

FREE LEGAL SERVICES

1. BAR PRO BONO UNIT

Type of support: Legal. A barrister can provide advice, draft certain documents or represent you in any court/tribunal. Barristers cannot prepare case papers, lodge documents at any court/tribunal, provide administrative support or write letters on your behalf. You remain responsible for your case at all times.

Areas covered: They can assist with any area of law.

Process:

- An application form (which can be found on their website) must be completed and received at least three weeks before a hearing date or deadline.
- The Bar Pro Bono Unit's services are only accessible, however, if they have been referred to the organisation by either a Citizens Advice Bureau, law centre, advice agency, practising solicitor/barrister or a local MP.
- They do not assist individuals who are entitled to legal aid or can access legal help through

a union, insurance policy, no win no fee arrangement or can reasonably be expected to pay privately. These options should be explored first before applying.

- Once an application form has been received they will respond within seven days to explain the next stage. Once ready, an application is sent to be reviewed by a senior barrister. If accepted, they try to find a volunteer barrister to assist. More help can be asked for after a piece of work has been completed.
- **NOTE:** As they are a charity that relies on volunteer barristers, they cannot assist in all cases. It sometimes happens that even after accepting a case, they are unable to find a volunteer barrister.

Website: www.barprobono.org.uk

Email address:

www.barprobono.org.uk/new_contact_us.html

Telephone number: 0207 092 3960 (Monday, Wednesday or Friday, 10am–2pm)

2. BLACKFRIARS ADVICE CENTRE

Type of support: Legal advice

Areas covered: Housing; debt; benefits; consumer; employment; immigration

Process: Clients can be seen in their drop-in hours (Monday–Thursday, 9:30am–1:30pm) and also through a series of different appointment times, including ones for those who cannot speak

English or who cannot attend during the day. To book these, clients should call on the number below or fill out an enquiry form: <http://www.blackfriars-advice.com/email-enquiry-form>

Website: www.blackfriars-advice.com

Email address: advice@blackfriars-advice.com

Telephone number: 020 7358 7034

3. BPP PRO BONO CENTRE

Type of support: Legal advice. While they do not represent clients or carry out casework, they might be able to draft a letter to a third party or fill in court papers as a part of their advisory service.

Areas covered: Employment law, family law and housing law issues, which fall outside the scope of legal aid (probably not suitable for urgent matters).

Process: Students should call and leave a message; someone will pick this up and call back for more information.

Website: www.bpp.com/bpp-university//pro-bono

Email address: probono@bpp.com

Telephone number: 020 7430 5668 (housing); 0330 0603 444 (family); 020 7633 4534 (employment)

4. CIVIL LEGAL ADVICE (CLA)

Type of support: CLA is a government scheme that allows people to get free and confidential legal advice in England and Wales if eligible for legal aid.

Areas covered: Benefit appeals; debt, if your home is at risk; special educational needs; housing; discrimination issues; help and advice if you're a victim of domestic violence; issues around a child being taken into care.

Process: You should first go to www.gov.uk/check-legal-aid to access the legal aid checker, which will take you through a series of questions that assess your eligibility for legal aid to pay for help and advice. If eligible, you should then contact the number below.

Website: www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice

Telephone number: 0345 345 4 345 (Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm; Saturday, 9am–12:30pm)

5. EQUALITY ADVISORY & SUPPORT SERVICE (EASS)

Type of support: Non-legal. They are able to provide free advice and information about the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998, and how to raise a complaint if an individual's rights have been breached. EASS aim to support an individual to resolve their issue using alternative informal dispute resolution, as opposed to issuing a claim in a county court or an employment tribunal. Where a claim is the only option they may write to a service provider on behalf of a client in order to initiate a resolution.

Areas covered: Issues relating to equality and human rights

Process: Phone, email, live chat or write through post in the first instance.

Website: www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

Email address:

www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/app/ask

Telephone number: 0345 345 4 345 (Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm; Saturday, 9am–12:30pm)

6. FREE REPRESENTATION UNIT (FRU)

Type of support: Legal representation

Areas covered: FRU offers representation in:

- Employment tribunals (and the Employment Appeal Tribunal);
- Benefit appeals in the first-tier tribunal (and Upper Tribunal);
- Criminal injury compensation cases in the first-tier tribunal (and Upper Tribunal)

Process: Cases must be referred to the FRU by one of their referral agencies, which can be found on their website. Some of these are already listed

in this document. They cannot usually take referrals directly from a member of the public. For cases to be considered, a hearing date at a tribunal in London and the South East (or Nottingham) must have already been set.

