



JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS AND CONDUCT OMBUDSMAN

BUSINESS PLAN

2025-2026

Introduction

The Ombudsman is independent of Government, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Judiciary. The Ombudsman's Office is an Arms Length Body of the MoJ, but acts autonomously under the Ombudsman's direction. The Ombudsman and his Office supports the MoJ's vision to deliver a World-Class justice system that works for everybody and a transformed department that is more efficient, more effective, less costly and more responsive to the public.

The Ombudsman can consider complaints from applicants for Judicial Office alleging maladministration which disadvantaged them in the selection process. He can also consider complaints about the process by which allegations of misconduct by Judicial Office Holders are considered under the Judicial Conduct arrangements by the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office, Tribunal Presidents or Magistrates' Advisory Committees in the first instance. The Ombudsman can consider whether the processes followed in such matters were consistent with the relevant legislation or maladministrative. Where appropriate he also looks to provide appropriate feedback on matters arising from complaints and other correspondence considered.

We aim to deliver an effective, responsive and professional service, in a timely, consistent and transparent manner. It has been, and is likely to remain, a challenge to continue to deliver our business in a time of significantly reduced resources across the public sector.

Douglas Marshall, Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman

Joan Wilson, Joint Head of Office

Heather Wrangmore, Joint Head of Office

How we will achieve this

Annex A

Our strategic aim in undertaking independent investigations into complaints is to ensure that the processes for applying for Judicial Office and for dealing with complaints about Judicial conduct are applied correctly and consistently. We will deliver an effective, responsive and professional service in a timely, consistent and transparent manner.

<p>Our business objectives</p>	<p>To provide a timely, consistent and transparent service to all our users.</p>	<p>To continue to improve our processes and our service delivery, to ensure we deliver an effective, responsive and professional service to all our users.</p>	<p>To deliver our business in the most cost effective and efficient manner, and to operate efficiently.</p>
<p>Our outcomes</p>	<p>People are aware of our service, and come to us at the right time, in the knowledge that we will undertake an independent investigation. Enquiries and complaints are handled promptly with appropriate information provided whilst avoiding creating unreasonable expectations of either the Ombudsman's remit or the bodies whose actions the Ombudsman can review. Decisions and recommendations are clear, impartial and evidence based.</p>	<p>We have effective and efficient systems in place.</p> <p>We have a positive working environment where our staff are well trained and motivated.</p> <p>We provide excellent customer service.</p>	<p>We operate and deliver within budget.</p> <p>We are effective in managing our risks and our information.</p> <p>We have good relationships with all our stakeholders.</p>
<p>Our indicators</p>	<p>To acknowledge receipt of all new complaints and correspondence from complainants, within 5 working days of receipt (98%).</p> <p>To deal with 90% of all other correspondence received within 15 working days of receipt.</p> <p>When a preliminary investigation is required to establish if the potential complaint warrants a full investigation we will conclude this evaluation and provide a full reply within 30 working days/6 weeks from receipt of the complaint file from the First Tier Investigating Body, in 90% of cases.</p> <p>When a case is ready for investigation we aim to keep all complainants fully informed on a monthly basis in 98% of cases.</p> <p>We will publish our performance against these indicators in our Annual Report</p>	<p>We will keep our working practices and processes under review, striving for continuous improvement, in order to deliver the best possible service to our customers.</p> <p>We will ensure our leaflets and Website are up to date and reflective of our organisation. We welcome feedback from our customers about how we could improve our service and will learn from any complaints that we receive about our service, doing our best to put things right.</p> <p>We will work creatively to build and maintain our capability to deliver a service that is efficient, responsive and professional. We will have the right people, processes and supporting infrastructure in place; value diversity and the importance of a work-life balance; identify and address any gaps in training and knowledge. We will ensure that our staff maintain a high level of skill in Complaints Handling and Investigations.</p>	<p>Budget We will operate within our budget; we will effectively manage financial pressures and risks to achieve our business objectives, re-profiling expenditure plans, reviewing responses to risks, and reporting any significant consequences on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Governance We will operate in accordance with the relevant governance arrangements as agreed with the Ministry in our Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out the related roles, relationships and responsibilities of the Ombudsman, the Head of the Ombudsman's office, and the Ministry.</p> <p>Working constructively with our stakeholders We have established constructive working relationships with the MoJ, the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO), the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC), the Judicial Office, Tribunal Presidents, Magistrates'</p>

			Advisory Committees and all our external stakeholders. We will continue to strive to maintain this position.
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SUMMARY OF FORECAST EXPENDITURE 2025-26

Ombudsman and staff costs	£551,000
Office expenditure, including publications, IT, postage Service costs, including stakeholder engagement	£10,00
Legal and other professional services	£13,000
Training and development, including travel and subsistence costs	£2,000
Total	£576,000

JACO Office structure (April 2025)

