

Judiciary
of Scotland



Health and Education Chamber
Ordinary Judicial Office Holder

First-tier Tribunal
For Scotland





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A foreword from the President of Scottish Tribunals

Lady Wise



The Scottish Tribunals, like the Scottish Courts, are subject to the rule of law. Those who sit as judicial office holders of the devolved Tribunals are independent judicial office holders with all the privileges and responsibilities that encompasses. Decision making must be impartial, rational and accurate. It is the duty of all those involved in the operation of the Tribunals to act ethically and adhere to standards of conduct that promote the rule of law.

The Health and Education Chamber the First-tier Tribunal, one of the six Chambers within the devolved system, deals with sensitive and highly specialised applications involving children and young people with additional support needs. Its judicial office holders decide cases in a unique setting that caters for the particular needs of everyone coming before them. This bespoke approach places considerable demands on those who sit on such cases, but the work is stimulating and rewarding. Those interested in administering justice in an inclusive and child-centred way will have much to offer.

The Chamber is led by its impressive President, May Dunsmuir, who brings a wealth of experience to her role. The advertised positions offer an opportunity to work collaboratively with other judicial office holders and to make decisions that have a meaningful impact on young people's lives.

As President of Scottish Tribunals, I regularly observe the skill and dedication of the judicial office holders throughout the devolved tribunals. I hope that you will apply to join this committed group of people.

History of the Scottish Tribunals

The Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014 (the 2014 Act) created a statutory framework for the Tribunals in Scotland.

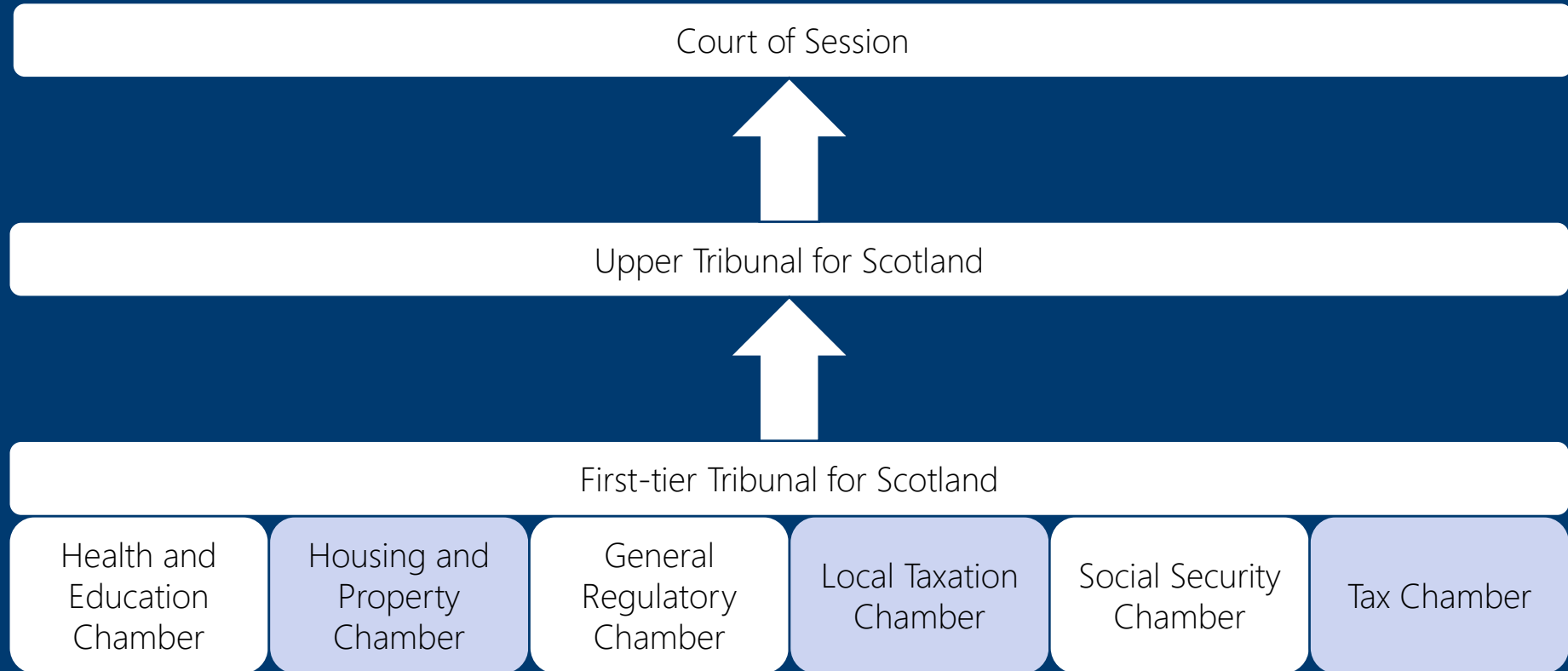
The 2014 Act created two new Tribunals, the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland and the Upper Tribunal for Scotland, known collectively as the Scottish Tribunals. The First-tier Tribunal consists of a number of Chambers, each with its own jurisdiction and headed by a Chamber President.

