

Email to Jenny Rathbone from Mark Beattie JP, the National Chair of the Magistrates' Association — 05/06/25

Dear Jenny,

I'm pleased to share our new report, *Magistrates Matter: A plan to ensure magistrates are valued, appreciated and recognised*, published today by the Magistrates' Association.

Magistrates are the backbone of our justice system, dealing with over 90 per cent of criminal cases in England and Wales. They are also key to efforts to reduce the backlog of cases in the crown courts. Yet our research shows that many magistrates feel unsupported and undervalued – raising serious concerns about morale, retention and long-term sustainability.

The report draws on national survey data, member testimony, and best practice in volunteer management. It sets out seven practical, evidence-based recommendations to improve how magistrates are recognised and supported throughout their journey, from application to retirement.

Key recommendations include:

- A national strategy for recruitment and retention
- Better tracking of magistrates' volunteering hours to inform policy and planning
- A national Magistrates' Volunteer Charter to clarify mutual expectations
- An annual Magistrates' Attitude Survey to capture magistrates' experiences
- A 10-year long service medal to recognise sustained commitment
- Greater consistency in recognition across England and Wales
- Clearer expense processes and better support for those with caring responsibilities

We hope this report will support ongoing work across the justice system to ensure magistrates feel respected, appreciated and equipped to serve their communities.

You can read the full report [here](#).

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the recommendations further, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

With best wishes

Mark Beattie JP
National Chair