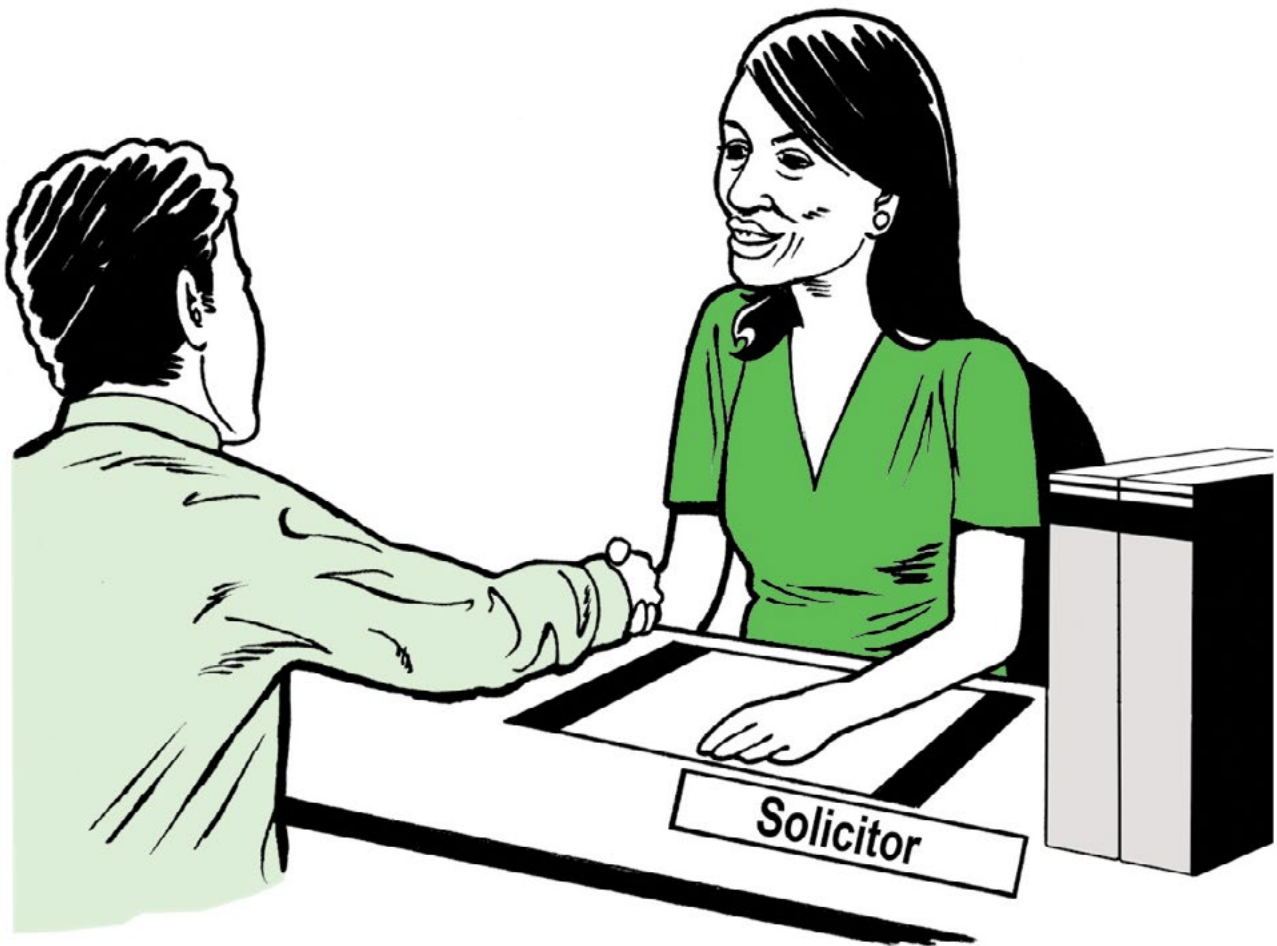




The Law Society



How to use a solicitor in England and Wales

Easy Read

Do you need a solicitor?



Solicitors give advice about the law. They are experts and can help you understand your rights and solve different legal problems you may have.



There are many areas of law and different legal problems.

For example, if you need help with a lease



if you want to complain about a service



or if you feel you lost your job unfairly.



If you need a solicitor you should choose one who knows the law about the problem you have and can help you.



This guidance will tell you about what to expect when you use a solicitor. It also tells you how you can get the best and most suitable help for you.