The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland deals with first instance decisions. These are cases heard at a tribunal for the first time.

The 2014 Act brings Tribunal appointments under the remit of the Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland (JABS) and transfers administrative support of Tribunals to the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS).

Appeals from the First-tier Tribunal are heard in the Upper Tribunal. In certain circumstances, some matters can be appealed from the Upper Tribunal to the Court of Session.

Structure of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland



Health and Education Chamber (HEC)

The Health and Education Chamber was established in 2018, and is based in the Glasgow Tribunals Centre, Glasgow. The Chamber President is May Dunsmuir. The Chamber currently has one jurisdiction - Additional Support Needs.

Additional Support Needs Jurisdiction

The Additional Support Needs jurisdiction decides different types of cases in relation to school education and discrimination. Applications are made under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (*called references*), the Equality Act 2010 (*called claims*). Claims or references can include a question about whether statutory duties have been applied compliantly with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Applications can be raised by a parent, young person (aged 16 years and above who remains in school education) or a child (up to and including the age of 15 years).

Anyone raising an application becomes a party in the case. The person raising the *reference* is called the appellant. The person raising the *claim* is called the claimant. Where the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is being argued other agencies may give notice of their intention to intervene in the proceedings. These are the Lord Advocate, the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland and the Scottish Commission for Human Rights. Where this happens, the intervening agency becomes a party for the UNCRC part of the proceedings.

Children and young people as parties

Children aged between 12 and 15 years may raise specific types of references that relate to co-ordinated support plans, provided they have capacity to do so and this will not have a detrimental effect on their wellbeing. Wellbeing is defined using the 'SHANARRI' principles – Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included. Children in this age range can also raise a reference challenging the education authority's assessment on their capacity and wellbeing.

Children and young people of any age who have capacity to do so may raise a disability discrimination claim.

Representation

Most parties are legally represented, although the Chamber has seen a rise in the number of unrepresented parties.

HEC applications – references and claims

Here is a summary of the types of references and claims that are made to the HEC.

References (respondents are education authorities)

References relate to the child or young person's additional support needs and their school education. The most common type of additional support need is neurodiversity (principally autism and ADHD associated conditions) but this can include other factors, e.g. care experience, bullying or being gifted. Most of the children and young people who are the subject of an application have complex and enduring health conditions. The types of references are:

- In relation to the only statutory education plan in Scotland, the co-ordinated support plan;
- Placing requests (the majority for special schools);
- Transitions (principally the transition from secondary school to post school destinations);
- The child's ability to exercise a right under the 2004 Act (testing their capacity and the impact on their wellbeing)

Claims (responsible bodies are education authorities, independent or grant-aided schools)

Claims are made in respect of disability discrimination in school education. Some of the subject matters include exclusion from school, qualifications, support in class and academic/life skills curriculum balance. The most common types of discrimination argued are:

- Discrimination arising from disability;
- Indirect discrimination;
- Direct discrimination;
- Duty to make reasonable adjustments.

HEC applications – UNCRC Cases

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

For the purposes of the UNCRC a child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

A party may rely on the UNCRC when making a reference or claim, to argue that the respondent or responsible body has acted or failed to act in a way which is compatible with any of the UNCRC Articles. Some of the remedies being sought include a return to school, upholding the child's right to privacy of confidential medical information and apologies. The UNCRC Articles that bear most relevance to matters raised before the Chamber are:

- Article 2 (non-discrimination – often linked to a child's abilities)
- Article 3 (best interests of the child)
- Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)
- Article 16 (right to privacy, e.g. in relation to confidential medical information)
- Article 23 (children with a disability)
- Article 28 (right to education)
- Article 29 (goals of education)
- Article 30 (children from minority groups, e.g. deaf community)
- Article 31 (child's right to leisure, play and culture)

HEC child- centred hearings

In this Chamber, legal judicial office holders judicially manage their cases from allocation to the hearing or towards settlement. They decide which hearing type is suitable (in-person, online or hybrid). A great deal of planning and preparation then begins in the background.

