

THE LEEDS LAW SOCIETY IS AN INDEPENDENT LOCAL LAW SOCIETY AND NOT PART OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF ENGLAND AND WALES

How do you find a solicitor to help you?

To find a list of solicitors in your area use The Law Society's Find a Solicitor database. Contact The Law Society's helpline on 0207 320 5650 or visit their website at www.lawsociety.org.uk/findasolicitor. Fill in your postcode/location and the area of law of interest. Click on the search tab to bring up a list of firms that relate to the criteria you have selected.

How can you be sure a solicitor is qualified to help you?

Solicitors in private practice must hold a practising certificate issued by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA). This guarantees the solicitor is qualified to practice and has insurance to protect you if anything goes wrong. You can ask to see the certificate or contact the SRA on 0370 606 2555 to check the certificate. Some firms hold quality marks to demonstrate that they have good standards of practice in place. If the firm has received the 'Lexcel' quality award, The Law Society will be able to confirm this (call 0207 320 5933 or email www.lexcel@lawsociety.org.uk). Individual solicitors may be members of 'quality-assured accreditation schemes'. You can find details of solicitors in your area who are members of these schemes (and more details about the schemes) by visiting the Find a Solicitor area of The Law Society website (see above).

How do you find a solicitor that does legal aid work?

If you are on a low income or receiving benefits, you may be eligible for legal aid. If you are eligible, you will need to narrow your search to firms that offer legal aid services. You can find solicitors who do legal aid work by visiting <http://find-legal-advice.justice.gov.uk>. Legal aid is managed by the Legal Services Commission. If you have any urgent Civil Legal Aid enquiries regarding your case call 0300 200 2020 - you will need your Legal Aid reference number. See also <https://www.gov.uk/legal-aid/overview>.

Free Assistance for Court proceedings

For Court related assistance please contact the Personal Support Unit (PSU). At the Leeds Court PSU can be contacted on 0113 306 2764 or at leeds@thepsu.org.uk. The PSU helps litigants in person, their friends and families, witnesses, victims and inexperienced court users. It provides free, confidential, impartial, independent assistance to people facing proceedings without legal representation in civil and family courts and tribunals. Volunteers establish what might be the next and best step to pursue the case, and help access legal advice from other organisations where appropriate. For further information, visit the PSU website at https://www.thepsu.org/our_network/leeds/

How do you find a solicitor that undertakes work on a conditional fee basis?

For certain types of cases, your solicitor may be prepared to work on a conditional fee basis. There are various types of conditional fee arrangements, but not all solicitors' firms take cases on this basis so you will need to discuss this with the solicitor at the time of your initial enquiry.

Guides for Litigants in Person

Follow the links on The Leeds Law Society Court Notice Board <http://leedslawsociety.org.uk/court-notice-board/>

Are you looking for a will?

Contact the Probate Registry at: The Record Keeper, Principal Registry of the Family Division, First Avenue House, 42 – 49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6NP Tel 0207 947 7000 Web: <http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/index.htm>.

Do you need to appoint an Estate Practitioner?

The Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) is the professional body for the trust and estate profession worldwide. STEP members are experts from the legal, accounting and banking professions and their website can help you to find an expert in your area (www.step.org).

Land Registry Enquiries

The web site www.landreg.gov.uk provides information about the Land Registry in England and Wales, forms for lodging applications, and publications offering guidance on a range of subjects.

Finding a public notary

The function of notaries is to prepare and certify the execution of legal documents for use nationally and internationally. Visit www.thenotariessociety.org.uk for further information.

How do you complain about a solicitor?

If you have a formal engagement letter from the solicitor you should refer to this in the first instance as it should contain details of the firm's complaints procedure (which is likely to include putting the complaint in writing to invoke the in-house complaints procedure). Ensure that you keep copies of all correspondence. If you need advice or feel that conciliation will not provide a suitable means of dealing with your complaint, contact the Legal Ombudsman at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ - Tel 0300 555 0333 www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Other ways to complain about a solicitor (including one acting for another party)

The SRA deals with failures to comply with professional obligations but is not able to award compensation. You can contact the SRA by setting out your concerns and identifying the individuals you consider responsible in a SRA report form, attaching any evidence you have in support. The form and more information can be found at <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor.page> and should be sent to the address: Solicitors Regulation Authority, The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN or emailed to: report@sra.org.uk

**This information has been compiled by The Leeds Law Society, 62 Wellington Street, Leeds
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