Finding a solicitor



You can find a solicitor in different ways. Local advice agencies such as a law centre or Citizens Advice Bureau can recommend solicitors.



You might like to talk to friends, family or local groups about their experiences.

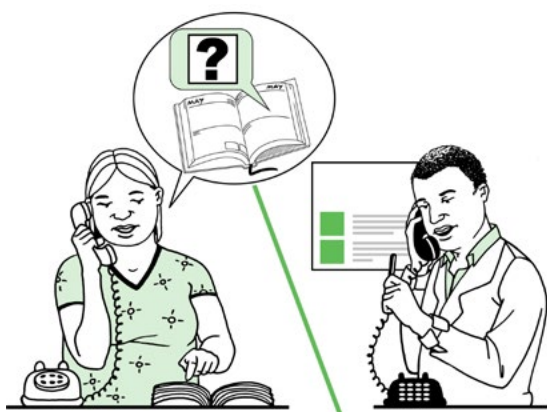


You can also find solicitors through the Law Society at:
www.lawsociety.org.uk/FindASolicitor

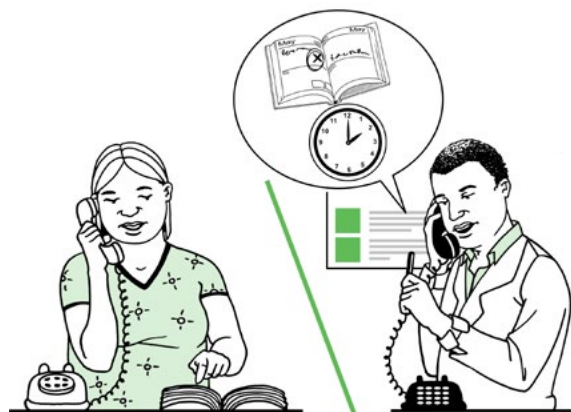


If you are arrested and kept in custody at a police station you can get free legal advice. If you are charged with a criminal offence and you need to go to court, you may be able to get free legal advice.

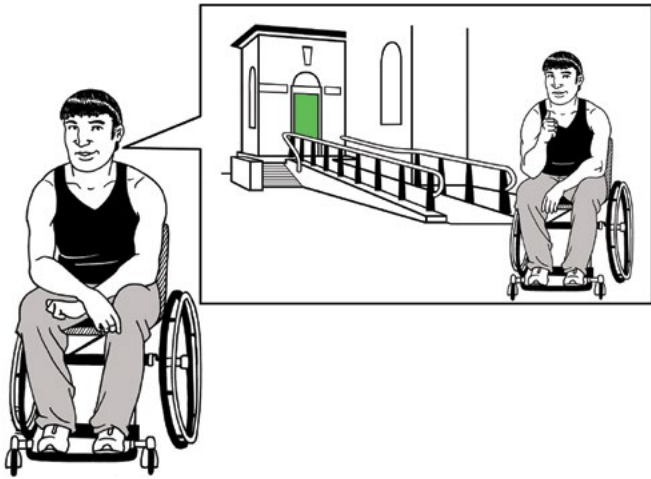
Meeting your solicitor



When you have chosen a solicitor you will need to make an appointment.



If you need to see a solicitor urgently the solicitor should try and see you as quickly as possible.



Before you meet your solicitor you should tell them of any special requirements you may have. This could be about access to the office.



Or telling them about your communication needs. Or asking them to take time to explain things clearly.



You can bring someone with you to your appointment if you want to. This could be a supporter or a family member or someone else who you are comfortable with. They can help you understand the legal problem and what your solicitor is telling you.



You might need to bring some identification with you. Identification is a document that says who you are. This could be your passport or driving licence if you have one.



Before your appointment you should make a list of things that you want to talk about. If you have any questions make a list before the appointment.



Before your appointment check with the solicitor if there is any information you should bring to the appointment.



The solicitor will talk with you and ask you some questions.



If the solicitor says something that you do not understand you should ask them to explain. The solicitor is there to help you.

