

Diversity of the Judiciary 2026

Annex A: Analysis of candidate drop-out rates during the magistrate appointment process, by diversity characteristic

1. Introduction

This annex presents a summary of the results from the ad hoc analysis of candidate drop-out rates during the magistrate appointment process for applications made between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2025. Using this time period allowed the majority of applications to be completed by the time the data was extracted for analysis (May 2026).

Analysis was focussed on the three stages of the process which showed the highest drop-out rates at a national level: 'Pre-Screen to Eligibility Review (ER)', 'Situational Judgement Test' (SJT) and 'Interview'. Comparisons are made for the following characteristics: sex, ethnicity, disability, age, religion, occupation, schooling and receipt of free school meals.

Differences between the groups were tested to determine whether they were practically significant using some standard tests, and whether they were also statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

2. Main findings

Summary figures on the number of applications at each process stage and associated drop-out rates, by characteristic and region, can be found in the accompanying table (Annex A, Table 1).

Overall summary

For applications made between April 2023 and March 2025, there was a disparity in the drop-out rates at the Pre-screen to ER and SJT stages for several characteristics: higher drop-out rates were seen for ethnic minorities (compared to Whites), for those aged under-40 (compared to those 60 and over), for Muslim candidates (compared to Christian ones), for those from a manual occupation (compared to professionals), for those schooled outside of the UK (compared to those schooled in the UK), and for those who received free school meals (compared to those who did not).

At the interview stage, higher drop-out rates were seen for Muslim candidates (compared to Christian ones), for those from a manual occupation (compared to professionals), and for those schooled outside of the UK (compared to those schooled in the UK).

The key findings are as follows:

- Sex - At a national level, there was no evidence of a disparity between the drop-out rates for male and female applicants at any of the three process stages analysed. Some significant differences were seen at the interview stage in the North East, South East and Wales regions.
- Ethnicity - For England and Wales overall, ethnic minority candidates had higher drop-out rates than white candidates at all three stages examined in this report, but the differences were only practically and statistically significant for the first two stages (pre-screen to Eligibility Review, and Situational Judgement Test). Across all the regions, ethnic minority candidates also consistently had higher drop-out rates at all three stages (except for the South East interview stage), although not all were practically and statistically significant.
- Disability – At a national level, there was no evidence of a disparity between the drop-out rates for disabled and non-disabled applicants at any of the three process stages analysed.
- Age – For England and Wales overall there was evidence that applicants aged under 40 had higher drop-out rates than those aged 60 or over at the Eligibility Review and SJT stages. However, those aged under 40 had a lower drop-out rate at the Interview stage, although this was statistically but not practically significant.
- Religion - At a national level, there was evidence that Muslim applicants had higher drop-out rates than Christian applicants at all three process stages analysed. These higher rates were also reflected across all the regions where there were sufficient numbers for robust rates to be calculated (more than 10 applicants), although not all of these differences were practically and statistically significant. There was no evidence of a disparity when comparing Christian candidates with those who chose no religion, at all three process stages.
- Occupation - At a national level, those candidates currently in a professional occupation had lower drop-out rates compared to those currently in a routine, semi-routine manual or service background at all three process stages covered in this report, and all were both practically and statistically significant.
- Schooling - For England and Wales overall, those candidates who attended a school from 11 to 16 outside of the United Kingdom had significantly higher drop-out rates than those who were schooled in the UK, at all three process stages of this report. When comparing those candidates who attended a UK State school with those who attended a UK independent or fee-paying school, the former had slightly higher drop-out rates at all three stages, but none of these were both practically and statistically significant.

- Receipt of free school meals - At a national level, candidates who received free school meals had practically and statistically higher drop-out rates than those who did not, at the Eligibility Review and SJT stages, but not at the interview stage where drop-out rates were the same.

3. Intersectional analysis

Additional analysis was also carried out to explore the degree to which the drop-out rate of candidates with certain multiple characteristics (ethnicity, schooling and age) was affected over and above those faced for each individual characteristic on its own. The methodology used was similar to that used for judicial appointments in the main annual report, and so only tests for statistical significance¹.

Drop-out rates at the Pre-Screen to SJT stages for four intersectional groups were considered: ethnic minority schooled outside the UK candidates; candidates aged under 40 schooled outside the UK; ethnic minority candidates aged under 40; and ethnic minority candidates aged under 40 schooled outside the UK. Each of these groups were compared to White candidates aged over 60 schooled in the UK.

