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# PCS condemns attempt to reintroduce tribunal fees

The UK Government has launched a consultation on the reintroduction of fees for submitting claims to the Employment Tribunal (ET) and Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) in a move that will hit the lowest earners, women, disabled people and minorities.

PCS General Secretary-elect, Fran Heathcote said: "This is nothing short of a further attack on working people trying to exercise their rights in the workplace. The government has given carte blanche to rogue employers to ride roughshod over the rights of workers who they know can ill-afford to pay tribunal fees just to access justice.

"This is the latest anti-worker and anti-union move from the Conservative government who have also sought to restrict the right to strike under the guise of minimum service levels. PCS will oppose any attempts to introduce restrictions on the right to strike and any attempts to deny justice to our members seeking justice through the tribunals system."

The government previously introduced fees in 2013, but these were struck down following a successful campaign and legal action taken by Unison to the Supreme Court in 2017. At the time, the Supreme Court noted in their decision that the fees presented a real risk of a denial of access to justice.

[Also condemning the move](#), TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak said: "All working people should be able to enforce their rights. But introducing fees for tribunals puts yet another hurdle in the way of those seeking justice at their most vulnerable moment.

"Working people shouldn't be picking up the bill for exploitative employers' poor behaviour. Employment tribunal fees are just an invitation for bad bosses to ride roughshod over workers."

During the previous fees regime, there was a 70% drop in the number of cases submitted to the Employment Tribunal. The court also found that the practice

was inherently discriminatory, given that a greater number of claims were brought by women who, on average, tend to earn less than men and the fees presented an additional barrier.

The fees are also likely to disproportionately affect disabled workers who, despite being guaranteed protections under the Equality Act, will find their access to the tribunals system severely hampered by this additional barrier. This is especially pointed given that disabled workers earn around 15% less due to the disability pay gap.

While the fees for submitting a claim under the previous regime ranged from £390 to £1,200 for the ET and to £1,600 for the EAT, the new consultation is advocating a reduced fee of £55. However, this would continue to be a huge burden for many people already struggling with the cost of living, particularly those on lower incomes.