

Bolt drivers win legal claim to be classed as workers

Thousands of Bolt drivers won their legal claim to be recognised as workers, securing rights to paid holidays and a minimum wage.

After the landmark ruling, handed down by an employment tribunal on Friday, law firm Leigh Day said the compensation owed to the 15,000 drivers they represent could be worth more than £200m.

The tribunal determined that the relationship between Bolt and its drivers does not constitute self-employment, as claimed by Bolt, but rather an employment arrangement, granting the drivers essential worker protections under employment law.

It affects all of the 100,000-plus drivers who take on work through the Bolt ride hailing app, Leigh Day said.

This decision was reached following a three-week hearing in September 2024.

Leigh Day, who also represented Uber drivers in a similar successful claim in 2021, contends that each Bolt driver could be entitled to over £15,000 in backdated compensation for underpayment and unpaid holiday pay.

The ruling impacts over 100,000 drivers using Bolt's private hire hailing app, who can now seek worker status.

Ahead of the hearing, Bolt announced it would start offering holiday pay and the national living wage from August 2024.

The tribunal ruled drivers must be compensated not only for trips but also for time spent logged into the app, provided they are not logged into other private hire apps simultaneously.

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Further hearings are scheduled to determine the exact compensation amounts for the affected drivers.

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Leigh Day employment solicitor Charlotte Pettman said the ruling marks a significant step forward in securing fair treatment for gig economy workers.

“We are very pleased that the employment tribunal has found in favour of our Bolt driver clients,” Ms Pettman said.

“This judgment confirms that gig economy operators cannot continue to falsely classify their workers as independent contractors running their own business to avoid providing the rights those workers are properly entitled to.”

“We call on Bolt to compensate our clients without further delay,” she added.

Bolt, which has its headquarters in Estonia, has yet to comment on the tribunal’s decision.

A parallel claim on behalf of hundreds of Ola drivers is due to be heard by the London Central Employment Tribunal from Tuesday. It is scheduled to last for eight days.