

Free legal services

A few things to note:

- In some cases only part of the services provided are free
- This list is not exhaustive. 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 that are available for those seeking legal support
- The information on this document is correct as of January 2017

Location coverage:

The following services are accessible
across all of London*

** Most also accessible across the whole of England and Wales.*

Bar Pro Bono Unit

🏠 barprobono.org.uk
✉ barprobono.org.uk/contact_us
☎ 020 7092 3960
(Mon, Weds, or Fri, 10am - 2pm)

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 on 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.

Advising London

(Formerly Blackfriars Advice Centre)

🏠 advising.london
✉ info@Advising.london
☎ 020 375 5520

Type of support: Legal advice.

Areas covered: Housing, debt, benefits, consumer, employment, immigration.

Process: Drop-in during the following hours:

Monday: 9am - 12pm, 1 - 4pm
Tuesday: 9am - 12pm, 1 - 4pm (debt only)
Wednesday: 1 - 4pm
Thursday: 9am - 12pm, 1pm - 4pm

Clients can also be seen through a series of different appointment times, including ones for those who cannot speak English.

BPP Pro Bono Centre

🏠 bpp.com/bpp-university/l/pro-bono
✉ blac@bpp.com
☎ 020 7430 5668 (housing)
0330 0603 444 (family)
020 7633 4534 (employment)

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.

Civil Legal Advice (CLA)

🏠 [gov.uk/civil-legal-advice](https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice)

☎ 0345 345 4345

(Mon - Fri, 9am - 8pm)

Saturday 9am - 12.30pm)

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

Areas covered:

- Debt, if your home is at risk
- Housing, if you're homeless or at risk of being evicted
- Domestic abuse
- Separating from an abusive partner, when you're making arrangements for children or sorting out money and property
- A child being taken into care
- Special education needs
- Discrimination
- Some child abduction cases

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

Equality Advisory & Support

Service (EASS)

🏠 equalityadvisoryservice.com

✉ equalityadvisoryservice.com/app/ask

☎ 0808 800 0082

(Mon - Fri 9am - 7pm, Sat 10am - 2pm)

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.

Free Representation Unit (FRU)

🏠 thefru.org.uk

✉ thefru.org.uk/contact-us#query

☎ 020 7611 9555

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 are already listed in this document. They can't 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.

LSBU Legal Advice Clinic

🏠 lsbu.ac.uk/schools/law-and-social-sciences/subjects/law/legal-advice-clinic

✉ legaladvice@lsbu.ac.uk

☎ 020 7815 5450

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); and
- Specialist legal advice in family, housing and employment (on a Thursday evening assessment)

Process: Drop-in sessions:

Tuesday, 10am - 12pm

Wednesday, 10am - 12pm, 3 - 5pm

Drop-in sessions can get quite busy and usually around six clients per session can be seen so it is advisable to arrive early. The clinic is only open during term time.

Mary Ward Legal Centre

🏠 marywardlegal.org.uk

☎ 020 7831 7079

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

Areas covered: Predominantly debt, housing and welfare benefits. They also offer employment advice via their special pro bono clinics and additionally run free advice clinics with the support of volunteer lawyers for people with problems that fall outside of their traditional casework including small claims, tax, consumer and contract law.

Process: This varies depending on the area. Some areas require appointments, whilst others can be accessed through a drop-in service. See website for more details.

Migrant Legal Action

(Formerly Afro-Asian Advisory Service)

🏠 aaas.org.uk

✉ aaas@btconnect.com

☎ 020 3150 1470 (advice line)
020 7701 0141 (reception line)

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.

Process: This varies, but for the London service it is as follows: For support at a hearing call **020 7073 4760** or email london@the PSU.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.

Richmond Legal Advice Service (RLAS)

🏠 rlas.org.uk

✉ rlas@rlas.org.uk

☎ 020 8891 2105

Type of support: Legal advice.

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

Rights of Women

🏠 rightsofwomen.org.uk

✉ info@row.org.uk

☎ 020 7251 6575 (NOTE: This is an administrative, not an advice line)

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 (different numbers for different areas of law – see rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/)

Royal Courts of Justice (RCJ)

Advice Bureau

🏠 rcjadvice.org.uk

✉ admin@rcjadvice.org.uk

☎ 0203 475 4373

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: Any type of civil or family case, but not criminal.

Process: To be triaged for an appointment, students should telephone between 9.30am and 4.30pm.

Queen Mary, University of London, Legal Advice Centre

🏠 lac.qmul.ac.uk

✉ lac@qmul.ac.uk

☎ 020 7882 3931

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.

Start-Ed

🏠 [meetup.com/legalworkshopslondon](https://www.meetup.com/legalworkshopslondon)

✉ start-ed@city.ac.uk

☎ 020 7404 5787

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.

