

# GUIDE TO PRO BONO AND OTHER FREE ADVICE IN SCOTLAND

**A directory of free legal  
and other advice**

November 2023 version

Download at [probonoweb.org.uk/guide](https://probonoweb.org.uk/guide)

Published  
for:

**PRO  
BONO  
WEEK**

# 1. INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

## Table of contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION &amp; OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Table of contents .....	2
About this Guide .....	4
The limitations of pro bono and charitable help .....	5
Factors to consider when signposting.....	6
Identifying a legal problem & training for MPs/MSPs/caseworkers ....	8
MPs and MSPs working with local organisations .....	9
Overview of sources of legal help .....	11
Scotland: devolved law.....	14
<b>2. GENERAL SOURCES OF FREE LEGAL ADVICE.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Legal aid.....	16
Cost of living advice.....	19
Advicelocal.....	20
Citizens Advice Scotland .....	21
Law centres .....	22
AdviceUK.....	24
LawWorks Clinics Network.....	25
Law school/university clinics .....	26
<b>3. PRO BONO LEGAL HELP .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Faculty of Advocates – Free Legal Services Unit (“FLSU”) .....	28
Other pro bono in Scotland.....	300

This booklet is published annually for Pro Bono Week, a cross-sector collaborative initiative that through publications, launches, events and comms every November helps support the legal profession's voluntary provision of free legal help to those in need.

Gratitude is expressed to everyone who supported the production of the Guide, whether by contributing information or their advice.

This is a pilot revision for Pro Bono Week in November 2023 and takes as its inspiration the [Guide to Pro Bono published in England and Wales](#).

**Please email your comments, additions or corrections to [guide@probonoweek.org.uk](mailto:guide@probonoweek.org.uk)**

This booklet may be freely distributed electronically, printed or photocopied, but may not be sold or put behind a paywall.

# About this Guide

**Who is this Guide for?** Advisors and advocacy workers in the third sector, MPs, MSPs, their caseworkers and others seeking to signpost members of the public to sources of free legal and other advice.

## What does the Guide signpost to?

- **Legal aid** i.e. legal assistance funded by the Government.
- **Pro bono** i.e. free legal advice or representation provided by volunteer lawyers to individuals and charities who cannot afford to pay but where legal aid is unavailable.
- **Front line advice organisations**, which provide assistance from general advice through to specialist legal support. Note some areas have regulatory restrictions in particular debt and immigration.
- **Online guidance** about legal issues and the legal process.
- **Specialist charities providing general advice/support** for particular groups or problems, reflecting that legal issues often occur alongside non-legal issues. Some of those charities may offer legal information or advice, or may be able to signpost to it.

The Guide includes a combination of full-page entries supplied by certain charities that facilitate legal help, with brief details about others. A summary is provided about the charity, with their website, email & phone numbers including helplines (but not opening hours which may change).

**What geographical areas are covered?** Scotland, and usually only national rather than local services. Some of these charities provide UK wide support. For England and Wales, please see [probonoweb.org.uk/guide](http://probonoweb.org.uk/guide)

## Disclaimer:

- The Guide does not itself provide legal nor financial advice.
- The information it contains was sourced using independent internet research, whilst the full page entries with logos were contributed and checked by the featured charity. The data will not be comprehensive.
- No liability is accepted to anyone as to the contents. Nor is a guarantee offered as to the listed organisations and websites or their services. The Guide is not designed to verify their suitability, standing or quality.
- Details may be out of date or otherwise inaccurate, so check the relevant website.

# The limitations of pro bono and charitable help

- Solicitors and advocates volunteer to provide legal help for free to an unparalleled extent, helping some of the most disadvantaged people access justice.
- But **pro bono** projects cannot guarantee to help in every case:
  - There is an inherent limitation in a service which relies on volunteers;
  - Demand for help substantially outstrips the available supply; and
  - Furthermore, the need for help in key areas of law may not match the specialisms of the volunteer lawyers.
- Pro bono should therefore only be seen as complementary to, rather than a replacement for, a properly funded and fully functioning legal aid system. But:
  - There are now significant shortages of legal aid providers in a number of areas of law, and geographical gaps in provision;
  - This has created legal aid deserts.
- In addition to the need to fund legal aid, so too must be emphasised the importance of supporting the not-for-profit **advice sector**:
  - Amongst other reasons, pro bono help by volunteer lawyers is often most effective and sustainable when delivered in partnership with frontline legal advice organisations;
  - However, those agencies themselves face huge demands for help, but have limited funding, and so may have very limited capacity to support additional clients.
- **Important: the Guide does not generally list the capacity of the charities to help, or response times. Service limits may be severe.** Charities may have waiting lists (e.g. 9 months for one project helping children) or may have suspended accepting new clients.

