



19 May 2008

No:

Countdown to Two Tier Tribunal System Launched

A radical shake-up of the tribunals system was unveiled by the Government today.

Individual tribunal jurisdictions doing similar work will be brought together into a radically simplified two tier tribunals system - consisting of a First Tier and Upper Tribunal that goes live on 3 November 2008.

This new system, headed by Lord Justice Carnwarth as Senior President, will speed up justice, make the process easier for the public to understand and bring together the considerable expertise that exists in each tribunal jurisdiction.

Justice Minister Bridget Prentice said:

“Bringing individual tribunals into a single integrated system is at the heart of the most radical change to the tribunal system in 50 years.

“This truly modern and unified service will help people to find their way around the system and get solutions to their issues more quickly and efficiently.

“Tribunals often form the public’s only experience of the legal process and it vital that experience is effective and serves their needs. These reforms will not come at the expense of continuity, specialisation or service to users.”

Following a consultation on implementing the Tribunals Courts and Enforcement (TCE) Act proposals to create five First Tier Tribunal Chambers and three Upper Tribunal Chambers will be taken forward. Two Chambers from the First Tier, the Social Entitlement Chamber and the Health Education & Social Care Chamber will commence on 3 November 2008.

The Employment Tribunal and the Employment Appeal Tribunal will be separate from the First Tier and Upper Tribunal, although there will be close links between them. The Government is currently considering bringing the Asylum

and Immigration Tribunal into the unified tribunals structure and is likely to consult on this shortly.

The Upper Tribunal will be a Superior Court of Record that can deal with onward appeals and judicial reviews.

The Tribunals Service, an executive agency within the Ministry of Justice will continue to provide an integrated administration of the new tribunal system. Implementing the TCE Act is an integral part of the Tribunals Service's Transforming Tribunals Programme, which includes the introduction, later this year, of multi-jurisdictional hearing centres in major towns and cities created to provide a range of services to tribunal users.

Notes to Editors

1. The Government response to the consultation on the implementation of the TCE Act is available at: www.justice.gsi.gov.uk
2. The Chambers in the First Tier are:
 - Social Entitlement;
 - General Regulatory;
 - Health, Education and Social Care;
 - Taxation; and
 - Land, Property and Housing.
3. The three Upper Tribunal Chambers are:
 - Administrative Appeals;
 - Lands; and
 - Finance and Tax.
4. The TCE Act created a 'Tribunals Procedure Committee' that will be established on 19 May 2008 to make and amend rules governing the practice and procedure in the First-tier Tribunal and Upper Tribunal. The Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice, the Lord President and the Senior President of Tribunals have appointed the following members:
 - The Honourable Mr. Justice Elias - President - Employment Appeal Tribunal
 - Mark Rowland - Commissioner - Office of the Social Security and Child Support Commissioners
 - Nicholas Warren - Regional Chairman - Social Security and Child Support Appeals Tribunal
 - Lesley Clare - Adjudicator - Criminal Injuries and Compensation Appeals Panel
 - The Right Honourable Lord Newton of Braintree - Chairman - Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council
 - Carolyn Kirby - The Law Society
 - Philip Brook Smith - Bar Pro Bono Unit
 - Michael James Reed - Free Representation Unit

- Douglas May - Senior Commissioner - Office of Social Security & Child Support Commissioners
5. The purpose of the Tribunals Service is to:
- provide a responsive and efficient tribunals administration;
 - contribute to the improvement of the quality of decision-making across government;
 - reform the tribunals justice system for the benefit of its customers and the wider public; and
 - promote and protect the independence of the judiciary.
6. For more details see or contact Ministry of Justice Press Office on 020 7210 8822 or Tribunals Service Press Office on 020 7340 6510.

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