



G4S response to Liberty's call for a judicial review of the Government Equalities Office tendering process for the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) Helpline Contract.

We would welcome and support any review of the tendering process for the Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) helpline, which in our view was conducted very openly, professionally and competitively.

We were awarded the contract on the strength of our work handling other complex call centres including the Department of Work and Pensions' (DWP) child maintenance options service. We have supported that helpline for separating parents over the past three years and feedback from callers and the DWP has been positive.

We will bring that experience to the Equality Office's advisory service and ensure that our team has the knowledge, skills and training to provide clear, supportive and practical advice to people who turn to this helpline when they are concerned they have been discriminated against.

Neil Malpas
Managing Director
G4S Employment Support Services

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www.g4s.com



About the service:

- The Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) helpline is a resource for people who think they may have been discriminated against or have a human rights issue
- The service is designed to guide people on their legal rights and options to resolve issues, but not to give legal advice
- People may contact the helpline if they believe that they have been discriminated against based on their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, being pregnant, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Examples include: suspicions that they may have been made redundant because of their age or disability; refused housing because of their race; or treated differently because of pregnancy, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

Which department commissions this work:

- The Government Equalities Office (GEO) asked G4S to take on the running of the EASS after a competitive tender process following EU procurement rules

G4S experience:

- During the past three years, we have run the Child Maintenance Options (CMO) helpline for the Department of Work and Pensions, where our advisors engage with separating parents to help them put in place the best maintenance arrangements for their children
- Parents may be distressed and emotionally vulnerable and we give them support through the process of setting up maintenance arrangements with a strong focus on amicable resolution, putting their child's welfare first
- In 2015, we contacted 500,000 parents last year and cases can be long and complex
- Our staff guide parents through the complicated scenarios that apply as their lives may (e.g. remarrying, getting a job, receiving benefits), carefully explaining the options available to them
- We provide an accessible service to people whose first language is not English and vulnerable customers
- We're confident that we can use this expertise to improve the EASS helpline for the benefit of its users