# Factors to consider when signposting

## *System issues*

- **Sector capacity / service limits:** as stated above, advice and pro bono charities have limited funding but face huge, increasing, demands for help, often far outstripping the supply. They cannot help everyone, so client expectations need to be managed.
- **Charity services may be fragmented:** in addition, it may prove frustrating for clients that many charities can only help in a narrowly defined remit (potentially reflecting funding restrictions).
- **Paid legal / no-win no-fee / legal aid** assistance may provide a more comprehensive legal service than a charity can offer.
- **Legal aid** should therefore be signposted/referred to whenever available to ensure specialist legal advice and representation. Additional reasons are that legal aid may: (a) also fund disbursements such as interpreters or court and expert fees; (b) protect against adverse costs (the lawyer will advise about this); and (c) free up limited charity and pro bono resources.
- **Pro bono as a last resort:** pro bono projects usually only provide help from volunteer lawyers when other avenues are not available.

## *Legal problems*

- **Timing:** clients often approach organisations towards the end of a problem rather than having received early advice.
- **Multiple problems:** clients often approach organisations or constituency surgeries with more than one interlinking legal issue. Clients may also face barriers to accessing justice / remedy, or may have suffered recent trauma, making casework more complex to resolve. Individuals may also have more than one interlinking legal issue.
- **Priorities:** for some clients may require help in identifying and prioritising multiple overlapping issues and how to tackle them. This is a holistic approach to client care and the one we would take. In other cases, addressing a legal issue through specialist legal help can have a transformative effect.

## *Other points for effective signposting*

- **“Shopping around”**: some clients will approach numerous charities with the same request, using up limited resources. So, ask them whether they are already seeing or have seen an advice provider (particularly important where legal aid might be relevant).
- **Negative advice**: if the client has received negative legal advice from a lawyer or reputable organisation (e.g. that they do not have a good claim), they may need to be encouraged to heed that advice, rather than signposting/referring them to another agency.
- **Triaging**: Citizens Advice, law centres, other charities, and constituency surgeries may provide a triage service, to identify the client’s problems and work out what can be done (and by whom) to address each issue. Where legal problems are identified, they may be able to refer to specialist legal advice, including legal aid or pro bono.
- **Signposting**: for many clients, signposting them to the right organisation (e.g. website or phone number) may be sufficient.
- **Or referring**: for other clients, for example those with multiple problems or additional vulnerabilities such as disabilities and additional trauma, they might be best helped by making a referral in their name to a local or specialist charity. This may ensure they get the help they need.
- **Request to MPs or MSPs to intercede**: clients may present with a request for MPs or MSPs to intercede with a (Scottish) Government department or a council.
- **Client comprehension/capacity**: consider the client’s ability to understand and action the signposting information.
- **Digital exclusion**: some individuals will not have access, or the capability, to use online materials or services. Some may be isolated without family/friends to help them navigate online. Whilst local libraries may offer internet access, some vulnerable people will need to be referred to a local agency offering in-person help.
- **Translation and interpreters**: consider whether the client needs translation or interpreter support in order to access advice.
- **Complaints, mediation & ombudsmen**: consider encouraging the client to use a complaints procedure, mediation process or ombudsman. For ombudsman see [ombudsmanassociation.org](http://ombudsmanassociation.org).

