



Policy Committees

MA policy committees assist the staff team in developing policy, steering research and developing training and development, and outreach resources.

There are five committees: [adult](#), diversity and inclusion, [family](#), [training learning and development](#), and [youth](#).

Any member of the MA who is a sitting magistrate can apply to be a member of a policy committee with the exception of the training, learning and development committee, where retired members may also apply. Members are selected by the MA's Policy Board, usually for a term of three years. This is with the exception of the diversity and inclusion committee, where members are selected by members of the MA's diversity and inclusion networks. As all policy committees are standing committees of the board of trustees, the board of trustees has the ability to make final decisions on committee membership if it so wishes.

The committees develop and implement proactive policy goals to promote the sound administration of the law, discuss and make policy recommendations in their areas of expertise, and work with staff to produce responses to consultations, position statements and MA resources.

A committee normally meets three times a year, once in November or December, following the AGM, and at other times ideally to feed into meetings of the Policy Board. Meetings are usually held online, with occasional meetings held at the MA's office at St George Wharf in Vauxhall.

The detailed policy work that is carried out by each committee – and the reporting to committee members on actions taken and progress made – is done remotely through email exchange and online (through the online information-sharing platform Basecamp). The work is co-ordinated by the relevant committee chair and member of staff or, on specific specialist areas, by a committee member appointed by the committee chair.

The committee chair, or appointed committee member, is encouraged and supported to set up ad hoc working groups on particular issues where necessary.

This flexible approach is designed to enable quick decision-making and encourage involvement from those members with the most appropriate skills, knowledge or interest in the particular issue in question, regardless of geographical location or their availability during standard office hours.

Adult Court Committee

The Adult Court Committee is responsible for all MA policy activity relating to the workings of and decision-making in the adult criminal court.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

The diversity and inclusion committee (D&IC) is responsible for all MA activity around policy and practice in relation diversity and inclusion, including intersectionality, within the magistracy.

Family Court Committee

The Family Court Committee is responsible for all MA policy activity relating to the workings of and decision-making in the family court.

Youth Court Committee

The Youth Court Committee is responsible for all MA policy activity relating to the workings of and decision-making in the youth court.

Training Learning and Development Committee

The Training Learning and Development Committee is responsible for all MA activity around training and development of, and by, magistrates. This includes the MA's Magistrates in the Community outreach programme.

The following terms of reference for each committee set out key tasks and issues covered by each committee. Some issues (such as domestic abuse or the reform agenda) can be specific to one committee, or be dealt with as a cross-over issue.

Any committee may be asked to be the lead committee on additional issues in the future, as appropriate

Some issues that have been identified as cross-over issues sit with the Policy Board, rather than a specific committee. This includes:

- Expenses for magistrates
- Devolved issues in respect of Wales
- Retirement age for magistrates
- Shortage of legal advisers
- Reform of local justice areas

Adult Court Committee – Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Adult Court Committee (ACC) is responsible for all MA policy activity on the workings of, and decision-making in, the adult court.

Key tasks

- To set the priorities for the work of the committee on an annual basis, taking into account the MA's broader policy priorities
- To agree and deliver a workplan on these priorities, working within available resources
- To contribute to the development of responses to consultations or inquiries where they fall within the ACC's remit
- To contribute to the development of MA responses to requests for input or comment on issues or proposals that fall within the ACC's remit
- To provide feedback on work carried out by the ACC, ensuring that it is fit for purpose

Key subject areas

The following list of areas of business is not exhaustive, but gives an insight into the regular work of the ACC:

