

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Steve Jones is a diabetic. He was also a postman for 21 years, working for the Royal Mail. He drove a van and his driving licence was renewed every three years. However, when his doctor advised him to use insulin injections instead of tablets – and Steve Jones told his bosses – he was banned from driving his van and ordered to use a bicycle instead. As a result, his wages were reduced and he had to abandon the rural round in Cambridgeshire where he had worked for eight years.

Steve Jones was very unhappy about this decision, which his bosses refused to reconsider. He asked his union, the Commercial Workers' Union, for help. They were unable to influence the decision of Royal Mail chiefs, who said they were worried Steve might black out at the wheel and be a danger to the public – and himself.

The union recommended taking the case to an employment tribunal, arguing that there was no medical evidence to support the decision. The British Diabetics Association supported Steve's case, saying many businesses unfairly judged diabetics and made judgements on a blanket basis which were unfair.

Students, of course, aren't employees so can't take cases to the employment tribunal. So when Tom White, also a diabetic, felt he was discriminated against by his school, he took his case to a county court. Tom, 14 years old at the time, was given a place on a school watersports holiday. Then he suffered an attack on another school trip and was told he could no longer go on the watersports holiday. Despite appeals to the school, staff refused to reverse the decision so the case went to court. Tom's solicitor claimed the school was acting unfairly because it took no advice from a specialist, Tom, his family or the holiday centre.

- 1 What medical condition do Steve Jones and Tom White have in common?
- 2 Why did Steve Jones have a disagreement with his employers?
- 3 What, normally, would be the first thing an employee would do if he or she disagreed with a decision made by the boss?
- 4 Which two organisations supported Steve Jones?
- 5 Why did Steve Jones' bosses think the decision was fair?
- 6 Why did Steve eventually take the case to an employment tribunal?
- 7 Why did Tom White take his case to a county court, and not to an employment tribunal?
- 8 **a** Why did Tom White have a dispute with his school?
b In your opinion, why did the school take this action?
- 9 Both claims were brought under the same law. Can you identify which law would aim to protect both Steve and Tom and ensure they were fairly treated?
- 10 For both cases, state what decision you think was reached by:
 - a** the employment tribunal – in Steve's case
 - b** the county court – in Tom's case.
 Give a reason for your opinion in both cases.