# Identifying a legal problem & training for MPs/MSPs/caseworkers

- It is very common for individuals **not to be aware** they have a legal problem. Research has also shown most are unable to identify legal problems accurately. This is complicated by the fact that individuals can present with both legal and non-legal problems.
- The [Mind the Gap](#) survey in 2016 of London MPs' surgeries concluded that **not all MPs' surgeries have the resources or knowhow** to be able to identify when legal advice is required and when legal aid might be available. A second survey has been conducted and its findings are available at [tinyurl.com/mindthegap2023](https://tinyurl.com/mindthegap2023). Scottish MPs/MSPs may have similar difficulties.
- Where it is unclear if an individual has a legal problem, they may be best helped by a **local advice agency** or other specialist charity who can identify the problems and triage (including to signpost or refer to legal aid, other advice agencies, or to pro bono). See the next page.
- If specific legal problems are identified, this Guide may help identify where the individual can be signposted or referred to.
- **Free training is available to MPs and their caseworkers** on how to spot legal problems and other commonly encountered issues through the House of Commons Learning and Development team in collaboration with the APPG on Access to Justice. Courses include:
  - An introduction to casework and advising constituents.
  - Housing law (homelessness and possession, disrepair, housing allocation, and security of tenure).
  - Mental health casework.
  - Community care casework.
  - Anti-social behaviour.
  - Additional support needs.
  - Employment law.
  - Civil and criminal legal aid.

Training sessions are run both online and in-person. For more details contact the House of Commons Learning and Development team. The [House of Commons Library](#) also has some casework guidance.



# MPs and MSPs working with local organisations

- For Parliamentarians and caseworkers undertaking constituency work, it is important to **investigate what local organisations** exist, and to find out about any local networks or other initiatives.
- This Guide generally does not list local advice agencies, but these can be located both through the websites of the umbrella organisations listed below (e.g. Citizens Advice and AdviceUK), and via [advice.local.uk](http://advice.local.uk) & [advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk](http://advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk).
- MPs or MSPs can **invite someone** from their local Citizens Advice, Law Centre or similar agency to provide an overview of local services.
- This may help **build relationships** between the MPs/MSPs/caseworkers and the local organisations. This can particularly help ensure that effective referrals can be made.
- One model is for MPs/MSPs to **deliver their surgery** within a Citizen Advice or law centre community outreach session or setting.
- Being able to make a **referral** for a named individual (rather than just signpost) to a local organisation may be more effective, especially for those with mental health or other vulnerabilities, or those with multiple problems where the local agency can triage.
- Getting to know the local organisation can also help with **practical information** for signposting or referrals e.g. knowledge of changes to opening hours, or that the office is on the ground floor.
- Remember to obtain the **individual's consent** to send their information to the advice provider. Also, it may be useful to include any information about disabilities in a referral.
- MPs/MSPs might also investigate what **social prescribing** or other health partnerships are available in their area, whether linked to primary care or a charity such as Age UK. Also known as **community referral**, this is a means of enabling GPs, nurses

and other health and care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services. There are different models for social prescribing, but most involve a link worker or navigator who works with people to access local sources of support.

# Overview of sources of legal help

## 1. Online resources

Online guides may help explain legal rights and how disputes can be resolved, and offer guidance to individuals representing themselves. See pages 20 to 26, including:

- [advicelocal.uk](http://advicelocal.uk) (please look specifically for Scots Law Sections)
- [advicenow.org.uk](http://advicenow.org.uk) (including [guides](#) to self representation)
- [Citizens Advice Scotland](#)

## 2. Help provided or funded by insurance

E.g. household or motor insurance.

Also, subscriptions (e.g. from [Which?](#)) may include legal advice.

## 3. Help from a Trade Union

Trade Unions might provide members with free or discounted legal assistance, e.g. on employment issues.

## 4. Privately paid legal help

From a solicitor: the Law Society of Scotland:  
[lawscot.org.uk/find-a-solicitor](http://lawscot.org.uk/find-a-solicitor)

A solicitor may advise you that you can instruct an advocate but they are not normally available to be directly instructed by the public:  
[advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates](http://advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates)

The Scottish Legal Complaints Commission (**the SLCC**) publishes consumer guidance for instructing lawyers in certain areas of the law:  
[scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk/resources/consumer-guides](http://scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk/resources/consumer-guides)

## 5. Legal aid (funded by Government)

Publicly funded legal advice and representation is available in certain areas of law but usually only for those with limited means. See page 16. For more information about Legal Aid: [Scottish Legal Aid Board \(slab.org.uk\)](https://www.slub.org.uk) and the Just Right Scotland [factsheet](#).

## 6. Local advice agency

A local charity or non-for-profit organisation may be able to help over the phone or in person. In many cases they will be the best starting point for individuals, including to triage multiple problems, or signpost/refer to other help including legal aid. See pages 19 to 26.

