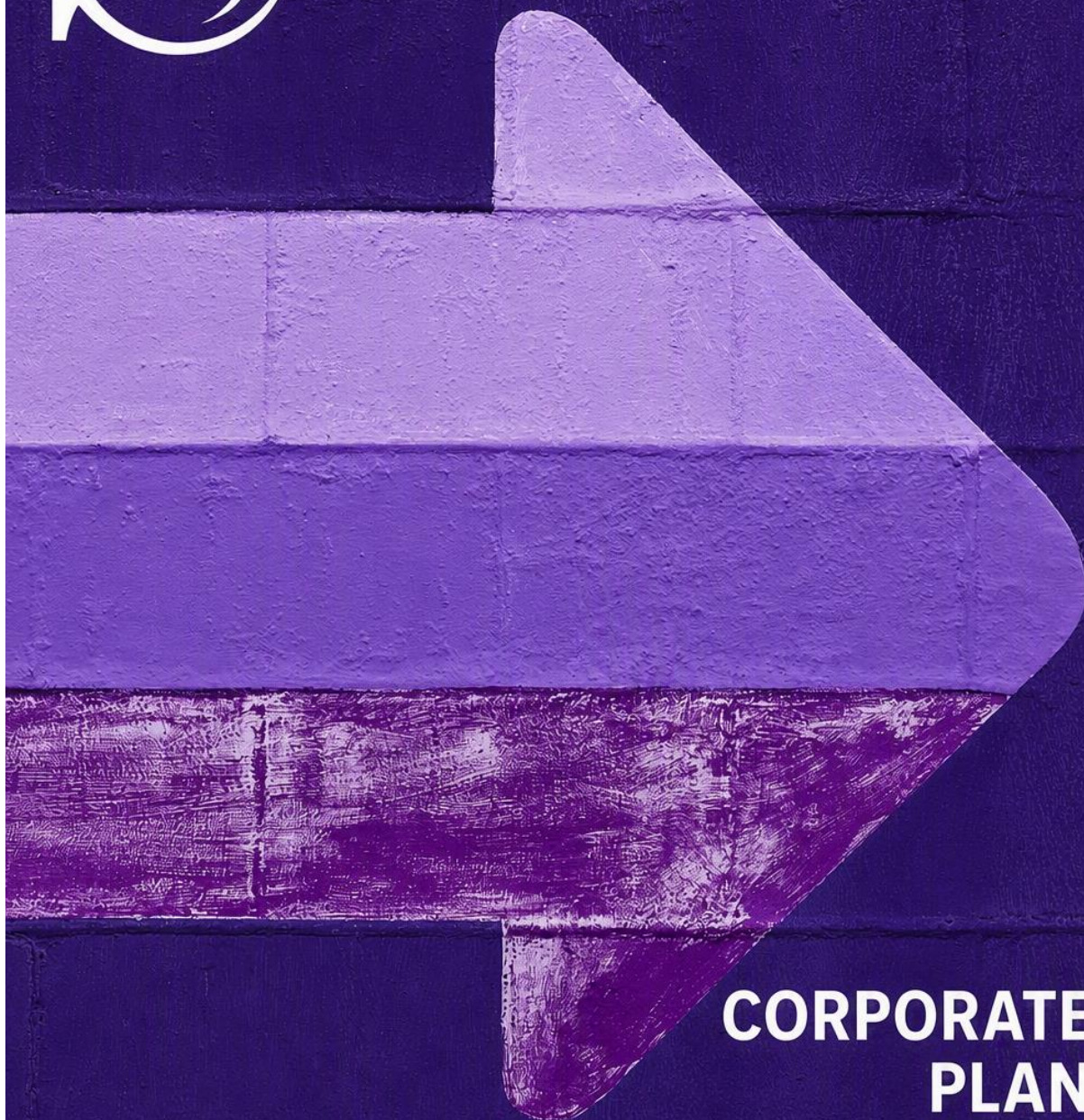




**JUDICIAL
APPOINTMENTS
BOARD FOR
SCOTLAND**



**CORPORATE
PLAN
2026-2029**

Corporate Plan

Foreword from the Chairing Member

This Corporate Plan sets out the Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland's (JABS) priorities and strategic direction for the period 2026–2029.

In recent years, JABS has undergone significant change. Our focus is now less on transition, and more on embedding resilience, maintaining high standards, and continuing to deliver a trusted and effective judicial appointments system. We will build on the benefits of digital innovation and hybrid working, while ensuring that our processes remain fair, rigorous and accessible.

