

## Information:

## Legal Advice

March 2014

### Introduction

This guide aims to outline and signpost possible sources of support and information if you are seeking legal advice.

There are many different ways in which you can get help and advice to deal with a problem. Free face-to-face advice is available from advice centres, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and law centres. Some advice and law centres can help with different problems, others just deal with one particular area like housing, benefits, or money problems. The Research Service is unable to endorse or take responsibility for the content of any website, or publication mentioned in this guide..

### Finding a solicitor

For some legal problems, you will need the help of a private solicitor. Different solicitors will specialise in different areas of law - such as crime, education or family law, so it is important to find a solicitor who is an expert in dealing with area that you need assistance with.

Most local libraries will hold a directory of solicitors; alternatively the Law Society has a search facility on their website which can be used to search for a local solicitor or one who is an expert in a specific area.

[www.lawsociety.org.uk/find-a-solicitor](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/find-a-solicitor)

Many solicitors will give members of the public a free first appointment.

Contact details:

**Telephone:** 0870 606 6575

**Website:** [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)

### Legal Aid

Legal aid can help you pay for legal advice, mediation or representation in court if you are unable to meet the costs.

This could include help for housing, debt, work, family, benefits or education problems.

You can also get legal aid if you are accused of a crime.

Whether you can receive legal aid depends on many things including your financial circumstances such as how much you earn and what savings you have, and the type of legal help you are looking for.

You can use the Gov.uk online legal aid eligibility calculator to check if you may be entitled to legal aid.

**Website:** [www.gov.uk/legal-aid-eligibility-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/legal-aid-eligibility-calculator)

### Pro-Bono

If you are not eligible for legal aid funding, some of the advice agencies listed below work with pro bono lawyers who may be able to help with your case. Pro bono is the term for free legal help for someone who cannot afford to pay for legal assistance and is not entitled to legal aid.

LawWorks is a charity which aims to provide free legal help to individuals and community groups who cannot afford to pay for it and who are unable to access legal aid.

They offer free legal advice clinics, free mediation and free casework assistance.

Clinics provide free initial advice to individuals - with a particular focus on social welfare issues, employment law, housing matters and consumer disputes

To find your nearest LawWorks Clinic please visit:

[www.lawworks.org.uk](http://www.lawworks.org.uk)

## The Bar Pro Bono Unit

The Bar Pro Bono Unit, matches barristers prepared to undertake pro bono work with those who need their help. Applications cannot be made by individuals but you can ask to be referred by any of the agencies below.

- **Citizen Advice Bureau**
- **Law Centre**
- **Your local MP/AM**

For more information please visit:

[www.barprobono.org.uk](http://www.barprobono.org.uk)

## Other sources of advice

The Citizens Advice Bureau can help people resolve their debt, benefits, housing, legal, discrimination, employment, immigration, consumer and other problems. Free advice is available face-to-face and by telephone. Most bureaux offer home visits and some also provide email advice. The CAB website has a search facility where you can find the address and contact details of your local office:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

The CAB's Advice Guide website has lots of factsheets to download and frequently asked questions on a wide range of legal topics.

Contact details:

**Telephone:** 08444 77 20 20

**Website:** [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

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To find your nearest LawWorks Clinic please visit:

[www.lawworks.org.uk](http://www.lawworks.org.uk)

## Other sources of advice Specific

There are also lots of charities which run legal advice services for particular groups or for those with specific issues.

### Shelter Cymru

Shelter Cymru specialise in providing information and advocacy to people in housing need. Shelter Cymru operate local housing advice surgeries, some of these are drop-in and some by appointment only. Shelter also gives free specialist advice over the phone.

The Shelter website can also be used to search for services that provide advice on housing, debt, benefits, care and health needs.

Contact details:

**Telephone:** 0808 800 4444

**Website:** [www.sheltercymru.org.uk/home](http://www.sheltercymru.org.uk/home)

## Mind

Mind is a registered charity which provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem

They have a special legal team who can provide information and general advice on mental health related law covering:

- mental health
- mental capacity
- community care
- human rights and discrimination/equality related to mental health issues

Contact details:

**Telephone:** 0300 466 6463

**Email:** [legal@mind.org.uk](mailto:legal@mind.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## National Debtline

National Debtline is part of the Government's Money Advice service which can give individuals advice and information about debt problems over the phone or by email.

The helpline provides free confidential and independent advice on how to deal with debt problems.

The National Debtline website also has information packs and factsheets for individuals with specific problems to download:

Contact details:

**Telephone:** 0808 808 4000.

**Email:** [www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/england\\_wales](http://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/england_wales)

**Website:** [www.nationaldebtline.co.uk](http://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk)

## Disability Law Service

Run by and for disabled people, the Disability Law Service provides information and advice to disabled and deaf people.

They can provide advice in the following areas:

- Goods and Services Community Care
- Disability Discrimination
- Employment
- Welfare Benefits

Contact details:

**Telephone:** 020 7791 9800

**Textphone:** 020 7791 9801

Rights of women

Rights of Women is a charity which provides free and confidential telephone advice in a number of areas.

Contact details:

Family Law Advice Line:

**Telephone:** 020 7251 6577

Criminal law advice line:

**Telephone:** 020 7251 8887

Immigration and asylum law advice line:

**Telephone:** 020 7490 7689

**Website:** [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)

## Age UK

Age UK is a charity which provides advice and information about a range of issues relevant to older people through its website and advice line.

Contact details:

**Telephone:** 08000 223 444

**Website:** [www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru)

