



Ministry  
of Justice

**Dominic Raab MP**  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary  
of State for Justice

Bob Neill MP  
Chair, Justice Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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Dear Chairman,

### ESTIMATES DEBATE: COURT AND TRIBUNAL FEES

During the estimates debate on 4 July, I said that I would write to you setting out the evidence and research on the costs to the courts of delays caused by unrepresented litigants.

Over recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of people who represent themselves, particularly in family proceedings. Despite concerns that this was leading to cases taking longer, and that children and families were suffering through delay, the evidence does not support this.

The latest statistics published in the Ministry of Justice's family court statistics quarterly bulletin shows that in the quarter from January to March 2016, the average time taken from the issue of a private law family case to first disposal was 14.8 weeks, which was the same as the equivalent quarter in 2015 and lower than in the same quarter in 2014, when the average time was 17.8 weeks.

Further details can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/533607/family-court-statistics-jan-mar-2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/533607/family-court-statistics-jan-mar-2016.pdf)

We do, of course, want those representing themselves to have all the support they need which is why we are improving support and advice in the civil and family courts, by providing funding for projects led by advice, voluntary and the pro bono sector. In the last 18 months we have invested £2 million to fund the 'Litigants in Person Support Strategy', which is already seeing significant progress, with increased provision of face to face, telephone and online support to litigants in person.

Judicial training has been delivered to support the implementation of the new child arrangements programme, a key focus of this training is to ensure that Judges, Magistrates and Legal Advisors are better equipped to support litigants in person through the court process.

During the same debate, Dr Rupa Huq MP, the Honourable Member for Ealing Central and Acton, asked a question in relation to the costs of the Employment Tribunals. In answering, I set out the overall cost of the Employment Tribunals in 2014/15 of £71.4 million. That figure is correct, but on reviewing the transcript of the debate, I realised that the question was about the specific costs of administering fees in the Employment Tribunals.

The operational running costs of processing claims, determining applications for fee remissions and accounting for income are estimated to be around £0.7 million per annum. In comparison, we collected a little over £9 million in income during 2014/15.

You surely. 

**DOMINIC RAAB**