



# Courts and Tribunals Judiciary

## EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS England & Wales

### 52<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF NATIONAL USER GROUP

#### **Minutes of the National User Group meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 30 September 2024**

#### **Attendance:**

Judge Barry Clarke	President of Employment Tribunals (England & Wales)
Judge Jennifer Jones	Regional Employment Judge, Midlands West
Judge David Franey	Regional Employment Judge, North West
Judge Omar Khalil	Regional Employment Judge, London South
Judge Rohan Pirani	Regional Employment Judge, South West
Judge Benjamin Burgher	Regional Employment Judge, London East
Judge Andrew Freer	Regional Employment Judge, London Central
Judge Sian Davies	Regional Employment Judge, Wales
Judge George Foxwell	Regional Employment Judge, South East
Marie Mannering	ET Deputy Service Manager, HMCTS
Helen Nolan	Manager, Jurisdictional Support Team, HMCTS
Richard Boyd	Department for Business and Trade (DBT)
Tony Lowe	Acas
Clare Cruise	Law Centres Network
Matt Jackson	Barrister and member of Tribunal Procedure Committee
Danae Shell	Valla UK
Nicola Redhead	Citizens Advice
Matthew Creagh	Trade Union Congress
Caspar Glyn KC	Employment Lawyers Association
Catrina Smith	Employment Lawyers Association
Kate Redshaw	Employment Lawyers Association
Karen Teago	YESS (Your Employment Settlement Service)
Emelia Quist	Federation of Small Business
Carla Bennett	UNISON
John Sprack	Law Works
James Gilbert	Peninsula
Kiyara Sen	Government Legal Department
Sophie McGuinness	Thomson Reuters
Andrew Willis	Croner Group Limited
Paman Singh	Law Society of Scotland
Andrew Lingard	Advocate (formerly Pro Bono Unit)

#### **Apologies:**

Judge Susan Walker KC	President of Employment Tribunals (Scotland)
Judge Paul Swann	Regional Employment Judge, Midlands East
Judge Stuart Robertson	Regional Employment Judge, North East
Mark Lewis	ET Service Manager, HMCTS

Nick Peel	Ministry of Justice (MOJ)
Tim Sharp	Trade Union Congress
Emma Wilkinson	Free Representation Unit
Rob McKellar	Peninsula
Bertrand Stern-Gillet	Health Assured
Daniel Barnett	Barrister
Nick Denys	Employment Law Committee, Law Society of England & Wales

## **1. Welcome & Introductions**

### **1.1 England and Wales**

The President welcomed members to the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Employment Tribunals (England & Wales) National User Group, via Teams. The President reminded members that minutes of the previous user group meetings can be found [online](#).

The President welcomed two new members to the national user group: Danae Shell, CEO of Valla UK, and Karen Teago, CEO and Principal Solicitor of Yess Law. If any member is aware of other organisations that would find attendance at these meetings useful, please bring them to the attention of the President's Private Office.

## **2. Employment Tribunals system update – President**

### **2.1 People and Places**

The new cohort of salaried judges recruited in 2024 have all started. Appointment announcements can be found [here](#).

We have also now received confirmation that the Lord Chancellor has approved the appointment of two new Regional Employment Judges.

The first [confirmed appointment](#) is Regional Employment Judge Jennifer Jones. REJ Jones is the new Regional Employment Judge for the Midlands West region, based in Birmingham. REJ Jones has been based in the Midlands for most of the last 30 years, spending 14 years as a barrister in practice before moving in-house and ending as a partner and head of an employment team at a large regional law firm. REJ Jones became a salaried judge in 2021, having been appointed a fee-paid employment judge in 2004.

REJ Omar Khalil has [been announced](#) as the new Regional Employment Judge in London South. Previously a solicitor, REJ Khalil joined as a salaried Employment Judge in 2019. He was previously head of the employment team at EEF, now known as Make UK, a role he performed for over a decade.

We are in the process of inducting new 50 fee paid Employment Judges, who were appointed earlier in 2024. The first half were inducted in September, and the other half will attend induction in late October.

### **2.2 Resources**

As of October 2024, this jurisdiction now comprises:

- One President
- 10 Regional Employment Judges
- 161 salaried judges (approximately 138 FE)
- 370 fee-paid judges
- 770 non-legal members

We expect to launch a further salaried Employment Judge recruitment exercise at the end of the 2024/2025 financial year. While exact dates or numbers cannot yet be confirmed, we hope to recruit between 25-30 salaried judges and focus those appointments on the London and South East regions (with some vacancies possible in Birmingham).