Case management and sentencing	System and organisational issues	Defendant and offender populations
Allocation / listing	Cancellation and Delays	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
Bail	Disciplinary process for magistrates	Gangs
Case management	Efficiency / court statistics	Mental health and learning difficulties
Community sentences and breach	Fine enforcement	Repeat and prolific offenders
Custodial sentences	Flexible courts	Veterans
Early release	Interpreters	Women
Electronic monitoring and curfew	Technology in the courtroom	
Engagement	Legal aid	Licensing / licensing appeals
Fines	Listing	Alcohol / premises
Increasing sentencing powers	Out of court disposals / scrutiny panels	Fishing
Innovation in the courtroom	Private prosecutions	Television
Sentencing guidelines	Provision of legal advisers	Vehicle excise
Suspended sentences	Single Justice Procedure	
Victim Surcharge	Reform agenda	
	Victims	

Crossover issues

The ACC is the lead committee on a number of cross-over issues where they work with other MA Committees or the Policy Board where necessary. These issues include:

- out of court disposals/diversion
- delays in the system
- disciplinary processes
- listing
- the reform programme

The ACC also contributes as necessary to work on other 'crossover' issues that affect the work of more than one committee.

Diversity and inclusion committee – Terms of Reference

Purpose

The diversity and inclusion committee (D&IC) is responsible for all MA activity around policy and practice in relation diversity and inclusion, including intersectionality, within the magistracy. It guides, supports and contributes to the MA's work to:

- a) inform and influence the work on diversity and inclusion within the magistracy by bodies other than the MA (taking account of the role of the senior judiciary, HMCTS, Advisory Committees and others)
- b) raise awareness and action on diversity and inclusion within the MA.

Key tasks

- To set annual priorities for its work, aligning with the MA's broader policy priorities
- to contribute to relevant consultations or inquiries
- to contribute to the MA's input or comment on relevant issues
- to raise awareness and act on diversity and inclusion within the MA
- for committee members to engage with the network they represent at least once every three months

Key subject areas

The following list of areas of business is not exhaustive, but gives an insight into the regular work of the D&IC:

Practicalities of being a magistrate	The development of a diverse magistracy
Disproportionality created by expenses issue	Availability of quality mentors
Disciplinary processes and whistleblowing	Inclusive language in court
Guidance on court dress	Judicial development pathway
Magistrates' use of social media	Bias and prejudice on the bench
Employed magistrates	Changes to the Equal Treatment Bench Book
Parental leave	Accessibility of the court estate
Support for magistrates waiting to start	The social aspect of the magistracy (what works for meeting other magistrates)
Specific needs of LGBT+ magistrates	Recruiting and retaining a more diverse magistracy (including through Magistrates in the Community)
Specific needs of Black, Asian and minority ethnic magistrates	

Specific needs of magistrates under 40	
Specific needs of magistrates with disabilities	
Intersectionality	

Crossover issues

The D&IC is the lead committee on certain cross-over issues where they work with other MA committees or the policy board where necessary. These issues include:

- all training where it affects the diversity of, and support to, magistrates (training, learning and development committee)
- judicial discipline (adult court committee)

The D&IC also contributes as necessary to work on other 'crossover' issues that affect the work of more than one committee.

Family Court Committee – Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Family Court Committee (FCC) is responsible for all MA policy activity relating to the workings of and decision-making in the family court.

Key tasks

- To set the priorities for the work of the committee on an annual basis, taking into account the MA's broader policy priorities
- To agree and deliver a workplan on these priorities, working within available resources
- To contribute to the development of responses to consultations or inquiries where they fall within the FCC's remit
- To contribute to the development of MA responses to requests for input or comment on issues or proposals that fall within the FCC's remit
- To provide feedback on work carried out by the FCC, ensuring that it is fit for purpose

Subject areas

The following list of areas of business is not exhaustive, but gives an insight into the regular work of the FCC:

26 week limit	Direct Recruitment	Judicial continuity
Adoption proceedings	Domestic Abuse	Legal Aid
CAFCASS	Expert evidence	Litigants in person
Care plans	Family only magistrates	Local Family Justice Boards
Care proceedings	Family panels	Mediation
Case management	Family Procedure Rules	Persons lacking capacity
Child participation in proceedings	Family Approvals, Authorisations and Appraisals Committees	Single Family Court
Child protection	Forced marriage	Supporting separated families
Cooperative parenting	Independent mediation	Transparency

Crossover issues

The FCC is the lead committee on certain cross-over issues where they work with other MA Committees or the Policy Board where necessary. These issues include:

- Direct recruitment to sit in family

The FCC also contributes as necessary to work on other 'crossover' issues that affect the work of more than one committee.

