



JUSTICE Strategic Plan 2017-2020

JUSTICE is an all-party law reform and human rights organisation working to strengthen the justice system – administrative, civil, family and criminal – in the United Kingdom.

We are a membership organisation, primarily of the legal profession, comprising barristers, solicitors, legal executives, academic lawyers, law students and interested non-lawyers. We work on an all-party basis, seeking to inform debate, frame issues and influence decision-makers from across the political spectrum.

OUR VISION

Our vision is of fair, accessible and efficient legal processes, in which the individual's rights are protected, and which reflect the country's international reputation for upholding and promoting the rule of law.

OUR MISSION

We contribute to achieving our vision in three key ways:

- Providing evidence-based analysis and proposing practical solutions to law-makers, judges and relevant public servants.
- Strengthening the law and legal processes by reference to international and comparative best practice, looking across jurisdictions, across types of law and across the legal profession.
- Using the expertise of our membership to strengthen our understanding of the challenges arising in legal practice and of possible solutions, working with them to execute our vision.

OUR VALUES

- We act with integrity, protecting our independence, objectivity and all-party approach.
- We aspire to excellence in all aspects of our work.
- Our work is considered and practical in approach.
- We strive to be forward looking, anticipating and setting the agenda for reform of the justice system.
- We work collaboratively within JUSTICE and with our partners, seeking consensus where at all possible.



Strategic aims and objectives

Strategic Aim One: To produce creative, thoughtful and practical proposals for justice system reform, likely to make a sustained impact on the design of the system and/or practice within it.

Context: JUSTICE has a long standing reputation for proposing change in the justice system. We are an influencing organisation, using our research, contacts and reputation as levers for change. The cornerstone of this work is high quality, evidence-based research drawing on both the expertise of our membership and on international and comparative experience. Our projects have a practical and applied focus. In designing and executing this work, we seek to engage the judiciary, legal professionals, civil servants, politicians of all parties and other relevant stakeholders to maximize the likelihood of implementation. For flagship projects, we use working parties of our members, supported part time by a member of our staff. The external conditions – with the HMCTS Reform Programme marking an unprecedented investment in court modernisation and a reforming senior judiciary – are providing JUSTICE with a unique opportunity to influence the system. The decision for the United Kingdom to exit the European Union will impact upon the fair administration of justice in due course. It is our understanding that Government will not proceed with repeal of the Human Rights Act 1998 during this Parliament.

Key risks and challenges: To date our work on justice system reform has been both innovative and well received by key stakeholders. We benefit from strong working relationships with the senior judiciary, and senior figures in Whitehall and Westminster. We need to continually strengthen and institutionalise these relationships and ensure that our work product remains of such a standard as to be valuable to them. To date we have secured strong Chairs and membership of working parties, including committed corporate supporters. We need to ensure that we have staff of a high quality to service the working parties, and take responsibility for the carriage of the project.

Our objectives for 2017-2020 are:

- to have a number of working parties on the go at any one time (each supported half time by one of our lawyers, i.e., if we have four lawyers, we will have four working parties).
- to produce high quality reports, optimally timed and providing practical recommendations for reform.
- to secure the support of academics and their postgraduate students for high quality research assistance with reports.
- to engage in follow-up on recent working party reports at a senior level and among necessary stakeholders to maximize the likelihood of implementation.
- to keep the justice implications of exit from the European Union under review, focusing our work on those aspects of EU law on which we have worked in the past.
- to monitor and evaluate the impact of our proposals on justice system reform.



Strategic Aim Two: To act as a bridge between law and law makers, by engaging strategically with Westminster and Whitehall

Context: JUSTICE has always had political representation in our constitutional structure and we pride ourselves on cross-party consensus building. Beyond recommending law reform, for decades we have worked with parliamentarians and civil servants to ensure that human rights and the rule of law are upheld in the legislative process. To this end, we regularly brief on legislation going through the UK and Scottish parliaments, respond to government consultations, give advice to select committees and hold events in Westminster and Holyrood on relevant legal developments.