Following a question regarding when new salaried judges are expected to come on stream, the President confirmed that it normally takes a year from the launch of an exercise for new salaried judges to be appointed and begin. Depending on the timing of a campaign, the President said it may be possible for new judges to begin work by the spring of 2026.

## **2.3 Performance**

The President reminded users of the published data produced by HMCTS found at [this link](#).

The [minutes of the meeting held in November 2023](#) include a detailed analysis of the statistical position of the Employment Tribunals as reported over the last few years. At the time of this meeting, the latest quarterly published statistics are accurate up to March 2024. (Update: the [latest statistics published on 3 October](#) contain data up to June 2024.)

The latest published statistics indicate an outstanding single caseload of approximately 34,000 single claims and 6,300 open multiple cases, which themselves comprise 410,000 claimants.

HMCTS also publishes monthly management information reports, found [here](#).

## **2.4 Waiting Times**

The President confirmed that HMCTS still cannot produce timeliness data (that is, data about how long it is taking cases to come to a hearing). However, he continues to gather anecdotal data from the Regional Employment Judges and confirmed, in broad terms, the following position:

- For shorter hearings of 1-2 days' duration, approximately half of the regions were still listing them in the second half of 2024. London East, Wales (North and West), the North East (Newcastle), the North West, Midlands West, London Central, South West and the South East (Cambridge) regions were listing in the first half of 2025. London South is listing these hearings in the second half of 2025.
- For medium length hearings of 3-5 days' duration, many regions could hear them in the first half of 2025; these include London East, Wales (South and West), the North East, London Central, South West and South East (BSE, Cambridge and Norwich). The remains of the regions could hear them in the second half of 2025.
- For longer hearings of 6-10 days' duration, the picture is mixed. The shortest waiting times are in the North East, who could still list these cases in the first half of 2025. London East, Midlands East, the North West, London South and the South East (Watford) are listing these cases in the first half of 2026. All other regions can still hear them in the second half of 2025.
- For hearings longer than 10 days, the picture is also mixed. The North East can still list these cases in the first half of 2025. Wales, Midlands West, London Central, South West and the South East (BSE and Norwich) are listing these cases in the second half of 2025. London East, Midlands East, the North West, and South East (Watford, Reading, Cambridge) are listing these cases in the first half of 2026. The longest waiting times are in London South, which is listing these cases in the first half of 2027.

The President explained the work to reduce waiting times across all regions, which include:

- Ongoing recruitment and further appointment of salaried judges into London and the South East. There remains a significant number of salaried judges who provide support to the London South region remotely, hearing cases on video. The President explained that his preference is for complex cases to be heard in-person but acknowledged that it was better to hear cases on video than not at all.
- The President continues to direct as many sitting days as possible into the Virtual Region. By way of reminder, the Virtual Region is a mechanism by which fee-paid judges sit on video for hearings in London and the South East regions. This provides cover for cases that would otherwise be adjourned for lack of a judge.
- Work is ongoing to increase the number of judges across all regions who can conduct judicial mediation hearings.

## **2.5 Sitting Day Allocation**

The President confirmed that the sitting day settlement process had been more complicated this financial year than previous ones. This was due to the different way the allocation was calculated by HMCTS.

So while this jurisdiction has more salaried and fee paid judges this year than in previous years, there are insufficient sitting days to sit them all to the capacity. Work remains ongoing behind the scenes to increase resources where possible.

The President is also monitoring the potential impact that new government legislation may have on the Employment Tribunals and will ensure that the judicial viewpoint is appropriately fed into modelling work ongoing in MoJ and DBT.

## **2.6 Practice Direction on Panel Composition**

Further to the update provided at the [National User Group meeting in April 2024](#), the [Practice Direction on Panel Composition has been published](#) and will take effect from 29 October 2024. Accompanying [Presidential Guidance](#) issued jointly by the Presidents in England & Wales and Scotland will also take effect from 29 October 2024.

The Practice Direction, in broad terms, moves the ETs away from a position where non-legal members sit, by default, on open track claims, but do not sit on short or standard track ones. With a few exceptions, the new position will be neutral across all case types.

The President expressed gratitude on behalf of himself and Judge Susan Walker for the comments received on the draft Presidential Guidance from members of the national user group.

