



JUSTICE to host successor to the Administrative Justice Forum

JUSTICE has agreed to host the successor body to the Administrative Justice Forum. It will be renamed the Administrative Justice Council (AJC) and will continue to advise government departments on administrative justice issues. Lord Justice Ernest Ryder, Senior President of Tribunals, has agreed to be the AJC's chair.

The scale of Administrative Justice is vast with tens of millions of decisions made by public service bodies every year leading to hundreds of thousands of complaints and tribunal appeals. Those affected by the Administrative Justice System include some of most vulnerable in society: asylum seekers, immigrants, those in social housing and/or claiming benefits, prisoners, pensioners, victims of police misconduct and those with disabilities or special educational needs.

The Council will be the only body with oversight of the whole of the administrative justice landscape in the UK. It will advise government, including the devolved governments, and the judiciary on how to improve the administrative justice system. This will include examining issues such as the apparent extent of poor government decision making: in 2016, appeals before the relevant tribunals were successful in 43 per cent of immigration and asylum cases, 61 per cent of appeals in social security and child support cases and 88 per cent in special educational needs and disability cases.

JUSTICE will provide the AJC with an independent, non-partisan and dedicated secretariat function. JUSTICE will also act as a liaison between ministers and civil servants and the AJC. Through pro bono partnerships, one or more law firms will provide venues for AJC meetings and ad-hoc research capacity; JUSTICE will also seek other pro-bono and charitable sources to support the work of the Council.

The AJC will assume and build upon the role of the Administrative Justice Forum. It will have the following aims:

- to keep the operation of the administrative justice system under review;
- to consider how to make the administrative justice system more accessible, fair and efficient;
- to advise the Lord Chancellor, relevant ministers in the devolved administrations and the judiciary on the development of the administrative justice system;
- to provide a forum for the exchange of information between Government, the judiciary, and those working with users of the administrative justice system; and
- to identify areas of the administrative justice system that would benefit from research.

The AJC's purpose will be to help make the administrative justice system increasingly accessible, fair and effective by:

- playing a pivotal role in the development of coherent principles and good practice;
- promoting understanding, learning and continuous improvement; and
- ensuring that the needs of users are central

Membership of the AJAC will include senior representatives drawn from:

- members of the tribunal and administrative court judiciary;
- civil servants concerned with administrative justice;
- public service Ombudsmen and other public sector complaint handling bodies;
- legal professional bodies;

- non-governmental organisations or groups representing the public or ‘users’ of administrative justice; and
- academics and other experts in the field of administrative justice, including those from and working with devolved administrations.

The Council will be advised on research issues by an academic panel consisting of the leading academics in the field of administrative justice.

Notes for editors

1. JUSTICE is an all-party law reform and human rights organisation working to strengthen the justice system – administrative, civil and criminal – in the United Kingdom. JUSTICE’s work on administrative justice dates back as far as 1961 when it proposed the UK’s first Ombudsman. This was followed by the seminal publication in 1988 of the joint JUSTICE / All Souls Committee report *Administrative Justice – Some Necessary Reforms*. JUSTICE continues to be at the forefront of the modernisation and reform of the justice system publishing reports on justice reform which continue to shape the £1 billion modernisation programme of courts and tribunals. For more information about JUSTICE visit www.justice.org.uk.
2. Please direct all queries to Jean-Benoit Louveaux, Head of Administrative Justice at JUSTICE on ajc@justice.org.uk or 020 7762 6434