

## Employment Disputes Important Information

### Employment tribunal fees

Employment tribunals now charge for using their services, in the way that courts always have done. Employment tribunals charge fees of up to £1,200. If your financial means are very low, it is possible to avoid paying these fees, but the procedure for applying for an exemption is complex and, in general, your application will only succeed if you are in receipt of state benefits.

### Recovery of costs

It is almost impossible to recover legal costs in employment tribunal claims, whatever the outcome. Costs can only be awarded against a party whose claim or defence was clearly frivolous, vexatious or unreasonable or he conducted himself abusively or disruptively. It is very difficult to persuade an employment tribunal that a party has behaved in such a way and you should therefore assume that you will not recover any of your costs from your opponent, even if you win.

### Third party payment of legal costs

If another person has agreed to pay all or part of our charges or expenses, you will still remain liable for those costs. You accept we may keep that third party informed about the progress of any dispute and the costs and expenses which are incurred. Third party funding may be provided, for example, under a legal expenses policy. Such policies are often added to household, business or motor insurance policies. You should therefore check any such policies carefully. If we have not been notified about third party funding, we will proceed on the basis that no such funding is available to you.

### ACAS conciliation

It is now a requirement that, before employment tribunal proceedings are issued, the case is referred to ACAS for it to attempt to broker a settlement without the need for employment tribunal proceedings. The conciliation period lasts a month and the very tight time limits for bringing employment tribunal claims are put on hold while the conciliation is attempted.

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