



SEN ADVICE SERVICE

CLIENT CARE LEAFLET

What we do:

We provide free legal advice and support for parents of children with special educational needs.

Liverpool Law Clinic is part of the School of Law and Social Justice in the University of Liverpool, a charitable organisation.

Liverpool Law Clinic provides an opportunity for law students to gain experience of legal work, under close supervision of qualified lawyers.

Deborah Tyfield is regulated by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority and the Law Clinic has professional indemnity insurance.

The students are not regulated by a professional body but they have agreed to abide by the professional Codes of Conduct that apply to the solicitors responsible for your case. They have signed an agreement setting out their promise to treat your case confidentially.

Students may conduct part of your client interview by asking you for information or details about your case and they may help you to prepare documents, for example filling in forms or writing a statement. They cannot give you legal advice. All legal advice will be given by a qualified solicitor or barrister.

Responsibility for your case:

The SEN Advice Service is run by our specialist solicitors, who will have responsibility for your case.

We have three services:

1. Advice Appointments

There are 3 steps to our advice appointments:

Information gathering:

A Clinic administrator or student volunteers will speak to you to find out about your situation in order to identify whether we are the best service to help you. If we think that we are not able to help you we will tell you about other services.

Advice at an appointment:

Normally a solicitor will be accompanied by two or three students who will take notes. The solicitor will give you advice about your situation at the interview.

After the appointment:

If you are using our SEN Advice service our students will research the law further and provide you with a detailed letter of advice or

If you are using our Appeals Service of Public Law Challenge (Judicial Review) we will provide a written summary of the advice provided at interview.

2. Appeals Service

If we agree to support you with your appeal to the Tribunal following the initial advice appointment we will either prepare your grounds of appeal or assist you to.

We may also agree to help you to prepare for the hearing and will discuss this with you.

3. Public Law Challenges

Support Appointment

If we agree to support you to challenge your local authority about a failure or delay, we will represent you by writing a letter to your local authority about the issue.

Once a response has been received we will assist you to take appropriate next steps.

We cannot represent you beyond this stage.

Funding for your case, costs and fees

We do not charge for our services. If we think you may be eligible for Legal Aid we will signpost you to a local solicitor's firm.

Our responsibilities to you

The Liverpool Law Clinic's aim is to provide a high standard of service, similar to that offered by any Solicitor's practice.

We will:

- Put your interests first when advising you
- Be polite and considerate in our dealings with you
- Deal with correspondence and telephone calls as quickly as possible
- Make every effort to provide relevant and realistic advice in plain language
- Keep your information confidential
- Treat all clients fairly and not discriminate against anyone

Limits to our service

Our service is usually limited to advice and support. If we think that another organisation that can help you with your case we will let you know. Depending on the service:

We can:

- Give you advice about the strengths and weaknesses of your case
- Help you fill in any necessary forms
- Confirm our advice in writing
- Send an initial letter to your local authority where we agree to do so

We cannot:

- Represent you in court
- Assist you if your case is too complicated for our service
- Support you if you already have a lawyer

Our advice is based on any information you tell us and any documents you show us so it is important you tell us as much as you can and be truthful with us. We cannot be liable for incorrect advice if it is based on incorrect information that you have given to us.

As solicitors/barristers we have a professional duty to the court as well as to you, our client. If we become aware that you have misled or intend to mislead the court in any way we will advise you to bring this to the attention of the court. If you do not do so we will not be able to continue to advise you.

Comments and Complaints

Liverpool Law Clinic is committed to providing the best possible service to our clients and to high quality legal advice and client care. We would therefore like you to tell us if you feel that the way we work with you could be improved. We will ask you to complete a feedback form on our service at the end of our work with you.

We have a complaints procedure in place, you can request a copy of this at any time and it will be sent to you.

The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted via email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk, telephone: **0300 555 0333** or post: **PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ**

Closure of your file

We will close your file after the agreed steps have been taken. We retain your file, in most cases for 6 years, before eventually destroying them.

We do not have your original documents and will be storing your papers electronically on our case management system Advice Pro.

Your emails and letters are saved on the University intranet and although we will try to remove these after 6 years we are not able to guarantee that everything is deleted due to the historical data storage systems at the University.

Liverpool Law Clinic is offering appointments on campus or on Microsoft Teams if necessary.

You can contact our team by Email: clinic@liverpool.ac.uk or Telephone: **0151 794 5782**