## **2.7 Practice Direction on Open Justice**

Members will recall that the President had previously circulated a draft Practice Direction on Open Justice. After the draft had been circulated, the Ministry of Justice had launched its own call for evidence on open justice. As there was some overlap between the draft Practice Direction and what might be new national benchmarks for open justice which follow the MoJ's call for evidence, the President felt it sensible to await the outcome of that call for evidence.

It was hoped that the Government's response would be published in the spring of 2024, however that process was interrupted by the general election. We now await the view of the ministers in the new government. The President believes there is merit in knowing the government's steer before putting forward proposals.

## 2.8 Practice Direction on Presentation of Claims and Responses

The Presidents in England & Wales and Scotland issued a joint interim [Practice Direction on the Presentation of Responses](#), which has effect from 6 April 2024. The new Practice Direction on the Presentation of Claims and Responses awaits approval from the Lord Chancellor, and until such time as it has been approved, the interim PD remains in effect.

When the new PD comes into effect, it will introduce symmetry for the submission of both claims and responses. There will be four approved methods of submitting both an ET1 claim form and an ET3 response form to the Tribunal:

- **Method one:** online, using the online submission service provided by HMCTS.
- **Method two:** by post to the Employment Tribunal Central Office.
- **Method three:** by hand to any of the Employment Tribunal offices.
- **Method four:** exceptionally, by email to a central inbox, but only in circumstances where the online portal is down (and it must be evidenced with an accompanying screenshot showing the portal is down).

This update will require a significant behavioural change by respondents. The President reiterated that the best way for a respondent to submit a response once the PD takes effect is via the online portal. The success of the HMCTS reform system is predicated upon increasing user engagement with the online system.

## 2.9 Register of Judgments

The President reminded users that the register of judgments and written reasons is stored in two locations:

- 1) Decisions and written reasons post-February 2017 are stored on the online register.
- 2) Decisions and written reasons pre-February 2017 are held in a physical archive.

The physical archive was previously located in Bury St Edmunds. While the physical register remains nominally under the watch of an HMCTS team in Bury St Edmunds, the physical archive itself has recently moved to Norwich.

Unfortunately, when HMCTS transferred the archive, the software that enabled a clerk to locate a judgment within the archive became corrupted and stopped working. Until this can be fixed, HMCTS cannot provide copies of judgments from the physical archive. A notice to this effect has now been published on the [online judgment register](#). The number of outstanding requests for copy judgments has now risen to 242.

## 3. Regional Updates

### 3.1 Judge David Franey

#### 3.1.1 Regional Update – North West

REJ Franey confirmed that as of 1 October 2024, the North West region comprises:

- 24 salaried judges (19.4 FTE)
- 34 fee paid judges (including judges cross-assigned from the First-tier Tribunal)
- 100 non-legal members

The outstanding caseload in January 2021 was 3,800 single claims. In 2023 it was 2,750 and in August 2024 it is now just over 3,000. The number of multiple claims remain steady in the region.

The North West region has been using the HMCTS reform portal since 6 June 2024.

The region has had some success with Dispute Resolution Appointments, having previously been piloted in Midlands West.

One ongoing frustration for the region is the lack of recording facilities. The hearing centre is a leased building and there are no in-built recording facilities. Hearings can only be recorded in approximately half of the 15 hearing rooms. Work is ongoing with HMCTS to get sufficient recording resources.

### **3.2.2 Tribunal Procedure Committee**

Judge Franey is a judicial member of the Tribunal Procedure Committee (TPC). It is established under the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 as the body which makes rules which govern practice and procedure in the First-tier Tribunal and in the Upper Tribunal. Historically, responsibility for procedural rules within the Employment Tribunals has been held by the Department for Business and Trade and its predecessor departments. The Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 made a number of amendments to the Employment Tribunals Act 1996 with a view to transferring responsibility for making procedural rules to the TPC. The relevant provisions were brought into force in April 2024.

The new Schedule A1 to the Employment Tribunals Act 1996 requires that the TPC must exercise its power to make procedural rules with a view to securing, amongst other things, that the ET system is accessible and fair, that proceedings are handled quickly and efficiently, and that procedural rules are both simple and simply expressed. When making rules the TPC seeks, as far as possible, to avoid unnecessary technical language, to adopt common rules across tribunals where appropriate, but to enable the ET to continue to operate tried and tested procedures which have been shown to work well.

