

Fee-paid Legal Members of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales

Number of vacancies: two immediate and two possible future vacancies

Fee: £479 a day

Location: Wales

An important opportunity has arisen for solicitors and barristers to contribute to the work of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW). In addition to two immediate vacancies, the JAC has been asked to identify two candidates for a reserve list to fill possible future vacancies. This exercise is expected to launch in September this year.

About the tribunal

SENTW is an independent tribunal that deals with appeals against certain decisions made by Welsh Local Authorities concerning a child's special educational needs. It also deals with discrimination claims about unfair treatment in schools relating to disabilities.

Parents are able to make an appeal or claim, and children and teenagers may also do so with, or without, assistance. Hearings are not open to the public and the format is less formal than other tribunals to help put appellants and claimants at ease, many of whom are unrepresented, unfamiliar with proceedings and understandably anxious. A measured and sympathetic approach is required.

About the hearing

Tribunal hearings comprise a panel of three; a legal member who chairs the hearing and two non-legal members selected for their knowledge and experience of children with special educational needs.

The chairperson invites all of the parties to speak and to question the other parties involved. The members can also ask questions in order to ascertain the full facts and gain a better understanding of the arguments put forward. At the end of the hearing the members consider all of the evidence before them in order to reach a decision. The chairperson is responsible for writing the decision. Cases are often complex and may require multiple hearing days before drawing to a conclusion.

Who can apply?

This exercise is open to solicitors and barristers in England and Wales with at least 5 years post qualification legal experience. Candidates must be fully conversant with, or demonstrate an ability to quickly acquire knowledge in the relevant legislation relating to special educational needs and disability discrimination in schools, and the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales Regulations 2012.

In addition, candidates should be able to offer a reasonable length of service, usually of 4 years, before retirement.

The JAC encourages diversity and welcomes applications from groups currently under represented in the judiciary. The principles of fair and open competition will apply and recommendation for appointment will be made solely on merit.

About the appointments

The tribunal covers the whole of Wales. Candidates must be able to travel independently throughout Wales and be willing to stay overnight when necessary. Reasonable costs for travel and subsistence will be paid for by the tribunal.

Although it is not possible to offer a guaranteed number of sitting days, candidates should be able to offer at least 10 days a year to tribunal business.

Preparing your application

Throughout the selection process candidates will be assessed against a [competency framework](#) specifically tailored to the role of a Legal Member of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales. The framework lists the ways in which a person demonstrates the required skills and abilities when working effectively in post.

As part of your application you will be required to provide, in no more than 250 words per competency, specific examples that demonstrate how your experiences make you suitable for the role. Further information on [completing the self-assessment](#) and [choosing the best examples](#) is on the JAC website. You are advised to start preparing your examples in advance, putting aside sufficient time to develop relevant examples that demonstrate your suitability for the post.

You can also [create an online account](#) before you apply. The JAC's online application system requires all candidates to create an account before applying for judicial office. Your account will include your personal, character and diversity profiles. This information is stored on the system so, if you apply for another position in the future, you only need to update your details making the application process quicker and easier.

[Sign up for alerts](#) to receive email notifications concerning the progress of this exercise up to launch.