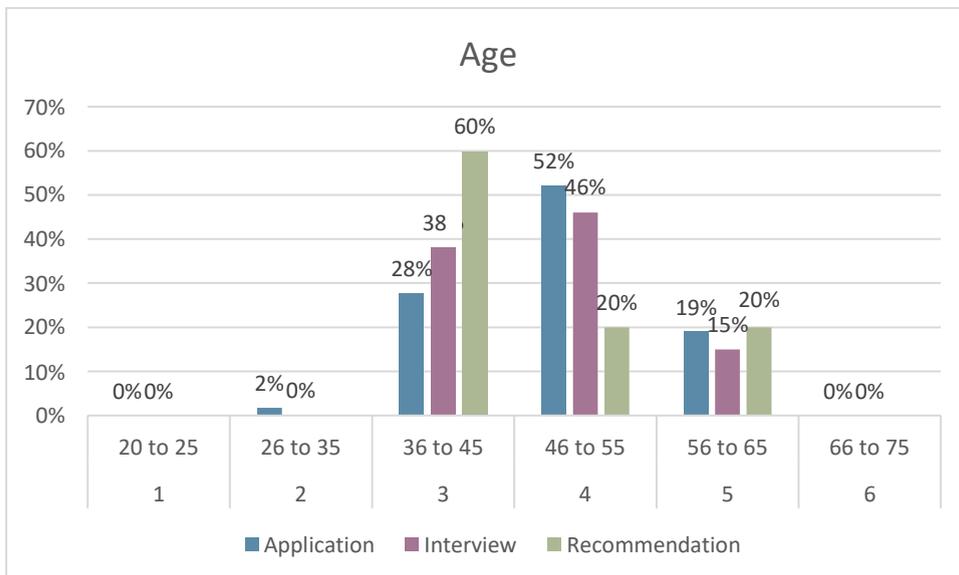
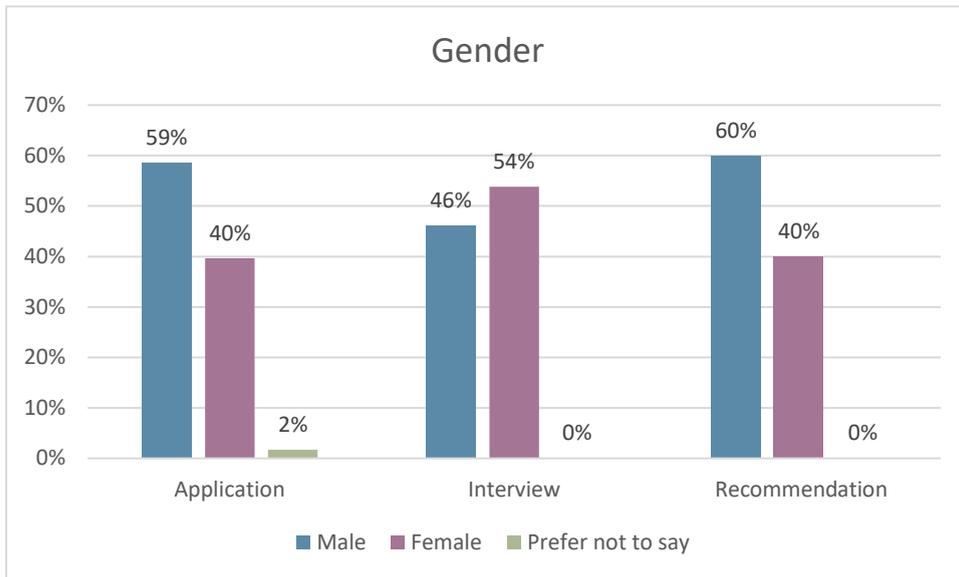
The full Board met on 20 July 2020 and made recommendations to the First Minister for appointment to office.

