



JUSTICE Strategy: 2021-2024

This Strategy is elaborated in the context of four main social and political trends, which we believe will influence the direction of our work and developments within the justice system over the next four years.

First, a period of considerable economic struggle brought on by the consequences of COVID-19, compounded by the UK's departure from the European Union. There will be limited funding from Her Majesty's Treasury for the justice system and JUSTICE will be operating in a difficult funding environment.

Second, this Strategy will likely span four years of a Conservative government that has made significant manifesto pledges with respect to the operation of the justice system, including on constitutional matters, administrative redress, criminal justice, policing and human rights.

Third, growing social movements, such as #BlackLivesMatter, calling for urgent addressal of increasing racial and ethnic discrimination, inequalities and disproportionality in the justice system and for greater inclusivity and diversity within the system.

Finally, challenges brought by the pandemic have highlighted many existing limitations within the system, while providing an impetus for accelerated cultural change with respect to the use of technology and innovations with respect to access to justice.

1 PURPOSE – what brings us together

We strive for a fair, accessible, and equal justice system. Our work aims at making practical, realistic, and timely changes, addressing some of the most urgent issues facing the United Kingdom's legal framework.

We use our voice to influence and improve policies and practice, while not being afraid to scrutinise and challenge developments in the justice system that threaten the country's adherence to human rights and the rule of law.

2 CORE AREAS OF ACTIVITY- what we do

JUSTICE's work spans administrative, civil, family and criminal justice in the United Kingdom.

We have four intersecting core areas of activity:

- We use working parties of our members and other experts to identify and address areas ripe for reform. Supported by our staff, the working parties provide evidence-based analysis and propose practical solutions by drawing on leading academic research, international and comparative material, and lived experiences of people interacting with the justice system in different ways. We work towards implementing our working party recommendations, and use our reports to inform, influence and collaborate with decision-makers and other key actors.



- We act as a bridge between law and lawmakers, briefing politicians from all parties on draft legislation relevant to the justice system in the UK and devolved Parliaments. We also respond to consultations from Government, parliamentary committees and other significant bodies within our areas of expertise.
- We hold informative events on our work and related issues, and on access to the legal profession for our members and other interested parties.
- Finally, we submit third-party interventions before the UK Supreme Court and the European Court of Human Rights in cases that raise critical points of law in our areas of expertise.

JUSTICE also provides the Secretariat for the Administrative Justice Council (the AJC). We will continue to work closely with the AJC, strengthening both our own capacity and that of the administrative justice system.

3 FOCUS OF OUR WORK-what we are concerned about

Our primary focus is on overcoming institutional and procedural barriers to access to justice and fairness for people using the system. We put their experiences at the heart of our work, and we recognise that many aspects of the existing structure and practises within the justice system compound exclusion for disadvantaged people.

Across all our work we address:

Institutional weakness: considering ways to strengthen the operation of key institutions and frameworks in the justice system, testing them for fairness, accessibility and efficiency.

Procedural deficiency: identifying and challenging unfair, inaccessible and inefficient legal procedures. We will examine the potential of technology and innovation in delivering justice – including alternatives to traditional justice processes – and consider its emerging impact on the system.

Biases in the justice system: exploring and confronting the ways in which the justice system adversely treats and impacts upon individuals and groups based on their status and/or protected characteristics including race, gender, disability and/or socio-economic status.

4 POSITION – how we want to be regarded

A registered charity, we are an all-party membership organisation, drawn primarily from the legal profession with a common commitment to the rule of law and the fair administration of justice.

We work closely with our members and other stakeholders in all aspects of our work, drawing on their expertise and insights, as well as using their networks and influence to change the justice system for the better.



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Our considerable convening power enables us to produce high quality, evidence-based research that reflects the professional and lay experience of the justice system.

We recommend practical and realistic change that leads to meaningful reform.

We build consensus that access to justice, fairness and efficiency in the justice system are the concern of all lawyers and lawmakers, rather than party-political issues.

5 DIFFERENTIATION – what sets us apart

We are the only NGO that works to improve access to justice across the entire UK justice system.

We use our research and reports to influence policymakers, judges, civil servants, lawyers, and other decision-makers. We do not campaign or lobby.

Our greatest strength is our membership.

We are pragmatic. While consistently urging improved resourcing of the justice system, we pursue reform that stands a reasonable chance of implementation within the existing financial and political climate. In some instances, where the threat to the rule of law or fairness within the system may be so acute, we speak up as a matter of principle, even when we know it will fail.

