

13 July 2018

The Administrative Justice Council holds its first meeting

The Administrative Justice Council today held its first meeting at Freshfields LLP in London. Forty members from across the administrative justice landscape came together to discuss issues including the courts and tribunal's reform programme, the ombudsman system, administrative justice in devolved administrations and the Council's priorities for the year ahead.

The Administrative Justice Council (AJC) is the successor body to the Administrative Justice Forum and provides oversight and advice to administrative justice across the UK. It is chaired by the Right Honourable Sir Ernest Ryder, Senior President of Tribunals, and the Secretariat is provided by JUSTICE, a law reform and human rights organisation. Grounded in grass roots experience and academic research, the AJC will advise ministers, government, and the judiciary on how to improve the administrative justice system and ensure that it is accessible, fair and efficient for users.

The AJC is supported by an Academic and Pro Bono Panel which will provide research and carry out projects relating to specific areas of administrative justice. The work of the Academic Panel is already underway, with working groups focussed on: tribunal modernisation; decision-making and procedures; ombudsman reform and data access for civil and administrative justice research. The Pro Bono Panel have also identified a number of projects concerning fairness and effective access to justice, through their work with clients.

Speaking after the meeting, the Chair Sir Ernest Ryder said:

"The administrative justice system affects millions of people, including society's most vulnerable. The Administrative Justice Council brings together and challenges its members to identify practical evidenced-based recommendations to improve decision-making and the remedies which are available. Today's meeting saw a commitment to a stronger, more accessible administrative justice system, and I look forward to leading and working with the Council towards this shared vision in the months and years ahead."

The Council will meet bi-annually and the minutes for their meetings will be published on the JUSTICE website at <https://justice.org.uk/ajc/>.

Notes for editors

1. The Administrative Justice Council is made up of members from the judiciary, ombudsman, academics, organisations representing 'users' and civil servants. The MoJ asked JUSTICE to take on the role of the Secretariat following their abolition in 2017.
2. JUSTICE is an all-party law reform and human rights organisation working to strengthen the justice system – administrative, civil and criminal – in the United Kingdom. JUSTICE's work on administrative justice dates back as far as 1961 when it proposed the UK's first

Ombudsman. This was followed by the seminal publication in 1988 of the joint JUSTICE / All Souls Committee report Administrative Justice – Some Necessary Reforms. JUSTICE continues to be at the forefront of the modernisation and reform of the justice system publishing reports on justice reform which continue to shape the £1 billion modernisation programme of courts and tribunals. For more information about JUSTICE visit www.justice.org.uk.

3. The Academic Panel is co-chaired by Naomi Creutzfeldt, University of Westminster and Robert Thomas, University of Manchester and is made up of administrative justice academics from across the UK. The Pro Bono Panel is made up of 5 pro bono lawyers from top law firms in London.
4. Please direct all enquiries to Heidi Bancroft, Secretary to the AJC, on 0207 762 6434 or hbancroft@justice.org.uk.