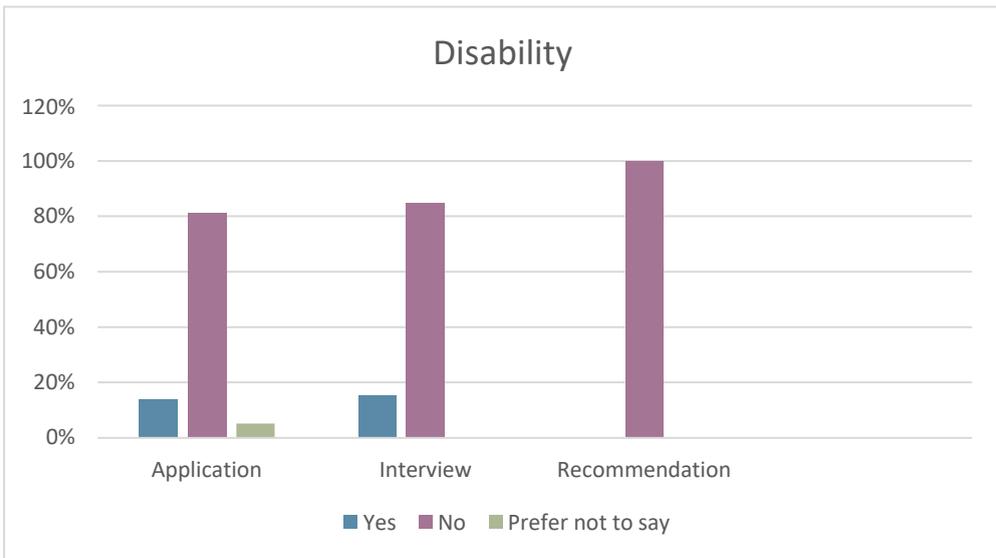
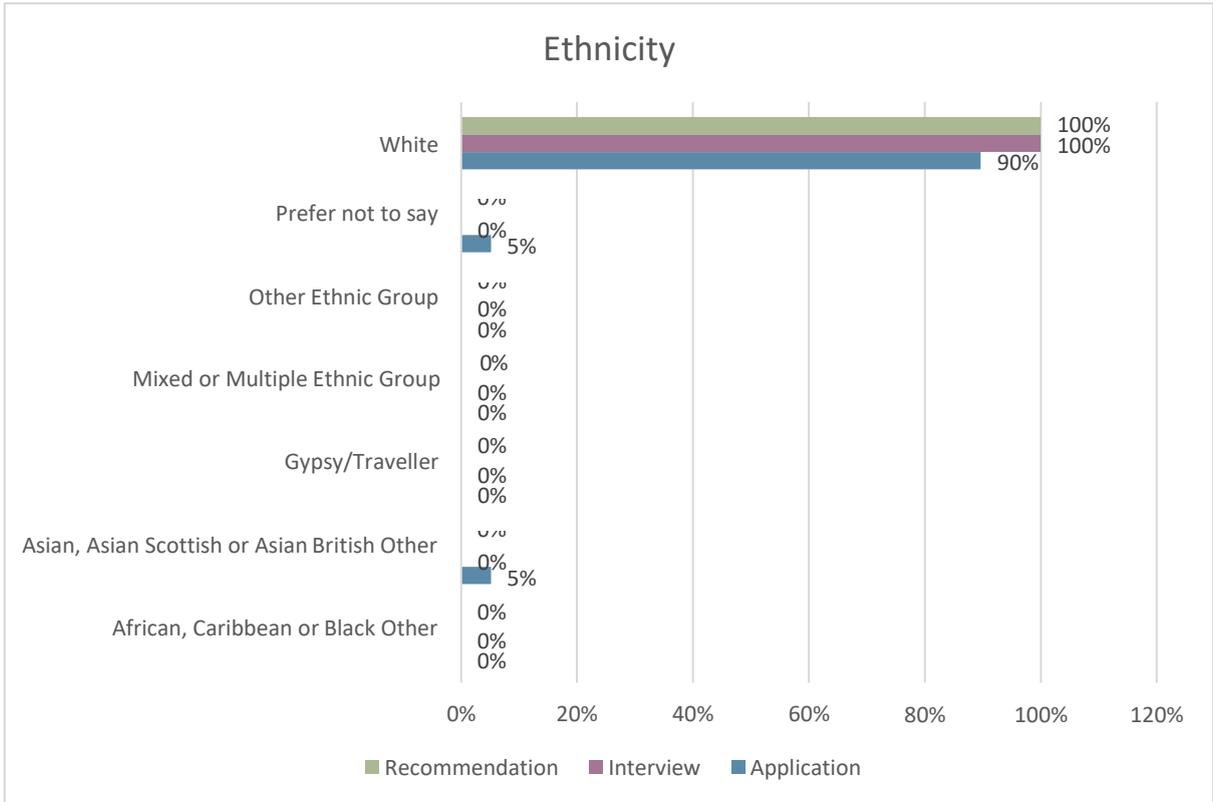
- Summary Sheriff Neil Bowie, to the Sheriffdom of, Central, Tayside and Fife, based at Dundee;
- Summary Sheriff Adrian Fraser, to the Sheriffdom of Lothian and Borders, based at Edinburgh; and
- Summary Sheriff Siobhan Connelly, to the Sheriffdom of South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway, based at Ayr.

