

MA POLICY COMMITTEES VACANCIES

Recruitment pack

Closing date:
11 August 2024



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE	3
ABOUT THE VACANCIES	5
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	8
ROLE DESCRIPTION	10
EQUALITY STATEMENT	10
HOW TO APPLY	11

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Dear candidate

Thank you for your interest in joining one of the Magistrates' Association's (MA) five policy committees: adult court, diversity and inclusion, family court, youth court, and training, learning and development.

Our committees are made up of sitting magistrates who steer policy research, development, and implementation in their specialist areas. They work in partnership with the MA staff team to influence policy makers on behalf of our members. The committees are a vital part of the MA's policy making structure – ensuring that our contributions to justice policy are grounded in the experiences of magistrates across the country.

Taking part in the committees is also a rewarding experience for those members who do so, with the opportunity to learn more about issues, meet others with specialist knowledge, and shape national MA policy development through recommendations to our own policy board.

Committee vacancies

We have up to:

- four vacancies on our adult court committee
- four vacancies on our family court committee
- four vacancies on our training, learning and development committee

Our diversity and inclusion committee is newly formed, and all positions are now filled; and our youth court committee recruited a large number of new committee members last year.





The committees are a vital part of the MA's policy making structure – but they are also a rewarding experience for those members who sit on them.

I hope this recruitment pack provides all the information you need to complete your application.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Kind regards

Tom Franklin
Chief Executive

ABOUT THE VACANCIES

We are the only independent body representing the voice of magistrates. We work with our members to ensure their views are used to influence law, policy, and practice.

The MA works to influence key decision-makers in parliament and government to help guide policy and promote the sound administration of the law. We do this by:

- providing parliamentary briefings to MPs and peers on topics relevant to the magistracy and work of magistrates
- giving evidence to the government, Sentencing Council, select committees, inspectorates, and independent inquiries
- conducting our own in-house research to provide robust evidence for our policy positions
- representing our members' interests at meetings with and working groups for key justice system stakeholders.

You can view a selection of our research, policy positions, and consultation responses in our [publications section](#) on our website.

We are recruiting to our:

1. Adult court committee

This committee is responsible for all MA policy activity on the workings of and decision-making in the adult court.

In the last year, the Committee worked in partnership with HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and the Sentencing Council to understand the specific offences new to magistrates relating to extended sentencing powers. It is currently working to understand the viability of unpaid work in lieu of fines for low-income defendants, and whether small amounts of Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR) days could be issued in place of a conditional caution. The committee is also seeking to ensure consistency in speed awareness courses and investigating the quality and availability of Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes nationwide.



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There is plenty for the adult court committee to work on including the move to the single justice area, new single justice procedures and of course consultations on new and revised sentencing guidelines. Input from those with broad experience is always welcome.

Val Castell, chair of the adult court committee

2. Family court committee

This committee is responsible for all MA policy on the workings of and decision-making in the family court.

The committee has recently responded to consultations of domestic abuse, mandatory mediation and improving the update of Mediation Information and Assessment Meetings. We feed into the Family Magistrates Oversight Group, which is made up of HMCTS staff and senior judiciary and implements changes such as four additional sitting days for family magistrates to account for time taken reading bundles. In the coming year, we want to continue our work with the Family Solutions Group to make meaningful changes to adversarial language used in the family court and ensure that there are adequate magistrates and family legal advisers across England and Wales.



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It's a great time to join the MA's family court committee, together we can inform decision makers and improve outcomes for all.

Tracy Sortwell, chair of the family court committee

3. Training, learning and development committee

This committee is responsible for all MA activity around the training and development of, and by, magistrates.

Over the last year, we have worked in partnership with the Judicial College to produce a bite-sized learning modules and inputted on domestic abuse and core family magistrate training. We are the link between MA members and the implementation of the magistrates' training review and have recently taken Magistrates in the Community into our remit.



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Interested in any aspect of magistrates' training and development? The MA's training, learning and development committee works both to improve training and to ensure our voice is heard at appropriate levels.

Danny Brennan, chair of the training, learning and development committee

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How much time is involved?

