

## EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS SOUTH WEST: SOURCES OF LEGAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

Although Employment Tribunals are used to dealing with parties who are unrepresented and our procedure is relatively informal, many cases are more complex than they may at first seem. It is a fact of life that the more involved in a case you are, the easier it is to overlook its weaknesses and to overestimate its strengths.

Advice and guidance from an experienced outsider before the case is heard can be just as valuable as representation at the hearing itself.

In addition, it is useful to appraise yourself of how Employment Tribunals work, what procedure they deploy and how cases are managed.

### **Video Guides:**

Ten short video guides have been produced by BPP Law School providing an overview of Employment Tribunal procedures, including what happens at a hearing.

You can access them here: [video guides](#)

### **Procedure and Rules**

There is information about Employment Tribunal procedures, including case management and preparation, compensation for injury to feelings, and pension loss, here: [procedural information](#)

The Employment Tribunals Rules of Procedure are here: [ET Rules](#)

Presidential Guidance on General Case Management is here: [Case Management](#)

### **Free Advice**

Below a list of some organisations where you may be able to get free advice and/or representation. The organisations give different types of help. Some offer legal advice. Some may represent you at the hearing. Some only offer emotional support. The websites usually explain what kind of help can be given.

There is no guarantee that any of these organisations will be able to help you. We are also not responsible for the content or quality of any advice or help which you do receive. Please note that we do not delay cases to allow any extra time for you to get assistance.

Another possibility is that you can read a reliable written guide to the law and procedure, for example: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk).

If you cannot find any organisation to help you or you would prefer to represent yourself that is fine. The tribunal staff and Judges will do everything they can to ensure your case is given a fair hearing. You are also very welcome to come to the Tribunal to sit in on other hearings before yours begins so that you become familiar with the process; this can be very helpful. However, we cannot give you legal advice or advice on how to conduct your case. The Employment Tribunal website has useful information and can be accessed at [www.gov.uk/employment-tribunals](http://www.gov.uk/employment-tribunals)

### **Employment Tribunal Litigant in Person Support Scheme (ELIPS)**

ELIPS stands for the Employment Tribunal Litigant in Person Support Scheme. Online ELIPS has been set up to support litigants via virtual meetings for as long as face-to-face meetings present difficulties due to Covid-19. It is a free advice service set up to support those who cannot afford legal advice. It usually runs on the first and third Thursday of the month via Zoom meetings. It is open to Claimants and Respondents without representation by legal professionals, HR advisers or trade union officials. The service is for the parties themselves, not their witnesses.

To access a free advice session, you should do the following:

- Send an email to [elips@elaweb.org.uk](mailto:elips@elaweb.org.uk);
- Attach a copy of the notice of hearing and/or the case management orders/directions in respect of which you require advice so that the date for compliance and the Tribunal which is hearing your claim can be verified;
- If possible, please provide brief information about what help you would like to receive. For example, you may require assistance with preparation of a Schedule of Loss or you might have a query about a preliminary hearing to decide an issue such as whether or not you meet the test for disability in accordance with section 6 of the Equality Act 2020.

### **Advice agencies**

**Law Centres:** [www.lawcentres.org.uk](http://www.lawcentres.org.uk)

The address of a law centre nearest to you is available on the website or you can telephone the Law Centres Network on 020 7842 0720.

**Citizens Advice:** [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

The address of your local Citizens Advice is available on the website which also has very clear help on all work-related issues and practical advice, for example on how to write a Schedule of Loss. The Whitechapel Legal Advice clinic at Tower Hamlets Citizens Advice offers specialist employment advice by appointment to those in Tower Hamlets: 020 7247 1050.

**Equality Advisory and Support Service:** [www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

The helpline is on 0808 800 0082 (free phone). This is only for discrimination cases under the Equality Act.

**Law Works:** [www.lawworks.org.uk](http://www.lawworks.org.uk)

The LawWorks Clinics Network is a nationwide network of free legal advice sessions supported by LawWorks. For a listing, see the website.

**Bar Pro Bono Unit:** [www.barprobono.org.uk](http://www.barprobono.org.uk)

The Bar Pro Bono Unit may offer free representation at the tribunal hearing. You cannot approach them direct. You need a referral from an advice agency, solicitor or your MP.

**Personal Support Unit:** [www.thepsu.org](http://www.thepsu.org)

The PSU (T: 020 7947 7701/3) does not give legal advice, but it provides moral support and practical assistance in terms of helping put paperwork in good order etc. Volunteers are on call and can often attend at short notice.

**Working Families:** [www.workingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk)

For issues around childcare and family rights. The helpline is: 0300 012 0312.

**National Debt-line:** <https://www.nationaldebtline.org/>

0808 808 4000 – telephone or email advice on debt problems.

**Agencies offering free support and advice in: Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Somerset and Gloucestershire**

### **Support Through Court**

This is located at the **CJC in Bristol**. They provide a range of help and support (They do not give legal advice). This includes: providing information and support; helping people access free legal advice; discussing settling issues without going to court; explaining how the courts work; help in filling in court forms and organise court papers; help plan what to say in court; accompany the LIP into court and take notes and help afterwards.

They operate a drop in service between 9.30- 4.30 Monday – Friday. People are encouraged to make an appointment in advance if possible by ringing 0117 366 4809 or by email: [bristol@supportthroughcourt.org](mailto:bristol@supportthroughcourt.org). They do not provide advice over the phone.

contact 01483 216 571.

### **Law Centres**

If any **Bristol (in the City Council Area)** resident has an employment claim that involves discrimination and this needs to be taken forward these may be referred to the Employment Team at Avon and Bristol Law Centre. Please see [www.ablc.org.uk](http://www.ablc.org.uk). If the client is a **BANES** resident, it is also worth contacting the Law Centre, as we can deal with a few cases annually.

For Employment advice on other matters (that may not be being covered at the tribunal) For

**Bristol, S Glos and BANES** residents they can telephone the Employment Advice Line at ABLC on 0117 916 7727 between 4-6 every Tuesday.

For **Bristol** (through the Law Centre), **North Somerset** (through the CAB at Weston Super Mare), **South Somerset** (through the CAB at Yeovil) they can book a 45 minute on off appointment with a volunteer ( pro-bono) lawyer – this will be delivered face to face in Bristol and from Bristol through Skype to CAB offices.

**Other advice agencies in Bristol:**

All the agencies below will offer outreach clinics in various areas of Bristol, so it is worth asking the client to check the one nearest to them.

Talking Money (Based Old Market, delivers services in South Gloucestershire and Bristol). Covering advice and casework in: Debt, Energy and Benefits advice.

0800 121 4511 [www.talkingmoney.org.uk](http://www.talkingmoney.org.uk)

**St Pauls Advice Centre.** (Based in St Pauls, Covering St Pauls and East Bristol). Covering advice and casework in Debt and Welfare benefits. Advice only in: Employment, Consumer, Immigration (OISC Level 1) and Housing.

0117 955 2981 [www.stpaulsAdvice.org.uk](http://www.stpaulsAdvice.org.uk)

**North Bristol Advice Centre** (Based Lockleaze covering North Bristol and South Gloucestershire). Covering advice and casework in Debt and Welfare Benefits.

0117 951 5751 [www.northbristoladvice.org.uk](http://www.northbristoladvice.org.uk)

**South Bristol Advice Services** (Based Withywood covering South Bristol). Covering advice and casework in Debt and Welfare Benefits.

0117 985 1122 <https://www.southbristoladvice.co.uk/>