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Dear Mr Mizra Ahmed,

HIGH COURT SELECTION EXERCISE 2008

The Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) was established in April 2006 to select judicial office holders on merit, and to encourage diversity in the range of persons available for selection. We do this independently of government through fair and open competition.

The JAC is about to launch a selection exercise for appointments to the High Court. This will be the second High Court exercise run under JAC processes.

I should be grateful if you would bring the new exercise to the attention of your members. The selection exercise is for Queen's Bench and Chancery Division appointments to be filled between October 2008 and about October 2009. We are not currently selecting for the Family Division since a sufficient number of individuals were identified in the last exercise for posts likely to arise between now and the expected end of the new exercise.

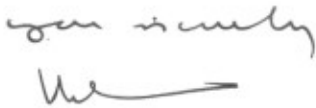
The last exercise was conducted, at the request of Her Majesty's Courts Service, under section 94 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. This has been quite a frequent form of request, and meant that the JAC draws up a list of those suitable for selection to fill vacancies as and when they arise.

The consequence of this approach is that some of those selected by the JAC for inclusion on that list may not be appointed to the High Court before the list is closed, since the number of actual vacancies may not meet the number of predicted vacancies

during the currency of the list. This lack of certainty can be a real disincentive to potential applicants. Because of that, the JAC has been active in challenging the need for new exercises that lead to such lists. I am pleased that the 21 successful candidates from this new selection exercise will be given a guarantee of an offer of appointment within an approximate timetable – subject to the outcome of medical checks.

This will give candidates the certainty that the earlier selection approach was unable to offer, reduce the potential blight on professional careers, and avoid frustrated expectations. I hope that the removal of this significant disincentive will help to increase the number and widen the range of applicants. I am pleased that effective partnership working between the judiciary, MoJ and the JAC has led to such a welcome outcome.

Copies of the Information Pack and Application Form will be available to download from the JAC website at <http://judicialappointments.gov.uk> soon. Hard copies will, of course, be available on request.



Baroness Usha Prashar