Key risks and challenges: While we are told that JUSTICE's briefings are prized among decision makers, we are often briefing in a crowded field, with identification of our particular value not always readily apparent. For legislative briefing, it is often difficult to identify whether our contribution has made any impact, and even if we are told that it has, it is difficult to measure that impact. The complicated parliamentary process is such that this work is often enormously time-consuming. Over the last strategy, with a greater focus on the operation of the courts and tribunals, we have also been responding to judicial consultations – a space in which there are fewer contributions and where our briefings have been welcomed greatly also. We need to be selective in our approach to those matters which we will take up in Westminster and Holyrood, and more strategic about how we engage. We need to focus on those issues on which we stand a chance of making a unique impact, and find ways of minimising the time commitment to matters where we will either be repeating the positions of others or stand little chance of effecting change.

Our objectives for 2017-2020 are:

- to respond on a selective basis to developments in Westminster and Holyrood, focusing on consultations and legislation clearly within our areas of expertise and on which we stand some chance of influencing change.
- to engage early with Ministers, their staff and their opposite numbers in HM Opposition and other parties on both our strategies to strengthen access, fairness and efficiency in the justice system, and their proposals for law reform.
- to continue to collaborate with other NGOs and actors on briefing work in areas of mutual interest.
- to continue to respond to consultations of the senior judiciary and relevant statutory bodies on matters related to JUSTICE's areas of work.
- to arrange with the political party's legal associations fringe events at major parties' conferences to highlight JUSTICE's work and challenges in the system.
- to monitor the impact of our briefing work on debates and decisions in Westminster and Holyrood, and in respect of consultations.



Strategic Aim Three: To intervene in appropriate cases before superior courts domestically and regionally

Context: JUSTICE has long been a lead intervener before domestic superior courts and before the European Court of Human Rights. A number of these interventions have directly impacted upon the development of constitutional principles and have helped build our reputation for excellence with senior judges. We intervene with the assistance of pro bono representation from amongst our membership. Over the last three years, with a refocusing of our strategy, we have intervened less frequently than in the past. However we have retained a reputation as a key source of expertise about how to effectively intervene – having reported on the practice and procedure for interventions for over twenty years – and have led efforts to protect the rights of intervention from curtailment.

Key risks and challenges: Again, there is the challenge of ensuring the impact of our work. We need to ensure that we only intervene in cases where we have insight – international and comparative, or from other research undertaken – to share with the court, and where that intervention is making a unique contribution. With the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, we now incur a costs risk with interventions before the Court of Appeal, meaning that it is unlikely that we will be able to intervene in proceedings before they reach the UK Supreme Court. We have elaborated case selection criteria which we will use as a guide on decisions when to intervene.

Our objectives for 2017-2020 are:

- to intervene in cases before the UK Supreme Court and European Court of Human Rights on a selective basis, in line with our case selection criteria.
- to keep under review developments which threaten to undermine interventions in UK courts and before the European Court of Human Rights.
- to collate information on the practice and procedure of third party interventions in the UK, with a view to updating *To Assist the Court* when such an update is necessary.



Strategic Aim Four: To share our research and ideas for justice system reform with our membership and other interested parties

Context: JUSTICE has an educational mandate, and has always engaged with its membership through events – both free and paid – on developments in human rights and the rule of law. Free events are part of our ‘offer’ to members. We hold a small number of events – most notably our Annual Human Rights Conference – for which we charge. We have ceased organising conferences with corporate partners, allowing us greater control of content and much higher income generation. We have a Student Network of over 4,000, and a Student Membership of 215 for whom we also hold events. We share our ideas online, via email newsletters to members, our website and through social media. We have a dedicated online presence for our Students, which includes resources they value on substantive law but also on careers development. Over the last Strategy, we developed a new website for JUSTICE, which we manage ourselves.

Key risks and challenges: We need to ensure that we arrange attractive events, well-timed for members, which result in a respectable turnout and build good will. Apart from events in Scotland, during Party Conference season and university events, at the moment all of our events are in London. We need to build relationships with corporate members with the resources to host such events.

