



Judicial Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

2026-2030

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Foreword

By Lord Reed, President of the Supreme Court

When I became President of the UK Supreme Court in 2020, I set out as one of my first priorities to try to improve the degree of diversity on the Court. One of the hallmarks of a well-functioning judicial system is the ability of all members of the public to have equal confidence in its ability to provide justice. The public has to be confident that judges are able to understand the cases before them and deliver justice fairly, and that can be difficult if the judiciary is drawn from a narrow section of society. We also need to ensure that we are recruiting the highest quality lawyers as judges, and are not missing out on talented people. This is a fundamental question of fairness: every lawyer should have the opportunity to progress in their career and to apply for judicial office.

In 2021, the Court published its first Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which set out our aim to support the progress of under-represented groups at every stage of their legal career, and into judicial roles. Over the last four years, we have pursued this strategy through a range of initiatives targeted at lawyers and judges at all stages of the career pipeline. We have built strong relationships with organisations that have helped us learn from the experience of underrepresented groups and have shaped the work we have undertaken.

Progress is being made, but I know that there is much more to do to remove barriers and to increase the pace of change. At the end of her presentation to Supreme Court Justices and Court staff, one of our Bridging the Bar interns said: “Thank you. And please do more.” That is a call to action for all of us. We are all responsible for making change happen, but the Supreme Court recognises that, as the UK’s highest court, it should be playing a leadership role. Our new judicial diversity and inclusion strategy is our response to that call for action. I look forward to the Court working together with many others to bring about a future where there is equal opportunity for all talented individuals to flourish in the judiciary, and in the wider legal profession.

Introduction

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom is the final court of appeal for the United Kingdom, deciding arguable points of law of general public importance arising from civil cases throughout the UK and from criminal cases in England and Wales, Northern Ireland and, in a limited number of cases, from Scotland. The Court also hears cases to determine devolution issues relating to the powers of the devolved administrations, Parliament, and Assemblies. The Court hears cases of the greatest public or constitutional importance affecting the whole population.

In 2021, the Supreme Court launched its first Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. That strategy set out the Court's commitment to supporting greater diversity and inclusion across the judiciary and the legal profession. The annual updates published during this period demonstrate the progress the Court has made against its objectives. New initiatives have been developed, existing programmes have been expanded, and the Court has strengthened its relationships with a range of partners and representative organisations.

Over the past four years, the Supreme Court has focused its activity across all stages of the career pipeline. Key achievements have included the launch and development of the Bridging the Bar Internship which has expanded from a small internship at the UK Supreme Court for eight aspiring barristers into a year-long Academy programme with over 100 aspiring barristers from a wide range of backgrounds undertaking professional development training each year. This now includes internships at the Court of Appeal, the High Court and the Law Commission. The Court hosted a number of career webinars demystifying the pathways to becoming a Supreme Court Justice and supported events in partnership with representative organisations, including the launch of the UK Association of Black Judges and the Sikhs in Law Association.

Statistics suggest that there remain significant barriers to progressing in the legal profession and in judicial careers. Change is underway, but it requires sustained, long-term commitment. The Supreme Court will play its part in achieving equality of opportunity and a profession in which diversity is valued and respected.

The Court's new Judicial Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2026 – 2030) builds on what we have learned over the first four years. Our commitment remains the same, but our objectives have been updated to take account of the work we have done and the feedback from our partners in this work.

Vision:

The UK Supreme Court's commitment to diversity and inclusion is deeply rooted in our values. We believe that diversity and inclusion strengthen public confidence in the judiciary and the legal profession. We believe that equality of opportunity and a profession in which diversity is valued and respected is essential to the Court and the people that we serve.



Image description: Portrait by Henny Beaumont which featured in the exhibition 'Equal to Everything: Judge Brenda and the Supreme Court' which accompanied the children's book by Afua Hirsch and was displayed in the Supreme Court in 2020.

