

PRESS RELEASE

The Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council (AJTC) today launched its [Principles for Administrative Justice](#). The Principles are being published at a time when public services are under intense scrutiny, having to deliver significant but also fair cuts in services. They are a timely reminder of the values and standards that should underpin fairness and access to justice for people in their day-to-day dealings with public service organisations.

Richard Thomas, AJTC Chairman said: "Thousands of decisions affecting individuals and families are made every day by government departments, local authorities and others. These decisions range from welfare benefits to taxation, from planning decisions to traffic management, from mental health to immigration, from property valuation to school admissions and exclusions. The sheer scale of the numbers of decisions, their sensitivity and impact on people's lives is quite daunting. It is imperative, especially in the current climate, that the principles of fairness and accessibility as well as efficiency are seen to be applied. Public confidence depends upon it."

Seven principles are set out in the document that reflect the AJTC's twin concerns with a fair deal for users and a well-run, fair and proportionate administrative justice system. There is also a straightforward and simple self-assessment tool for public service organisations to use.

"Public services organisations are often large and complex. We aim to provide them with a simple barometer to test the fairness of their decision-making and the responsiveness of their services. At a time when cuts are being made, we are trying to ensure that core public service values are protected" continued Mr. Thomas.

"Fairness and good customer service are vital elements of public service. Organisations should set themselves high standards and communicate those standards to their customers at every opportunity".

A summary version of the Principles is also included. It is intended that organisations should be able to provide this to their customers as an indication of the service quality they should expect.

Notes to Editors

1. Principles for Administrative Justice is available at: www.ajtc.gov.uk. Its publication follows extensive research and consultation during 2009/10.
2. Richard Thomas was appointed Chairman of the AJTC with effect from September 2009. Prior to this he was Information Commissioner from November 2002.
3. The AJTC is an independent advisory non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Justice. The Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council (AJTC) was created by the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007.
4. On 14 October 2010, the Government announced its intention to abolish the AJTC as part of its Review of Arm's Length Bodies.

5. The AJTC does not have a press office. For further information or to interview Richard Thomas, please call Lisa Chilver on 020 7855 5202