

# HM Coastguards win workers status after historic legal win



## HM Coastguards have won worker status after a historic legal battle

The Employment Appeal Tribunal this week ruled that HM Coastguard officers are workers and a contract existed between the parties in circumstances where coastguards had the right to be remunerated for their activities.

The hearing centered around a coastguard officer – Martin Groom – whose membership was terminated in a meeting where a trade union official was not allowed to be present.



Mr Groom claimed this was in breach of the Employment Relations Act (ERA) – but to rely on the act had to prove he was a worker and not a volunteer.

The outcome of the case has potential implications for the voluntary sector as a whole as it rows back on previous case law finding volunteers not to be workers in every case.”.

**Martin Groom, lead claimant and former HM Coastguard, said:**

“This judgement brings a level of responsibility to HM coastguard to treat officer with a respect and dignity they haven’t been shown before.

“They now cannot terminate contracts on a whim – we are workers and deserve to be treated as such.”

“I’d like to acknowledge the effort, time and input of GMB – without the union we would not have been able to fight the case.”

**Gary Smith, GMB General Secretary, said:**

“This is a landmark win for coastguards – and workers – everywhere.

“The public have the utmost respect for the brave men and women who keep our coasts safe. This ruling demands that their employers do the same.”

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