Ordinary (called specialist in the HEC) judicial office holders are only allocated to cases that are due to proceed to a hearing.

Hearings in the HEC

Hearings are made up of three judicial office holders – one legal and two specialist. The specialist judicial office holders are drawn from three fields - education, health or social work.

Hearings last around 2 to 3 days and will have a sizable bundle of documentary evidence. It is common for skilled (expert) witnesses to give evidence. The child or young person may attend part or all of the hearing to give their evidence or their views.

Child-centred access to justice

The child or young person is kept at the centre of all Chamber processes, from preparation for the hearing to the drafting of the decision, which are tailored to their needs. Tribunals often write short letters to the child or young person after the decision has been made, explaining their decision.

The Chamber conducts in-person hearings in sensory hearing venues. These are child-led by design and intended to promote inclusion and reduce sensory overload. Online and hybrid (a mixture of in-person and online or telephone) hearings are conducted in a manner consistent with sensory principles.

The Chamber has a website which includes a section for 12 to 15 years olds, called *needs to learn*. The Chamber President publishes most of her Guidance Notes on the website for the assistance of parties. Most tribunal decisions are published (on an anonymised basis) on the Chamber website on their Decisions Database. The Chamber website can be accessed here: [About the Chamber | First-tier Tribunal for Scotland \(Health and Education Chamber\)](#)

Eligibility – HEC ordinary judicial office holder

Ordinary members of the First-tier Tribunal are judicial office holders appointed by the Scottish Ministers.

To be eligible for appointment to the Chamber you must have knowledge and experience of children or young persons with—

(a) additional support needs within the meaning of section 1(1) of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004; **or**

(b) a disability within the meaning of section 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

(Scottish Tribunals (Eligibility for Appointment) Regulations 2015/381, paragraph 3A)

You will be asked to confirm that you have the necessary knowledge and experience in the application form.

The Chamber has ordinary judicial office holders from a variety of backgrounds including: education, health and social work. A judicial office holder with experience in education will always sit on a hearing.

Background Examples of Existing Judicial Office Holders

Experience in school education. School education means nursery, primary and secondary school education. This may be in a mainstream or special school, a state school, residential school, a grant-aided school or an independent school.

Experience in health, which include GPs, child and adolescent psychiatry, child psychology, allied health (e.g. speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy) and nursing.

Social work practice. This can include children and families, care experience, adoption and permanence and criminal justice.

Becoming a judicial office holder

All members of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland are judicial officer holders, and all take an oath of allegiance to the King and a judicial oath to do right to all manner of people without fear or favour, affection or ill will. Judicial office holders are expected to follow the six Bangalore Principles of :

- Judicial independence
- Impartiality
- Integrity
- Propriety
- Ensuring equality of treatment
- Competence and diligence

The Bangalore Principles are discussed in the *Guidance to Judicial Office Holders on Judicial Ethics in Scotland (2023)*, which you will find here: www.judiciary.scot/docs/librariesprovider3/judiciarydocuments/judicial-institute-publications/guidance-to-johs-on-judicial-ethics.pdf?sfvrsn=8c484132_1.

Working as part of a tri-partite judicial body alongside a legal judicial office holder and another specialist judicial office holder, you will play a crucial role in considering evidence, applying the law and reaching fair and balanced decisions. You will bring valuable professional knowledge, sector expertise or lived experience to underpin practical outcomes for parties.

As a judicial office holder, you will act independently, uphold the highest of standards of integrity and confidentiality and ensure that all parties are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. You will be supported by significant training and ongoing development opportunities.

This role offers a rewarding, exciting opportunity to contribute to public service, supporting accessible and specialist justice while using your experience to make a meaningful contribution to the delivery of school education across Scotland.

