

Easier complaints process for streamlined access to justice



Jon Wilby, Partner and head of our Litigation Department, advises It may soon be easier for people to make complaints against public bodies if new proposals from the Law Commission are adopted – and Jon has welcomed the suggestions, calling them “potentially an important step forward in making justice easier to access for individuals and families everywhere.”

According to Jon, “The proposals suggest that it should be easier for people to make complaints directly to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, who carries out investigations into complaints about Government departments and a range of other UK public bodies.” (Visit www.ombudsman.gov.uk for a full explanation.)

He continues, “At the moment, if you want to complain to the Ombudsman you have to go through your MP, which can take time. Under the new proposals, you would be able to go direct.

“Just as important, you cannot currently make a complaint if legal action is involved – this would also change, so that you could make an Ombudsman complaint even if you are already seeking legal redress from a body like the Home Office or the NHS in England.”

Jon warns, though, that it will be very important that any complaint made by a member of the public is in full alignment with the legal case. “If there are any substantial inconsistencies, they may affect the outcome of both the legal action and the complaint.

“Currently, the proposals are in a consultation process, that’s due to complete on 7 November. In the meantime, if you have an individual concern about a Government department or agency, call us on 024 7663 2121 to help you decide the best way forward.”