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Next Meeting: 13 April 2002, 2:00 to 4:30

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Deadline for the next *Update* is

Please send letters on any issue, news items and articles to:

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**Notices**

York St John College v Claire Hobbs

York St John College has failed in its bid to overturn a unanimous decision of the Employment Tribunal in Leeds that Claire Hobbs is disabled within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Counsel for Dr Hobbs, who has a neuromuscular illness, told the Employment Appeal Tribunal that "It was obvious to the Appellant, as it was obvious to the Tribunal, that Dr Hobbs was disabled." Counsel went on to stress that "the DDA was not designed to provide employers with technical escape routes from having to take responsibility for persons suffering from disabilities."

The Employment Appeal Tribunal agreed with Dr Hobbs' Counsel that there was no error of law in the Tribunal's ruling and, accordingly, dismissed York St John College's appeal.

The decision means that Dr Hobbs' claims of discrimination and victimisation can now be heard in full. A further Hearing of a Preliminary Point related to a claim of unfair dismissal and a Directions Hearing is due to take place in Leeds at the end of January.

The THES and the Lecturer both reported the EAT's ruling. Dr Hobbs dismissed the comment made by a College spokeswoman to the THES that the appeal to the EAT was for the benefit of both parties as "a piece of spin worthy of an Alistair Campbell or a Jo Moore." In the Lecturer, Adrian Jones, NATFHE Regional Official, who has supported Dr Hobbs throughout, did not mince his words when he said, "It is disgraceful that a Church of England college should have used the law in such a way to try to prove that an obviously disabled person was not disabled."

Dr Hobbs would like to thank CAFAS members for their support, including attendance at part of the London EAT hearing in October, during her distressing and protracted dispute with York St John College.