



GENERAL REGULATORY CHAMBER FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL

GRC Guidance Note 1

FORM OF DECISIONS AND NEUTRAL CITATION NUMBERS on or after 18 January 2010

1. The Senior President of Tribunals issued a Practice Statement on 31 October 2008 on the *Form of Decisions and Neutral Citations* (the PS). This Guidance Note explains how the PS is being implemented in the GRC.

Form of Decisions

2. The GRC wishes to adopt as far as possible a similar and consistent format for the decisions of all its jurisdictions in order to make it easier for users. This follows from the direction given in the PS. The decision template format in Annex A to this Guidance Note will be adopted as far as possible by Judges in GRC jurisdictions in the First-tier Tribunal.
3. The format of the decision is reasonably self explanatory and will be familiar to Judges.
4. There are two requirements with which Judges may not be familiar. Firstly the inclusion of the 'subject matter' in the decision is to enable users to identify quickly the area(s) of law considered in the decision.
5. In order to identify the subject matter Principal Judges of jurisdictions may wish to adopt a taxonomy for their jurisdictions so that a consistent approach is taken by Judges to the identification of the subject matter of decisions. An example of a taxonomy at two levels can be found on the decision page of the Information Rights' web site at www.informationtribunal.gov.uk.)
6. The second requirement is to set out the cases cited in the decision which is again to help users.

7. Although a decision may be sent to the parties electronically or by post without a judge's signature, an original copy should be signed by the Judge so that it can be kept by Tribunals Service.
8. Judges should give consideration as to whether to anonymise references to private citizens in decisions so as to comply with any statutory requirements and to respect their privacy where there is a good reason for doing so.

Neutral Citation

9. The PS prescribes that First-tier Tribunal (FTT) requests for a Neutral Citation Number (NCN) for a decision should be made to the GRC Chamber President. Then, where the Chamber President considers it appropriate, the decision will be referred to the Upper Tribunal (UT) and a unique number will be issued by the UT Office.
10. The FTT GRC Form 1 should be used for this purpose which is contained in Annex B to this Guidance Note.
11. Section 1 of Form 1 should be completed by the Principal Judge of the applicable jurisdiction. The Chamber President will seek a NCN where the decision is expected to be cited in the future or there is some other important reason for issuing a NCN.
12. Where a party or member of the public has requested a NCN be given to the decision they should if necessary be asked to explain why the case is expected to be cited or there is some other important reason for issuing a NCN.
13. The Principal Judge should categorise the decision using if available any developed taxonomy by the use of keywords under the two heads given, for example "Jurisdiction - Data Protection" and "Subject - Data Subject Access Rights".
14. Then the FTT GRC Form 1 with section 1 completed should be emailed to the Chamber President for approval together with a copy of the decision.
15. The Chamber President will then submit the form to the UT for the allocation of a NCN which he will send to the Principal Judge on receipt.
16. The Principal Judge may wish to use the NCN together with the FTT file number or in place of it for future reference to the decision. It should where possible be displayed with the decision on the jurisdiction's web pages. It is likely that once a decision has a NCN that the UT and external reporters will only use the NCN.

John Angel
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First-tier Tribunal
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