The scale and complexity of judicial appointment activity continues to increase. JABS is now operating as a more mature organisation, supported by a strengthened Board, a broader range of appointment advisers, and improved internal capability. Over the period of this Plan, our priority will be to ensure that these arrangements operate effectively and proportionately, enabling us to meet demand while safeguarding the quality and integrity of our recommendations.

Independence remains the cornerstone of our role. Our statutory duty to make independent recommendations to the Scottish Ministers is fundamental to public confidence in the judiciary. At the same time, constructive engagement with key stakeholders - including the Scottish Government, the Judicial Office for Scotland, and the representative bodies of the legal profession - remains essential to the effective delivery of our functions. We will continue to engage openly and professionally, while maintaining clear and appropriate organisational boundaries.

We recognise the importance of public understanding of the role of JABS and of the wider system of judicial appointments. During the period of this Plan, we will continue to increase our visibility and transparency, helping to build confidence in how judges are appointed in Scotland and encouraging a broad and diverse range of applicants to consider judicial office.

Continuous improvement remains central to our approach. We will keep our policies, procedures and methods under review to ensure they remain proportionate, evidence based and aligned with best practice. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion runs through all that we do - not as an additional objective, but as an integral part of delivering appointments on merit from the widest possible pool of talent.

We will continue to work collaboratively with counterpart bodies in the other UK jurisdictions, including the Judicial Appointments Commission and the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission, learning from shared experience and responding to common challenges where appropriate.

During the lifetime of this Plan, further change to the judicial landscape in Scotland is likely, including the continued development of the tribunal system. Where responsibilities evolve, JABS will engage early with stakeholders to understand implications, manage risk, and ensure that any new functions are delivered effectively and transparently.

This Corporate Plan reflects our commitment to independence, integrity, professionalism and public confidence. With the continued support of Board members, staff and stakeholders, JABS is well placed to meet the challenges of the period ahead and to fulfil its statutory role in support of Scotland's justice system.

Lindsay Montgomery CBE, FRSE
Chairing Member
July 2026

About JABS

Our Purpose

JABS's statutory purpose is

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

Our Mission

Attracting applicants with the skills, knowledge and ability for particular judicial roles, whilst encouraging diversity in the range of individuals available for selection and recommending applicants solely on merit, through processes that are, and are seen to be, independent, fair and transparent.

Our Core Values

- Trust – our actions justify the faith others have put in us to make recommendations based on merit and to protect the confidentiality of candidates
- Fairness – our actions and processes are designed to be equitable, to encourage diversity and to minimise the risk of bias in our decision making
- Independence – our recommendations are independent
- Transparency - our processes are as accessible, open and transparent as our role allows
- Flexibility – we are flexible, adaptable and embrace change and develop where it helps us to streamline and enhance the quality of our processes
- Inclusion – we observe, listen, understand and support everyone we work with.

Strategic Objectives

1. To make independent recommendations for judicial appointment to courts and tribunals, based solely on merit and only if satisfied of candidates' good character.
2. To provide advice to Scottish Ministers on matters relating to judicial appointments.
3. To contribute to the delivery of justice in Scotland, working constructively with Scottish Ministers, the judiciary and the legal profession.
4. To conduct our work through processes that are – and are seen to be - independent, fair and transparent.
5. To encourage diversity within the pool of individuals available for judicial appointment.
6. To work collaboratively with key stakeholders, seeking and responding to feedback to modernise and continuously improve our processes and ways of working.
7. To foster a supportive and inclusive environment in which applicants and candidates, Board Members, Appointment Advisers and staff are empowered and motivated to perform at their best.

How We Will Meet Our Objectives

1. To make independent recommendations for judicial appointment, based solely on merit and good character.

Relevant Actions:

- Maintain robust and proportionate selection processes.
- Ensure assessment criteria and guidance reflect evolving judicial and tribunal needs.
- Provide targeted training for Board Members and Appointment Advisers to support consistent, high-quality assessment.
- Apply rigorous quality assurance across recommendation decision making.

2. To provide advice to Scottish Ministers on matters relating to judicial appointments.

Relevant Actions:

- Maintain structured engagement with the Scottish Government and Judicial Office for Scotland.
- Develop and deliver a forward three-year competition schedule in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Monitor legislative change impacting judicial appointments and advise on procedural implications.
- Use competition and system data to inform advice on demand, timing and appointment approaches.