Role of an HEC ordinary judicial office holder

Tribunals in the HEC are composed with three judicial office holders – one legal and two ordinary (called specialist) judicial officer holders in the HEC. Each tribunal is a multi-disciplinary body in which the three judicial office holders come together to offer deep and rich hearing and decision-making processes. Your specialist contribution holds an equal part within this structure, allowing the law to be applied in a context-specific way. The appeal courts have made it clear that the Tribunal's specialist knowledge ought to be directly used to inform its decision making and reasoning tasks. Specialist judicial office holders will require to:

- Work collaboratively with other HEC judicial officer holders, participating effectively and impartially in the hearing and the decision-making process
- Read and become familiar with the papers ('the bundle') in preparation for hearings
- Meet the other judicial officer holders prior to commencement of the hearing to plan and prepare the tribunal's approach
- Contribute to the fair, efficient and effective conduct of hearings including ensuring that parties can present their evidence and arguments and have their cases considered fully and fairly, consistent with the Tribunal's overriding objective
- Take an active role in hearings including asking relevant questions of witnesses; taking the evidence of the child or young person using a list of agreed questions; and listening to the views of the child or young person
- Weigh up complex and potentially conflicting evidence and support the other judicial office holders to reach an independent and reasoned decision after considering all oral and written evidence
- Contribute effectively to the use of the tribunal's specialist expertise by sharing their specific knowledge, expertise and understanding
- Work collaboratively with other judicial officer holders and support the legal judicial office holder to draft the written decision to reflect the evidence considered and the collective decision of the tribunal, consistent with the HEC's Judicial Decision Writing Toolkit
- Fulfil initial induction and continuing training requirements by attending training days and meetings with other judicial office holders of the HEC as and when required, keeping up to date with current procedures and practices
- Participate in judicial office holder review at least every five years, as directed by the Chamber President
- Be IT-literate, have access to a laptop or desktop computer (unless provided with a Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service laptop) and make fullest use of electronic means of communication including working from electronic bundles
- Travel throughout Scotland, as required

Personal and judicial qualities

As well as the statutory eligibility, applicants are also required to demonstrate judicial and personal qualities.

Specialist Knowledge

- Provide the tribunal with support and guidance on matters in which they hold specialist knowledge, lived experience, understanding and expertise on relevant issues which are in dispute;
- Use experience and expertise to assist the tribunal to understand how a child or young person's additional support needs and/or disability affects their activities of daily living and school education, highlighting any barriers to participation and inclusion in school education.

Working with others

- Work collaboratively and effectively as part of a team of judicial office holders and be active in the hearing, deliberations and decision making;
- Take tri-partite responsibility for process and decisions, ensuring they are fair and impartial;
- Manage difficult issues which may arise in hearings in an inclusive and supportive manner, with care and sensitivity;
- Is self-aware and uses feedback and self-reflection to develop self and others.

Exercising Judgement

- Remains impartial and open minded and is seen to be fair to all;
- Able to absorb and distil complex arguments, summarise issues, and apply specialist knowledge to support well reasoned decisions.
- Able to focus on salient pieces of information and ask probing, focused questions in a way that is sensitive to those being questioned.

Managing Work Effectively

- Is diligent and hard working; and
- Is able to deliver work at speed and under pressure within timescales set by the Chamber President.

Communicating Effectively

- Modifies communication style to meet the needs of other tribunal judicial office holder, parties and witnesses, consistent with trauma informed principles;
- Ability to communicate with children and young people in an inclusive and respectful manner;
- Listens with care, patience and respect;
- Participate fully in deliberations after the hearing has concluded and convey specialist knowledge clearly.

Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland

The Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland (JABS) is an independent non-departmental public body whose statutory role is to make recommendations to the Scottish Ministers for appointment for judicial offices under the provisions of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008.

The responsibilities of JABS under the 2008 Act are that:

- selection of an individual to be recommended for appointment must be solely on merit;
- the Board may select an individual only if it is satisfied that the individual is of good character; and
- in carrying out its functions, the Board must have regard to the need to encourage diversity in the range of individuals available for selection to be recommended for appointment to a judicial office. This is subject to the provisions in the first two bullet points above.

Candidates will go through a holistic application process which tests the level of skill, experience and professionalism required to perform the duties of the office.

JABS encourages diversity and particularly 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.

Each applicant will be assessed against a set of skills and qualities which are necessary for the role, which are shown in the diagram below.

The skills and qualities of an ordinary judicial officer holder are highlighted in the following graphic.



Appointment and Remuneration in the HEC

Fees and Expenses

The roles are paid on a daily fee basis. Ordinary members of the Health and Education Chamber are paid £293.69. Travel and subsistence expenses will also be met in line with terms and conditions.

