

How to prepare for seeing a solicitor or adviser

<https://www.advicenow.org.uk/know-hows/how-prepare-seeing-solicitor-or-adviser>

Plan what you want to get out of the appointment

Make a list. It can be a good idea to get a friend to help with this.

The list should include:

1. The main points you want to make about your problem.
2. What you want to know.
3. The questions you want to ask.

What to take

Take any relevant letters or documents with you, organised so that you can find what you need. This will help your solicitor or adviser understand what has been going on.

Take proof of your address, or care of address, and some photo ID as the solicitor or adviser will need this for their file.

If you may be able get legal aid for your legal problem you will need to take evidence of your income (including all benefits you receive), any savings, and outgoings such as rent, maintenance payments and childcare costs. This is so the solicitor or adviser can assess your financial circumstances and tell you if you should apply for legal aid for your case.

If you know that you won't be able to get legal aid before you go, you will need to have money available to pay for your appointment. It is a good idea to check beforehand exactly how much it will cost and what methods of payment are accepted.

What to expect

They will ask you lots of questions. Try to answer them as clearly and accurately as you can. The solicitor or adviser should check with you to make sure they've understood what you've said. Try to be clear with the solicitor or adviser about what you want to happen. Don't hold back

information because you are embarrassed or feel it may not be important. Explain why you feel awkward.

Don't be afraid to ask them to explain anything you don't understand. Take notes of what is said or better still get a friend or family member to come too, if you can, to take notes for you.

You may want to ask questions such as:

- What happens next?
- How likely is my case to succeed?
- What are the risks involved?
- How long will it take?
- How much will my case cost?
- Am I eligible for legal aid?
- Can I do anything to help my case?

Before the end of the appointment make sure you understand what the solicitor or adviser is going to do for you next.

After you have seen the adviser or solicitor for the first time you may want to ask yourself:

- Do I feel confident about using this person?
- Did I understand everything that they told me?
- Do I think they fully understood my problem?
- If the service isn't free, am I clear how much this could cost me if I go ahead?

Make sure you keep all the paperwork you get from your solicitor or adviser. Try to keep it in order. If you can afford to pay the solicitor or adviser to do more work on your case make sure you are clear about the costs and how and when you have to pay them.

If your solicitor or adviser asks you for extra documents, try and get them to him or her as quickly as possible by the most secure method. Make sure you take a copy if you need to give them the original.