The key online directories to locate local agencies are:

- [advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk](https://advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk)
- [advice.local.uk](https://advice.local.uk)

You can specifically locate Citizens Advice and Law Centres at:

- [cas.org.uk](https://cas.org.uk)
- [mygov.scot/legal-advice](https://mygov.scot/legal-advice)

## 7. Specialist charities

There are many specialist charities helping particular categories of people or those with specific problems.

They may offer general advice and/or holistic support.

Some may be able to provide legal advice or representation, or may be able to signpost or refer to legal help (including legal aid).

## 8. Pro bono clinics and charities

Free legal assistance may be available through pro bono clinics, such as through the LawWorks Clinics Network, law schools,

FLSU, or through other charities. See pages 25 to 35.

*Note:* pro bono help is usually only provided to those who do not have the means to pay for legal help and who do not qualify for legal aid.

# Scotland: devolved law

It is important to note that Scots law is different from the laws of England and Wales in a significant number of ways. Resources which originate from an English organisation or are written from an English and Welsh perspective may not be suitable for Scots pro bono users.

Where possible, clients should be signposted to a Scottish organisation with experience in the particular area or Scottish branches of national organisations.

However, this is not to say that clients should not be signposted to English organisations where no Scottish equivalent exists. A number of organisations featured in this Guide offer their services across the whole of the UK, and may have a Scottish specific arm (for example [Age Scotland](#)). If possible, when making a referral it is advisable to make clear that the matter is based in Scotland.

# 2. GENERAL SOURCES OF FREE LEGAL ADVICE

**This section signposts to:**

- **legal aid**
- **key websites with online guidance**
- **websites to locate local agencies**
- **networks of advice agencies and pro bono clinics**

Referred to elsewhere as the “GENERAL section”.

# Legal aid

Legal aid may help meet the costs of legal advice, family mediation or representation in a court or tribunal. This is funded by the Government, who determine who is eligible. Legal aid is generally provided through private firms of solicitors and Advocates, and some agencies such as Law Centres.

This is just a brief overview. More details can be found at:

- [mygov.scot/legal-aid](https://mygov.scot/legal-aid)
- [slab.org.uk/new-to-legal-aid/eligibility-estimators](https://slab.org.uk/new-to-legal-aid/eligibility-estimators)

In summary, whether someone qualifies for legal aid will depend on:

- The type of case being “in scope”.
- Means testing of their financial situation (save for limited exceptions); and
- The merits of the case (save for limited exceptions).

Legal aid solicitors can apply for legal aid for their client. To find a solicitor or with a legal aid contract, try:

- [lawscot.org.uk/find-a-solicitor](https://lawscot.org.uk/find-a-solicitor) (selecting the legal aid box); or
- [slab.org.uk/new-to-legal-aid/find-a-solicitor](https://slab.org.uk/new-to-legal-aid/find-a-solicitor)

## Criminal legal aid

Criminal cases are in scope for legal aid, save for certain minor offences. Free advice (without means testing) is available for those arrested and taken to a police station. Eligibility for advice/representation in the criminal courts will depend on (a) the merits or “interests of justice” test, and (b) the client’s means. See [mygov.scot/legal-aid/criminal-cases](https://mygov.scot/legal-aid/criminal-cases)

There is also a Public Defence Solicitors’ Office: [pdso.org.uk](https://pdso.org.uk)

## Civil legal aid (including family)

- For more information:
  - [mygov.scot/legal-aid/civil-cases](https://mygov.scot/legal-aid/civil-cases)
  - <https://www.mygov.scot/legal-aid/advice-and-assistance>
- The Scottish Legal Aid Board also operates a series of advice centres called the Civil Legal Assistance Office covering certain areas of law



and parts of the country: [clao.org.uk](http://clao.org.uk)

**Civil means test:** many people will not be financially eligible, even though they cannot afford legal help. The Scottish Legal Aid Board website provides an online estimator to help work out if you qualify financially for legal aid: [slab.org.uk/new-to-legal-aid/eligibility-estimators/estimator-civil-legal-aid](http://slab.org.uk/new-to-legal-aid/eligibility-estimators/estimator-civil-legal-aid)

**In scope civil cases** may include (check at [lawscot.org.uk/for-the-public/what-a-solicitor-can-do-for-you/legal-aid](http://lawscot.org.uk/for-the-public/what-a-solicitor-can-do-for-you/legal-aid) and [mygov.scot/legal-advice](http://mygov.scot/legal-advice)):

- Benefits
- Children’s Hearings
- Claims for Money
- Criminal Injury
- Debt
- Discrimination
- Divorce or Separation
- Domestic Abuse
- Employment
- Housing
- Immigration and asylum
- Mental Health
- Some personal Injury claims
- Trouble with the police

Whilst the following may be **outside of scope**:

- Consumer and other contractual disputes.
- Most immigration cases other than those listed above.
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority cases.

