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Tribunal reform enters final phase

Today (Monday 18 January) heralds the start of the next chapter in the Tribunals Service's ambitious programme of reform.

As part of a raft of wholesale changes to the nation's tribunal system, six more tribunal jurisdictions will transfer into the two-tier system set up in November 2008. They will join others which moved into the structure last year. The remaining transfers that complete the second phase of the implementation programme are all due to take place before the end of April this year.

The unified tribunal format is designed to streamline tribunal processes and improve consistency across the wide range of appeals. Most appeal types will now go to a specialist chamber within the First-tier Tribunal, with onward appeals to the Upper Tribunal on a point of law.

The following jurisdictions have moved into the General Regulatory Chamber within the First-tier Tribunal:

- The Information Tribunal*
- Gambling Appeals Tribunal
- Claims Management Services Tribunal
- Immigration Services Tribunal; and
- the Adjudication Panel for England.

The Family Health Services Appeal Authority (FHSAA) has also transferred across, into the Health, Education and Social Care Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal.

Kevin Sadler, Chief Executive of the Tribunals Service said: "We've come a long way since the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 and this latest tranche of transfers is yet another step forward in developing a more standardised and flexible structure across the wide range of appeal rights.

“Further transfers are due to take place within the coming few months. We are also working on ways to improve the administration of tribunals and the end-to-end process for tribunal users - as well as liaising with government departments to help them improve their decision-making first time round.

“It is important that we have as fair and consistent a way as possible for people and organisations who wish to make appeals to be able to do so. I’m confident that we are well on our way in creating a more consistent tribunal service that responds to the needs of those people who use the system.”

For further information and to find out more about the Tribunals Service visit:

www.tribunals.gov.uk.

Ends

*The Information Tribunal hears appeals against decisions made by the Information Commissioner in relation to Freedom of Information and Data Protection claims, amongst others.

The Gambling Appeals Tribunal hears claims against decisions made by the Gambling Commission.

The Claims Management Services Tribunal hears appeals against decisions made by the Claims Management Services Regulator.

The Immigration Services Tribunal hears claims against decisions made by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner.

The Adjudication Panel for England hears and determines references concerning the conduct of local authority councillors. It also acts as an appellate body to determine appeals against the decisions of local standards committees.

The FHSAA hears appeals against Primary Care Trusts about decisions made in relation to GPs, dentists, optometrists and other professionals on a ‘locally managed performers’ list.

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Note to editors

- Jurisdictions which have already transferred into the new two-tier structure are as follows:

First-tier Tribunal

Social Entitlement Chamber:

- Asylum Support (no onward right of appeal)
- Social Security and Child Support
- Criminal Injuries Compensation

War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber:

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Health, Education and Social Care Chamber:

- Care Standards
- Mental Health
- Special Educational Needs & Disability

Tax Chamber:

- General Commissioners of Income Tax
- Special Commissioners of Income Tax
- VAT & Duties Tribunals
- Section 706 Tribunal

General Regulatory Chamber:

- Charities
- Consumer Credit
- Estate Agents
- Transport Tribunal (appeals against decisions of the Driving Standards Agency)

The Upper Tribunal

Administrative Appeals Chamber :

- Onward appeals from the Social Entitlement Chamber
- Onward appeals from the War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber
- Onward appeals from the Health, Education and Social Care Chamber
- Criminal Injuries Compensation (Judicial Review only – no onward right of appeal)
- Transport Tribunal (appeals against decisions of the Traffic Commissioners)
- Onward appeals from the General Regulatory Chamber (except for Charities cases)
- Some first instance Information appeals (National Security cases)

Tax & Chancery Chamber:

- Onward appeals from the First Tier Tax chamber
- Onward appeals Charities (and some first instance appeals)

Lands Chamber:

- Lands Tribunal

- Jurisdictions which will transfer into the unified structure later this year:
- FINSMAT- April
- Pensions Regulatory Tribunal - April
- Asylum and Immigration Tribunal – Feb
- The Tribunals Service provides administration and support to various tribunals throughout the UK. An executive agency of the Ministry of Justice, it was formed in 2006 to:
 - Provide responsive, efficient administration of the tribunals;
 - Promote and protect the independence of the judiciary;
 - Contribute to the improvement of the quality of decision-making across government; and
 - Reform the tribunals justice system for the benefit of its customers and the wider public.