

ELIPS Online

Information for Litigants

What is ELIPS?

1. ELIPS stands for the Employment Tribunal Litigant in Person Support Scheme. Online ELIPS has been set up to support litigants via virtual meetings for as long as face-to-face meetings present difficulties due to Covid-19. It is a free advice service set up to support those who cannot afford legal advice.

2. It usually runs on the first and third Thursday of the month via Zoom meetings. It is open to Claimants and Respondents without representation by legal professionals, HR advisers or trade union officials. The service is for the parties themselves, not their witnesses.

3. Three qualified lawyers will be on duty during the online clinics. They are acting voluntarily and will not be paid for this work. All volunteers specialise in advising on employment law including cases brought in the Employment Tribunals.

4. The support provided includes advice on preparing for hearings and compliance with case management orders. You may find it helpful to obtain advice prior to the first preliminary hearing. This may include advice on identifying the issues that you will want an Employment Judge to decide.

5. The clinic is co-ordinated by the Employment Lawyers Association Pro Bono Committee, funded by the Employment Lawyers Association and supported by three “pro bono” (free of charge) legal charities: ADVOCATE, LawWorks and the Free Representation Unit.

6. The ELIPS clinics are very popular and the appointments are allocated on a first come first served basis. In order to assist those who need it most urgently, appointments are limited to those who require advice in respect of hearings that will be taking place within two weeks of the appointment, or who have to comply with a direction (e.g. prepare a witness statement) within two weeks of the appointment. Currently it is only available for litigants with a claim that is being heard in London Central Employment Tribunal and will not apply to claims issued in London South or London East.

For example, if the clinic is taking place on Thursday 3 June 2021, to qualify for assistance you would need to show that you have a deadline to meet or a hearing to prepare for within two weeks of the clinic (on or before 17 June 2021).

7. To access a free advice session, you should do the following:

- Send an email to elips@elaweb.org.uk;

- Attach a copy of the notice of hearing and/or the case management orders/directions in respect of which you require advice so that the date for compliance and the Tribunal which is hearing your claim can be verified;
- If possible, please provide brief information about what help you would like to receive. For example, you may require assistance with preparation of a Schedule of Loss or you might have a query about a preliminary hearing to decide an issue such as whether or not you meet the test for disability in accordance with section 6 of the Equality Act 2020.

8. The documents you provide will be accessed by the volunteers on the day of the clinic. They will not have access to those documents in advance of the clinic. They are not allowed to help you outside of the clinic. However, if you require further assistance, the volunteer may be able to signpost you to other services.

How will the online clinic work?

9. If you have been successful in securing an appointment with one of the ELIPS volunteers, you will be sent an email with instructions about accessing the appointment. This will be set up as a videocall via Zoom. You will need an appropriate device to access the appointment via Zoom, which may include a mobile telephone or a laptop or computer with a webcam. You will be provided with an ELIPS information leaflet which gives more detail of the clinic and what you should expect to happen.

10. The appointment will last no more than 40 minutes and you will receive an email following the meeting, summarising the advice provided. A law student may attend to provide administrative support to the qualified volunteer and for the purpose of career development.

11. Anything you discuss with the volunteers will be kept confidential between you, the lawyers and the students advising/assisting on the day and the ELIPS scheme administrators.

12. If you are not polite and respectful, the online meeting will be terminated and you will not receive assistance.