- Most private family law e.g. divorce, finance and children matters (unless for example domestic abuse or violence, or child abuse).
- Personal injury or death.
- General claims for civil wrongs (such as nuisance, unjust enrichment).
- Conveyancing.
- Will-making or matters of trust law.
- Company or partnership law or business law.
- Legal advice in relation to a change of name.
- Defamation or malicious falsehood.

# Cost of living advice

Cost of living issues may comprise a number of areas where legal or non-legal advice can assist, such as regarding benefits, debt, housing, childcare, disabilities and health.

The national networks featured below in this section may be able to help with these issues, such as Citizens Advice and Law Centres.

See also specialist charities that help with benefits and debt issues, noting that debt charities should be able to assist with fuel debt problems. Other specialist charities also provide cost of living advice and support for the communities they serve, for example Age UK.

There are a number of Government and charity websites which provide guidance on cost of living support (including regarding payments or discounts) and can signpost to relevant services, including:

- UK government: [gov.uk/cost-of-living](https://www.gov.uk/cost-of-living)
- Citizens Advice: [citizensadvice.org.uk/costofliving](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/costofliving)
- Scottish Government: [mygov.scot/support-money-debt](https://mygov.scot/support-money-debt)
- Money Advice Scotland: [moneyadvicescotland.org.uk/resources-for-people-with-money-worries](https://moneyadvicescotland.org.uk/resources-for-people-with-money-worries)
- National Debtline: [nationaldebtline.org/cost-living-hub-s](https://nationaldebtline.org/cost-living-hub-s)

In addition, local authorities may have webpages on cost of living, with signposting to specific local support.

You can locate foodbanks at using [advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk](https://advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk).

Advicelocal is a website developed by the *rightsnet* advice charity to help people with social welfare problems.

It provides links to tailored information for each area of law, and details of free, independent local advice organisations to help get advice and support with issues such as:

- Welfare benefits and tax credits
- Council tax
- Debt and money advice
- Housing and homelessness
- Employment and work issues
- Disability and social care
- Asylum and immigration

## How to get help

Go to [advicelocal.uk](https://advicelocal.uk) enter your postcode and choose an advice topic.

You will find both:

- Links to online sources of advice and information.
- Details of local advice organisations across the UK who may be able to assist.

# Citizens Advice Scotland

The logo for Citizens Advice, featuring the words "citizens advice" in white lowercase letters inside a blue speech bubble shape.

Citizens Advice Scotland is a network of charities that provides confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person for free. This can include legal advice.

Citizens Advice Scotland can help in various areas, including:

- Benefits
- Work
- Debt and money
- Consumer
- Housing
- Family
- Law and courts
- Immigration
- Health

## How to get help

1. Read online advice on various topics at [citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland)
2. Speak to Citizens Advice Scotland on their national phonelines, listed at [cas.org.uk/spotlight/scotlands-citizens-advice-helpline](https://cas.org.uk/spotlight/scotlands-citizens-advice-helpline) (including options for online chat & RelayUK/textphone). These include:
  - Citizen Advice Scotland Free Helpline:
    - 0800 028 1456
3. Get help from your nearest Citizens Advice agency, find it at [cas.org.uk/bureaux](https://cas.org.uk/bureaux)

# Law centres

A law centre is a law practice that is a charity. Law centres employ expert solicitors and caseworkers to give free legal advice and representation to people who cannot afford a lawyer.

They provide legal advice and representation in social welfare law, covering 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 and children's rights

Some law centres work within geographical remit, or focus on a specific community or area of law, whereas others offer legal advice services nationally, across a range of legal issues. Most Scottish law centres are also legal aid providers.