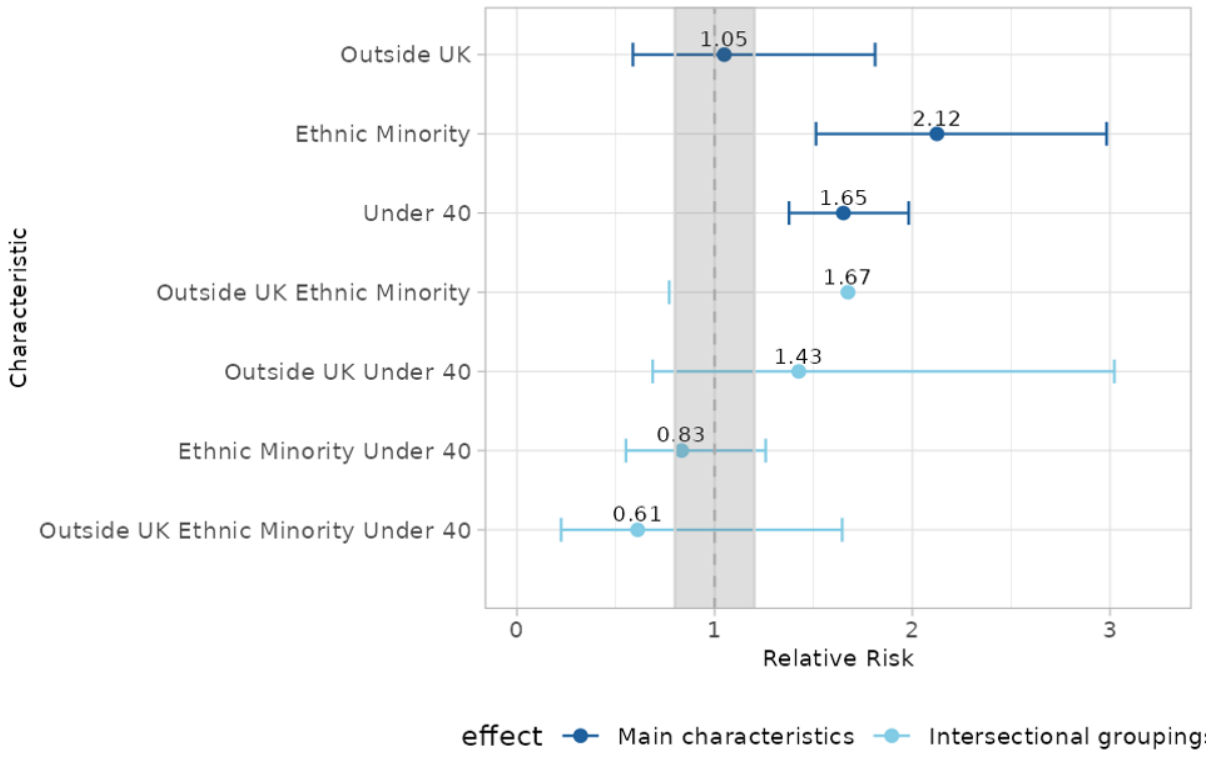
Annex A, Table 2 provides a summary of the results of this analysis for this particular subset of candidates². Figure A1 presents these results graphically and shows that:

- The independent qualities (shown in dark blue) of being an ethnic minority, and under 40 had statistically significant detrimental effects on drop-out rates (as the confidence interval does not cross the 1.0 line). However, being schooled outside of the UK did not.
- Further to these main effects, the additional intersectional components (shown in light blue) each show some effect on the drop-out rates. However, none of these effects were statistically significant (as the confidence interval crosses the 1.0 line), meaning that there was no significant evidence of intersectional effects, and that therefore there was no additional advantage or disadvantage in the drop-out rates for having these combined characteristics.

¹ Please see the User Guide that accompanies the publication for more details on the methodology used.

² Only those who declared their ethnicity and schooling and were aged either under 40 or over 60 were included in this intersectional analysis.

Figure A1: Independent impact of main and intersectional characteristics on drop-out rates (magistrate applications between 2023-24 and 2024-25).



4. Background Notes

The source of the data used in this report is a snapshot of live and completed cases, taken on the 27 May 2026 from the magistrate case management applicant tracking system (ATS). It is a live management information system and so data may change over time.

The data is not subject to the same quality checks as Official Statistics which are published by the Ministry of Justice.

Diversity characteristics are based on self-declared, non-mandatory information provided by the candidates at the time of application. For each characteristic, those who did not answer or chose 'prefer not to say' were excluded from the rate calculations.

'Occupation' is the candidate's current occupation, and 'Schooling' is where they attended school predominantly between the ages of 11 and 16.

'Drop-outs' are deemed to be those applications which were recorded as being rejected, withdrawn or cancelled.

Rates were calculated as follows: for each stage, the number of drop-outs was calculated as a percentage of the total applications remaining at the beginning of that stage.

The 'Pre-screen to ER' stage includes 'Application sift', 'Pre-screening', 'Eligibility screen', and 'Eligibility review'.

To determine whether any differences in the drop-out rates were practically significant, the 4/5th rule of thumb for adverse impact was used. Any values falling outside of the range of 0.8 to 1.25 are considered likely to indicate a difference in rate having practical significance. Combined with this, to determine whether any observed differences were statistically significant, the Chi-squared test was employed. If any of the expected number of observations was too few (less than 5), the Fisher's exact test was used instead.