



# FAMILY LAW ADVICE SERVICE

## CLIENT CARE LEAFLET

### What we do:

We provide free legal advice and support for family law problems involving children. 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.

Helenor Birt and Lucy Yeatman are 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 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.

We do not give advice on divorce or finance matters.

### Responsibility for your case:

The Family Law Service is run by specialist family law solicitors, **Lucy Yeatman** and **Helenor Birt**. Lucy or Helenor will have responsibility for your case.

Family law solicitors and barristers often volunteer to help the Law Clinic and provide free advice services.

You may be given advice by a volunteer solicitor in an advice appointment.

We will tell you the name before the appointment. If you see a volunteer solicitor, Lucy Yeatman or Helenor Birt will still have overall responsibility for your case.

### 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:

We will agree at the appointment which of the following options will happen next:

- 1) The students will research the law and write a letter setting out the advice given to you in the interview. The advice letter will be sent to you within three weeks of your appointment.
- 2) We will send you some information leaflets and a short summary of the next steps recommended in the advice appointment.
- 3) We will close your file with no written advice provided.

## Support Appointments

If you need help filling in forms or writing a statement we may be able to offer you a follow up appointment to assist you with this.

In a support appointment two students will go through your situation with you and help you to complete the documents needed.

The students will not be able to give you legal advice in this appointment but will make a note of your questions to pass on to the supervising solicitor.

## 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
- Make every effort to provide relevant and realistic advice in plain language
- Treat all clients fairly and do not discriminate against anyone
- Deal with correspondence and telephone calls as quickly as possible
- Provide you with a letter summarising the advice given to you within three weeks of your appointment (unless agreed otherwise).
- Keep your information confidential

## 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
- Send you a letter after your appointment confirming the advice given

**We cannot:**

- Represent you in court
- Negotiate for you with the other parents or parent's representative
- Advise or support both parents in a case
- 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 that 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 provided. 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 so 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](mailto: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 date storage systems at the University.

## Family Court Projects

We run two student court projects most weeks during term time.

### Liverpool FHDRA Helpdesk

Advice appointments at court, subject to checks, are available on a first come basis. These appointments are with a qualified solicitor. A trained student is then available to attend the hearing and take notes and provide a summary after the hearing.

### Birkenhead Family Court Support Project

This is a support project run by trained students. Advice is not available at court, only support and information. Advice appointments can be arranged at the Clinic either in person or online.

Students will provide information about the hearing and attend the hearing with you to take notes and will provide a summary for you before you leave court.

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](mailto:clinic@liverpool.ac.uk) or Telephone: **0151 794 5782**