Website: www.thefru.org.uk

Email address: www.thefru.org.uk/contact-us#query

Telephone number: 020 7611 9555

7. KINGSTON UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE

Type of support: Legal advice. All appointments, research and advice is carried out by law students, supported with guidance from staff, and volunteers from the Kingston legal community. At present they do not represent clients in court, but can try to help find an organisation that can if necessary.

Note: Whilst the website states that they serve people from Kingston and the surrounding areas, it has been assured that they are happy for students outside these areas to be referred to them provided they don't mind travelling to their campus on a Tuesday evening for an appointment. It is advisable to contact them beforehand, however, as they accept cases on a case-by-case basis.

Areas covered: Consumer rights; tenancy/landlord disputes; employment issues; employment issues;

community and charitable ventures. They might be able to assist in other areas not listed as well, much will depend on the individual circumstances.

Process: Contact them via email or telephone, leaving a brief summary of the case and a contact number. A student adviser will follow this up with a call before deciding on the next course of action. If unable to help, they will endeavour to signpost to another relevant organisation.

Website: <http://bit.ly/KUCommunityLegal>

Email address: legaladvice@kingston.ac.uk

Telephone number: 020 8417 5923

8. LSBU LEGAL ADVICE CLINIC

Type of support: Legal advice. The LSBU Legal Advice Clinic is open to the public for free legal advice on a drop-in session basis. The clinic is staffed by LSBU law students, working under the supervision of practising solicitors.

Areas covered: They provide:

- Basic information on any topic;
- Generalist advice in any social welfare law matters (except immigration);
- Specialist legal advice in family, housing and employment (on a Thursday evening assessment)

Process: There are three drop-in sessions (Tuesday, 10am–12pm; Wednesday, 10am–12pm; Wednesday, 3–5pm) that people can attend. However, drop-in sessions can get quite busy and so they cannot guarantee they will see everyone. They will usually aim to see six clients per session so it is advisable to arrive early. The clinic is only open during term time.

Website: <http://bit.ly/LBSULawAdvice>

Email address: legaladvice@lsbu.ac.uk

Telephone number: 020 7815 5450

9. MARY WARD LEGAL CENTRE

Type of support: Legal advice. They provide free and independent advice to people who live and work in London to help them access their legal rights and entitlements.

Areas covered: Predominantly debt, employment, housing and welfare benefits. They also run weekly general legal advice clinics for people on a low income (these sessions take place in the evening and are run by volunteer lawyers from various firms). The clinics cover debt, housing, employment, tax, personal injury, consumer, contract law and small claims. They do not

advise on immigration, family law or criminal law.

Process: This varies depending on the area. Some areas require appointments, others can be accessed through a drop-in service. Some are eligible for representation, others just advice. Some are open to all people living and working in London, others have specific income criteria, which must be met. See their website for more details.

Website: www.marywardlegal.org.uk

Telephone number: 020 7831 7079

10. MIGRANT LEGAL ACTION (AFRO-ASIAN ADVISORY SERVICE)

Type of support: Free and independent legal advice and representation

Areas covered: Matters relating to nationality, immigration and asylum law

Process: Clients should phone the advice line in between 2pm and 5pm, Monday–Friday to speak

to an adviser, or call the reception line to make an appointment for a face-to-face meeting.

Website: www.aaas.org.uk

Email address: aaas@btconnect.com

Telephone number: 0845 618 5385 (advice line); 020 7701 0141 (reception line)

11. PERSONAL SUPPORT UNIT (PSU)

Type of support: Practical and emotional support to people representing themselves in court. PSU volunteers assist with things like accompanying people to court, giving simple guidance with court forms, and helping people find their way around court buildings. They do not give legal advice or represent clients in court.

Areas covered: This varies, but for the London office it is as follows:

- For support at a hearing, call 020 7073 4760 or email londonservice@thepsu.org.uk to book

a PSU volunteer to go with you to your hearing. It is best to get in touch with them at least two weeks before your hearing.