Objectives:

1. To support and build an inclusive culture and working environment at the Court, where Justices lead the way by:
 - fostering an inclusive workplace, respecting and valuing everyone
 - improving their knowledge of diverse groups' experience of the Court, and taking action where issues are identified
 - creating an awareness of bias or barriers and working to minimise their impact
2. To actively support the progression of underrepresented groups into the legal profession and judicial roles by:
 - publicly promoting the importance of greater diversity and inclusion within the judiciary and legal profession
 - delivering outreach and education work
 - supporting and working in partnership with others to create greater opportunities for entry to the legal profession and career advancement for members of underrepresented groups
 - building a greater understanding of the role of a Justice and how to build a career path to the Supreme Court



Lord Sales speaking at the Girls Human Rights Hub Young Lawyers' Symposium.

We will do this by:

- **Strengthening connections and engagement.** Justices and staff are committed to continuing to forge strong connections with representative organisations so that we can better understand the barriers to fair progression, support their work and widen their reach.
- **Learning and developing.** Justices and staff will continue to develop our approach and our activities as we gain a greater understanding of barriers and meaningful ways in which we can help, based on our learning and through testing the effectiveness of our actions.
- **Opening doors to opportunity.** Through partnerships, internships and our education and outreach programme, we will help remove barriers and create career pathways for lawyers from currently underrepresented groups.
- **Small moments, big impact.** We all have significant moments in our lives—meaningful experiences that shape us and help mould our careers. We will offer visits and conversations that make our support for diversity and inclusion visible and will use our role as the apex Court to offer allyship and support.



2025 Bridging the Bar interns.

Evaluation

The Court recognises the importance of assessing and communicating the impact of its work to support judicial diversity and inclusion. We recognise that the impact of a one-off event or activity is often difficult to measure. However, we will continue to evaluate every activity and event for its reach, quality and impact. We believe that transparency and accountability are important, and we will continue to publish an annual update reporting on our D&I work.



Image description: Lord Leggatt judges a moot by Queen Mary University in 2024.



Image description: Dame Janice Pereira sits with the JCPD in December 2024.

Delivery

Our main areas of work will focus on the activities below. We will review and set an action plan annually and we will adjust our work based on feedback and on progress made.

Continuing to work in partnership with representative organisations such as Black Talent Charter, Bridging the Bar, the Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme, the Girls Human Rights Hub and the Sikhs in Law Association.

Engaging with judicial networks such as the Association of UK Black Judges, the Association of Women Judges and others to strengthen connections, to ensure that diverse voices are heard and valued within the judiciary and to offer advice and support on career pathways to the Court.

Continuing with our education and outreach programmes, expanding our reach by working with the newly formed Judicial Assistant Network and the Bridging the Bar Interns Alumni Network.

Hosting representative groups' events at the Court to offer support and allyship.

Increased communication of the Court's support for diversity and inclusion, widening our reach via podcasts, videos and news items on the website.

Defining Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

For the purposes of this strategy, diversity refers to recruiting and retaining individuals with a wide range of personal characteristics, different experiences and backgrounds. This includes differences arising from personal characteristics and experiences, such as those protected under equality legislation, socio-economic background, and caring responsibilities, as well as from their professional background, including individual career routes into the legal profession and types of professional training and experience.

Inclusion refers to the creation of a culture in which all individuals are welcome, involved and valued, where their perspectives are respected and they can participate fully. An inclusive environment is one where differences in background and life experience are recognised as a source of strength rather than a weakness.

Equity is concerned with fair access to opportunity. It recognises that individuals may encounter barriers that vary in nature and impact depending on personal background and circumstances, as well as at different stages in professional careers.

Together, diversity, equity and inclusion support a judiciary that draws on the most talented individuals wherever they may be found. These concepts inform the Court's activities under this strategy, including its engagement, education and accessibility work.



Image description: Lord Leggatt speaks at the launch event of the UK Association of Black Judges in July 2025.