

Administrative Justice Council

Terms of Reference

Aims

The Administrative Justice Council ('the Council') 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, other relevant ministers, and the judiciary on the development of the administrative justice system;
- to share learning and areas of good practice across the UK;
- to provide a forum for the exchange of information between Government, the judiciary, ombudsman, academics and those working with users of the administrative justice system;
- to identify areas of the administrative justice system that would benefit from research; and
- to make practical proposals for reform.

Purpose

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

- playing a pivotal role in the development and sharing of good practice;
- promoting understanding, learning and continuous improvement; and
- ensuring that the needs of users are central to the operation and ongoing reform of the system.

Membership

The Council will be chaired by the Senior President of Tribunals¹, currently the Right Honourable Sir Keith Lindblom.

Membership of the Council will include senior representatives drawn from:

- members of the tribunal and administrative court judiciary;
- civil servants concerned with administrative justice;
- public service ombudsman 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.

¹ In circumstances where this is not possible, a suitable alternative will be found.

Membership of the Council will be subject to the approval of the Chair and selected from the above categories, in addition to any other persons that the Chair or Steering Group considers would most helpfully enhance and inform the work of the Council; the latter may be invited to participate on an ad-hoc, temporary or permanent basis and/or as observers only.

Members will be limited to serving a maximum length of two terms of three years each. Overall attendance will be taken into account when considering re-appointment to the second term.

A 'steering group' of core members selected by the Chair or nominated by the Council will oversee and guide the work of the Council.

It will be also advised by a panel of academics.

The Chair will appoint senior representatives from the following to the steering group:

- the Council's Secretariat;
- the Ministry of Justice;
- a senior member of the judiciary;
- a representative from the Pro Bono Panel;
- the co-chairs of the Academic Panel;
- the Ombudsman Association;
- organisations representing 'users' of administrative justice; and
- the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Format

The activities of the Council will take place through:

- biannual meetings chaired by the Senior President of Tribunals;
- smaller ad-hoc working group meetings of selected members (or other relevant experts) to discuss and propose solutions to specific issues of administrative justice;
- email correspondence between meetings;
- the use of an online information sharing and correspondence platform;
- a website to communicate the areas of work and recommendations of the Council;
- planning and strategy meetings of the Steering Group to facilitate the above and agree relevant agenda items;
- academic, pro bono and advice sector panel meetings to discuss and identify specific areas of research in administrative justice; and
- an annual roundtable discussion with relevant stakeholders to guide the work of the Council.

Minutes, agendas and meeting dates of Council meetings will be published on the Council website together with any formal publications or correspondence².

² This would not apply to deliberations of the Steering Group, save where directed by the Chair.



JUSTICE will provide the Council with an independent, non-partisan and dedicated secretariat function. This will include an element of policy work, acting as a liaison between ministers and civil servants and the Council.

The Council will be supported by a panel of law firms offering venues for Council meetings and ad-hoc research capacity.

The Council is funded by the Ministry of Justice and charitable sources.