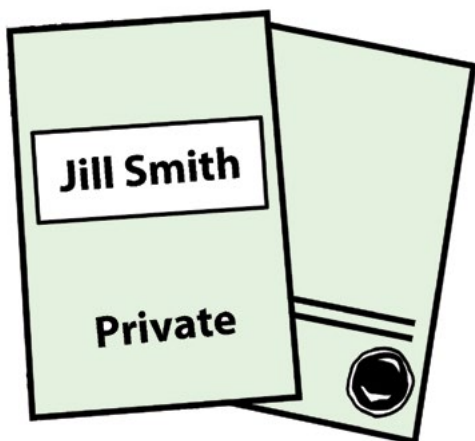
What your solicitor should do



You are the solicitor's client or customer. This means the solicitor is working to help you.



Solicitors are expected to do their job well and treat people with respect.



The information you give to solicitors should not normally be given to anyone else unless you are happy for that to happen.



Solicitors must obey special rules about how they work. These rules are there to make sure you are safe.



At your first appointment the solicitor will listen to your problem. They will tell you if they can help you.



If the solicitor can help they will tell you what the next steps are.



It is up to you to decide if you would like their help.



The solicitor will tell you how much it will cost. They will explain if you can get help with paying for their service. This should also be confirmed in a letter.



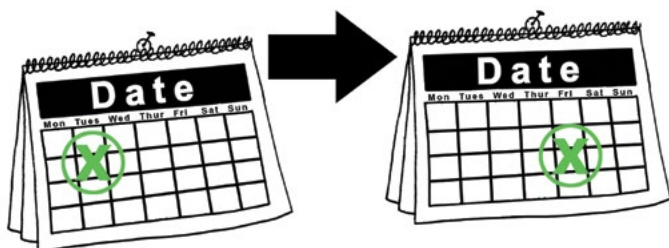
The solicitor will tell you how the costs will be added up. There are different ways solicitors can charge for their work. There might be a single one-off cost or you might pay them based on how much time they spend on your problem.



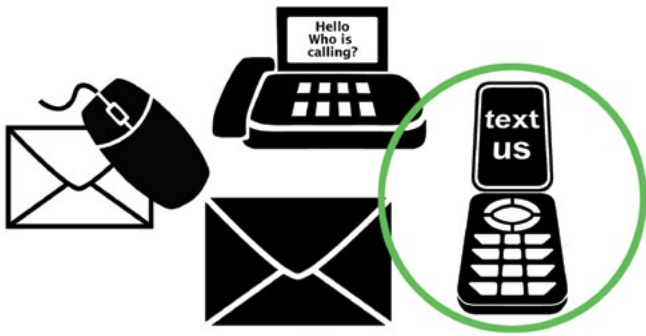
The solicitor should also tell you when you should pay these costs. You can discuss what is best for you.



The solicitor should talk about whether you can use a solicitor for free or pay a smaller amount. This type of solicitor is called a legal aid solicitor.



The solicitor will tell you how long they think it will take to help solve your problem.



You can talk to your solicitor about how you would like them to keep in touch with you.



You can tell your solicitor if you would like them to communicate with someone else for you. This is someone who would speak to your solicitor on your behalf.



Sometimes a special person can be appointed to help you. This could be a close family member or advocate.



The solicitor will keep you up-to-date with progress on your case.



The solicitor will tell you who to contact if you have a problem with the solicitor and their service. They should also put this in their first letter to you.



If the solicitor is holding your money for you they must keep it safe.



This may be to do with a will or buying and selling property.



Your money may earn interest while the solicitor holds it for you. The interest belongs to you.

What you should do



Make sure you understand what the solicitor has told you. If you are not sure ask the solicitor to explain.



Do not be afraid to ask questions. Take a pen and paper to write down anything that you might want to look at later.

Contacting the Law Society



By phone:
020 7242 1222



By email:
findasolicitor@lawsociety.org.uk



By post:
The Law Society
113 Chancery Lane London
WC2A 1PL



You can see more about what the Law Society does at:
www.lawsociety.org.uk

Word bank

Charged - to accuse someone of breaking the law and to take them to court.



Citizens Advice Bureau - independent charity which gives free advice and information to help people with money, legal and other problems.



Client - a person getting advice and help from a solicitor or other professional person.



Custody - when a person is kept in detention (locked up) because they have been accused of a crime.



Interest - money that you may earn when your money is being held by someone else like a bank or your solicitor.



Law centre - gives legal advice to people who cannot afford a solicitor.



Law Society - organisation which helps solicitors do their job.



Lease - an agreement where a person pays another person to use their property.



Legal aid solicitor - helps people with legal problems who can not pay for a solicitor or can only pay a small amount.



Solicitor - a solicitor is somebody trained in law who helps people sort out legal problems.



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