

## Representation for employees in employment disputes

The AOP has made arrangements with Amicus Legal to provide representation in employment disputes to AOP members who work as employees.

Amicus Legal currently provide a legal advice helpline service to AOP members, answering legal enquiries on work and non-work related matters. Now Amicus Legal will provide representation in employment disputes on preferential terms to employed AOP members.

Employees seeking advice on disputes with their employers can telephone Amicus Legal for advice in the initial stages of the dispute. This is provided to AOP members free of charge. Should an employee wish to take the employer to an employment tribunal it is important to have legal representation in such matters. Amicus Legal have great experience in representing clients at employment tribunals and will offer this service to AOP members who are employees at a cost of £80 an hour or a flat fee of £1,800. If Amicus needs to instruct Counsel on a particularly complex issue the member will be asked to agree Counsel's fee in advance and to pay the fee in addition to Amicus's fee, otherwise there no additional charges, such as for postage or telephone calls. These rates are much lower than you are likely to pay a solicitor to handle your case and represent you at an employment tribunal. This service will be provided in England and Wales by Amicus Legal and in Scotland and Northern Ireland by agents who Amicus Legal use in these countries.

Advice and representation can also be offered for employers' disciplinary hearings.

The Association of Optometrists' staff will continue to assist members directly with hearings before the General Optical Council, PCTs and the College of Optometrists.

Should you require these services telephone Neil McDermott or Edward Wright at Amicus Legal on 01206 36 84 34.