- For support preparing for a hearing, visit the PSU office in the Royal Courts of Justice.

Website: www.thepsu.org

Email address: All email contacts are available at: www.thepsu.org/contact-us-2

Telephone number: All telephone numbers are available: www.thepsu.org/contact-us-2

12. RICHMOND LEGAL ADVICE SERVICE (RLAS)

Type of support: Legal advice

Process: RLAS runs a weekly advice session every Wednesday evening, between 8pm and 9pm in central Richmond. No appointment is needed.

Website: www.rlas.org.uk

Email address: rlas@rlas.org.uk

Telephone number: 020 8891 2105

13. RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Type of support: Legal advice. They provide free and confidential legal advice to women over the phone. They do not provide legal representation, but do publish a number of free legal guides, which can be helpful.

Areas covered: Family law; criminal law; immigration and asylum law

Process: Call them on the telephone (different numbers for different areas of law – see <http://rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice>)

Website: <http://rightsofwomen.org.uk>

Email address: info@row.org.uk

Telephone number: 020 7251 6575

14. ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE (RCJ) ADVICE BUREAU

Type of support: Procedural legal advice. The RCJ is a good first port of call when it looks like court is imminent (they would advise people to try a local Citizens Advice Bureau as a good first option if the matter has not reached court stage). They can give procedural advice in appointment and can refer to the Bar Pro Bono Unit where substantive free advice/representation from a barrister is needed.

Areas covered: RCJ cover any type of civil or family case, but not criminal.

Process: To be triaged for an appointment, students should telephone between 10am and 1pm, or attend in person between 2pm and 4pm.

Website: www.rcjadvice.org.uk

Email address: admin@rcjadvice.org.uk

Telephone number: 0203 475 8996

15. QUEEN MARY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE

Type of support: Legal advice

Areas covered: Various – potential clients are advised to get in touch to see if they are able to help.

Process: Go to www.lac.qmul.ac.uk/contact/index.

html and complete an enquiry form. They will then get in contact to conduct a brief telephone interview.

Website: www.lac.qmul.ac.uk

Email address: lac@qmul.ac.uk

Telephone number: 020 7882 3930

16. SOLACE WOMEN'S AID

Type of support: Legal advice and representation for women and children affected by domestic and sexual violence

Areas covered:

- Making emergency protection orders (non-molestation and occupation orders) to protect families experiencing violence.
- Representing clients in court in regards to child contact/residence and divorce proceedings.

- Working with women whose children have been taken in to care when domestic violence was present.

Process: Call or email in the first instance

Website:

www.solacewomensaid.org/about-us/legal-services

Email address: advice@solacewomensaid.org

Telephone number: 0808 802 5565

17. START-ED

Type of support: Business and legal advice, run by law students from The City Law School and supervised by local professionals – Start-Ed is a free walk-in centre offering assistance for small businesses and technology start-ups.

Areas covered: Business structure and incorporation; contractual agreements – key issues in contracts; intellectual property issues – copyright/trademarks/ patents; preparation for an investment; recruiting

students across a range of subject areas including IT, Business, Law or Journalism/Social Media through Careers Hub.

Process: No booking is required. We operate on a first come, first serve basis.

Website: <http://bit.ly/Start-Ed>

Email address: start-ed@city.ac.uk

Telephone number: 020 7404 5787

18. TOYNBEE HALL LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE

Type of support: Legal advice. While they do not represent clients or carry out casework, they might be able to draft a letter to a third party or fill in court papers as a part of their advisory service.

Areas covered: Education law matters with regards to discrimination or harassment cases. Housing issues.

Process: New clients should either attend their

drop-in service (Monday–Friday, 10:30am–4:30pm) or email to make an initial assessment of the issue/case. Returning clients should contact the service via telephone.

Website: www.toynbeehall.org.uk/legal-advice

Email address: advice@toynbeehall.org.uk (new clients); flac@toynbeehall.org.uk (returning clients)

Telephone number: 020 7392 2978

19. THE CITY LAW SCHOOL

Type of support: Legal advice. Sessions are led by qualified lawyers, who are supported by postgraduate law students..