The members of the TPC are appointed or nominated by senior members of the judiciary or by the Lord Chancellor. The committee holds about nine meetings a year. Further details, together with copies of consultation papers and TPC minutes, can be found at this link: [Tribunal Procedure Committee - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/tribunal-procedure-committee) .

The TPC is chaired by Mrs Justice Joanna Smith, appointed by the Senior President of Tribunals. The remaining members are members of the judiciary and/or practitioners. In anticipation of responsibility for the ET rules being transferred, in November 2023 the following were appointed: Judge Franey, non-legal member Gillian Fleming, and Matt Jackson, a specialist employment barrister. Judge Michael Reed, cross assigned to the ET, is a longstanding member of the TPC.

There are four aspects of the TPC approach to ET Rules:

- The first was a prospective consultation paper issued in April 2024 setting out the TPC's proposed approach. It can be viewed here: [et-rules-consultation.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/125444/et-rules-consultation.pdf)
- The second is the need to re-make the Employment Tribunal Rules of Procedure currently found in the schedules to the Employment Tribunals (Constitution and Rules of Procedure) Regulations 2013. This will involve a new statutory instrument which will not make any substantive changes to the Rules, but will re-issue them. That statutory instrument has to conform to modern drafting standards, so there will be some reorganisation and rewording of some of the rules without any significant change of substance. It is anticipated that the new statutory instrument and procedural rules will be issued in late 2024.
- The third element is a consultation paper on the provision of written reasons which applies to the Employment Tribunal and to the Chambers of the First-tier Tribunal. The consultation paper was issued on 30 July 2024 and the consultation



closes on 22 October 2024. A copy of the consultation paper can be viewed at this link [Changes to the procedure rules on the provision of written reasons for decisions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-procedure-rules-on-the-provision-of-written-reasons-for-decisions).

- The fourth element comprises proposed future changes to ET Rules. These were set out in paragraphs 32-34 of the first consultation paper issued in April 2024. There will be further consultation on any proposed changes in due course and it is hoped that such changes will come into effect in 2025.

## **3.2 Judge Benjimin Burgher**

### **3.2.1 Regional Update – London East**

The current complement in the London East region comprises 12 salaried judges (7.8 FTE) and 35 fee paid judges.

Judge Burgher confirmed that 6 newly appointed salaried judges from the 2023 recruitment campaign have completed their second induction course, which now allows them to sit on open track cases. This will have a positive impact on the region's ability to hear longer hearings.

The current outstanding caseload is 2,000 single cases and 13,000 multiple cases.

London East has been trialling a new listing process as a result of ongoing concern about the waiting times in the region. During the trial, parties will not receive a final hearing date until they have completed the relevant work and confirmed their readiness for a hearing. There was concern that many longer cases were occupying space in the listing diary where parties may not be ready and the hearing would not proceed.

As a result of the trial, REJ Burgher confirms that his region is now able to list cases up to 10 days within 4-9 months from the point of readiness. REJ Burgher continues to seek feedback from users on this new process.

London East continues to need additional microphones to ensure they can properly produce transcriptions, where required, of recorded hearings. They have 8 hearing rooms, 7 of which have the video screens installed which will enable recording, but they have insufficient microphones which would enable transcription companies to determine easily who is speaking at any given time.

London East has been allocated 6 new fee paid judges from those appointed in 2024, although REJ Burgher is conscious that these new judges will not be able to hear open track cases for a further 12-18 months.

### **3.2.2 ADR / Dispute Resolution Appointments**

REJ Burgher is the lead judge for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). A new development as part of ADR are Dispute Resolution Appointments. It is hoped that this will become a familiar part of the Employment Tribunals, particularly in relation to open track claims.

Members of the user group were reminded of [the Presidential Guidance on Alternative Dispute Resolution](#) which was published in July 2023.

REJ Burgher reminded users that Alternative Dispute Resolution, including Judicial Mediation, are integral parts of the litigation journey and encouraged users to engage with these processes. They are a good use of judicial resources and the parties' time.

The ongoing pilot between London East and Wales whereby they swap salaried judges to hear DRAs remains successful. The remains merit in swapping judges as it facilitates more

effective use of resources and ensuring a region does not run out of salaried judges to hear cases on merits should the ADR not succeed.

### **3.3 Judge Omar Khalil – London South**

REJ Khalil confirmed the current judicial resource in London South is:

- 20 salaried judges (15 FTE)
- 42 fee paid judges
- 100 non-legal members

Of the 5 new salaried judges appointed in 2024, all but one sit remotely. The ratio of judges working in person in Croydon to those working remotely is approximately 50:50, which results in some hearings being converted to video at short notice.

