



06/08

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TRIBUNALS SERVICE CONTINUES TO DELIVER IMPROVED ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Tribunals Service is delivering on its promise to improve access to justice for users, its annual report reveals today.

The number of tribunal applications received totalled 613,000 for 2007-08, exceeding the number forecast by 15%. For the Tribunals Service as a whole Key Performance Indication (KPI) 1 was met with 75% of applications dealt within target time.

Over 90% of the Tribunals Service caseload is handled within the three largest jurisdictions – Social Security and Child Support Appeals (SSCSA), the Employment Tribunal (ET) and the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT).

- SSCSA performed strongly with 87% of hearings taking place within 14 weeks of receipt. The number of applications received were 229,123 and the number disposed of 256,565.
- The number of AIT applications received were 167,500 and the number disposed of 161,538.
- The number of ET applications received were 189,300, 42% higher than expected due to the number of multiple claims and the number disposed of 86,237.
- The smaller tribunals performed well overall, with many exceeding their targets.

Jeanne Spinks, Acting Chief Executive of the Tribunals Service, said:

“We are committed to providing the highest standard of service to the people who use our services. Our current plans for reforming the overall structure of tribunals’ justice are well advanced. We have improved performance significantly and reorganised our management teams to deliver a more unified service.

“I would like to thank Tribunals Service staff and our judicial colleagues, who work so well in partnership together to ensure that justice is administered in an accessible, speedy and inexpensive way.”

The Tribunals Service retained the Charter Mark accreditation in the following tribunals: Asylum and Immigration, Employment, Employment Appeals, The Commissioners’ Office, Pensions Appeal, Lands, Transport, Adjudicator to the Lands Registry, Immigration Services, Finance and Tax. A customer satisfaction performance target (KPI 2) of 72% is being introduced for 2008-9 to ensure that the quality of service customers receive continues to improve.

The Tribunals, Courts, and Enforcement Act 2007 received Royal Assent earlier last year enabling the Tribunals Service to move most of its jurisdictions to a new two-tier structure.

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

The creation of the First-tier and Upper Tribunal will improve service delivery and bring together the considerable expertise that exists in each tribunal jurisdiction. Bringing most tribunals together and harmonising their procedures will help people to find their way around the system and get solutions to their issues more quickly and efficiently.

Notes to Editors

1. Copies of the Tribunals Service Annual Report and Accounts 2007-08 are available from: <http://www.tribunals.gov.uk/publications.htm>
2. The Government response to the consultation on the implementation of the TCE Act is available at: <http://www.tribunals.gov.uk/publications.htm>
3. The Tribunals Service is an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice, formed in April 2006 to provide independent administrative support to central government tribunals and organisations. The Tribunals Service now supports 29 tribunals. For more details visit: www.tribunals.gov.uk
4. 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.
5. For further details contact Paula Ogun, TS Senior Press Officer, on 020 3334 6510 or email pressoffice@tribunals.gsi.gov.uk.