Areas covered: Basic housing, welfare benefits and employment legal advice (at London Bloomsbury Centre); employment and family telephone advice; consumer and business legal advice (London Moorgate Centre).

Process: Clients should call to book an appointment. They will then receive a one-off piece of preliminary written or verbal advice.

Website: <http://bit.ly/CityLawSchool>

Email address: law@city.ac.uk

Telephone number: 020 7404 5787, extension 353/391

20. THE UNIVERSITY OF LAW

Type of support: Legal advice. They offer a mixture of preliminary legal advice either in writing or by telephone, depending on the service and the centre.

Areas covered: Basic housing, welfare benefits and employment legal advice (at London Bloomsbury Centre); employment and family telephone advice; consumer and business legal advice (London Moorgate Centre).

Process: Depending on the advice needed, clients should either email or call in the first instance.

Website:

www.law.ac.uk/about/legal-advice-for-the-public

Email address: ssadvice.centre@law.ac.uk

(Bloomsbury) and mlac@law.ac.uk (Moorgate)

Telephone number: 01483 216528 (Bloomsbury) and 01483 216140 (Moorgate)

21. UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER STUDENT LAW CLINIC

Type of support: Legal advice

Areas covered: Family law advice covering the full range of family disputes (children, divorce, finances). The only area NOT covered is domestic violence, as legal aid is available for this work and it tends to need a speedy response.

Process: Potential clients should either phone or email in the first instance.

Website: www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/faculties/law/contacts-us

Email address: lawclinic@westminster.ac.uk

Telephone number: 020 3506 9626

Location coverage: The following services are accessible only in some specific parts of London

1. BRIXTON ADVICE CENTRE

Type of support: Specialist legal advice on housing (possessions, evictions, disrepair, etc.) and debt, as well as general advice on welfare benefit, housing and debt issues.

Areas covered:

Housing, debt and welfare benefit

Process: Clients can attend drop-in sessions or book an appointment by email or telephone. Clients must be residents of Lambeth.

Website: www.brixtonadvice.org.uk

Email address: info@brixtonadvice.org.uk

Telephone number: 020 7733 7554

2. ENFIELD CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU

NOTE: This is one of many different local Citizens Advice Bureau offices (different offices will offer different services), and is used as an example in this document. If you live in another borough, go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk to find your nearest one.

Type of support: General advice. The Citizens Advice Bureau can refer students to solicitors who may be able to give some free legal advice (it is more difficult to get free representation).

Areas covered: Most issues including welfare benefits, debt and money problems, employment, housing, immigration, family and personal issues.

Process: Come to the drop-in (Tuesday–Friday, 10am–1pm) or call on the phone (Monday–Friday, 10am–4pm). Clients must be residents of Enfield.

Website: www.enfieldcab.org.uk

Email address: info@enfieldcab.org.uk

Telephone number: 0208 375 4170

3. LAW CENTRES (SEVERAL DIFFERENT LOCATIONS)

Type of advice: Legal advice to local residents. All Law Centres offer local residents face-to-face legal advice, and some run a telephone advice line. There are 22 different Law Centres in London, and more outside, each one covering a different geographical area. The London-based offices are:

- Brent Community Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:brent-community-law-centre>)
- Camden Community Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:camden-community-law-centre>)

- Central London Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:central-london-law-centre>)
- Croydon Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:croydon-law-centre-part-of-south-west-london-law-centres>)
- Ealing Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:ealing-law-centre>)
- Hackney Community Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:hackney-community-law-centre>)
- Hammersmith and Fulham Community Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:hammersmith-and-fulham-community-law-centre>)
- Haringey Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:haringey-law-centre>)
- Harrow Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:harrow-law-centre>)
- Hillingdon Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:hillingdon-law-centre>)
- Islington Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:islington-law-centre>)
- Kingston and Richmond Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:kingston-and-richmond-law-centre-part-of-south-west-london-law-centres>)
- Lambeth Law Centre (see below) (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:lambeth-law-centre>)
- Merton and Sutton Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:merton-and-sutton-law-centre-part-of-south-west-london-law-centres>)
- North Kensington Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:north-kensington-law-centre>)
- Paddington Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:paddington-law-centre>)
- Plumstead Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:plumstead-community-law-centre>)
- Southwark Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:southwark-law-centre>)
- Springfield Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:springfield-law-centre>)
- Tower Hamlets Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:tower-hamlets-law-centre>)
- Vauxhall Community Law and Community Information Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:vauxhall-community-law-and-information-centre>)
- Wandsworth Law Centre (<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/about-law-centres/law-centres-on-google-maps/alphabetically/centre:wandsworth-law-centre-part-of-south-west-london-law-centres>)

