

## **CASEWORK PRIORITY POLICY**

Potential clients should be clear that we are not a firm of solicitors. Our discrimination casework service is offered as part of our charitable aims – to challenge and ultimately eliminate discrimination. However there must be recognition that we can only generate income to run this service through taking a percentage fee from successful cases.

It is important that all potential clients understand that we do not have unlimited resources. We operate with a small team of staff and volunteers and can only physically deal with a limited number of cases.

We think it is important that we are transparent about how we determine the types of cases we choose to assist. Generally, all enquiries should receive some initial advice and support. However, to take cases through to tribunal or court requires much more dedicated resources and means that we have to take difficult decisions.

We have therefore developed a priority policy so that clients can appreciate the types of issues that we consider when determining if we can assist them throughout their case.

It is important to note that all these priorities are dependent on the caseload at any given time. In some cases we may offer assistance to try and settle a case, rather than full representation in court or tribunal.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our casework policy.

### **1. LOCALITY**

We are based in Chester, Cheshire. Our primary area of benefit is Cheshire, Halton and Warrington sub region. We will prioritise cases that are from this area. This is in part a decision because of our history and support from local authorities and partly because of practicalities including costs of travel to see clients or represent at hearings further away.

### **2. STRENGTH OF CASE**

We have to consider the strength of the case because we are risking charity funds in supporting cases and if there is not a strong case then we could lose money and reputation in pursuing a case with little merit. You should also know that cases that a tribunal considers should not have been taken in the first place may attract costs against them.

### **3. OTHER MEANS OF REPRESENTATION**

If you have other representation already eg through a trade union, or you have the means to pay up front for a solicitor then we will not prioritise your case unless there are other exceptional circumstances.

### **4. PART WAY THROUGH CASE**

If your case is almost at conclusion stages, it is unlikely that we would pick it up for you. We need to have time to prepare cases and run them in the way we see fit, which isn't possible when someone else has been running the case.

### **5. COMPLEXITY**

Some cases are extremely complex either factually or legally. We have not got the resources to deal with these types of cases because they would have a negative impact on the running of the service.

### **6. DEADLINES**

If a deadline day or hearing is approaching fast we may not be able to assist you. A rule of thumb is that we would generally not support a case that has less than a month to go to the tribunal hearing when you approach us.

In all these cases we may assist on the basis that we cannot represent at the final stages but will help you to run the case and carry out paperwork.