16. Tribunals, inquiries, and the ombudsmen remedy

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Chapter: (p. 349) 16. Tribunals, inquiries, and the ombudsmen remedy

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This chapter begins by distinguishing between tribunals and inquiries. A tribunal is a permanent body that sits periodically, while an inquiry is something which is established on an ad hoc basis. Tribunals are empowered to make decisions that are binding on those parties subject to their jurisdiction; inquiries generally do not have formal decision-making powers. Tribunals are concerned with matters of fact and law, whereas inquiries are concerned with wider policy issues. The discussion then turns to the reform of the tribunal system, the former Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council, the origins of ombudsmen, the Parliamentary Commissioner, ombudsmen of devolved institutions, the Health Service Commissioner, the Local Government Commissioners, ombudsmen and the courts, proposals for a unified Public Service Ombudsman service, and the European Ombudsman.