We have a long and rich history of reforming the justice system in the United Kingdom. Our pioneering work over more than sixty years has shaped the infrastructure of the system, making it more accessible, accountable and fair.

We are the UK section of the International Commission of Jurists. In our work we incorporate international and comparative law experiences which strengthen our proposals for reform.

6 OUR MAIN PRIORITIES – what we hope to achieve through our work and as an organisation during the next four years

Policy

More than ever, during this strategy period, we will strive to tackle urgent and important issues within the constraints of the social, economic and political climate indicated above. To achieve this, our working parties, briefings and interventions will focus on the following themes.

Reform of courts and the impact of COVID-19:

We will continue to monitor the HMCTS Reform Programme, urging that it increase access and fairness in the courts and tribunals. We will explore and evaluate ways in which the integrity of the courts and justice process can be maintained as they adapt to the impact of COVID-19. We will lead thinking on which aspects of the COVID-19 response should remain, be revised or be discarded as courts 'return to normal'.

User-centred justice:



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The justice system must be comprehensible to all its users so that they can effectively participate and have confidence in it. Building on our 2019 Working Party Report *Understanding Courts*, we will focus on improving the experience and involvement of specific cohorts of users, such as children, victims of crime and vulnerable people to enable fair outcomes.

In 2021, our working party 'Improving Access to Justice for Separating Families' will undertake a child-centred review of what families need from the Family Court when they seek help with child arrangements, with particular emphasis on domestic abuse victims and unrepresented litigants.

Effective routes of redress:

Routes of redress are becoming increasingly uncertain or unavailable as a result of shifting State powers and responsibilities.

We will focus on ensuring privatisation, automation, and civil orders with criminal consequences do not inhibit effective challenge to decision-making through courts, tribunals and other complaints mechanisms.

Challenges to the courts and Constitution:

Independent and impartial courts are a central feature of the UK constitution. Safeguarding their integrity and remit amidst proposed reforms is crucial to the rule of law and ensuring access to justice.

We will pursue projects addressing proposed reforms to the operation of the Supreme Court, the role of judicial review and amendment of the Human Rights Act. We will continue to examine judicial appointments, with a view to increasing judicial diversity.

Non-judicial decision-making:

At the start and end of court and tribunal processes, many public bodies and officials make significant decisions concerning individual rights and freedoms. Given the impact of these decisions on people's lives, these require careful scrutiny.

In the first part of the strategy period, we will consider the processes for release from imprisonment through the Parole Board and Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Other work

We will continue to follow up on past reports and policy work by capturing whether our activities and interventions have paved the way for desired outcomes.

We will continue to collaborate and establish constructive relationships with diverse stakeholders within the justice system as we evidence, elaborate, and implement our work.

We will seek opportunities to expand our work in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales in line with our above priorities, as relevant to those jurisdictions.

We will look to engage more closely with the International Commission of Jurists, using its network to strengthen our work, and supporting it as appropriate.



Development

The key to successful fundraising is multifaceted and meaningful relationships, especially given the political and economic climate outlined at the beginning of this strategy. To this end, developing even stronger and deeper bonds with our donors, supporters and members through thoughtful engagement opportunities will be the foundation of the Development team's work over this strategy period.

Broadening our current income streams and attracting new funders

We plan to attract new funders and increase support from existing donors by developing opportunities for them to support us beyond a single project and investing in our longer-term growth, especially trusts and foundations. We will focus on unrestricted, multi-year funding and increasing our network of donors of all sizes and from varied industries.

We will continue to improve the experience of our JUSTICE60, Friends and major donors by working with the Development Board to ensure this transformational group remains engaged in our work and invested in our impacts. We are committed to providing bespoke events and networking opportunities and will look to diversify its growth by increasing corporate donors and approaching lawyers and leaders of industry from a wider audience.

We will enhance our external communications and cement our reputation as sector leaders, by focusing on more accessible content, targeted events, demonstrating our impacts and encouraging wider audiences to engage with and support our work.

Strengthening and increasing our membership programme

Membership plays a crucial role in shaping our work, as well as a source of unrestricted and sustainable funding. We plan to develop and create lasting relationships and multifaceted journeys for our members, especially those in the highest-level categories and corporate members, to ensure better acquisition and retention.

We will improve our engagement communications through segmentation and strategic messaging and streamline our administrative communications to make the membership experience easier.

