

Below is some important information about the claim provided by solicitors representing the Next staff, Pattinson & Brewer. Please read it and then click next to continue with your registration.

If I join the Next equal pay claim, will I have to pay legal fees?

Pattinson & Brewer are representing the Next staff under a no win no fee agreement (called a Damages Based Agreement or DBA).

What is a DBA?

A DBA is a no win no fee agreement.

Under a DBA you are obliged to pay your solicitor for the work they do on your claim **but only if you receive financial compensation.**

The amount you pay is capped at a percentage of any compensation you get, plus VAT.

Are there alternatives to a DBA?

Yes.

- The **Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service** ("ACAS") help people resolve equal pay disputes through mediation and do not charge. Further information regarding ACAS can be found at <http://www.acas.org.uk>.
- Limited free legal advice and assistance is sometimes available to help with Equal Pay claims from the Legal Aid Agency. Their website is: <https://www.gov.uk/check-legal-aid>.
- Some people have **legal expenses insurance ("LEI")** as part of their house or car insurance. Assistance from a solicitor under LEI is free.
- Organisations such as law centres and Citizens Advice Bureau offer free legal advice and assistance for people on limited means who live in their area (this is called **pro bono representation**).
- **Trade Unions** provide access to free legal help with employment claims for their members.

At this stage, Pattinson & Brewer are satisfied that funding your claim with a DBA is suitable for you but if you are in union or have LEI, please tell them and they will check to see if these provide a cheaper way for you to fund your claim.

What about Expenses?

Under your DBA you will be separately responsible for paying any expenses involved in pursuing your claim, but only if you win compensation. Expenses are shared across everyone in the group. In this case expenses (including VAT) are likely to be as follows:

- Barristers' Fees: It is hard to be accurate at this stage, but typically barristers' fees for a tribunal claim of this type will range from £50,000 to £100,000. This would mean that if there were 3,000 people in the group (and we think this is a realistic estimate at this time), each person would have to pay between £16.00 to £32.00 if they receive compensation.
- Equal Pay Expert's Fees: Typically these could range between £10,000 - £20,000. So, based on our estimated number in the group, this would be between £3 to £6 per person.

If you do not win your claim, no expenses will be payable by you.

Are there any circumstances when I could be responsible for paying Pattinson & Brewer even though I do not receive compensation?

Yes, but only in very limited circumstances. For example, if Next make you an offer of compensation and Pattinson & Brewer advise you it is a reasonable offer and to accept it, but you refuse, Pattinson & Brewer can end the DBA and charge you for their work.

The total charge would depend on how much work had been done on your case but they estimate approximately £2,000 per client.

Can I cancel my DBA?

Yes. You have the right to cancel your DBA within 14 days after it is entered into, and you do not need to give any reason for this.

You also have a right to dispute any charges and expense.

Both these rights are set out clearly in the DBA itself.

I want to be included in the Next Equal Pay Claim and for Pattinson & Brewer to represent me under a DBA – what do I do now?

You will need to read and agree the DBA [LINK TO DBA]

Pattinson and Brewer will then Sign, date and return a copy of the DBA to you by email (or post if you prefer). They will then action your claim. You will be told when your claim has been sent to the tribunal and kept up to date with its progress.