A: Committee members typically spend about three hours a month on committee duties. This is comprised of:

- preparing for and attending three committee meetings per year
- providing ad hoc responses to requests for input from the committee chair or policy and research officer
- representing the MA on external bodies as required
- collaborating in working groups with other committee members and MA staff on specific pieces of policy work.

Q: When are committee members appointed and how long for?

A: Successful applicants will be appointed by the MA's policy board at the end of September 2024 and will take up post from after our annual general meeting on 23 November 2024 for a term of up to three years. Committee members coming to the end of their first term can re-apply for one further term of three years, so can sit for a maximum of six years.

Q: How often and when do committees meet, and do they sit in person or remotely?

A: Committees usually meet three times a year, with the dates set for the year in advance. Meetings usually last for two hours, and are held during the day. They are mostly via Microsoft Teams, though we try to hold the first meeting after the AGM in person for those who are able to do so (but with online facilities for those who cannot).

Q: Where do the policy committees sit within the MA's overall mission and structure?

Policy committees are standing committees of the Board of Trustees, which agrees their terms of reference. As well as appointed members, the national chair and deputy chairs are ex officio members of all the policy committees.

The chairs of each of the policy committees, together with the national chair and deputy chairs, meet as the MA's policy board – co-ordinating policy across the MA and reporting into the board of trustees.

As you can see, our policy committees are instrumental in supporting our [mission](#) and are an integral part of our [structure](#).

Q: I have some questions about a particular committee; who should I contact?

A: You can contact the following people:

- Janet Lallysmith – training, learning and development committee: janet.lallysmith@magistrates-association.org.uk
- Adam Chaddock – family court committee: helen.richardson@magistrates-association.org.uk
- Samira Ali – adult court committee: samira.ali@magistrates-association.org.uk

Q: How do I apply?

A: Please complete the [application form](#) with reference to the role description (see next section). Send your completed application form to policy@magistrates-association.org.uk by 11 August 2024.

Q: Can I apply for more than one vacancy?

A: Yes. Please indicate on the application form which committee(s) you are applying to join. In the supporting statement on the application form, make sure you address the needs of each of the committees you are applying for. It is likely that you will only be appointed to one committee.



I wish I had been more involved with the MA earlier because I have found it so worthwhile. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being more closely involved with the MA as a member of the family court committee. I have learned a great deal and it has been a pleasure to be connected with so many people who are passionate about the family court system and want to contribute so positively to the work of the MA. I am very grateful for the opportunity I have had.

Louise Fleet JP, former member of the family court committee

ROLE DESCRIPTION

1. Main purpose of the role

To contribute to the committee's work in shaping policy research, development, and implementation.

2. Position in the organisation

Works with the committee chair and deputy chair, other committee members, MA policy and research officer and other MA staff.

3. Main duties

- to prepare for and attend three committee meetings per year
- to respond to ad hoc requests for input from the committee chair or policy and research officer in a timely manner
- to represent the MA on external bodies as required and agreed
- to collaborate with other committee members and MA staff on specific pieces of policy work as agreed
- to collaborate with external stakeholders on specific pieces of policy work as agreed
- to inform the chair if you are unable to, or anticipating being unable to, undertake committee duties for a period of time
- to stay up to date with changes and developments in the magistracy and wider judicial system as relevant to the committee's specialism
- to be able to communicate, effectively, diplomatically, and persuasively with a wide range of people
- to establish personal credibility with a range of stakeholders.

EQUALITY STATEMENT

The MA is committed to encouraging equality and diversity at all levels of our organisation and eliminating discrimination. The aim is for our membership and those who volunteer for positions in our branches and on our committees, as well as our workforce, to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each person to feel respected and able to give their best. Because we are focusing on

becoming an organisation that more closely reflects the society we live in, we especially welcome applications from underrepresented groups.

HOW TO APPLY

Please forward the following to policy@magistrates-association.org.uk by **Sunday 11 August 2024**:

- Completed application form

If you have questions about the role or the committees, please contact the MA's policy team at policy@magistrates-association.org.uk.

Recruitment timetable

Closing date	11 August
Shortlisted candidates contacted for informal conversation	August-September
Policy board meets to make decisions	30 September
Candidates contacted	October
New committee in place	End of November
First meeting of committee	December