Our objectives for 2017-2020 are:

- to hold three free event a year for our members (including the Annual Lecture).
- to hold and contribute to regular events outside of London for students and members, including attending student law fairs and careers events.
- to ensure that our website has content which supports our educational mandate.
- to ensure ‘return on investment’ for our paid events.
- to monitor and evaluate feedback from our events, adapting future events as a result.



Strategic Aim Five: To grow and support our membership – individual, corporate and student – and to increase the financial sustainability of JUSTICE through an effective fundraising function

Context: Membership is important to JUSTICE, providing authority for our work and a useful source of unrestricted income. Membership levels reduced over ten years from 2003 to 2013, during which time our poor database undermined our ability both to identify our members and renew their memberships. We now have an effective database and are committed to regular, electronic communication with members. Over the course of the last strategy we have committed to income generation, by employing professional staff to focus on membership and fundraising, and investing in appropriate systems to support their work. In October 2014, we initiated the *Securing JUSTICE at 60 Appeal* in an effort to diversify our funding base. We now have over 100 'Friends' who donate £20 a month to JUSTICE.

Key risks and challenges: We have now put in place the structures necessary for stronger membership outreach and development. We need to ensure that our membership and Friends offers are as attractive as possible. We have launched an Appeal with some success, but need to maintain momentum to reach our target. We also have to ensure that the Appeal ties in to longer term giving programmes in support of JUSTICE. We have launched a campaign to secure £1.2 million to renovate our building. Fundraising is rated as the highest risk to JUSTICE on our Risk Register.

Our objectives for 2017-2020 are:

- to double our membership, through improved marketing, communication and retention strategies.
- to double our number of Friends, through improved marketing, communications and retention strategies.
- to support, maintain and grow the JUSTICE Student Network, encouraging full Student and Individual membership on the back of it.
- to communicate with our members in a timely and compelling manner, engaging them as much as possible in our work.
- to increase our profile within the legal professions and with other key stakeholders.
- to reach our Appeal target of £2 million, and our capital campaign target of £1.2 million by the end of 2017.
- to celebrate our 60th Anniversary in 2017 in such a way that increases the profile and funding base of JUSTICE.
- to increase our income to £1,000,000 annually by 2020.
- to increase our staff complement, particularly on the legal side, in a sustainable manner.
- to increase our levels of reserves commensurate with our budget, in line with the Board's Reserves Policy.
- to ensure the diversity of our funding base, keeping a growing group of donors informed and engaged, and to focus on fundraising activities that maximize our return on investment.
- to hold regular and engaging events for our members, Friends and donors.



Strategic Aim Six: To be an effective and sustainable organisation in relation to our staff development, operational management and governance.

Context: JUSTICE has a dedicated and committed team of staff and provides a collegial and collaborative working environment. Our capacity is enhanced by paid interns, pro bono corporate supporters and the involvement of volunteer working parties of our membership. We have recently held a governance review, which has clarified the roles of the Board and the Council. We have an engaged Board of Trustees. Our financial systems are sound and prudent. We have sound systems for monitoring and appraising staff performance. We proudly recruit our interns through competitive processes that see them paid the London Living Wage. Our staff enjoy flexible working by agreement.

Key risks and challenges: As a relatively small organisation, it is challenging for us to provide the range of staff opportunities and benefits available in larger institutions. While our office is centrally located, our building is in need of refurbishment. Our Council contains many eminent individuals but we do not always make effective use of their interest and expertise.

Our objectives for 2017-2020 are:

- to continue to recruit the most well-qualified and talented staff through open advertising of vacancies, and clear job descriptions and person specifications.
- to enable professional development for all staff through effective line management, the annual review process and guidance on training opportunities.
- to continue to support the well-being of staff through flexible working and our health and safety policy and procedures.
- to improve our longer-term financial forecasting, planning and project management capability.
- to improve the working environment as part of the building refurbishment.
- to continue to improve our IT systems and infrastructure and to ensure that these remain secure.
- to continue to ensure that Trustees are effectively inducted, briefed and well-supported in carrying out their role.
- to review the operation of the Council with a view to making better use of its members' expertise and engagement with JUSTICE.