

Press release: More than 1000 new magistrates recruited in 2018

A new national recruitment process, designed by HM Courts and Tribunals Service and the judiciary, is helping to boost the number of new recruits.

Press release: More than 1000 new magistrates recruited in 2018

- national recruitment process launched to speed up applications
- direct applications to sit in the Family Court available nationally for the first time
- a 4% increase in both female and BAME magistrates since 2012

More than 1000 new magistrates were welcomed to the bench last year thanks and there is a concerted effort to attract even more candidates from diverse backgrounds.

A new national recruitment process, designed by HM Courts and Tribunals Service and the judiciary, is already helping to boost the number of new recruits. In addition to this, a number of specialist recruitment advisory committees have been assessing the needs of courts in their area and working with local people to ensure the magistracy better reflects their community.

For the first time nationally, applications can now also be made to sit directly in the Family Court – previously this was only possible after 2 years of sitting in the criminal court. This has increased the range of roles open to newly recruited magistrates, meaning that as well as dealing with cases such as theft and assault, they can be responsible for making life-changing decisions regarding adoption, child protection and issuing court orders to prevent domestic abuse.

Justice Minister, Lucy Frazer said:

Magistrates play a vital role in our justice system, and that's why we are working hard to increase numbers and ensure all walks of life are represented.

If you care about your community and want to give back then I would encourage you to apply to become a magistrate. There are few other opportunities that have such a profound impact on people's lives.

Luke Rigg JP, a magistrate for the past four years said:

Being a magistrate has helped me develop so many skills that I use in my professional and personal life – from communication to persuasion, decision-making and team building to name a few.

We make some of the most life-changing decisions possible – in some cases deciding whether to send someone to prison. It is a privilege to be given the responsibility and opportunity to have my voice heard in the retiring room when I'm deliberating with my colleagues.

Diversity has also increased in recent years, with the number of female magistrates now standing at 55% and BAME magistrates at 12% – a 4% increase for both groups since 2012.

Relationships are being forged with universities and religious centres throughout the country to raise the profile of the magistracy among young people and BAME communities to ensure a wide representation of society.

Evodian Fonyonga has been sitting as a magistrate for 3 years while also working part-time as an NHS Transfusion Practitioner and firmly believes the justice system must represent the community it serves. As a British woman of African origin, she said it was important for “all members of society” to apply.

Dave Mann, a keen lifelong biker who runs a gardening business, said: “We all have life skills and experiences and I wanted to become a magistrate in order to use these for the benefit of my local community.”

Who can apply?

- You can apply if you are over the age of 18 and under 65.
- Applications may be considered for those aged between 65 and 70 but all magistrates must retire at 70.
- You must be aware of social issues, have sound judgement and be of good character (which means you cannot have been convicted of a serious crime or cumulative minor offences, have been banned from driving in the last 10 years or have been declared bankrupt).
- You must be reliable and mature and be able to listen and communicate with others.

[Find out more and apply](#) on GOV.UK.

Press release: Call for Scottish businesses to make their voices heard in future trade negotiations

The UK government and the Scottish Chamber of Commerce are calling on Scottish businesses to make their voices heard in post-Brexit free trade agreements.

Press release: Call for Scottish businesses to make their voices heard in future trade negotiations

The UK government and Scottish Chamber of Commerce are today calling on Scottish businesses to make their voices heard in post-Brexit free trade agreements.

The Department for International Trade has announced that the Scottish Chamber of Commerce will represent Scottish businesses on the government's new Strategic Trade Advisory Group.

The group, which is chaired by Trade Policy Minister George Hollingbery, will meet at least 4 times a year. It will advise the government on future trade policy issues, including on future trade agreements with the USA, Australia, New Zealand and potential accession to the Trans-Pacific partnership, a group of 11 countries around the Pacific rim.

Membership of the group will be reviewed annually, and the government has committed to ensuring Scotland is always represented as it develops an inclusive and transparent trade policy that works for all regions and nations of the UK.

Scottish businesses can now feed views through their local Scottish Chamber.

Speaking at the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) Forum event in Edinburgh today, Minister Hollingbery said that future free trade agreements will be negotiated in the interest of the whole of the UK with input from Scottish businesses and the Scottish Government.

Trade Policy Minister, George Hollingbery said:

Scotland's exports are going from strength to strength and Scottish businesses will play a major role in helping to forge stronger trading relationships as we leave the European Union.

We are committed to a transparent and inclusive trade policy that benefits the whole of the UK and we have made sure Scottish interests influence our trade negotiations through a permanent seat on our advisory group.

