

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 you and the landlord have written; or
- *employment*: bring your employment contract, rules about, e.g. disciplinary and grievances matters, letters you and your employer have written; or
- *something you have bought*: bring the invoice/receipt for the item bought, and any letters you and the retailer have written, and any estimates for repairs.

Although we do not (and are not able) to "take on" cases in the same way that a firm of solicitors can, we can help you by drafting letters, filling in court forms, etc and also provide advice to you over several sessions.

However, we cannot represent you in courts or in tribunals. Also, if your problem appears to be too complex for an instant answer, or requires more time and attention than we can give in several short advice sessions, we will generally recommend that you consult 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 30 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 detailed list of local

firms of solicitors undertaking legal aid work categorised by particular areas of law.

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 50 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, the emphasis on contingency and conditional fee arrangements 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 to enable RLAS to obtain professional indemnity insurance, maintain a web site and pay for renting premises in Richmond in 2010. *Mortlake Community Association* has allowed RLAS to use their premises with charge to run extra advice sessions

Our advisers are qualified lawyers (solicitors, or barristers) and all are volunteers. They receive no payment for the advice they give.

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 on the other side of this leaflet.

Web site

Our web site (www.rlas.org.uk) has further information about what we do and copies of information leaflets we provide (including a list of solicitors providing legal aid work).

RLAS' Aim

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

When and where we are open

Weekly—in Richmond

Every Wednesday between 8pm and 9pm at
Duke Street Church, Duke Street, Richmond, Surrey, TW1 1DH

Monthly—in Mortlake

First Tuesday in each month between 8pm and 9pm at
Mortlake Community Association, St. Mary the Virgin Church, Mortlake
High Street, Mortlake, London, SW14 8JA

For details on finding and travelling to these locations are available on the
RLAS website

For more information

For further information:

- visit the RLAS website: www.rlas.org.uk
- via email: rlas@rlas.org.uk
- in writing: c/o Duke Street Church, Duke Street, Richmond, Surrey,
TW1 1DH
- by telephone: 020 8891 2105 (Victor Warner, Secretary)

Registered charity number: 1094365

Richmond Legal Advice Service

Providing
free
legal
advice

How
RLAS
can
help