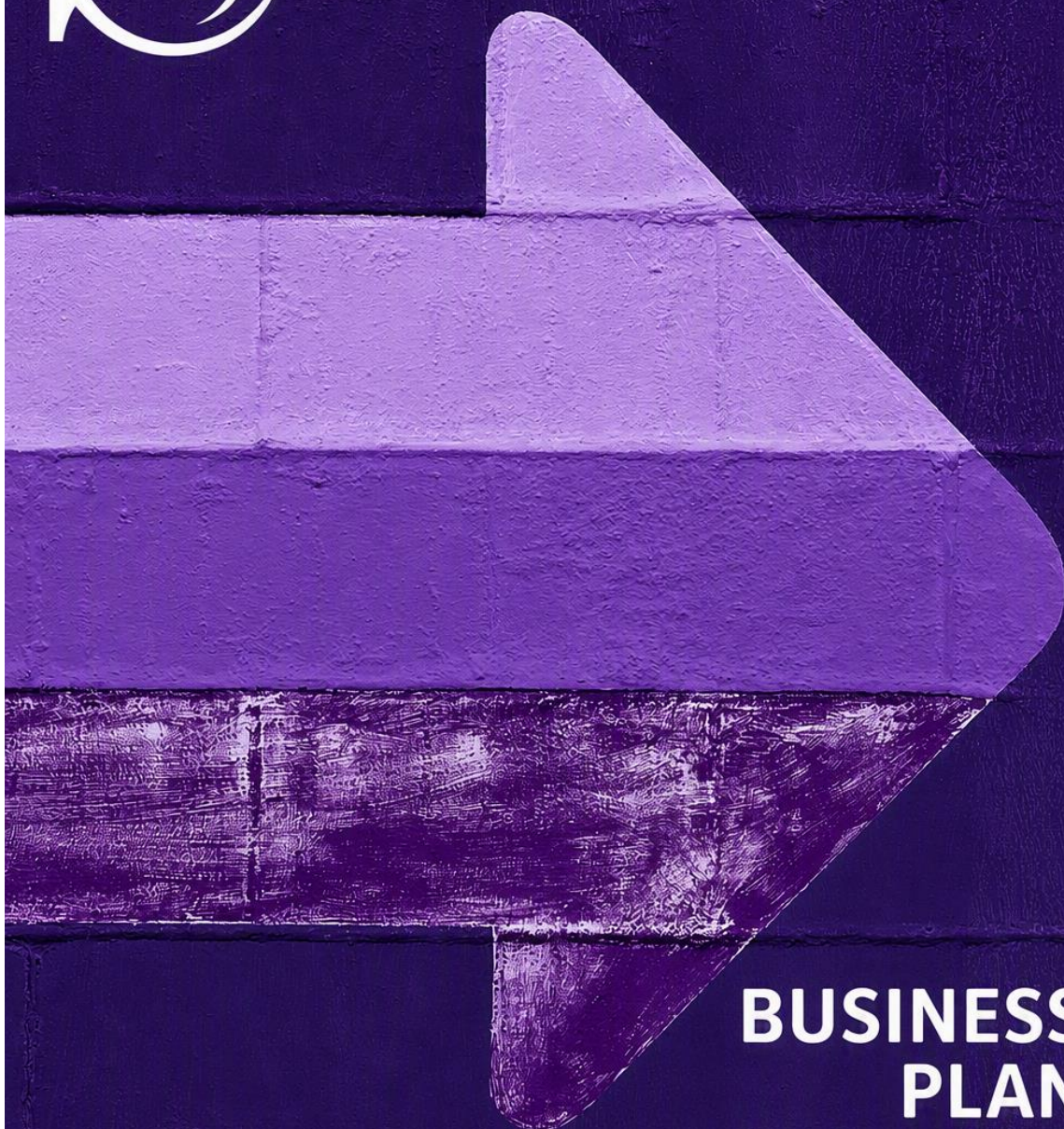




**JUDICIAL
APPOINTMENTS
BOARD FOR
SCOTLAND**



**BUSINESS
PLAN
2026-2027**

Introduction

This Business Plan sets out JABS delivery priorities for the 2026–2027 financial year.