There is no requirement for applicants to reside in Scotland. It should be noted, however, that for members that are located outside of Scotland expenses will not be reimbursed for travel expenses outside of Scotland.

Time Commitment

You are required to be available for not less than 10 days in each year, although the total time commitment could vary depending on the volume of work of the Chamber. The allocation of a minimum number of sitting days in any year is not guaranteed.

Hearings can be expected to last on average 2 to 3 days. In addition to sittings, there is at least one annual mandatory training event, which takes place in March. Additional training is offered throughout the year. Induction training will last three days. New judicial office holders are also expected to observe hearings and attend visits to special schools.

Period of appointment

By virtue of paragraph 4 of schedule 7 of the 2014 Act you will be automatically reappointed for periods of five years, unless one of the conditions listed in paragraph 4(3) of Schedule 7 applies which are if a member declines to be reappointed, the member is ineligible for reappointment or the President of Scottish Tribunals has recommended to the Scottish Ministers that you should not be reappointed. You may decline automatic reappointment by providing one month's written notice to the Lord President that you do not wish to continue in post at the expiry of your current period in office.

Pursuant to section 26 of the Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993, as amended by paragraph 25 of Schedule 1 of the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022, you are required to vacate your office on the day on which you attain the age of 75.

Induction and Support in the HEC

The Chamber provides comprehensive induction and support to new judicial office holders. This includes:

- A three-day induction course.
- A visit to the sensory hearing suite in the Glasgow Tribunals Centre and an instructed tour by the Chamber President.
- Meeting operational and support staff from within the Chamber.
- Shadowing experienced Tribunal judicial office holders to familiarise themselves with the judicial environment and observe the work undertaken, which also provides an opportunity for discussion on how best to approach and prepare for hearings.
- Observing hearings.
- Training with the Chamber administration on software used by judicial office holders.
- Training on relevant legislation.
- Training on Chamber President Guidance.
- Lectures.
- Peer presentations.
- Mentoring support.
- Visits to special schools to observe how additional support for learning is delivered.
- Informal drop-in sessions with the Chamber President.
- Access to peer-led judicial supports within the Chamber President's office.
- Protected caseloads in the first 6 months of appointment.

HEC induction training

Induction training is delivered across three days and includes sessions on the relevant law, the tribunal hearing and decision making, child/young person advocacy and our sensory hearing principles. The Chamber President will take you on a tour of the unique sensory hearing suite in Glasgow, showing you first-hand how a sensory hearing will happen and explaining how this is underpinned by lived experience.

Training will include presentations, group work, problem solving, discussion points and practical exercises. There will be lots of question-and-answer time. You will also hear from experienced specialist and legal judicial office holders in the HEC as well as from an external child and young persons' advocacy agency and others.

By the end of your Induction Training, you will be able to:

- Understand the features of the types of cases that come within the HEC (Additional Support Needs) jurisdiction.
- Appreciate how cases within the HEC are processed and managed, both judicially and administratively.
- Analyse some of the main legislative tests applicable in the most common HEC (Additional Support Needs) case types.
- Appreciate the importance of the voice of the child or young person in HEC proceedings and how to actively seek that voice.
- Practice good judicial techniques in preparing for an HEC hearing.
- Exhibit good judicial behaviour during HEC hearings.
- Reflect on the importance and main hallmarks of excellence in decision writing.

Following your training you will:

- Observe tribunal hearings to see these working in practice.
- Visits at least two special schools in Scotland to observe how education is being delivered in an additional support needs environment.
- Be given a mentor who sits in the HEC.

Ongoing Training

You can also expect to attend the HEC Annual Conference (in person) every March; and evening training (online) every two years. Complex case training is delivered to smaller groups of HEC judicial office holders every year and this includes training on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Equality Act 2010.