REJ Khalil explained that one measure the region was taking was to split hearings. He clarified that this split was not only between the liability and remedy parts of a hearing but may also be during the liability hearing if the region does not have a judge available for the entire duration.

The current volume of outstanding single claims is around 5,500. The focus over the next 6-9 months will be on judicial mediation and dispute resolution appointments. Currently, the demand for judicial mediation outstrips the supply of available, trained, judges, and therefore a concentrated effort has been made on those cases listed for hearings of 6 days or more.

### **3.4 Judge Sian Davies – Wales**

The current outstanding caseload in Wales is 620 single claims (although this does not include new claims received on the reform portal). This is comparable to last year.

The number of multiple claims in Wales had doubled in the last year. This was largely attributable to receipt of some large equal value claims against local authorities in Wales. The current figure for outstanding multiples claims is 6,500, whereas last year it was around 3,000.

Two new fee-paid judges have joined in Wales, Alys Williams and Gerallt Hughes, who can conduct proceedings in Welsh, which is very welcome.

Wales ET now has use of 15 venues. This improves access to justice for users that previously faced long journeys to hearing centres. Some of these venues did not have recording facilities installed, although hearings would be recorded by CVP where possible.

Judge Davies explained that the region had lost a number of HMCTS staff recently and the team was therefore not currently as responsive to user emails as they would like to be. There are approximately 500 unread emails in the administrative inbox, and users are asked to write to the Tribunal only if it was necessary and to mark their correspondence accurately.

### **3.5 Judge Jennifer Jones – Midlands West**

REJ Jones confirmed that the main hearing centre in Birmingham is currently undergoing refurbishment which is hoped to be completed by January 2025.

The caseload in Midlands West is increasing, and the composition of the outstanding caseload is skewed towards discrimination and whistleblowing claims. Several multi-day hearings are being listed into 2025, but REJ Jones continues to encourage parties' use of ADR where they can. REJ Jones confirmed that there is a mediation suite available if parties wish to speak (which can include at the outset of a multi-day hearing).



The backlog of claims in Midlands West approaches 4,000 singles. The current number of judges is:

- 20 salaried judges (15.3 FTE), although a few currently are not able to sit
- 42 fee paid judges

### **3.6 Judge Rohan Pirani – South West**

The current judicial resource in the South West region stands at:

- 13 salaried judges (10.7 FTE)
- 38 fee paid judges (7 of whom are newly appointed)

REJ Pirani confirmed that all hearings can currently be recorded at the Bristol Civil Justice Centre. Most other hearings centres in Southampton, Exeter, Plymouth and Bodmin have sufficient facilities to record most hearings.

The South West was the first region in England & Wales to become fully reformed and were working entirely digitally before that. REJ Pirani encouraged members to sign up for the HMCTS portal, indicating that parties are likely to get a faster response to correspondence submitted via the portal than via email.

With regards to listing practices, in the South West region if a case is listed for 5 days or more, a case management preliminary hearing is listed by telephone after the date of exchange of witness statements. This is to ensure the case remains on track. Similarly for cases listed for 6 days or more, a Dispute Resolution Appointment is listed.

REJ Pirani also provided an update on the HMCTS Video Hearing Service (VHS). VHS has been piloted in the South West region since mid-2020. VHS will eventually replace CVP when the CVP contract finishes in 2026, although it is hoped that it will roll out nationally before then. REJ Pirani confirmed that the functionality of VHS is better suited to the needs of the Employment Tribunal, and encouraged users who participate in a VHS hearing to complete the feedback form provided.

### **3.7 Judge Andrew Freer – London Central**

REJ Freer confirmed that the current judicial resource available to London Central is:

- 25 salaried judges (17.5 FTE), which includes 5 new salaried judges.
- 41 fee paid judges, which includes 7 new judges appointed in 2024.

The region currently has 5,500 outstanding legacy cases. REJ Freer confirmed that single claims in London Central have halved over the past 2 years. A review of Judicial Mediation within the region is ongoing and REJ Freer hopes to introduce Dispute Resolution Appointments by the end of the year. While each DRA hearing removes a judge from hearing a main hearing, around 60% of cases heard at a DRA will settle.

Currently there are recording facilities in 5 of the 11 hearing rooms in Victory House. The date to move to new facilities at Newgate Street remains to be finalised.

