

# Providing free legal advice

## How RLAS can help

### Key information

#### When is RLAS open?

Every other Tuesday  
between 8pm and 9.30pm

Check our website for which  
Tuesday in a month

#### How we operate

RLAS is a drop-in advice  
service—it is not possible  
not to make an  
appointment.

You should try to arrive  
close to 8pm. Depending on  
when you arrive and how  
many other people come for  
advice you may need to wait  
for some time.

**Note:** It is not possible  
always to see everyone who  
comes seeking to advice.

#### Where we provide advice

Holy Trinity Church, Sheen  
Park, Richmond, Surrey,  
TW9 1UP

#### How to find us

For details on finding and  
travelling to this location—  
see the RLAS website:  
[http://www.rlas.org.uk/  
location.htm](http://www.rlas.org.uk/location.htm).

#### What kind of help we give

We try to diagnose your problem and give advice and  
suggestions, as far as we can in the limited time available.

Our advice is based on the information you provide to us  
when you attend a Richmond Legal Advice Service (RLAS)  
session. If you have any documents (such as letters, forms,  
receipts or other papers) which are relevant to your  
problem, please bring them with you. For example, if your  
problem concerns:

- *renting a flat:* bring your tenancy agreement and  
inventory, notices your landlord has sent you, and any  
letters or emails you and the landlord have written; or
- *employment:* bring your employment contract, rules  
about, e.g. disciplinary and grievances matters, letters  
or emails you and your employer have written; or
- *something you have bought:* bring the invoice/receipt  
for the item bought, and any letters or emails you and  
the retailer have written, and any estimates for repairs.

#### What kind of help we cannot give

We do not (and are not able) to 'take on' cases in the same  
way that a firm of solicitors can. We cannot prepare letters,  
fill in forms or prepare any documents for you or on your  
behalf. If you do need to write a letter, fill in a form or  
prepare a document, then we can make some suggestions  
(which you may or may not choose to adopt) regarding the  
content and format, but only while you are with the legal  
adviser during the very limited time he or she can spend  
with you (about 10-15 minutes). Our legal advisers may  
look at a letter, form or document you have prepared and  
suggest amendments, but again only during the limited  
time the legal adviser can spend with you. Because we are  
only open one evening a week, we also cannot provide or  
confirm in writing what a legal advisor has discussed with,  
or told, you.

However, we cannot represent you in a court or at a  
tribunal. Also, if your problem is too complex for an instant  
answer, or requires more time and attention than we can  
give in several short advice sessions, we will recommend  
that you go to a firm of solicitors or a suitable agency.

If there is a deadline you need to meet or there is urgency concerning your problem we often have to ask you to obtain help elsewhere. This is because of our limited opening hours (one evening per a week) and that the adviser who sees you will not be present every week.

## Some limitations

We aim to see you for about 10 to 15 minutes per a session depending on the problem and those waiting. This limited time may mean we cannot give a definitive view on your problem.

If it is legally complex or there are a lot of facts or papers to go through then sometimes all we can do is refer you on or try to give a 'common- sense' answer. However, we do maintain a list of links to other resources (such as firms of solicitors dealing with particular areas of law, other advice agencies and so on), which is on the RLAS website.

No legal adviser can be an expert or have detailed knowledge on all areas of law. Therefore if your problem concerns an area of law which is outside the experience of the volunteers present on the night you attend, we may not be able to help at that session. Often another volunteer will be able to help, but you may need to come on another evening.

## About us

For more than 65 years RLAS has provided free legal advice in the Richmond area.

The need for our service remains strong, particularly with the continuing withdrawal of legal aid and the reduction in funding to other advice agencies, such as the CABx.

RLAS declares its intention not to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of race, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities, age, political or religious belief or lack of it or trade union activity.

RLAS has been generously supported by various groups. *Richmond Parish Lands Charity* has provided grants for several years to enable RLAS to obtain professional indemnity insurance, maintain a web site and pay for renting premises in Richmond. In the past *Mortlake Community Association* has allowed RLAS to use premises without charge to run extra advice sessions.

## Who provides advice at RLAS

Our volunteer lawyers are only qualified lawyers (solicitors, or barristers) and all are volunteers. They receive no payment for the advice they give and cannot benefit in any way from seeing clients at RLAS (such as taking on a client they have seen at RLAS outside of RLAS in return for payment).

# Aims and Information

## RLAS' Aim

- is to provide
- initial and basic legal advice,
- free of charge by
- volunteers who are legally qualified

## For more information

For further information:

- visit the RLAS website: [www.rlas.org.uk](http://www.rlas.org.uk)
- via email: [rlas@rlas.org.uk](mailto:rlas@rlas.org.uk)
- in writing: c/o Holy Trinity Church, Sheen Park, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 1UP
- by telephone: 020 8940 7362 (Victor Woroner, Secretary)

## Our registrations

Registered charity number: 1094365

Information Commissioner: Z1633133

## Your comments

If you have any comments or criticisms please feel free to tell the adviser you see or contact the secretary on the number or address above.

## Web site

Our web site ([www.rlas.org.uk](http://www.rlas.org.uk)) has further information about what we do and copies of information leaflets we provide.