

Employment Tribunals

Guidance for tribunal users who are deaf or hard of hearing

General information

Employment Tribunals acknowledge that deaf people face a number of particular difficulties when attending a tribunal. Each tribunal office has appointed a Customer Services Officer (CSO) who will be able to explain what facilities are available at that office and answer any questions you may have.

Facilities in tribunal rooms

Many tribunal rooms have hearing loops or infra red facilities. If you think this may help you, please contact the office's CSO as soon as you know you will have to attend a hearing. They will ensure your case is dealt with in a tribunal room equipped with the necessary facilities. If you wish, you may visit the office before the hearing to be certain the facility will help you.

If the tribunal office does not have the necessary facilities, you may ask for the case to be moved to a nearby tribunal office which does have suitable facilities. Please write to the tribunal office explaining the situation as soon as you know you will have to attend a hearing.

Using an interpreter

Employment Tribunals will meet reasonable costs of interpreting, lipspeaking and deaf-blind interpreting.

If you need an interpreter please contact the CSO at the tribunal office as soon as you know you will have to attend a hearing.

If either you or your interpreter wants to see the tribunal room before the hearing, please contact the CSO.

Using a friend or relative

Many deaf people have a friend or relative who interprets for them. If you want them to translate for you, the chairman must be satisfied that your friend or relative can accurately translate what you are saying and what is being said to you.

Unless your friend or relative has a recognised qualification in relaying information between deaf and hearing people it may be better to use a qualified interpreter. Your friend or relative may still be able to attend with you (subject to the agreement of the chairman) and provide support.

If you want to ask a friend or relative to act as an interpreter you will need the chairman's permission.

Attending the hearing

If your interpreter would like to discuss the practical arrangements for the hearing, for instance where they should stand or whether the lighting is acceptable, they can ask to speak to the chairman before the hearing starts.

If you find anything in the tribunal room distracting whilst you are giving your evidence, for instance a member of the public using sign language, then you must tell the chairman straight away.

The Employment Tribunals will not pay any costs arising in the preparation of your case - the costs fall to the parties.

Further information

If you require any further information, or if you cannot contact a CSO because the tribunal office does not have a Minicom, please contact the Enquiry Line.

Phone: **08457 959 775**

Minicom: **08457 573 722**

Our staff can contact you using Typetalk, and the CSO will have instructions for staff about using the service. If you wish to contact the office dealing with your case using Typetalk, please ask the CSO when you make the call.