Events are the cornerstone of our membership programme. We will continue to provide thought-provoking and topical events to our current members and to attract new members. We will maximize our reach through virtual events, allowing us to expand our membership beyond England by attracting new members from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Organisation

JUSTICE takes pride in having strong organisational policies and procedures in place that support staff in the development of our priorities and drive our culture of a healthy and nurturing working environment.

Financial planning



We will draw on our strengths as an organisation to deliver our main priorities by developing a financial strategy that provides long-term financial planning to cover the costs and revenue needed to deliver these aspirations.

Our annual business plan and budget will be monitored and measured by the Senior Management Team, Finance Committee and Board based on this strategy.

We will continue to pursue best practice in all aspects of our organisational management.

We will explore options for the better use of our building at 59 Carter Lane, as a base for our work, as well as a source of revenue.

Human Resources

We will continue to provide our staff with a nurturing and motivating work environment, with opportunities to develop their skills and to grow professionally through professional development practices, flexible working and human resources policy and procedures, keeping abreast of best practice.

We will provide staff with the tools needed to perform their roles by ensuring our IT systems and equipment is up to date and compliant to best practice.

We will continue to attract outstanding staff from diverse backgrounds who are passionate about the rule of law and fair administration of justice.

We will continue to pay the London Living Wage to all our interns and fellows.

7 CULTURE – what we value

We strive for excellence

We aim to produce work of the highest quality, by recruiting and retaining the best possible staff, and by working with our members and other leaders in the profession. We pride ourselves in the quality of our research, analysis and drafting, holding ourselves to the highest standards of intellectual rigour. We are committed to continuous learning and improvement, reflecting on how our work can be strengthened.

We are inclusive and collaborative

We are committed to recruiting staff from diverse personal and professional backgrounds. In our work, we seek out and collaborate with a wide range of legal professionals, organisations and users of the system to influence the direction of our work.

We value integrity, independence, and innovation

We ensure that our work is evidence-based, constructive and rigorous. We seek to challenge the status quo where it is not working and are creative and innovative in our



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response to problem-solving. We value integrity and honesty. We prize our objectivity and independence.

We value a healthy and nurturing working environment

We are proud of the office culture at JUSTICE, which provides opportunities for the development of staff skills and experience in a supportive and collegiate environment. We care that our staff enjoy their working day, and their health and wellbeing are of the utmost importance to us. We are a flexible employer, with staff encouraged to structure work around other aspects of their lives. In all our work, communications and relationships, we do not tolerate disrespectful or bullying behaviour.

8 GOVERNANCE – how we are governed and our priorities

The JUSTICE Board - elected from our membership - will continue to ensure that the charity is effectively run according to best practice and carries out its fiduciary and regulatory duties. The Finance Committee will continue to report to the Board on management accounts and cash flow, and sensitive human resources matters.

Our day-to-day management will be overseen by the Senior Management Team, comprised of the Legal Director, Director of Operations and Director of Development, headed up by the Director. We will continue to work closely with the JUSTICE Council – a group of leading jurists and cross-party members– who act as our sounding boards and help us expand our networks and connections.

Across our governing and advisory bodies, we will aim for gender parity with a strong membership of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic lawyers as well as LGBTQ and disabled lawyers.

We will recruit new Board and Council members from different areas of practice as well as different parts of the country so that our governance structure is more representative of the profession and our membership.

We will continue to identify skills gaps within the Board and Council and recruit for these replacements when Board and Council members retire.

We will ensure that Board members are properly inducted into the organisation and are encouraged to attend training courses on charity governance.

We will seek to hold more virtual meetings for the Board, Finance Committee and Council to increase participation and diversity.

The Board will continue to hold an annual away day, to review the strategy and its own performance.

We will continue to abide by the best governance practice across all areas of our work.

9 PERFORMANCE – how we measure our success



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Our performance will be monitored and measured across priority areas during the strategy period, noting progress towards our desired outcomes. We are developing a Theory of Change that should be useful in this regard.

We will track our performance through qualitative and quantitative indicators across policy, membership, funding, communications and organisational management.

10 REVIEW – how we will monitor and update our strategy

Our business plan and annual budget will be set against this Strategy. The Board will review the Strategy at its Away Day, assessing whether it remains relevant and optimal for the organisation, given changing policy, funding and organisational factors. Each year, the Board will agree on priorities for the coming year.