



Tribunal claims continue to decline while Government reviews fees system

The latest set of employment tribunal statistics show the continuation of the fall in overall single claim numbers. The government has also announced a review of the impact of tribunal fees, fulfilling a commitment made in July 2013.

The quarterly statistics showed a 25% drop on the same period last year, and a decrease of 52% in the annual 2014/15 figures compared to the previous year. Multiple claims were three times higher than last year, apparently skewed by large claims against a small number of employers.

The government review of the fees regime will evaluate whether fees have met the original objectives of the scheme (i.e. to shift costs onto users of the system, and encourage alternative dispute resolution), while maintaining access to justice. It is significant that UNISON's appeal in its judicial review of the fees system is listed for later this week, meaning that the Government will be able to tell the Court of Appeal that their review of the scheme is already underway.

The drop in claims shown by the most recent statistics is not a surprise, and is in line with existing trends and most commentators' expectations. The results of the review will be eagerly awaited, although the two year period it took to begin the review and the absence of any announced reporting date means that wait may be lengthy. The recent election result also means that the abolition or dramatic reform of the fees system is unlikely, absent an order from the Court of Appeal.