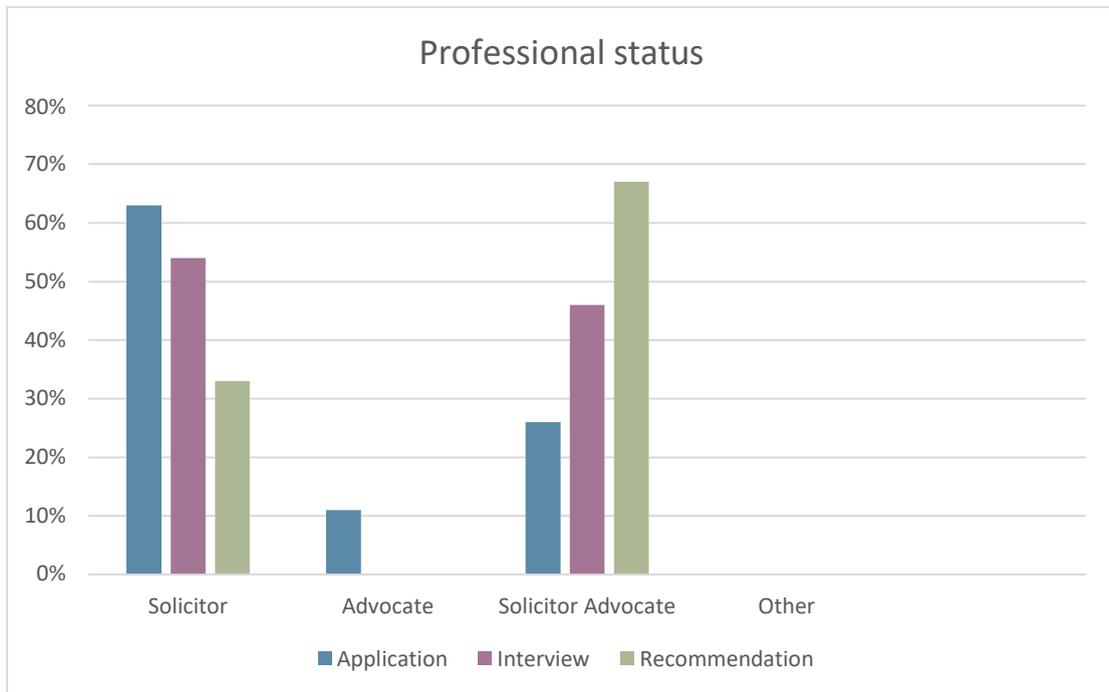
The Board also recommended that two candidates be held on a reserve list for a period of six months. When additional vacancies arose, they were subsequently recommended for appointment:

- Summary Sheriff Jonathan Guy, to the Sherifffdom of Glasgow and Strathkelvin, based in Glasgow; and
- Summary Sheriff Alison Michie, to the Sherifffdom of Tayside, Central and Fife, based in Stirling.

The following tables provide statistical information relating to the diversity of the application pool and those who were recommended for appointment.







Recommendations for the first tier tribunal for Scotland- Social Security Chamber.

In September 2019, the Board received a formal request from the Scottish Government, for recommendations of 75 individuals for appointment to the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland - Social Security Chamber (25 Legal Members, 25 Ordinary Members with medical experience, 25 members with disability experience).

It was clear that there was a large pool of potential candidates who were already sitting on social security cases in Scotland as members of the Social Entitlement Chamber (SEC) of the UK Tribunal who had already been through the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) process, so JABS considered whether an abbreviated and accelerated process could be devised whereby candidates from that pool might be recommended for appointment to the FTT-SSC without having to go through the full normal JABS process.

From the outset JABS members were clear that they required to satisfy themselves that there was sufficient correspondence between the skills and qualities required by the JAC and those required by JABS. A comparison exercise was carried out and the Board were satisfied that people appointed to the SEC of the UK Tribunal had the necessary skills and qualities to sit in the Scottish FTT-SSC, subject to a consultation exercise. It was also decided to extend this exercise to members of the Pensions Appeal Tribunal Scotland (PATs) who also regularly assess the functional ability of appellants in the context of their disabilities.

Accordingly a process was devised whereby the Senior President of (UK) Tribunals (SPT), Sir Ernest Ryder, was asked to contact all fee-paid SEC members sitting in Scotland inviting them to register their interest in serving on the Scottish FTT-SSC. A similar exercise was carried out with the President of PATs, Ms Marion Caldwell QC. Job Descriptions, Person Specifications and the terms and conditions of appointment were prepared by the Scottish Government and supplied to these presidents to enable their members to make informed decisions.