Toynbee Hall Legal Advice Centre

🏠 toynbeehall.org.uk/legal-advice
✉ advice@toynbeehall.org.uk (new clients)
flac@toynbeehall.org.uk (returning clients)
☎ 020 7392 2978

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; housing; debt; family; civil litigation; consumer; minor criminal issues.

Process: New clients should either attend their drop-in service (Monday - Friday, 10am - 1pm and 2 - 4pm) or email to make an initial assessment of the issue/case. Returning clients should contact the service via telephone.

The City Law School

🏠 city.ac.uk/law/careers/pro-bono-professional/information-for-clients/free-legal-advice-service
✉ law@city.ac.uk
☎ 020 7404 5787 extension 353/391

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

Areas covered: Civil law (including personal injury claims); Employment; Landlord and tenant disputes; Consumer rights; Small claims. The Service does not include immigration. The matter should not be too complex and no court proceeding should have been issued.

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

The University of Law

🏠 law.ac.uk/about/legal-advice-for-the-public
✉ ssadvice.centre@law.ac.uk
☎ 01483 216528

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; employment and family telephone advice (at London Bloomsbury Centre)

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

University of Westminster

Student Law Clinic

🏠 westminster.ac.uk/about-us/faculties/law/contacts-us
✉ lawclinic@westminster.ac.uk
☎ 020 3506 9626

Type of support: Legal advice.

Areas covered: Family law advice covering the full range of family disputes (children, divorce, finances). Please note that we cannot advise in very urgent situations.

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

Location coverage:

The following services are accessible only in some specific parts of London*

** These cover services that offer free legal representation across specific boroughs or areas in London. This list is by no means exhaustive and students seeking free legal advice in their borough should check local Citizens Advice Bureaus, council websites or **lawworks.org.uk** for more information.*

Brixton Advice Centre

🏠 brixtonadvice.org.uk

☎ 020 7251 6575

Type of support: Generalist and specialist legal advice on housing (possessions, evictions, disrepair, etc.), debt and welfare benefits.

Areas covered: Housing, debt and welfare benefit.

Process: Clients can attend drop-in sessions (10am to 3pm Monday to Thursday) or get an appointment by ringing One Lambeth Advice on **0800 254 0298**

Citizens Advice Enfield

🏠 enfieldcab.org.uk

✉ info@enfieldcab.org.uk

☎ 030 0330 1167

Type of support: Generalist advice. Can refer students to solicitors that 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 phone (Monday - Friday, 10am-4pm). Clients must be residents of Enfield.

Brixton Advice Centre

(Several different locations)

🏠 lawcentres.org.uk

Type of advice: Legal advice to local residents. All Law Centres offer face-to-face legal advice to local residents, 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 ones are:

- **Brent Community Law Centre**
- **Camden Community Law Centre**
- **Central London Law Centre**
- **Croydon Law Centre**
- **Ealing Law Centre**
- **Hackney Community Law Centre**
- **Hammersmith and Fulham Community Law Centre**
- **Haringey Law Centre**
- **Harrow Law Centre**
- **Hillingdon Law Centre**
- **Islington Law Centre**
- **Kingston and Richmond Law Centre**
- **Lambeth Law Centre**
- **Merton and Sutton Law Centre**
- **North Kensington Law Centre**
- **Paddington Law Centre**
- **Plumstead Law Centre**
- **Southwark Law Centre**
- **Springfield Law Centre**
- **Tower Hamlets Law Centre**
- **Vauxhall Community Law and Community Information Centre**
- **Wandsworth Law Centre**

Areas covered: This varies from Law Centre to Law Centre, but all specialise 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

Process: Check relevant local Law Centre website for process information.

Legal Advice Centre - University

House (Bethnal Green)

🏠 legaladvicecentre.london
✉ admin@legaladvicecentre.london
☎ 020 8980 4205

Type of support: Legal advice and legal representation (in very limited circumstances, see below). 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); Education (SEN & Discrimination) and debt.

Process: Call or email in the first instance.

The River House Law Clinic

🏠 riverhouseuk.org
✉ info@riverhouseuk.org
☎ 020 8753 5190

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

Areas covered: Housing and immigration.

Process: Call in the first instance. Solicitor consultations take place on Thursday afternoon at Hammersmith & Fulham Community Law Centre premises but appointments may be offered on other days if Thursdays are not possible for clients.

St. Hilda's Legal Advice Service

🏠 sthildas.org.uk/projects/legal-advice-service
✉ mail@sthildas.org.uk
☎ 020 7739 8066

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 and consumer problems – 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 Wednesdays from 6.30 - 8.30pm at Sonali Gardens in Shadwell.

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