### **3.8 Judge George Foxwell – South East**

REJ Foxwell confirmed that there are over 80 judges in the South East region, with 21 of them salaried (18 FTE approx.). 6 new salaried judges have been appointed this year, 5 of them are based in Watford. 7 new fee-paid judges have also been appointed in 2024.

The region is an amalgamation of 5 smaller hearing centres: Reading, Watford, Cambridge, Bury St Edmunds, and Norwich. Across the region between 20-30 hearings are conducted

each day and between 500-600 cases are heard each month. Hearings may be converted to video at short notice when judges are available in other parts of the region.

The South East region went live with HMCTS reform in July 2024. No reformed cases have yet come to hearing, but REJ Foxwell also encouraged members to register and begin using the portal as soon as possible.

With reference to listing times, these varied depending on the part of the region the case was due to be heard. Waiting times can be quite swift in Norwich and Bury St Edmunds, but other hearing centres with a larger caseload resulted in a longer wait. Dispute Resolution Appointments are being rolled out, and while not generally applying them retrospectively to existing claims, consideration is being given to building DRA into future processes.

#### **4. Marie Mannering – HMCTS**

Marie Mannering, Deputy Service Manager for the Employment Tribunals, provided an update on the HMCTS Reform Programme.

By way of background, the reform programme started with four "early adopter" sites: Bristol, Leeds, Nottingham and Glasgow. In May 2024, national rollout began across all other offices, concluding in July 2024. All offices are now using the online system and new reformed products.

There remains a non-digital route for users who cannot access the digital platforms, and this will remain in place moving forward.

As of September 2024, the project has formally closed, but ongoing improvement and enhancement work will continue with HMCTS digital support teams.

Upcoming releases include:

- The facility for unrepresented claimants and respondents to make applications via the digital platform.
- Functionality for employer contract claims to be lodged via the portal.
- Functionality for multiple claims.

Marie reminded members of the importance of providing feedback so improvements could continue to be made. HMCTS has also produced a number of bitesize YouTube videos, which can be found [here](#).

The President paid tribute to the HMCTS project team who were responsible for delivering the reform programme, in particular to the Senior Project Manager Michael Nuna, whose voice can often be found on the explanatory videos.

The President also thanked the Employment Lawyers Association for helping to organise and host various webinars.

#### **5. Tony Lowe – Acas**

Tony Lowe confirmed that this time last year Acas has received approximately 42,000 early conciliation notifications. They had profiled for a slight increase this year, on the basis of receiving 45,000 EC notifications. In fact, 46,700 EC notifications were received, which represents an increase of 4,500 compared to last year. The demand for EC notification has increased faster than was anticipated.

Receipts for Employment Tribunal cases has also increased. This time last year receipts for ET cases was 14,300, and so far Acas have now received 16,000. This extra push has resulted in more cases landing with Acas.

Around 39% of all EC notification cases are settled. This reflects the best performance since the start of Early Conciliation. In relation to ET cases, Acas have positively resolved 79% of all cases, which is slightly higher than the 77% figure of 2023/4.

A recent recruitment campaign for conciliators received a high number of applications. 53 candidates were successful at interview, with 31 of those starting in November. The remaining 22 will be placed on a 12-month waiting list for future vacancies.

Acas are expecting to see increased demand for their services as a result of the Employment Rights Bill. Work with colleagues and analysts is ongoing across government to model the anticipated increase in demand. As a result there is likely to be further recruitment campaigns staggered in 2025.

## **6. Richard Boyd – Department for Business and Trade**

Richard Boyd, senior policy advisor at the Department for Business and Trade, provided an update on Employment Tribunal policy.

There remains lots of activity around the new administration and government plans to “[make work pay](#)”, which contains a detailed set of changes to employment law. The key commitment is to deliver many of those through an Employment Rights Bill. The full scope at the time of the meeting remains under ministerial consideration, but more information will be shared as soon as possible. (Update: the Bill has now been published and is available online [here](#).)

The scope of the programme is likely to have an impact on the ET system and Acas and DBT is working with colleagues across those areas to understand the potential impacts and identify ways to help improve the efficiency of the system. This includes addressing some of the long-standing issues as well as newer challenges that have resulted from the change in working practices and use of technology.

## **7. Any other business**

There was no other business. The next user group meeting will take place in January 2025 and an invitation confirming the date will follow in due course.