



Family BarLink

The CFC Pro Bono Duty Scheme
Delivered in conjunction with Advocate

The Judge has referred you to Family BarLink for an opportunity to obtain free legal advice and, if appropriate, representation.

You must immediately take this leaflet and any other documents required by the Judge to the [room to be made available for the Scheme's use].

This leaflet sets out what you can and cannot expect from Family BarLink. Please read it carefully.

JUDGE'S REFERRAL

Case name: _____

Case number: _____

Court number: _____

Date and time: _____

Party referred: _____

Hearing type: _____

Particular documents to consider: _____

Comments/main issues (where appropriate): _____

Name of representative of other party:

Name of Judge: _____

Signature of Judge: _____

What is Family BarLink?

The scheme aims to provide free legal advice and, if possible and appropriate, representation to unrepresented litigants in appropriate cases.

The Scheme operates on Thursdays at the Central Family Court.

The free legal advice and representation will be provided by volunteer barristers who specialise in family law work. One barrister working with the Scheme will be physically present at the CFC, whilst other barristers working with the Scheme will be available to assist remotely.

Whilst we hope that barristers working with the Scheme will be available every Thursday, on some weeks the Scheme may be unable to operate due to lack of availability.

Is the barrister I see today properly qualified, regulated and insured?

Yes, any barrister you meet through the Scheme will be fully qualified to practice and is a specialist family lawyer. They are regulated by the Bar Standards Board and are covered by professional indemnity insurance.

How does the Scheme work?

Once you check in at [room at CFC to be made available for the Scheme's use] you will enter a queue to have a private meeting with a barrister.

When they have availability to consider your case they will review the details on the back of this leaflet and have an initial discussion with you about your case.

They will inform you as soon as possible whether it will be possible to provide you with free legal advice and representation today.

If they agree to arrange for a member of the Scheme to provide you with free legal advice and representation, a more detailed meeting with the barrister who will be advising and/or representing you will be arranged. They may need to take some time to read into your case.

The barrister will aim to advise you on the possible range of outcomes in your case, their opinion on the next steps you should pursue and, if appropriate, offers that could be made in an attempt to compromise the proceedings.

The barrister may represent you before the Judge later in the day to put forward your position. The barrister may also engage in negotiations with the other side's representative in an effort to compromise the proceedings.

The barrister will only act in accordance with your instructions but can decline to act in certain circumstances.

Does referral to Family BarLink guarantee me free legal advice and representation today?

Although the aim is to provide free legal advice to anyone who is referred to the Scheme, the Scheme has limited resources and for a variety of reasons it may not be possible to provide you with advice and/or representation today. For example, you may be declined free legal advice and/or representation if:

- There is insufficient time or human resources to take your case;
- You fail to produce this leaflet at [room at CFC to be made available for the Scheme's use] or the back of this leaflet has not been completed by the Judge; or
- The barrister who meets you considers there are professional conduct reasons for declining to offer their services.

The above list is not exhaustive and there may be other reasons why advice and/or representation cannot be provided today.

Does the referral mean I will get free legal advice and representation on future attendances at court?

No, the referral from the Judge relates solely to today's hearing. Your case is eligible only for such time today as the Scheme's barristers are able to allot it.

However, if you wish to apply for pro bono representation via Advocate in the future you can do so via the application form available at <https://weareadvocate.org.uk/apply-for-help.html>. If you are eligible, a volunteer barrister may be sought to advise and represent you in relation to future hearings.

Will my details be stored?

Yes, your referral by the Judge and the details of any barrister's advice and other involvement in your case through the Scheme will be recorded in writing and/or electronically and kept by the barrister who assisted you and/or Advocate.

However, your details will be kept confidential and used in future only to the extent that it is necessary, for example: (a) to ensure no future conflicts of interest arise in other cases, (b) to ensure assistance can be provided in the future if you are subsequently assisted by Advocate or (c) to deal with any complaint that you might make.

For further information, please read the privacy notices displayed on Advocate's website, and the chambers website of the barrister who assisted you.