A message from Chamber President, May Dunsmuir

Ordinary judicial office holders in the HEC are called specialist judicial office holders – that is because there is nothing ‘ordinary’ about them. They are specialist in their own fields. They bring a wealth of knowledge and understanding to their cases. They also support me in my work as a Chamber President. This includes the development of our sensory hearing principles, the development of guidance on how to take a child’s views or evidence and the development of the children’s section of our website. Our specialist judicial office holders bring knowledge, experience and expertise in a number of different ways. Sometimes this comes from their professional work and sometimes it comes from a combination of this and their own lived experience as parents or people with additional support needs or disabilities, or care experience. We have specialist judicial office holders from mainstream and special school education, social work, residential schools, child and adolescent psychiatry, forensic psychiatry, clinical psychology, speech and language therapy, pharmacology, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

The strength of an HEC tribunal is its tripartite nature. I was told by a child some years ago that a triangle is the strongest shape you can have because all the sides are equal. The HEC tribunal is very much like the triangle. Each judicial office holder plays an equal part in the hearing, the deliberations and the decision. The specialist judicial office holder ‘owns’ the decision as much as the legal judicial office holder.

A legal judicial office holder can sit alone in certain cases. When I ask our legal judicial office holders what their preference is, without exception they say the three-judicial office holder tribunal. This is because of the expertise and support we find in our specialist judicial office holders. They support us to understand the best type of approach to take, the significance of facts and evidence and they provide a practical insight into the challenges faced by children with additional support needs or disabilities.

There is no ‘standard case’ in the HEC and that is because every child is unique. Disability discrimination applications are perhaps the most wide ranging and can include disputes on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools, the provision of BSL interpretation as a reasonable adjustment and exclusions or expulsion from school. We tailor our hearings and our processes around the child – we do not expect the child to have to adjust to suit us – we adjust to suit them. This helps us to secure the best evidence. A child who feels included, important and valued from the outset and throughout will share their views or their evidence with much more ease. We take a trauma informed approach and work hard to reduce the potential for re-traumatisation. Some representatives tell us that far from having a detrimental effect on a child’s wellbeing, our tribunals can reinforce wellbeing, particularly in the areas of feeling respected and included.

Our hearings are not easy, they can be emotionally and physically challenging, but you will have the opportunity to make a difference to the experience of the child in how they access justice and in the decision you make on how their education will be delivered. Our decisions are not only relevant to the parties who are involved in the particular case, they can also have an impact on the delivery of education across Scotland.

The HEC is a collegiate and supportive Chamber. You will be well supported by our existing judiciary and our staff. I can say without hesitation that it is the most rewarding work of my judicial career. If you have the relevant experience, and you are keen to play a part in making decisions for some of Scotland’s most cherished children, then I encourage you to apply.



A message from HEC (health) judicial office holder, Sally Anderson



My background is as a clinical child psychologist working in the NHS, a residential special school, private practice and as an expert witness in custody and trauma related civil actions. After retirement I wanted to continue to use my expertise, and when my attention was drawn to the advert for the role as a judicial office holder of this tribunal, it dovetailed with my experience. However, many judicial office holders can fulfil the role while having other full-time or part-time work.

I have been a judicial office holder in the Health and Education Chamber since 2018 and I have sat on cases involving appeals against refusals of school placing requests for children with additional support needs, disability discrimination claims in school education and, latterly, UNCRC incompatibility actions following the United Nations Convention on the Child (incorporation)(Scotland) Act 2024. The judicial work is incredibly rewarding, intellectually stimulating and offers the opportunity to play a part in legal decisions which can have a profound impact on children, young people and families.

The Health and Education Chamber offers high quality training and support. The emphasis is on making the judicial process as child-centred as possible, from involving children with additional support needs in the design of the hearing rooms we use to sending a letter directly to the child or young person to inform them of the outcome when it is appropriate to do so. We aim to make hearings accessible and always to listen to children.

Taking the judicial oath as the first step to doing this work is a reminder of its importance. I have learned a huge amount about the law and how to apply evidence to legal tests. All three tribunal judicial office holders – one legal and two specialist (with experience in education and health or social work) – are equally involved in the hearing process, decision making and agreeing the terms of the written decision. The opportunity to work collaboratively over a 2 to 3 day hearing is a real strength of our jurisdiction.



A message from HEC (education) judicial office holder, Jane Laverick



I am a specialist judicial office holder for education. My background is as a secondary education teacher. I became a high school teacher sort of by accident. Having undertaken research and teaching in tertiary education, I decided to do a PGDE as an extra qualification, not really expecting to enjoy teaching in schools. However, as soon as I started working with children and young people I found it fascinating and, frankly, enormously good fun. There's a real energy about working with teenagers. It can be quite challenging but it's rarely, if ever, dull.

