



HM Courts &
Tribunals Service

Tribunal Update April 2022

Dear Tribunal users,

This is our latest Tribunal update since the Coronavirus pandemic restrictions have eased.

Tribunal remaining open for business

The Tribunal has remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to do so, with all customer facing services delivered.

Updates since our last newsletter

Appeal receipts at record levels

You may already be aware but the pressure on the Tribunal's resources is currently at its most demanding in its history.

We are looking at various options to allow the Tribunal to extend the capacity in our listings schedule and reduce the numbers of hearings postponed to a later date.

One suggestion is that the Tribunal lists an additional evening session. The Tribunal can start dealing with paper cases where parties do not need to attend, very quickly.

The Tribunal will have the capacity to hear half day appeals at video hearings during the early evening with hearings starting at 6.30 if that was requested by the users. Appeals postponed due to a lack of judicial resources or those where the timetable has been will now be offered an evening session if the appeal can be heard in half a day, which is usually 3 hours or less.

We would welcome your views on whether you would be willing to trial evening sessions by completing a short survey accessed at this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/SY83jQLtRZ>. This arrangement might be more suitable for appeals with one or two witnesses attending, but will depend on the LA's ability to request officers to work flexibly after office hours. Even if every LA offered only two such hearings, it would enable an additional 300 appeals to be heard.

If you have any other suggestions which may assist the Tribunal in concluding appeals, generating earlier decisions for the children and young people, please pop that onto the survey too.

Thank you for your patience and hopefully some of these measures will ensure cases move through the system more efficiently.



Document Upload Centre

You may have heard about the Document Upload Centre known as “DUC” at the Tribunal user group meetings or through the stakeholder newsletters. This is a secure facility for Local Authorities to submit bundles without the need to split bundles over a number of emails. This system allows bundles to be uploaded or dragged and dropped without splitting or worry about the size of the bundle.

Even more Local Authorities signed up to access DUC and send Tribunal bundles in this way and this is working extremely well. If you haven't signed up to DUC and would like to join please email send@justice.gov.uk with the subject DUC sign up in the subject box.

New Appeals

We are still receiving a high number of appeals and you will have noticed that some are registered outside the usual 10 working day target. We would kindly ask to refrain from checking that we have your new appeal until 20 working days have passed, to prevent resources being diverted away to search for new appeals, rather than registering new appeals.

If you have posted in your appeal, please check and use the delivery receipt from the Post Office or courier. If you have emailed your new appeal, the Tribunal has arranged an email bounce back message to confirm that it has been safely received and we are dealing with it.

Following a successful trial last year, once a new appeal has been compliance checked, we will send you a text message to confirm your appeal is compliant and is going to be registered.

About 30% of new appeals submitted are not compliant, mainly due to a lack of a mediation certificate or decision letter. We encourage all to follow the checklist on the new appeal form to ensure there are no delays in registering new appeals.

The Tribunal will only register an appeal on the date when it reached the office fully compliant. Therefore, if the Tribunal has to send an appeal back due to it being non-compliant and as a result it falls outside the timescales for appealing, you will have to provide the Tribunal with an explanation of the reasons why the appeal was made late.

August hearings capacity

The Tribunal can arrange hearings during August if both parties agree and this could mean your appeal is dealt with more promptly.

This will only apply in cases where the Tribunal has already received the LA's response and the Tribunal bundle can be produced in good time for the hearing.



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The Tribunal can arrange either an oral hearing by video or a paper hearing. A paper hearing allows a decision to be made by the Tribunal on the documentary evidence without the attendance of the parties.

If you would like your Appeal to be heard during August:

1. For a video hearing, please complete the attached Further Information Form, signed by both parties, confirming the date agreed by the parties for the hearing;
2. For a paper hearing, please complete the attached Further Information Form, signed by both parties, confirming that they agree to the appeal being concluded on the papers.

Please send the completed form to the Tribunal as soon as possible and no later than one month before the agreed date to send@justice.gov.uk

Thank you

From all in the administrative team, thank you for bearing with us whilst we deal with the high volumes of work and for your patience and understanding. With your help, we have all worked very hard to get used to a whole new world out there and have tackled the challenges effectively. With your continuing support we will continue to strive to deliver a quality service for all our users.