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Dr Martin Read  
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*Dear Dr. Read,*

Thank you for inviting me to an evidence session on the SSRB's major review of the judicial salary structure.

I will be able to provide an update on the evidence published by the JAC in February, which covered all competitions completed as of the end of December 2017. While the detail of live competitions will be provided in confidence, the current trends remain as indicated in that evidence. In respect of salaried roles:

- The number of vacancies requested for salaried roles has steadily increased over the last 18 months, and this looks set to continue over 2018/19
- There are no discernible issues with the overall numbers of candidates applying for such roles, although this has fluctuated from year to year
- Overall the number of candidates assessed as outstanding or strong for salaried roles shows no obvious general trend since 2012, and the JAC has continued to receive similar numbers of such applications
- However, the pool of strong candidates does not appear to be elastic to the number of vacancies requested, and there have been increasing instances of shortfalls between numbers of candidates selected as being suitable for appointment and vacancy requests in key salaried roles including the High Court, Circuit Judge, and for the first time in recent years for District Judge
- The percentage of candidates assessed as outstanding or strong compared to the number of selections in key salaried roles has been decreasing overall since 2012–13, although there have been some increases. In High Court exercises during this period, only candidates assessed as outstanding or strong were recommended for appointment.

In respect of fee-paid roles, the percentage of candidates assessed as outstanding or strong compared to the number of selections has been increasing over the same period. However, the

number of vacancies requested for such posts has also increased significantly over the last 18 months, and this looks set to continue over 2018-19. This may help to replenish the pipeline for salaried posts, although there are indications that fee-paid positions combined with continued professional practice are becoming an increasingly more attractive career path than the salaried judiciary.

Furthermore, while the number of strong candidates for fee-paid posts is currently high, it is not clear whether it will prove elastic to the current (record) levels of recruitment over a sustained period. This underlines the importance of initiatives such as the Pre-application Judicial Education (PAJE) programme announced this week under the auspices of the Judicial Diversity Forum, which I chair. The programme will be aimed at lawyers considering applying for their first judicial role, helping prospective candidates to understand more about judicial skills and decide if they are ready to apply, thereby achieving two objectives: increasing the number of applicants that can demonstrate suitability for judicial office; and increasing the diversity of successful applicants by providing targeted support to under-represented groups.

I am copying this letter to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals.

Yours Sincerely

Harriet

