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OTHER SOURCES OF HELP (LAST UPDATED OCT 08)

1 FINDING A SPECIALIST SOLICITOR / ADVISER

It is important to find a solicitor / adviser who specialises in the area of law in which you need help. We would strongly recommend that if you can't find specialist help locally, it is worth travelling a bit further.

You should try to go to a solicitor / adviser which has a Specialist Quality Mark. This means it has been approved by the Legal Services Commission, in that specific type of work. You can get information on specialist solicitors / advisers and their Quality Mark, where they are located, languages spoken or availability of interpreters and accessibility of their premises from **Community Legal Advice (tel 0845 345 4345 or www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk)**. To request a call back from the Community Legal Advice helpline simply **text 'legalaid' and your name to 80010** and they should call you back within 24 hours. We also have the Community Legal Advice Directory and access to the website (which can be viewed in private if required).

There are specialist panels of solicitors approved by the Law Society in some areas - for example, in personal injury and clinical negligence. You should phone the **Law Society Practice Directorate on 0870 606 2555**.

Some areas of law are not covered by specialist panels or Quality Mark e.g. conveyancing, wills and probate. You can get more information from the Solicitors Regional Directory (available in most libraries).

2 ELIGIBILITY FOR LEGAL HELP – THIS IS A SUMMARY ONLY

Most people who are receiving Income support or JSA (means assessed), are eligible for initial free legal help from solicitors / advisers. In addition, people on a very low income, ignoring certain benefits and making an allowance for housing costs, childcare and employment expenses, may be eligible. If you need full legal aid to take court proceedings, there is a different (slightly more generous) eligibility test. If you have savings this may affect eligibility. You can go to the **Community Legal Advice website** who have an online eligibility calculator.