## National

- Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland  
[ercs.scot](http://ercs.scot)
- Ethnic Minorities Law Centre  
[emlc.org.uk](http://emlc.org.uk)

- Clan Childlaw  
[clanchildlaw.org](http://clanchildlaw.org)
- JustRight Scotland  
[justrightscotland.org.uk](http://justrightscotland.org.uk)
- Legal Services Agency  
[lsa.org.uk](http://lsa.org.uk)
- Scottish Child Law Centre  
[sclc.org.uk](http://sclc.org.uk)
- Scottish Women's Rights Centre  
[scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk](http://scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk)
- Shelter Scottish Housing Law Service  
[scotland.shelter.org.uk](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk)

## Regional and Local

- Castlemilk Law and Money Advice Centre – Glasgow  
[castlemilklawcentre.co.uk](http://castlemilklawcentre.co.uk)
- Dundee Law Centre  
[dundeelaw.org](http://dundeelaw.org)
- Fife Law Centre  
[fifelawcentre.co.uk](http://fifelawcentre.co.uk)
- Govan Law Centre – Glasgow  
[govanlc.blogspot.com](http://govanlc.blogspot.com)

## How to get help

Several law centres provide factsheets, guides and other resources on their website, free legal advice helplines as well as appointments and walk in legal surgeries.

AdviceUK is the largest network of advice organisations with 650 members across England, Scotland and Wales.

The members are diverse both in terms of organisational size and the range of advice given. They range from large providers e.g. National Debtline, to smaller community-based organisations and foodbanks. 50 AdviceUK members employ lawyers.

For some AdviceUK members, the provision of advice is their core activity. For others, advice is a part of their wider work in housing, community development, student welfare, disability, health as well as cultural activities. Some adopt a whole person/whole community approach to their work.

Some AdviceUK members provide advice across a broad range of social welfare issues including benefits, debt, housing, immigration and employment undertaking casework and representation at court or tribunal. AdviceUK members in some cases work with particular communities of interest or groups of people needing advice.

You can locate the individual Advice UK organisations at [adviceuk.org.uk/about/contact](https://adviceuk.org.uk/about/contact)

**Find an Adviser** [advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk](https://advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk) is a directory to locate various advice organisations and other help on the following topics, using data maintained by Advice UK. You search by postcode and it includes various local, regional and national organisations.

- Benefits
- Bereavement
- Debt
- Disability
- Domestic Violence
- Foodbanks
- Housing
- Homelessness
- Immigration
- Legal issues
- Mental health
- Work

AdviceFinder is also available via a variety of other channels. From aiding your helpline team to signpost or by feeding search data into a multitude of your organisation's platforms (e.g. website, client portal or app). For more information, visit [advicefinder.org.uk](https://advicefinder.org.uk).



# LawWorks Clinics Network



The LawWorks Clinic Network is a UK network of around 300 clinics which offer free initial legal advice, supported by LawWorks. In Scotland, those clinics are Edinburgh School of Law Free Legal Advice Clinic and University of Strathclyde Law Clinic.

Clinics provide free advice to individuals on various areas of law including employment law, housing matters, consumer disputes, debt, and welfare rights. Some services are only able to offer advice to clients according to geographic location, client demographic and/or area of law.

Clients usually have 30 to 60 minutes to explain an issue and receive basic advice on the next steps to take. Some clinics may not be able to offer advice immediately, but provide a letter/email with a summary of advice.

## How to get help

Visit [lawworks.org.uk/catchment/all-scotland](http://lawworks.org.uk/catchment/all-scotland) to find your local LawWorks clinic, including details of what help the clinic provides and their contact details.

You can search by postcode and filter by area of law:

- Asylum
- Charity
- Child
- Civil litigation
- Community care
- Consumer
- Contract
- Corporate structure
- Crime
- Data protection
- Debt & insolvency
- Domestic violence
- Education
- Employment
- Environmental
- Family
- Health & safety
- Housing
- Immigration
- Insurance
- Intellectual property
- IT & internet
- Personal injury
- Property
- Tax & VAT
- Delict (civil wrongs)
- Welfare benefits
- Wills & probate
- Windrush

# Law school/university clinics



Most university law schools offer free legal advice through their respective law clinics and other pro bono projects. The majority are members of their umbrella charity the Clinical Legal Education Organisation (CLEO).

University law clinics are mainly student led. In other words, students, under the supervision of academic members of staff or external partners such as law firms, offer free legal advice and assistance to clients.