The number of registrations were:

Type of Member	Total Applications
Legal Member	63
Ordinary Member (Medical Experience)	64
Ordinary Member (Disability Experience)	69
Total	196

All applications and consultation responses were considered by a Panel consisting of one lay member, one legal member and the temporary President of the Chamber. The Panel Chair was a lay member.

The full Board met on 15 June 2020 and made recommendations to Scottish Ministers for appointment to the offices

Role	Number recommended to Board
Legal Member	39
Ordinary Member (Medical Experience)	58
Ordinary Member (Disability Experience)	67
Total number for recommendation	164
Number withdrawn	16
Number not recommended	17
Total	196

8. MEETINGS AND OUTREACH

Board Meetings

The Board normally meets on the third Monday of each month. The minutes of meetings are published on our website. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Board meetings have been conducted virtually since April 2020.

Board Member attendance at JABS Board meetings during the year was as follows:

Details	Board
Total Meetings in the Year	12
Mrs Nicola Gordon, Chairing Member ³	11/12
Mrs Alison Mitchell	12/12
Mrs Deirdre Fulton	12/12
Professor Stephen Tierney	12/12
Ms Neelam Bakshi	12/12
The Hon. Lord Minginish, QC	12/12
The Hon. Lady Wise, QC	11/12
Sheriff Michael O'Grady, QC ⁴	3/12
Mrs Elizabeth Burnley, CBE	12/12
Sheriff Principal Marysia Lewis	11/12
Ms Eilidh Wiseman ⁵	11/12
Ms Morag Ross, QC	12/12
Sheriff David Young, QC ⁶	8/12

Notes:

1. For details of current Board members, please see the JABS website. Details for retired members are available on request
2. Members also attended meetings on behalf of the Board in addition to those detailed above
3. Nicola Gordon left the Board in March 2021
4. Sheriff O'Grady retired from the Board in July 2020
5. Eilidh Wiseman left the Board in March 2021
6. Sheriff Young also attended the July Board meeting as an observer, joining the Board proper from August 2020

Meetings with Key Partners and Stakeholders

Whilst the restrictions mandated by the Covid-19 pandemic impacted meetings with our key partners and stakeholders, the Board continued to maintain close and effective relationships with them. Over the past year, we have held virtual meetings or discussions with the following individuals and organisations to promote our work and explore matters of common interest:

- The Lord President of the Court of Session
- The Lord Justice Clerk
- Faculty of Advocates
- Law Society of Scotland
- Society of Solicitor Advocates
- Judicial Appointments Commission (for England and Wales)
- Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission
- Scottish Government officials
- The Crown Agent
- The Lord Advocate
- The President of the Scottish Tribunals
- The Scottish Tribunals Forum
- The Judicial Office for Scotland
- The President of the Social Security Chamber

Outreach and Events

Outreach events were also impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in fewer outreach events being possible than was the case in previous years. No specific outreach events were undertaken during the initial period of lockdown, whilst organisations were reacting to the changing situation. Once it was possible to resume outreach activity, sessions were conducted remotely. These included:

- An information event on the Senator competition, in August 2020
- A 'Journey to the Judiciary' information evening with the Law Society for Scotland, in December 2020
- An information event with the Faculty of Advocates on the shrieval competitions, in January 2021

9 DIVERSITY STEERING GROUP

The Diversity Steering Group (DSG) emerged from the recommendations of the Diversity Working Group which was established in 2007 by the previous non-statutory Board. Membership of the Steering Group includes representatives of the Board, the Faculty of Advocates, the Judiciary, the Judicial Office and the Law Society of Scotland. The Scottish Government is present as an observer.

Role and Purpose

The Group is a voluntary collaboration and its function is to support the Board in the fulfilment of its statutory responsibility under section 14 of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008. This includes:

- identification of ways in which increased diversity of applicants applying for judicial office can be achieved;
- advice on removal of perceived obstacles to diversity;
- consideration of best practice in other jurisdictions; and
- discussion of areas in which there could be a common programme of action.

The member bodies each nominate an individual for membership and the Lord President nominates both a Senator of the College of Justice and a member of the Judicial Office.

