

This factsheet is aimed at disabled people in Greater Manchester who want legal advice or representation because of issues at work. Accessing free employment advice can be tricky because there is less public funding available for this area of law than there is for some others. **We do not provide legal advice within the Independent Employment Advocacy Centre ourselves, but can support you to access the advice you need.**

Accessibility

Providers of legal and advice services – whether you have to pay for them or not – have to comply with the Equality Act. This means that they have a duty to make a change to a practice, policy or procedure that makes it unreasonably difficult for you as a disabled person to access their service. This is called a reasonable adjustment. Adjustments could include, for example, providing a reasonable alternative method of accessing the service if a physical feature of their standard service would make it impossible or very difficult for you to use it. For further information on this, please contact us.

One off assistance

Organisations such as Greater Manchester Pay and Employment Rights Service, ACAS and some Citizen's Advice Bureaux can offer one off advice on employment rights. Their contact details are listed below. It is also worth checking whether your employer has an Employee Assistance Programme. These often enable you to get free, confidential legal advice over the phone.

In Greater Manchester there are now some LawWorks clinics available. LawWorks enables members of the public who would find it difficult to access legal support to get advice from volunteer solicitors. Some of these clinics run outside standard working hours and some specialise in employment issues. They may have rules about who can get advice, for example you may have to be on a low income. Contact us for details of current LawWorks clinics in the Greater Manchester area.

Breakthrough UK Law Clinic

Breakthrough runs a LawWorks clinic every other Wednesday evening between 6pm and 8pm by appointment only. It is staffed by volunteer solicitors from local law firms. This is open to disabled people in the Greater Manchester area and provides **one off** advice on all areas of law excluding criminal, family and immigration.

Tel: **0161 273 5412** Minicom **0161 273 5727**

Email: lawclinic@breakthrough-uk.co.uk

Website: www.breakthrough-uk.co.uk/OurWork/advocacy_and_info/lawclinic

Other organisations you can contact for one off advice include:

Greater Manchester Pay and Employment Rights Service

Greater Manchester Pay and Employment Rights (GMPER) Advice Service was formerly known as the Greater Manchester Low Pay Unit. They have been providing employment rights advice and undertaking research into aspects of the labour market and low pay for the last 20 years.

They provide free, confidential employment advice, information and support to anyone in Greater Manchester who is experiencing problems at work or who wants to know what their rights are. This is mainly a telephone service but you can write to them if this is not accessible.

GMPER also produces a number of leaflets and factsheets dealing with a wide range of employment issues. This includes a factsheet on Disability at Work. These are available online or via the helpline:

Helpline: **0161 839 3888**

Fax: 0161 839 3883

Address: 4th Floor, Swan Buildings, 20 Swan Street, Manchester M4 5JW

Website: www.gmemploymentrights.org.uk

ACAS

ACAS aims to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations. They provide up-to-date information, independent advice and training on employment issues and rights. ACAS work with employers and employees to solve problems and improve performance.

Helpline: 08457 47 47 47 (voice) 08456 06 16 00 (textphone)

Helpline is open between 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm on Saturdays.

Text phone is open between 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday.

Website: www.acas.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission champions equality and human rights for all. They offer information on your rights to equal treatment and dealing with discrimination on the grounds of disability, age, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation or race.

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline

Tel: 0845 604 6610

Textphone: 0845 604 6620

Fax: 0845 604 6630

Mon - Fri 8am to 6pm (last call taken at 5:45pm)

Freepost RRL-LGHUX-CTR, Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3EQ

Email: englandhelpline@equalityhumanrights.com

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

Community Legal Advice can provide free advice about benefits, tax credits, housing, employment, education or debt problems if you qualify for legal aid.

Helpline: 0845 345 4345

Textphone: 0845 609 6677

Website: www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Citizens Advice

There are Citizen's Advice Bureaux (CAB) in many parts of the country. Most offer employment advice and will offer home visits if required. You can find your nearest CAB online at the link below or alternatively contact us and we will do a search for you:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm#txt_getadvice_header-Anchor-search

Ongoing Legal Representation

If you need ongoing legal representation to take on a case, your options include:

- Private solicitors – can be expensive!
- 'No win no fee' private solicitors – you only pay if you win but they will often want a substantial cut.
- Government funded solicitors if you qualify for Legal Aid. You may have to make a financial contribution.
- Trade Union legal advisors if you are a member of a union.
- Home Contents insurance policies can sometimes cover legal representation.
- Equality Workers at some Law Centres.

- Employment Advisors at Law Centres, Citizen Advice Bureaus and Independent Advice Centres - you will often have to qualify for Legal Aid to access this.
- Disability Law Service Caseworkers (they only take on a small number of cases every year).
- LawWorks Individual Casework service – volunteer solicitors take on your case if you meet their eligibility criteria. Contact us for details.

Legal Aid

Some of the casework services mentioned in this booklet can only be accessed if you qualify for Legal Aid. There are several things that are looked at to decide whether you qualify. These include:

- The type of legal issue you have.
- Your income (how much you earn) and how much capital (money, property, belongings) you have.
- Whether there is a reasonable chance of winning your case and whether it is worth the time and money needed to win.

The Community Legal Advice website have an online Legal Aid Calculator which can help you to work out whether you qualify.

