



**CIVIL LEGAL
ASSISTANCE OFFICE**
Edinburgh



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Introducing the Civil Legal Assistance Office- Edinburgh

The **Civil Legal Assistance Office - Edinburgh** helps people in Edinburgh and the Lothians get help with their legal problems. The Scottish Legal Aid Board (the Board) employs five full-time solicitors to give legal help on many different kinds of problem, where there is unmet legal need.

We work from an office based in Edinburgh, but we serve people in Edinburgh and the Lothians



**Need legal help? All you
have to do is get in touch**

**Civil Legal Assistance Office
Edinburgh**
2nd Floor
8 Picardy Place
EDINBURGH
EH1 3JT

T: 0131 240 1960
E: info@pvs.slab.org.uk
W: www.slab.org.uk/civiloffice

**Are you facing eviction by your
landlord, repossession of your
house or homelessness?**

The **Civil Legal Assistance Office-
Edinburgh** helps people facing court action for eviction or repossession, or relating to debt, or when homelessness is threatened. This leaflet explains more about the services we offer, who can use us and how to contact us.



Can your service help me?

If you live in one of these areas, and you are having difficulties finding legal help, we may be able to help you. You must be eligible for civil legal assistance to use our service, although we may be able to help with information if you are not eligible.

We do not deal with cases under criminal legal aid.

What is civil legal assistance?

The Board can provide funding to help people who qualify to get legal advice and the help of a solicitor to put their case in court ("representation"), in civil cases. It may be free or you may have to pay a contribution towards the cost of the case.

There are two kinds of help you may be able to get under civil legal assistance.

- First, there is advice and assistance. This helps pay for advice from a solicitor on any matter of Scots Law, for example trying to settle a dispute for you without going to court. However, it does not normally pay for representation in court.
- Second, there is civil legal aid. This helps pay for your solicitor to act for you in court. It covers the preparation work, as well as the hearing itself, and can provide funding for advocates and experts if needed. Most cases begin on advice and assistance; legal aid may be the next step if necessary.

How do I find out if I am eligible for it?

You do not have to know if you are eligible for civil legal assistance before you contact the **Civil Legal Assistance Office** but you may wish to find out whether you are likely to be eligible for civil legal assistance before you try to contact us.

The easiest way to do this is to phone the Board's **Legal Aid Helpline on 0845 122 8686**—open seven days a week from 7 am until 11 pm.

Alternatively, you can use the Board's handy online calculators or leaflets on its website **www.slab.org.uk**. Or you may find a copy of the Board's leaflet "A Guide to Civil Legal Aid" which lets you work out if you may be eligible, in your local library or Citizens Advice Bureaux.

If I am eligible to use your service, what happens if I contact your for help?

First, we will ask you for some general details about you and your case. Although our service is confidential, you will have to give us some personal information including your name. If you want to get help anonymously, you will have to contact another advice agency such as your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

Based on these details, we will tell you if we think we are the best people to help you. For some problems someone else, like a Citizens Advice Bureau, may be better able to help you. Especially if your problem does not relate to the law, or the case is not yet at the stage of going to court another organisation may be able to handle the case better than a solicitor.

If appropriate we will try to find a solicitor in private practice who can take on your case. If there is a solicitor in the areas covered by our service who is willing to act for you, we will put you in touch with them.

What happens if no solicitor in private practice can act for me?

If we cannot find a solicitor in private practice who will act for you under legal aid, and you are eligible for civil legal assistance, we may be able to do some work for you ourselves. This will depend on:

- First whether we can handle the type of case concerned. We can deal with housing, landlord & tenant problems, mortgage arrears, employment, debt and related matters. But if the problem is more specialised, we may not be able to deal with it
- Second, whether we have a solicitor free to do it. A big part of our service is to give people legal help when they can't find get a solicitor in private practice to do so. But we are a small office and we can't guarantee that we can meet the needs of everyone looking for our help.

How do I contact your service

If possible, phone us on 0845 267 8078 or email us at **info@pvs.slab.org.uk**. This will allow us to get your details before deciding whether you need to see one of our solicitors.

Alternatively you can write to us at the address on the back cover of this leaflet.

You must get an appointment before one of our solicitors can meet you. We can't see you without an appointment. Before we can arrange an appointment, we need to look at your case and decide if someone else can help you, or we can find you a solicitor in private practice.

You may also be able to find out more about our service from other places like advice services or other solicitors. We have a close link with all the Citizens Advice Bureaux in Edinburgh and the Lothians. Their advisers can tell you more about our service, how to contact us and whether you are likely to be eligible for legal aid.