- The Chair will rotate amongst the members.
- The Group will operate by agreement amongst its members.
- The Group will report regularly to all of the nominating bodies.
- The Group will explore the scope for consensus, within the context of a shared commitment to select judges solely on merit, on approaches to encouraging diversity in the range of individuals available for selection to be recommended for appointment to judicial office.
- The Group will fulfil its function by providing a framework within which its members may:
 - Consider the findings from conferences, reports and surveys

- affecting judicial diversity;
- Exchange information and data;
- Share experience and expertise;
- Identify areas where collaboration between some or all of the member organisations might be useful;
- Review available data on the composition of the judiciary, of applicants for judicial appointment, and the feeder professions;
- Provide information to its member organisations; and
- Promote knowledge and understanding of, and debate about, merit, diversity and other appointment issues.

DSG Membership

The DSG member bodies each nominate an individual for membership and the Lord President nominates both a Senator of the College of Justice and a member of the Judicial Office. The Membership in 2020-2021 was:

The Hon. Lady Wise, QC, JABS Board Member (Chair)
 Mrs May Dunsmuir, Chamber President of the Health and Education Chamber
 Mr Tim Barraclough, Judicial Office for Scotland
 Mr Brian Napier, QC, Faculty of Advocates
 Mr Rob Marrs, Law Society of Scotland
 Sheriff Principal Turnbull, Judiciary of Scotland
 Mrs Elizabeth Burnley, CBE, JABS Lay Board Member
 Mrs Nicola Gordon, JABS Charing Member (Observer)
 Mr Ryan McRobert, Scottish Government (Observer)

Meetings

The DSG met on 18 May 2020 and 26 October 2020. The Group discussed:

- potential barriers to lawyers with disabilities applying for judicial office;
- updates on diversity stats from recently completed competitions; and
- challenges for candidates with dyslexia applying to judicial office, and possible approaches to encouraging more open and inclusive culture and processes.

10 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Board is funded by the Scottish Government. The Board's expenditure during the financial year 2020 - 2021, as recorded in the Scottish Executive Accounting System (SEAS) to 31 March 2021, is set out below. The Covid-19 pandemic inevitably impacted JABS' outgoings, and areas in which this resulted in notably atypical spend are highlighted below.

Expenditure	Year to 31 March 2021 (£)
Staff salaries including ERNIC and Superannuation	£221,633.98
Member's fees and ERNIC	£130,626.61
Travel and Subsistence for Board Members	£0 ¹
Travel and Subsistence for Staff	£3,208.87
Training	£75.00 ²
Accommodation including rent, maintenance and utilities	£72,181.74
Catering for Board Meetings and Interview Panels	£144.00 ³
Office running costs	£2,468.34
Appointment Advertising Costs	£1,590.00
IT Professional Services for website and vacancy system maintenance and development	£57,842.39
Professional services	£959.20
Total	£490,730.13

¹ During 2020-21, Board and panel meetings were conducted online

² Opportunities were limited due to Covid-19 restrictions

³ During 2020-21, meetings and interviews were held online. The spend in this category covered repairs to catering facilities.

11.COMPLAINTS

The Board's complaints procedure is set out in full on our website. The information explains to candidates how they can make a complaint, the timescales and how to proceed if they wish to take matters further.

For complaints which appear to fall within the scope of this procedure, the Chairing Member of the Board will establish a Complaints Committee of three Board members who have had no previous direct involvement in the matter complained of to consider and reach a determination on the complaint. The Committee will endeavour to reach a determination within 20 working days of the commencement of the investigation. A complainant has a right to request the Chairing Member to review the decision of the Complaints Committee.

A complainant not satisfied with the result of the review has the right to ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to consider the matter.

During the period of this report, the Board received one complaint. In accordance with the complaints procedure, a committee was set up to investigate the complaint and report its findings to the Board. Although the chief substance of the complaint was not upheld, the committee recognised that some of JABS' communication with the complainant had been unclear. As a result, the Board made changes to the wording of the letters it sends applicants to advise them of the outcome of their application, to try to avoid a similar situation arising in future.

12.FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

During the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 the Board received two requests for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. All responses were provided within the statutory 20 working days.

13. WEBSITE AND CONTACT

Our website is the primary source of information about us, judicial vacancies, news items, and recent appointments.

The Board aims for continuous improvement in all that they do, and this includes our website. Feedback is always welcome, and we would be grateful for your thoughts or suggested improvements to the site.

To offer this feedback, please do so through our “Contact Us” form found on the website.

Online application

Since December 2015 all of our appointment rounds have been run on an online application platform.

Applications for appointment will always be made online, however the Board will always make reasonable adjustments where required.

Our address for correspondence is:

Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland
Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD



0131 528 5101



mailbox@jabs.gov.scot



<https://www.judicialappointments.scot/>