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## Extra resources announced for employment tribunals

Nearly 350 new panel members are to be appointed to sit on Employment Tribunals across Great Britain following a major recruitment drive by the Tribunals Service.

The Lord Chancellor has approved appointments for 341 new panel members – 293 in England and Wales and 48 in Scotland - who will provide the workplace experience of disciplinary issues and dispute resolution upon which the Tribunal depends. Appointments are being made to all regions in England and Wales, and to offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen in Scotland.

Announcing the appointments, Justice Minister Bridget Prentice said:

“Employment Tribunals are a cornerstone of the civil justice system, and these new members will play a vital role in helping deliver justice for employers and employees alike. They have been chosen because they demonstrated the qualities that have underpinned the employment tribunal system since its creation: a passion for justice and fair play, a commitment to public service, and the ability to leave their preconceptions at the door.”

Kevin Sadler, Chief Executive of the Tribunals Service said:

“Employment Tribunals have been under pressure in the last year, as we would expect in more difficult economic conditions. But the Tribunals Service is coping well with the higher workload and we have significantly increased the number of cases of which we have successfully disposed.

“We’re also providing more resources. Thirty-five employment judges were recruited last year, the new panel members will increase our capacity and further fee paid judges are being recruited. These new members will help to ensure each case is fair and unbiased by providing added insight into employee/employer relations, helping the Tribunal to come to its decision.”

These appointments follow a large recruitment campaign during which nearly 4000 applications were received - far more than in any judicial recruitment campaign in recent years and more than the last Employment Tribunal Members recruitment exercise in 2005. Most applications were made online, through a web-enabled application process - a first for judicial recruitment in the United Kingdom.

Most employment disputes are heard by a panel that comprises an employment judge and two members, one each with 'employer' and 'employee' experience. Although when they sit on the panel they are impartial, this combination means that every panel has a balance of experience of dealing with workplace disputes gained on both sides of the fence.

Panel members are required to have experience of workplace issues and to have dealt with concerns ranging from grievances and disciplinary matters through to appeal proceedings and dismissals. They are also required to have an understanding of employment and discrimination law, combined with knowledge of how organisations manage employment relationships. Sensitivity to the issues affecting a diverse workforce is essential, as is exposure to the application of fair treatment principles to a range of individuals.

## **Ends**

### **Note to editors**

Since April 2006, the administration of the Employment Tribunals has been provided by the Tribunals Service, which is an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Justice. It was created to establish a unified administration for the tribunals system, maintain their independence and ensure the public can exercise their legal rights efficiently and effectively.

Many Tribunals deal with disputes about government decisions. Employment Tribunals, by contrast, focus on party versus party disputes, namely employer and employee. They hear claims about employment matters including unfair dismissal, redundancy payments and discrimination, and claims relating to wages and other payments.

Most judicial recruitment campaigns are run by the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC). This campaign was unusual in that it was administered by the Tribunals Service, whilst following the policies of the JAC in encouraging diversity in the field of applicants with appointment on merit.

The web-enabled on-line application process was developed and managed on behalf of the Tribunals Service by a third party provider, the Bernard Hodes Group.

For further information and to find out more about the Tribunals Service visit:  
[www.tribunals.gov.uk](http://www.tribunals.gov.uk).

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