Training Learning and Development Committee - Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Training Committee (TC) is responsible for all MA activity around the training and development of, and by, magistrates. This includes the MA's Magistrates in the Community outreach programme. It guides, supports and contributes to the MA's work to:

- a) Inform and influence the provision of training to magistrates by bodies other than the MA (taking account of the role of the Judicial College, HMCTS, the MLE and the TAAACs)
- b) In the context of HMCTS responsibility for training, to facilitate the training and delivery of complementary training offered by the MA to its members
- c) Increasing public understanding of the magistracy through outreach work.

Key responsibilities

- To set the priorities for the work of the committee on an annual basis, taking into account the MA's broader policy priorities
- To agree a workplan to deliver on those priorities, working within available resources
- To contribute to the delivery of that workplan, and any additional projects that are identified within the year, with a particular focus on ensuring that magistrates' views and experiences are considered
- To work with MA staff on particular projects to deliver ongoing learning and development for magistrates beyond core training provided by the Judicial College, with members taking responsibility for the delivery of specific pieces of work and ensuring that they are completed on time and to a high standard.
- To respond to requests to the MA for input or comment on issues or proposals that fall within the TLDC remit, representing the direct voice of the magistracy and subject-matter expertise on training by providing critical reads of stakeholders' materials, sitting on stakeholder committees or working groups, facilitating member evaluation to the Judicial College or responding to relevant consultations.
- To work to develop Magistrates in the Community – including the development of high quality resources and the extension of its reach within schools and the wider community.

Subject areas

The following list of areas of business is not exhaustive, but gives an insight into the regular work of the TC:

Core issues	
Appraisals	Expertise in training and development
Branch training	Good practice
Continuing professional development	Judicial College
Delivery of training	Management of training
E-learning	Training, Approvals, Authorisations and Appraisals Committee
Magistrates in the Community	

Crossover issues

The TC is the lead committee on certain cross-over issues where they work with other MA Committees or the Policy Board where necessary. These issues include:

- Recruitment

The TC also contributes as necessary to work on other ‘crossover’ issues that affect the work of more than one committee.

Youth Court Committee – Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Youth Court Committee (YCC) is responsible for all MA policy activity relating to the workings of and decision-making in the youth court.

Key tasks

- To set the priorities for the work of the committee on an annual basis, taking into account the MA’s broader policy priorities
- To agree and deliver a workplan on these priorities, working within available resources
- To contribute to the development of responses to consultations or inquiries where they fall within the YCC’s remit
- To contribute to the development of MA responses to requests for input or comment on issues or proposals that fall within the YCC’s remit
- To provide feedback on work carried out by the YCC, ensuring that it is fit for purpose

Subject areas

The following list of areas of business is not exhaustive, but gives an insight into the regular work of the YCC:

Breach of CBO or KCPO	Monitoring community sentences	Youths appearing in video court
Children accused of very serious offences	Referral orders	Youth conditional cautions
Communication in court	Reform agenda	Youth court sittings
Domestic Abuse	Secure estate for children and young people	Youth crime and anti-social behaviour
Drugs	Sentencing guidelines for children and young people	Youth Justice Board
Effective sentencing	Sexual offences	Youth Offending Teams
Engagement	Specialisation	Youth Rehabilitation Orders
Looked after children	Victim surcharge	Youths jointly charged with an adult
Modern Slavery	Welfare	

Crossover issues

The YCC is the lead committee on a number of cross-over issues where they work with other MA Committees or the Policy Board where necessary. These issues include:

- Modern Slavery
- Disproportionality for BAME / the Lammy Review

The YCC also contributes as necessary to work on other 'crossover' issues that affect the work of more than one committee.