Areas covered: This varies from Law Centre to Law Centre, but all specialise in social welfare law and cover some or all of the following areas:

- Welfare rights
- Disability rights
- Immigration and asylum
- Housing and homelessness
- Employment rights
- Community care
- Discrimination
- Debt

Other areas of work might include:

- Public law
- Mental health
- Family law
- Education rights
- Young people's and children's rights

Process: Processes differ depending on the Law Centre. You should visit the website of the Law Centre in question and contact them in order to find out what the first steps should be.

Website: See above for individual websites. If you are unsure which is your local Law Centre, please go to www.lawcentres.org.uk and type in your postcode in the box on the right hand side under "Find your local Law Centre".

Email address:

Varies – see individual Law Centre website.

Telephone number: Varies – see individual Law Centre website.

4. LAMBETH LAW CENTRE

This is one of many different local Law Centres offices (see above), and is used as an example in this document. If you live in another borough, go <http://bit.ly/LocalLawCentres> to find your nearest one.

Type of advice: Specialist legal advice and representation for people who live or work in the borough of Lambeth; generally only deal with cases involving or expected to involve, court or tribunal proceedings.

Areas covered: Housing, welfare rights and debt, immigration and employment

Process: Upon contacting the Lambeth Law Centre, your details will be taken and one of the caseworkers will call you back during the telephone advice session times (different slots for different areas of law). The caseworker will give initial advice and, if considered appropriate by the caseworker, an appointment for further advice will be arranged.

Website: www.lambethlawcentre.org

Email address:

www.lambethlawcentre.org/contact-us

Telephone number: 020 7840 2000

5. LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE – UNIVERSITY HOUSE (BETHNAL GREEN)

Type of support: Legal advice and legal representation (in very limited circumstances, see below). This is available to those who live or work in Tower Hamlets and South Hackney.

Areas covered: Legal expenses insurance; employment law (advice and casework); welfare benefits appeals (they might be able to offer

representation at your Welfare Benefit First Tier Tribunal hearing).

Process: Call or email in the first instance.

Website: www.legaladvicecentre.london

Email address: admin@legaladvicecentre.london

Telephone number: 020 8980 4205

6. THE RIVER HOUSE LAW CLINIC

Type of support: The River House Law Clinic provides legal advice for people living with HIV in Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Ealing, Westminster and Hounslow.

Areas covered: Housing, work, and immigration

Process: Call in the first instance. Solicitor

consultations take place on Thursday afternoon at Hammersmith and Fulham Community Law Centre offices, but appointments may be offered on other days if Thursdays are not convenient for you.

Website: www.riverhouseuk.org

Email address: info@riverhouseuk.org

Telephone number: 020 8753 5190

7. ST. HILDA'S LEGAL ADVICE SERVICE

Type of support: Legal advice for residents of Tower Hamlets and neighbouring areas.

Areas covered: Legal advice for issues such as housing matters, welfare benefits, debt, consumer problems and employment issues – as well as a range of other subjects – is provided. They cannot give any advice on immigration, employment or criminal matters. They cannot represent you at court.

Process: Drop-in sessions are available on Tuesdays from 6–8pm at St Hilda's East Community Centre in Bethnal Green, and on Wednesdays from 6:30 – 8:30pm at Sonali Gardens in Shadwell.

Website: <http://sthildas.org.uk/projects/legal-advice-service>

Email address: mail@sthildas.org.uk

Telephone number: 020 7739 8066

For help finding a solicitor, including those whose services are not free, the Law Society's website is a good place to start: www.lawsociety.org.uk

NOTE: Please note that that this list is not exhaustive and that by listing these options, the Students' Union is in no way endorsing or recommending any practice in particular. This is merely a list of some of the many places available for those who may require legal support. All information is correct as of March 2015.