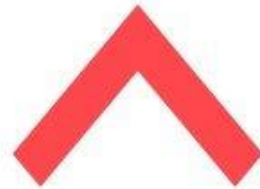


advocate



The pro bono charity
of the Bar

Who we are

- Advocate was established in 1996 as the Bar Pro Bono Unit
- We now have 4,000 volunteer barristers (including one-third of all QCs)
- We receive 2,000 applications from members of the public a year
- We cover all areas of law throughout England & Wales

www.weareadvocate.org.uk

What we do

- ✓ Match volunteer barristers with those in need
- ✓ Our volunteer barristers provide free legal advice, drafting and/or representation
- ✓ We assist members of the public and small organisations who cannot obtain legal aid or afford a barrister

“I don’t think my volunteer barrister really understands what he did for me. It wasn’t just winning the case, he actually saved my life. I couldn’t have done what he did if I’d had to represent myself.”

How we work

Step 1. Application form arrives: If complete, goes to step 2. If not, further information is requested from the applicant.

Step 2. Request for help is reviewed by a senior barrister. If case is suitable, goes to step 3. If not, case is rejected and applicant is told why.

Step 3. The piece of work is summarised and loaded onto the barristers' portal on the Advocate website and/or sent by email to subscribers.

Step 4. Barrister puts in an interest, looks over the papers and has 48 hours to decide whether to take on the work or not. Search continues.

Contact details

Email is our preferred method of communication and is quicker than calling. This is the first email address to use. Once the application is processed, we use another address from which we communicate with applicants.

Pre-application
enquiry



enquiries@weareadvocate.org.uk

Checklist for referrers

- ✓ The applicant is **not** eligible for **legal aid**
- ✓ The applicant cannot **pay privately**
- ✓ There is a **minimum of 3 weeks' notice** before any hearing date or deadline (with **exceptions** for loss of liberty (prison or deportation), homelessness, child welfare and having a barrister in place)
- ✓ The piece of work will take less than 3 days (some exceptions may apply)
- ✓ The piece of work is something that a **barrister** can do

Barristers can:

- Represent in any court/tribunal
- Give legal advice
- Draft documents

Barristers cannot:

- Prepare a case and paperwork for the court/tribunal
- Provide administrative support
- Write letters

How to apply

Form is available online and as downloadable Word document. Referrers are encouraged to help applicants complete the form. Applications must include all available case papers (listed on website):

- ✓ Court/tribunal papers including court orders, judgments and witness statements.
- ✓ Papers or opinions from solicitors, barristers or advisers giving advice about the case.
- ✓ Key correspondence with any other person(s) involved, or their solicitors.
- ✓ If seeking help with an appeal, a copy of the judgment being appealed.
- ✓ If seeking help about a contract or formal document, a full copy of the contract or document.

Key questions

- **Can an individual apply to Advocate directly?** Yes, but the form is detailed and applicants often need help assembling papers, so support from a referral agency leads to better quality applications.
- **Can applications be sent in hard copy?** Most of us are still working remotely but we have a small presence in the office so hard copy applications can be submitted for the time being (unless/until lockdown).
- **Can I speak to an Advocate caseworker?** Remote working has meant the closure of our phonelines and it is now only possible to leave a voicemail. It is generally much quicker to email and wait for a response.
- **When will I hear about whether my case has been accepted?** The application process is quite long and will move quickly when there is a clear form and good paperwork. A caseworker will be in touch generally within 5 working days of the application being sent.