JABS is a demand-led organisation, delivering judicial appointment competitions in response to requests from the Scottish Government. In parallel, JABS is working closely with the Scottish Government and the Judicial Office for Scotland to establish a robust forward planning cycle for judicial appointments in Scotland. This approach will improve predictability, capacity planning and delivery confidence.

This plan sets out the actions JABS will take in 2026–2027 to deliver year one of the 2026-2029 Corporate Plan. Delivery against this plan will be reviewed quarterly by the Board. The plan will be actively managed and adjusted as required to respond to changes in demand over the course of the year.

Delivering greater diversity across the judiciary remains a core organisational priority. JABS will continue to implement its Diversity Action Plan, working with the Judicial Appointments Diversity Reference Group and its Data Subgroup. This work is grounded in a clear and robust understanding of JABS statutory duties under the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008.

In 2026-2027, JABS will increase its focus on targeted communications and outreach activity, strengthening engagement with the legal profession and improving public understanding of judicial appointments.

JABS maintains a strong culture of continuous improvement. Corporate and operational enhancements are now embedded across policies and processes, and further progress has been delivered through Programme for Change, the multi-year project to review end-to-end judicial appointment processes to ensure they are efficient, proportionate and fit for purpose.

External feedback from the judiciary, legal professional bodies and post-competition candidate surveys will continue to be used to drive improvement.

This plan focuses on making best use of JABS key assets: the Board, legal and lay appointment advisers, the Business Management Unit, and strong relationships with organisations and stakeholders.

JABS Priorities

Based on the Corporate Plan (April 2026 – March 2029)

Year 1

- Finalise our multi-year review of our approach to outreach, applications and assessment under the Programme for Change.
- Continue to undertake survey research work to inform process improvements as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.
- Build on the established approach to longer-term competition planning, working closely with the Scottish Government and the Judicial Office for Scotland.
- Refresh the work of the Judicial Appointments Diversity Reference Group, continuing to work with key stakeholders to implement the diversity action plan for judicial appointments.
- Undertake a programme of regular and increased external engagement to further the understanding of JABS and the judicial appointments process, both with potential candidates, external stakeholders and the wider public.
- Finalise the review of the Framework Agreement between JABS and the Scottish Government.

Actions 2026-2027

Appointments

- Progress recruitment for currently agreed competitions (undernoted) and agree remaining priority roles with the Scottish Government and the Judicial Office for Scotland:
 - Senator of the College of Justice
 - Sheriff
 - Ordinary Member of the Health and Education Chamber
 - Ordinary Member of the Tax Chamber (light-touch exercise)
 - Ordinary Member (Surveyor) of the Upper Tribunal for Scotland
 - Sheriff Principal
- Finalise timelines and panel membership for competitions in 2027-2028, planning for priority recruitment and regularly review planning in line with the Planning Framework.

Governance and Assurance

- Discuss and agree with the Scottish Government appropriate revisions to the Framework Agreement and finalise by the end of 2026.
- Build on the recently reviewed competition costing and budgeting model to support effective use of resources and value for money.
- Build on existing change management arrangements to support the effective implementation of agreed changes and continuous improvement.
- Establish a clear and proportionate approach to recording decisions, to support transparency, accountability and organisational learning.

Diversity

- Review and refresh the Judicial Appointments Diversity Reference Group, with a focus on strategic direction to support diversity in the judicial appointments, for recommendation to the Board.
- Undertake outreach work including jointly with members of the Judicial Appointments Diversity Reference Group, based on identified gaps in the eligible cohort of legal and other professional candidates applying for judicial office.
- Continue work to better understand the makeup and demography of the legal profession driving judicial recruitment statistics.
- Publish JABS Annual Diversity Report.

Information Systems and Digital Resources

- Finalise the publication of the refreshed JABS website.
- Build on our approach to social media communications, engaging with stakeholders to identify best practice and share learning.

Engagement

- Produce a revised communications strategy covering stakeholder engagement, wider public engagement, outreach activity, and the organisation's website and social media presence.
- Develop and maintain a forward calendar of regular engagement and outreach events.
- Identify and prioritise opportunities to support, contribute to, or participate in relevant conferences, seminars and workshops.
- Put in place arrangements to evaluate the reach and impact of communications and engagement activity, to inform continuous improvement.