3. To contribute to the delivery of justice in Scotland through constructive engagement.

Relevant Actions:

- Maintain structured engagement with Scottish Government, the Lord President and the President of the Scottish Tribunals and the legal profession.
- Monitor developments in courts and tribunals, including changes arising from justice legislation.
- Engage with UK appointments bodies to share learning and respond to common challenges.
- Support system coherence through transparent planning and delivery of competitions.

4. To conduct our work through processes that are independent, fair and transparent.

Relevant Actions:

- Enhance transparency within statutory limits, including publication schemes and clear FOI handling.
- Maintain strong information governance, data protection and records management compliance.

- Review end-to-end applicant and candidate journeys to ensure clarity, accessibility and fairness.
- Strengthen quality assurance and process review arrangements.

5. To encourage diversity within the pool of individuals available for judicial appointment.

Relevant Actions:

- Publish annual diversity statistics on applicants and recommendations.
- Target outreach activity using profession and pipeline data to focus on underrepresented groups.
- Embed inclusive communications and accessibility practices across recruitment activity.
- Work effectively with the members of the Diversity Reference Group to identify best practice and joint working in encouraging judicial diversity.

6. To work collaboratively with stakeholders to modernise and continuously improve processes.

Relevant Actions:

- Conclude the Programme for Change (our current programme of continuous improvement) and embed learning into business-as-usual.
- Review and streamline selection tools and assessment methods in line with best practice.
- Refine data models to integrate planning, equality monitoring and outcomes.
- Seek and respond to stakeholder and candidate feedback to inform improvements.

7. To foster a supportive and inclusive environment for applicants, Board Members, Lay and Legal Advisers and staff.

Relevant Actions:

- Provide tailored training and development for Board Members and Appointment Advisers.
- Maintain clear guidance, communications and support for applicants and candidates.
- Strengthen internal capability, resilience and ways of working through digital and process improvement.
- Promote inclusive behaviours and continuous learning across the organisation.

Reporting

We will report progress against these priorities in our Annual Reports for each of these years.

Details of the Board, Appointment Advisers and the Business Management Unit

The Board comprises eight judicial and legal members (two Senators of the College of Justice, a Chamber President of the Scottish Tribunals, a Sheriff Principal, a Sheriff, a member of the Faculty of Advocates, a Solicitor and another legal member who is either a member of the Faculty or Advocates or a Solicitor) and eight Lay Members, one of whom is the Chairing Member.

Lay and Legal Members are appointed by the Scottish Ministers and Judicial Members by the Lord President.

Statutory provisions within the 2008 Act (Schedule 1 paragraph 13A(1)) allow the Board to appoint lay and legal assistants to help the Board to deliver its increased workload. A person appointed under paragraph 13A(1) as a lay or legal assistant may, so far as authorised by the Board, do anything that a lay or legal member of the Board may do, other than take part in a decision of the Board to recommend an individual for appointment. JABS currently has four Lay Assistants (Appointment Advisers) and one Legal Assistant.

All staff of the Business Management Unit, including the Chief Executive, are civil servants on Scottish Government terms and conditions of employment. They are required to comply with the Civil Service Code and Scottish Government HR policies, but their sole responsibility for operational matters is to the Board.

Judicial Offices Within the Board's Remit

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

- The office of judge of the Court of Session
- The office of Chairman of the Scottish Land Court
- The office of temporary Judge (with a number of statutory exemptions)
- The office of sheriff principal
- The office of sheriff
- The office of part-time sheriff
- The office of summary sheriff
- The office of part-time summary sheriff
- The office of member of the Parole Board for Scotland (including the Chairperson of the Parole Board)
- The Vice-President of the Upper Tribunal, if to be appointed under section 26(1) of the Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014 (the 2014 Act)
- Chamber President in the First-tier Tribunal, if to be appointed under section 22(1) of the 2014 Act
- Deputy Chamber President in the First-tier Tribunal, if to be appointed under the relevant provisions of schedule 4 to the 2014 Act

- Ordinary member or legal member of the First-tier Tribunal or the Upper Tribunal, if to be appointed under the relevant provisions of Schedule 3 (or as the case may be) Schedule 5 to the 2014 Act.

Contact details for JABS

The JABS website is the primary source of information about JABS, judicial vacancies, news items, and recent appointments. To get in touch please see the “Contact Us” form found on the [website](#).

Alternatively, please write to:

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91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD