



PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE

Submission towards the Development of the Judicial Appointments Commission's Diversity Statement

March 2026

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre

Pavee Point has been working to challenge racism and promote Traveller and Roma inclusion in Ireland since 1985. The organisation works from a community development perspective and promotes the realisation of human rights and equality for Travellers and Roma in Ireland. The partnership organisation works to address the needs of Travellers and Roma as minority ethnic groups experiencing exclusion, marginalisation and racism. The central aim of Pavee Point is to contribute to the improvement in the quality of life and living circumstances of Irish Travellers and Roma.

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Introduction

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Judicial Appointments Commission's Diversity Statement, and the steps being taken towards the adoption of proactive and positive measures to ensure the judiciary is more representative of the society it serves.

This submission aims to support the development of a Diversity Statement that is fully aligned with the Commission's statutory obligations, including the duty under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights in the performance of its functions. We set out key recommendations for the Commission to incorporate into its Diversity Statement and its implementation.

Context to Traveller and Roma Specific Considerations in the Diversity Statement and its Implementation

We are concerned about the lack of diversity in the judicial office, judiciary and candidates put forward for selection, particularly in terms of ethnicity, gender and other equality grounds. Traveller and Roma communities experience persistent and well-documented inequalities across key areas, including in education, employment, health, and access to justice. These arise from structural discrimination, racism, socio-economic disadvantage and the legacy of exclusion. Traveller and Roma women in particular experience intersectional discrimination and gendered forms of racism which further compound the outcomes and inequalities they face.

Employment rates and participation in higher education among the communities are low. Unemployment stands at 61% for Irish Travellers and 16% for Roma, compared to 7% among the White Irish population,¹ and only 2.8% of Travellers hold a third-level qualification.² Traveller and Roma communities also report low levels of confidence in the administration of justice. This acts as a barrier to engaging in education and employment pathways linked to the justice system, and will discourage many from self-identifying and disclosing their ethnicity.

The number of Travellers or Roma working in the legal sector is unknown due to the absence of ethnicity data, as well as individuals' reluctance to disclose their identity due to fear of prejudice, discrimination, or racism in the workplace. To our knowledge, there is a very small number of members of the Traveller community practising as solicitors, and there is no known representation of Traveller or Roma individuals within the judiciary or judicial office.

The absence of Traveller and Roma representation risks undermining confidence in, and access to, the justice system for the communities. In this context, it is essential that the Diversity Statement explicitly recognises Traveller, Roma and other marginalised communities and includes targeted, measurable actions to address barriers to participation and progression. This aligns with international and national policy commitments, including the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy, which emphasises the need to address structural inequalities and promote inclusion across public institutions.

¹ Central Statistics Office, [Census of Population 2022 – Profile 5: Diversity, Migration, Ethnicity, Irish Travellers and Religion, Dublin: CSO, 2023, Table "Ethnic Group/Background", including Roma category.](#)

² Central Statistics Office, [Census of Population 2022 – Profile 5: Diversity, Migration, Ethnicity, Irish Travellers and Religion, Dublin: CSO, 2023, Table "Ethnic Group/Background", including Roma category.](#)

1. Embedding Human Rights Principles in the Diversity Statement

The Diversity Statement should be underpinned by clear commitments to equality, non-discrimination, anti-racism, transparency, participation and accountability, and should explicitly acknowledge the structural and systemic barriers experienced by minority ethnic groups, including Traveller and Roma communities, in accessing and progressing within the legal profession and judiciary.

Recommendation: Embed human rights principles in the Diversity Statement, and explicitly address structural barriers faced by Traveller, Roma and other marginalised communities.

2. The Concept of Diversity

‘Diversity’ should reflect the full range of grounds protected under international and national human rights and equality legislation. This includes ethnicity - with explicit recognition of Irish Travellers and Roma - gender, socio-economic background, disability, age, and other relevant characteristics. It should also recognise intersectionality and structural discrimination and inequality, and be grounded in the Commission’s obligations under the Public Sector Duty.

Recommendation: Define diversity to include all protected grounds—explicitly recognising Irish Travellers and Roma—while also including intersectionality and structural inequality.

3. Monitoring Representation and Informing Targeted Actions

To monitor representation and inform targeted actions, the Commission should collect equality data, including ethnicity data, using a standardised ethnic identifier. Ethnic data collection must be voluntary, self-identified, and implemented within a human rights framework.

Recommendations:

- Collect equality data, including ethnicity, using a standardised, voluntary, and self-identified approach within a human rights framework to monitor representation and inform targeted action.
- Conduct regular equality reviews and impact assessments of its processes.
- Publish annual progress reports on diversity in applications and appointments.

4. Setting Clear Commitments, Targets and Positive Action Measures

In order to give practical effect to its equality obligations, the Commission should adopt positive action measures to increase the diversity and participation of individuals from communities that are currently underrepresented in judicial office and appointments. This can be done by identifying underrepresented groups and setting specific targets to increase their access, participation and progression.

Positive action measures should also be considered to increase the diversity of the Commission’s own membership. This could include ensuring representation of lay members, including individuals

with experience of, or links to, marginalised communities. Where such appointments are made, appropriate support should be provided to enable lay members' full and effective participation in the work of the Commission.

Recommendations:

- Use positive action measures to encourage applications and participation from underrepresented groups, including:
 - Undertaking targeted outreach and encouragement with representative organisations
 - Adjusting application and selection criteria around eligibility and selection processes
 - Providing clear and accessible guidance and supports for applicants
 - Providing ongoing supports to enable meaningful participation based on identified needs
- Include specific, measurable targets to increase representation from underrepresented groups, including Traveller, Roma and other minority ethnic communities
- Increase awareness of judicial careers and application processes among underrepresented groups

5. Review and Reform Processes and Criteria from an Equality and Anti-racist Lens

The Diversity Statement should include a clear focus on anti-racism, including anti-Traveller and anti-Roma racism, alongside measures to promote representation and anti-racist practices within the judicial office and appointments processes. Reviewing requirements, criteria and practices that may indirectly disadvantage certain groups should be a specific commitment in this regard.

Recommendations:

- Audit criteria and procedures to identify indirect discrimination or barriers for marginalised communities
- Conduct regular equality reviews and impact assessments of the Commission's processes
- Provide mandatory anti-racism training, inclusive of anti-Traveller and Roma racism, for all Commission members, selection panels and the judiciary