



Fees Policy

Free Initial Consultation

To understand the nature of your legal query, one of our team will usually offer an initial consultation (by telephone or video consultation), often limited to 10-15 minutes. However, if your legal query is particularly complex and requires more time, your lawyer may agree to extend that initial consultation with you at no cost to you. The purpose of this initial consultation is to outline some possible options for you at that early stage and to confirm whether we have capacity to assist and formally accept you as a client of Lotus Horizon.

Legal Aid

Lotus Horizon has a contract with the Legal Aid Agency which enables us to conduct certain civil family law matters under this type of funding. What can be available under legal aid is much more restricted since the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) which came into force in England and Wales on 1 April 2013.

Legal Aid remains automatically available in family law for the following types of cases if you are a parent or carer of a child that holds parental responsibility:

Public Law Outline (PLO) proceedings

Care & Supervision Proceedings

Legal Aid can be available, subject to financial and merits assessments, for the following type of family law matter:

Domestic Abuse

- Non-molestation, Occupation and DAPO

Public Children Law applications including

- Discharge of a care order, revocation of a placement order and contact with a child in care

This is not an exhaustive list of family law areas that remain in scope for legal aid funding and you will need to speak to one of our solicitors for an indication as to whether your matter may fall within legal aid funding

Legal Aid is sometimes available for private children law matters (such as applications for a child arrangement order) subject to there being evidence of domestic abuse against the other intended person involved in the court proceedings or evidence of child abuse. This is known as “gateway evidence” and there is detailed guidance as to what evidence is accepted by the legal aid agency for this type of legal matter (by reference to Regulations 33 and 34 of LASPO).

An example of domestic abuse evidence could include a previous report to a health professional (GP) or domestic abuse agency.

An example of child abuse could include a letter or report from children services confirming a child protection plan/ risk of abuse exists for the child subject to the private law proceedings.

The evidence that can and will be accepted by the Legal Aid Agency should be discussed with your solicitor, who will review your eligibility for legal aid and any supporting evidence you have.

You can use the online financial eligibility calculator to get an understanding of your financial circumstances but the results should be saved and discussed with your solicitor as part of the overall review of your eligibility to receive legal aid funding:

[Check if you can get legal aid - GOV.UK](#)

Fixed Fees – private paying

If you are not eligible for legal aid and depending on the nature of your legal matter and what you need help with, we may be able to offer you a competitive fixed fee. This would mean that an agreed list of work would be agreed with you for a fixed price (plus VAT). In agreeing the fixed fee, we will explain the work that we will do and the estimated time that will be spent and why that fee has been indicated. Before we are able to commence any fixed fee work, the agreed amount will need to be paid in advance.

Hourly Fees – private paying

If your matter is not suitable for a fixed fee, we can offer you an estimate of fees based on agreed hourly rates (plus VAT). The applicable hourly rate will depend on the level of experience held by your solicitor. Once you have agreed the estimated fees and hourly rates applicable to your case, you will be asked to pay an amount up front and before we can commence any work. We will then provide you with monthly, interim bills until conclusion of your matter. Any revision to the estimate of cost provided to you at the outset, will be set out in writing and your agreement sought. (Sometimes cost estimates increase if there is urgent and/or work that was not anticipated but if this becomes apparent in your case, we will discuss this with you urgently).

As an indication, there is a government guidance as to what may be considered as reasonable hourly rate fee bands and those can be viewed here:

[Solicitors' guideline hourly rates - GOV.UK](#)

Pro-bono Assistance

Depending on the nature of your case and your specific circumstances, if none of the above fee options are possible for you, we may consider if your case is able to be conducted on a pro-bono basis. Our ability to offer pro-bono assistance depends strictly on our capacity to take on your case in such circumstances; the urgency of your matter and our other commitments.

We have an overall commitment to ensuring access to justice and will regularly review our fees policy. We are also happy to discuss and review your circumstances at periodic intervals and upon you reporting any change of circumstances.