The advice offered may range from general advice through to specialist advice on certain issues.

University clinics might also offer letters of advice, form filling, signposting and/or representation.

Note that most clinics will operate on an appointment only basis, and some may be closed during academic holidays.

## How to get help

The following Universities offer law clinics:

- Aberdeen University: [abdnlawproject.com](http://abdnlawproject.com)
- Dundee University: [UoDLawClinic@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:UoDLawClinic@dundee.ac.uk)
- Edinburgh Napier University: [enlc.co.uk](http://enlc.co.uk)
- Edinburgh University: [law.ed.ac.uk/about-us/free-legal-advice-centre](http://law.ed.ac.uk/about-us/free-legal-advice-centre)
- Glasgow Caledonian University: [gcu.ac.uk/lawclinic](http://gcu.ac.uk/lawclinic)
- Robert Gordon University: [rgu.ac.uk/life-at-rgu/learning-facilities/law-facilities/the-law-clinic](http://rgu.ac.uk/life-at-rgu/learning-facilities/law-facilities/the-law-clinic)
- Strathclyde University: [lawclinic.org.uk](http://lawclinic.org.uk)

# **3. PRO BONO LEGAL HELP**

**This section highlights national services of pro bono advice and representation, provided voluntarily by lawyers across various areas of law.**

**Please note the limitations explained on page 5 above, including that demand for help usually exceeds supply, and help is usually only available to those unable to pay but not eligible for legal aid.**

**To be read in conjunction with the above INTRODUCTION and GENERAL sections.**

# Faculty of Advocates – Free Legal Services Unit (“FLSU”)

FLSU is the Scottish Bar’s pro bono charity. It finds free legal help from volunteer devils (trainee Advocates) and Members of Faculty (Advocates) for people who need advice on a court case or help with a hearing, who cannot afford to pay but cannot get legal aid.

*Geographical remit* Scotland.

*Type of legal help provided* Advocates can provide the following:

- Representation in any court/tribunal
- Legal advice in a meeting or over the phone
- Legal advice in writing
- Drafting documents such as skeleton arguments

*Areas of law* Every area of law.

*Criteria/eligibility to get help* Check eligibility here:  
[advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates/free-legal-services-unit/free-legal-services-unit-homepage](https://advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates/free-legal-services-unit/free-legal-services-unit-homepage)

- You have instructed an Accredited Agency to act on your behalf
- You need an Advocate to help with your case
- Your case is based in Scotland
- Your hearing or deadline is more than three weeks away after you submit a completed application (save in certain exceptional circumstances).

*In person service?* No.

*Online / remote?* Applications are processed online. Those without web access can request a paper form by phone or by post.

*Pro bono?* All help is provided pro bono by devils and Advocates.

*Application route* Referral through an advice agency. See [advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates/free-legal-services-unit/free-legal-services-unit-homepage/accredited-advice-agencies](https://advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates/free-legal-services-unit/free-legal-services-unit-homepage/accredited-advice-agencies)

It is helpful for those referring to help applicants write a summary and collate documents. See: [advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates/free-legal-services-unit](https://advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates/free-legal-services-unit)

*Website*

[advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates/free-legal-services-unit](https://advocates.org.uk/instructing-advocates/free-legal-services-unit)

*Email address*

[flsu@advocates.org.uk](mailto:flsu@advocates.org.uk)

*Phone number*

0131 226 5071

*Important notes*

**Assistance from a Devil or Advocate cannot be guaranteed.**

# Other pro bono in Scotland

Many lawyers and firms provide free of charge legal assistance directly to the public, charities and community groups.

Lawyers also volunteer via a number of dedicated pro bono schemes, which include, in addition to FLSU:

- [FLSU Accredited Advice Agencies](#)
- KIND UK: legal advice and representation to undocumented children on immigration and nationality issues.
- Ukraine Advice Project UK: immigration advice for Ukraine war refugees.
- Scottish Woman's Rights Centre: assistance for women aged 16 years and over living in Scotland who have been affected by violence or abuse. [scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk](http://scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk)

In addition, many charities utilise pro bono assistance from volunteer lawyers alongside specialist lawyers and other staff employed in house by the charity.

# NOTES

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Please help us improve this Guide: email your comments, additions or corrections to [guide@probonoweb.org.uk](mailto:guide@probonoweb.org.uk).