

Faster and fairer justice for victims thanks to major magistrate recruitment drive

16.4.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Thousands of new magistrates will be recruited and trained in under half the time it currently takes thanks to a new drive to bolster the ranks and deliver faster and fairer justice for victims.

- Taskforce first step towards modernising and speeding up recruitment process
- Record multi-million-pound investment to encourage public to become magistrates
- Part of the Government's Plan for Change to deliver faster and fairer justice for victims

A new national taskforce will oversee local recruitment committees across England and Wales – helping select, interview and recruit civil-minded members of the public to deliver justice in communities across the country.

And for the first time, recruitment of magistrates will happen throughout the calendar year with a recruitment drive every quarter standardising a process that varies from region to region.

Together, the changes will mean that, from today, people applying to be a magistrate will be recruited and trained up in at least half the time – a process that can currently take more than a year. The move will also turbocharge the number of successful new magistrates to 21,000 by March 2029 – a whopping six thousand more than currently in post.

The announcement comes as the Courts and Tribunals Bill continues its passage through the House of Commons – delivering the pragmatic reforms needed to cut the Crown Court backlog and to deliver fairer and faster justice for victims.

Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy said:

The justice system would not work without the vital role that magistrates play. Our reforms and investment will speed up the recruitment process and encourage even more people from all walks of life to volunteer their time to become a magistrate.

Hearing thousands of cases across different jurisdictions, magistrates truly are everyday heroes – people of all ages and backgrounds not only delivering justice but serving and representing their local communities.

This modernisation, alongside our wider investment in the justice system and the reforms in our Courts and Tribunals Bill, will deliver faster and fairer justice for victims.

Alongside this the Government has today confirmed plans to invest a record amount into a recruitment campaign to encourage people from all walks of life to volunteer their time to deliver justice. A multi-million-pound investment will inform more people about the vital role magistrates play and urge them to consider applying.

Over 2,900 extra magistrates have been appointed since 2022 and the Government aims to recruit

even more in the coming years as part of package of reform, investment, and modernisation that will turn the tide on the Crown Court backlog.

Magistrates come from all parts of the communities they serve. Latest figures show that 57% of magistrates are female and 14% come from an ethnic minority background, with London having the highest proportion of magistrates from an ethnic minority background at 31%.

David Ford, National Chair of the Magistrates' Association said:

Magistrates are central to the Government's ambitious plans for justice, and there will need to be more magistrates in post over the coming years if the government's reforms are to succeed. However, newly appointed magistrates have been telling us that the recruitment process is over-long, and communication with them on the progress of their application is often very poor.

We are pleased that a national taskforce has been set-up to coordinate and improve the process of recruiting new magistrates, building on a pilot scheme that has greatly reduced waiting times and frustration for applicants.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/faster-and-fairer-justice-for-victims-thanks-to-major-magistrate-recruitment-drive>