This is at the link below, contact us if you require assistance:

www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/en/legalaid/calculator.jsp

Free Representation Unit. Junior lawyers at the Free Representation Unit provide free representation to the public at Employment Tribunals. More details online at:

www.freerepresentationunit.org.uk

Tel: 020 7611 9555

LawWorks provide a similar free casework service operated by volunteer solicitors, but they won't start a case for you. Details at:

www.lawworks.org.uk/?id=lawworks-individual-casework

LawWorks, National Pro Bono Centre, 48 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1JF.

Private Solicitors

We cannot recommend or endorse private solicitors at the Advocacy Centre.

However, you can search for local Quality Marked solicitors for the area of law you are interested in on the Community Legal Advice website at:

www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/en/directory/directorysearch.jsp . Please

contact us if this is not accessible to you.

You can also search for details of private solicitors on the Law Society website at: www.lawsociety.org.uk/choosingandusing/findasolicitor.law

If you require assistance with searching for a solicitor please contact the Solicitors Regulation Authority on tel: **0870 606 2555** or email: contactcentre@sra.org.uk.

Home Contents Insurance

Do you have home contents insurance? If so, it is worth checking your policy as sometimes legal advice and representation is included. Again, they will usually assess the merits of your case first before deciding whether to take you on.

Trades Unions

Are you a member of a Trades Union? If so, your union may be able to offer you free legal representation. You will usually need to have been a member for a set period of time - 6 months is common - to be eligible for this. In order to take your case on, the legal team will often also want to assess your chances of success first. Most will not take on your case if they feel you have less than 50% chance of winning.

If you have a strong enough case the union caseworker will be able to represent you at a Tribunal if things reach that stage. Some workplaces will already have a recognised union. Some unions also have disabled members groups which can be a useful source of peer support and advice. You can get advice about joining unions and obtain their contact details from the Trades Union Congress:

Tel: 0870 600 4882

(Know Your Rights Line) Mon-Fri 8am to 10pm

Fax: 020 7636 0632

Address: Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

Website: www.tuc.org.uk (you can contact them online).

Contact details for all the unions in Britain are available online at:

www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/unions_main.cfm

Law Centres

Law Centres provide assistance with solving issues such as getting decent housing, dealing with discrimination, or obtaining the correct benefits. You will usually need to be eligible for Legal Aid to qualify for free legal assistance from Law Centres. Some Law Centres have specialist Employment Case Workers and/or Disability Rights Workers. To find your nearest Law Centre, contact the Law Centres Federation on:

Tel: 020 7842 0720

Fax: 020 7842 0721

E-mail: info@lawcentres.org.uk

Or find your local law centre online at:

www.lawcentres.org.uk/lawcentres/detail/find/

There are currently **Equalities Workers** based at Law Centres in Greater Manchester. They cover specific boroughs and can:

- Tell you about your rights under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Talk to your group, agency or organisation about the provisions of the Act.
- Advise you if you feel you have been treated unfairly or been unable to access a service due to your impairment.
- Offer you a casework service to enable you to take legal action to enforce your rights, where issues remain unresolved.

One Equalities Worker is based at **Rochdale Law Centre**.

Rochdale Law Centre can be contacted on:

Advice Line: 01706 657 766 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 12noon)
Address: 15 Drake Street, Rochdale OL16 1RE
E-mail: info@rochdalelawcentre.org.uk
Website: www.lawcentre.org.uk

Another Equalities Worker is based at **Trafford Law Centre** and can be contacted on:

Tel: 0161 872 3669
Fax: 0161 872 2208
Address: 2nd Floor Atherton House, 88-92 Talbot Road, Manchester M16 0GS
Website: www.traffordlawcentre.org.uk/disability/disability.htm

Others are based at the Tameside **Equality and Diversity Centre** on:

Tel: 0161 343 3399
Fax: 0161 343 2424
Address: 22 Warrington Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne OL6 6AS
E-mail: trec@btopenworld.com
Website: www.equalitydiversitycentre.org

Community Legal Advice

Community Legal Advice can provide free advice about benefits, tax credits, housing, employment, education or debt problems if you qualify for Legal Aid.

Helpline: 0845 345 4345
Textphone: 0845 609 6677
Website: <http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/index.jsp>

Disability Law Service

The Disability Law Service (DLS) is an independent company run by disabled people. They provide legal services for disabled adults and children, their families and supporters.

They have a **National Legal Adviceline** which provides access to a solicitor or qualified legal advisor in several areas of law including Disability Discrimination and Employment. They also provide an ongoing casework service in some circumstances but cannot take on a lot of cases. DLS produces a comprehensive range of easy to understand factsheets on legal issues on the areas of law they cover. These are available online and in different formats such as Braille and Audio.

Tel: 020 7791 9800

Textphone: 020 7791 9801

Lines are open from Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm

Fax: 020 7991 9802

E-mail: advice@dls.org.uk

Website: www.dls.org.uk

For more details, contact us on:

Tel: **0161 273 5412**

Fax: 0161 274 4053

Answerphone Textphone: **0161 273 5727**

E-mail: advocacy@breakthrough-uk.co.uk

Address: Independent Employment Advocacy Centre, Breakthrough UK Ltd,
B.E.V.C. Aked Close, Ardwick, Manchester M12 4AN

Please contact us if you require this information in different format or have any comments.