The Leeds Business & Property Court Litigant in Person Scheme Scheme (“Leeds B&PC LIP Scheme”)

Explanatory note for persons without representation

The Business and Property Courts at Leeds operate a support scheme for Litigants in Person (“the Scheme”). The Scheme is designed to assist litigants appearing in the District Judges’ Business and Property List who cannot afford to pay for legal representation.

The Scheme operates with the assistance of volunteers from the local Bar. They are trained and qualified lawyers (“the Representatives”). The Scheme also works in conjunction with Advocate.

If there is a Representative on duty on the day of your hearing, they may be able to offer you assistance. There is no cost for this assistance, and the Representative will not be paid for any work they do for you.

You will find details of how to obtain the assistance of a Representative below.

Please be aware that there is no guarantee that a Representative will be available to assist you. The Representative will assess your case in order to decide whether he or she can help you.

* **The duty advocate is a barrister, is acting as a volunteer, and is working for free.**
* **They will try to help you on this hearing but there will be limits to that help.**
* **They will only be able to give limited time to your case.**
* **On the day of your hearing, you will be directed to the duty advocate at the Leeds Civil Justice Centre.**
* **If the barrister can help you, they may offer you some advice and may be willing to speak for you at the hearing.**
* **If you want the barrister to help you, you can ask them to make all of the arguments for you, or to make only some of the arguments for you.**
* **There may be points that the barrister is not able to make. You can choose to make these points yourself.**
* **If you would like the barrister to say anything on your behalf, you should not speak while the advocate is speaking, and you will not usually be able to comment on or add to what the advocate has said.**
* **The advocate can only help you on the day of your hearing. If you need further help, you may be able to get help from Advocate.**

The scheme is operated through Advocate, which is one of the country’s main “pro bono” (free of charge) legal charities, and is supported by the Leeds Civil Justice Centre and members of the local Bar.

**Getting Assistance on the day**

1. If your hearing is listed in the Leeds Combined Court Centre, on the day of your hearing you should report to the District Judges’ Appointments Desk on the Ground Floor at the Leeds Combined Court Centre, The Courthouse, 1 Oxford Row, Leeds LS1 3BG . Give the court staff the details of your hearing and tell them that you would like to speak to the BPC Representative on duty. The court staff will take you to the BPC Representative. If a Representative is not present, the court staff will make enquiries and you should stay in the waiting area on the Ground Floor until a Representative arrives.
2. If your hearing is listed at the new Business & Property Court at West Gate, Grace Street, on the day of your hearing you should report to Reception on the Fourth Floor at West Gate, 6 Grace Street, Leeds, LS1 2RP. Give the court staff the details of your hearing and tell them that you would like to speak to the BPC Representative on duty. The court staff will take you to the BPC Representative. If a Representative is not present, the court staff will make enquiries and you should stay in the waiting area on the Fourth Floor until a Representative arrives.
3. You are strongly advised to check in with the court staff at least 30 minutes before your hearing to ensure there is adequate time for you to meet the Representative and discuss your case.
4. Please also remember that there may be other litigants who require assistance.

**What Assistance can be Provided?**

1. Please remember that the Representative is a volunteer and is working for free. While the Representative will try to help you, there will be limits to the services they can offer, and they will have limited time to deal with your case.
2. If the Representative can help you, they will, as appropriate, offer you some immediate advice and be ready, if you wish, to speak for you at the hearing.
3. If you want the Representative to help you, you can ask them to make all of the arguments for you at the hearing. If so, you should not speak to the Judge when the Representative is speaking, and you will not usually be able to comment on or add anything to what the Representative has said.
4. Alternatively, you can ask the Representative to make only some of the arguments for you. There may be points that the Representative is not able to make, for example if the Representative does not consider a point to be properly arguable. You can choose to make these points yourself. In these circumstances, the Judge will be asked to hear from both you and the Representative.

**Further Assistance**

1. The Representative can only help you on the day of your hearing. If you need further help, you can contact the Bar’s pro bono charity, “Advocate” (https://weareadvocate.org.uk/) which may be able to provide you with further advice or appear for you at a subsequent hearing.

**Data protection notice**

**Your Representative, Advocate and STC will process data about your involvement with the Scheme, including personal information. They each have privacy notices to explain how they will do so. These are available on their respective websites:**

**- https://weareadvocate.org.uk/privacy\_notices.html**

**- https://www.supportthroughcourt.org/privacy-policy/**

**- the Representative’s ’s chambers’ website will have their privacy notice**

**The Representative will inform Advocate about what happened at your hearing. They may comment about the need for any further assistance in the case. If your case requires a hearing on a later date then the Representative on that date may be informed about what happened in relation to your earlier hearing(s), unless you say that you do not wish this to happen. This is because the later Representative has a legitimate interest in knowing the background to the case.**

**Advocate and STC may keep records to monitor the use of the Scheme and may make such information available to Representatives.**

**Comments, concerns or complaints**

If the unrepresented person or a volunteer barrister wishes to raise any comment, concern or complaint he or she should, in the first instance, write to the Chief Operations Officer of Advocate at International Dispute Resolution Centre, 1 Paternoster Lane, London, EC4M 7BQ.

**Reporting**

Advocate will produce quarterly reports addressing:

1. How many volunteers are listed
2. How many requests for assistance have been submitted
3. How many requests for assistance have been accepted

Leeds B&PC LIP Scheme will provide a yearly report to Advocate on the impact of the scheme on the court process by consulting court staff and/or the Judiciary hearing these cases including, where available, information about:

1. Time saved by volunteer involvement
2. Cost of the time saved
3. Anecdotal comments from the Judiciary or court staff