I worked as an English teacher initially. I became interested in young people who found literacy and learning challenging. I could see how stressful and frustrating school could be for them. I wanted to find ways to engage them and build their confidence so that they could feel less anxious about learning.

I moved into a support for learning role and, over the years, I've seen some amazing success stories of children in mainstream settings exceeding everyone's expectations and going on to achieve fantastically in all sorts of areas of their lives. I've also seen children for whom mainstream education has not worked out, for a whole range of reasons, in spite of a lot of detailed planning and bespoke arrangements.

I have a particular interest in child-centred planning and also in listening to the views of children. I think it is important that we value the views of the child and that we always do our utmost to seek those views, even in the case of children who might have quite significant communication impairment. If you facilitate it properly and actively listen to what children have to say, you can be surprised by what you hear and how insightful they can be.

Our tribunal hearings are sometimes quite emotionally charged and, on occasions, those emotions are visible at our hearings. We really get into the detail of the supports that each individual learner needs in their education. The child is always at the very heart of every decision we make. We are making decisions of real importance which impact directly on the lives of children and their education. Sometimes, our decisions have implications that extend beyond that individual child and may have repercussions on the delivery of support in education much more widely. A specialist judicial officer's knowledge is enormously important, but it's also vital to recognise the specialist knowledge of other people, whether that's a fellow tribunal judicial office holder or a credible witness giving evidence. For me, the most important personal qualities to bring to this role are being respectful, personable and polite; having good listening skills and being flexible in your thinking in response to what you've read or heard. It's imperative for all of us to be openminded when we approach any hearing.

If you have relevant specialist knowledge and these sorts of personal qualities, I would urge you to consider applying for this role.



A message from HEC (social work) judicial office holder, David Calderwood



I have been a specialist judicial office holder with a background in social work in the Health and Education Chamber for the past 4 years, having been interested to apply when I saw a note for expression of interest in the Social Entitlement Chamber, where I have been a Disability Qualified Member for the past 5 years. I have been a qualified social worker for nearly 40 years and am currently still working as a manager in Out of Hours Social Work, where I have worked for over 30 years. I have undertaken specialist training and perform duties as a mental health officer and appropriate adult as part of my role. Prior to working in out of hours social work, I was a Justice Social Work manager and worked as a social worker in a learning disabilities team for over 7 years, which included working with children. I sit on the SSSC Fitness to Practice Panel and am Chair of a foster panel and I am involved in social work education. Although I am currently employed, I find that the tribunal scheduling system which asks for your availability in advance, means that I can plan my HEC work around my employment commitments.

I have found the HEC Chamber to be very welcoming and I feel very valued. The initial training was excellent and really prepared me for the role. Ongoing training is really valued in the Chamber, and they have an excellent member review system which ensures that you get feedback on your judicial work which is really helpful and assists your development. I was allocated a mentor when I started which was also really helpful just to be able to run things by a peer.

When sitting on tribunals I have found that other judicial office holders really value my knowledge, and I have learned so much from the legal and other specialist judicial office holders. This is the real strength of the HEC tribunal in that we all work together and use our knowledge to make good decisions. As a specialist judicial office holder, you have input into the content of the decision and deciding questions to be asked of children if they are attending the hearing. The tribunal always wants to hear the views of children and really goes the extra mile to ensure that their views and voices are heard, either directly or via advocacy reports. The hearing rooms are child friendly and the tribunal strives to ensure that everyone feels comfortable to give their evidence.

I really enjoy my work in this Chamber and would encourage you to apply.



Useful Links

- Health and Education Chamber

www.healthandeducationchamber.scot

- The visual guide to the Glasgow Tribunals Centre Sensory Hearing Suite

[Visual Guide: Going to the Glasgow Tribunals Centre | First-tier Tribunal for Scotland \(Health and Education Chamber\)](#)

- Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014

[Tribunals \(Scotland\) Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

- Scottish Tribunals Annual Report – 2024/2025

[Scottish Tribunals Annual Report](#)

- My Rights, My Say – the national children’s agency

[My Rights, My Say](#)

- Let’s Talk ASN – national advocacy service for additional support needs

[Let's Talk ASN - National Advocacy Service for Additional Support Needs – Enquire](#)

- National Autistic Implementation Team

[NAIT | ThirdSpace](#)

- The Promise Scotland

[The Promise Scotland | Transforming how Scotland cares for children, families, and care-experienced adults](#)



Judicial Office for Scotland
2026