I encourage all Scottish businesses to make the most of our new partnership with the Scottish Chamber of Commerce and feed their views about our future trade policy in to their local Chamber.

Consultations on future free trade deals with the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a group of 11 Pacific nations received a large volume of input from businesses in Scotland.

An event attended by businesses and stakeholders in Edinburgh last September revealed strong support for new free trade agreements which would help expand access to key global markets for Scottish exports and businesses.

Liz Cameron OBE, Director & Chief Executive of Scottish Chambers of Commerce, said:

In such uncertain times, it is essential that Scottish businesses have a voice on the future of the UK's trade policy. The Scottish Chambers of Commerce Network plays a central role in driving business growth across Scotland's communities, with a significant focus on maximising international trade opportunities.

As part of our commitment to the Strategic Trade Advisory Group, we will represent the business views from across the Scottish economy as the UK seeks to secure new trade agreements. We will ensure Scottish businesses are ready and able to take full advantage of expanding their trading footprint in markets around the globe.

Matt Lancashire, SCDI Director of Policy and Public Affairs, said:

Protecting and strengthening our international trading relationships is essential for a more productive and inclusive Scottish economy.

We believe that a commitment to open, rule-based system of trade will deliver growth and prosperity, and we have been encouraging the UK to explore joining the CPTPP of growing economies.

We welcome this opportunity for Scottish businesses and civic organisations to discuss the UK's trade priorities with Minister Hollingbery at our Forum. We have met regularly with the Minister and will continue to make the views of our members known to the UK and Scottish governments and the Strategic Trade Advisory Group to inform and influence future trade negotiations.

Scotland's food and drink industry is a powerhouse of international trade, exporting 41 bottles of world-famous Scotch whisky every second. Two thirds of the nation's whisky exports, worth £4bn annually, go to countries outside the EU, and the sector directly employs 40,000 people.

Scotland also remains a major export and investment hub and is a major centre for financial and professional services, outside London. Scotland benefitted from 141 new investment projects by international companies that created 4,000 new jobs last year alone.

One drinks business taking advantage of markets worldwide is Pickering Gin, who export more than 25% of their outputs to markets including Australia, New Zealand, China and America. They employ more than 26 people at their site in Edinburgh.

Matthew Gammell, Co-Founder and Head Distiller of Pickering's Gin said:

As an ambitious young company, it is essential that we have the ability to grow our key export markets and take new opportunities as they arise. It is critical at this time that our government ensures we achieve the best possible trade deals with key nations in order that the UK can remain competitive within the export marketplace.

The UK's devolved administrations have a direct interest in future trade agreements as we leave the EU and the UK government will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government, through regular policy roundtables, official meetings and public consultations to make sure any future trade deal works for the whole of the UK.

News story: Construction cartel directors disqualified

The move follows the Competition and Market Authority's (CMA) [statement of objections](#) issued on 13 December 2018, alleging that 3 suppliers of pre-cast concrete drainage products – CPM Group Ltd (CPM), Stanton Bonna Ltd, and FP McCann Ltd – breached competition law by taking part in a secret cartel for almost 7 years from 2006. The CMA has provisionally found that the cartel aimed to fix or coordinate prices and share out the market for certain pre-cast concrete drainage products in Great Britain.

As part of a settlement process, Somerset-based CPM and Derbyshire-based Stanton Bonna Ltd admitted to participating in the alleged cartel and have agreed to pay fines, which will be determined at the end of the CMA's investigation. The CMA's investigation into a third company which has not entered into settlement, FP McCann Ltd, continues and no assumption should be made that it has infringed the law.

Mr Philip Michael Stacey and Mr Robert James Taylor Smillie were directors at CPM throughout the period of the alleged cartel activity, during which time the company was one of the leading players in the market. The CMA has secured legally binding undertakings from these former directors, which disqualify them as directors and prevent them from being involved in the management of any company based in England, Scotland and Wales.

Mr Stacey has been disqualified for 7 years and 6 months, and Mr Smillie has been disqualified for 6 years and 6 months.

Under the Company Directors Disqualification Act, the CMA has the power to apply to the court to disqualify a director from holding company directorships or performing certain roles in relation to a company for a specified period, if a company which he or she is a director of has breached competition law. The Act also allows the CMA to accept a disqualification undertaking from a director instead of bringing proceedings, which has the same legal effect as a disqualification order.

Investigations are ongoing with respect to other directors and FP McCann Ltd.

For more information, view the [case page](#).