

## Can I get Legal Aid for my family case?

If you are on a low income you may be eligible for free or subsidised advice or representation from a solicitor.

However, since 2012 Legal Aid is only available in very limited circumstances. It will depend on three things:

- **Means test** – whether you can afford your own legal costs, AND
- **Scope** – what your case is about, AND
- **Merits test** – the likelihood of success (whether a reasonable person would use their own money to pay for the case).

### Means test

You will have to show the Legal Aid Agency that you cannot afford to pay legal costs. They need documentary evidence of your income, benefits, savings, property and investments. You will also have to show your expenditure. On the Legal Aid Agency website you can enter your financial details to see whether you would be eligible for funding: <http://civil-eligibility-calculator.justice.gov.uk/>

### What is Legal Aid available for?

If you meet the Means Test, Legal Aid is available for the following areas of family law:

- **Social services involvement** - if social services are applying for a care order, supervision order or emergency protection order for your children
- **Family injunctions** - including non-molestation orders and occupation orders following domestic abuse
- **Family mediation** - to resolve disputes about children and/or finances after a relationship breakdown

- **International and domestic child abduction** - to prevent a child being removed illegally from the UK or to make sure they are returned
- **Private children disputes** – ONLY if you have evidence of domestic abuse or child abuse
- **Divorce and finance matters** – ONLY if you have evidence of domestic abuse

If you or your child have been victims of domestic abuse/violence or financial control, you will need to produce evidence, such as a letter from the police, a social worker, doctor or domestic abuse worker. A full list of what counts as evidence can be found on the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/legal-aid/domestic-abuse-or-violence>

### **What next?**

If you think you may be entitled to Legal Aid, you need to contact a solicitor who has a Legal Aid contract. See the list below.

However, there is a shortage of Legal Aid solicitors in Norfolk, so you may find that even if you meet all the criteria, you can't get a solicitor to take on your case. If this happens, you can search for a provider elsewhere in the country on <https://find-legal-advice.justice.gov.uk>.

If you are still unable to find a Legal Aid solicitor, the alternative is to represent yourself. This is known as being a Litigant In Person. NCLS may be able to help you do this – please get in touch for more information.

## Legal Aid providers in Norfolk

**Fosters Solicitors**

William House, 19 Bank Plain, Norwich NR2 4FS  
01603 620508

**Lucas & Wyllys**

5/6 South Quay, Great Yarmouth NR30 2QJ  
01493 855555

**Norton Peskett**

66a Bells Road, Gorleston, NR31 6AF  
01493 652204

**ONLY FOR MATTERS INVOLVING CHILDREN****Hayes & Storr**

Fakenham, Kings Lynn, Swaffham, Holt & Sheringham  
01328 863231

*NCLS is not responsible for any advice or information you may be given from an individual, company or organisation you might approach as a result of any signposting or referral by NCLS.*

Please contact us if you would like this guide in another language, or if you have difficulty accessing the website mentioned.

**Norfolk Community Law Service**

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