



Ministry
of Justice

Findings from the Legal Problem and Resolution Survey, 2014–15

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1. Introduction

The Legal Problem Resolution Survey (LPRS) measures people's experiences of everyday problems that *may* have a legal solution through the civil court or tribunal system. Examples include disputes with landlords or employers, problems with consumer purchases, money or state benefits, debt, and problems related to the breakdown of a relationship.

Conducted in 2014-15, it provides a primary source of quantitative data on the nature and impact of legal problems experienced by individuals in England and Wales following a number of significant reforms in the civil, family and administrative justice field.

This report presents the key findings from the LPRS, focusing on the experience of legal problems and the resolution strategies adopted, including the advice people obtained to help them resolve their problems.

1.1 Background

Understanding people's experiences of everyday problems that *may* have a legal solution and how they try to resolve these problems has been important to inform policy development and service delivery in the legal advice and services field. These everyday problems are wide ranging, including issues such as debt, problems with consumer purchases, disputes with employers and landlords and issues arising from relationship breakdown. Although these problems could be resolved in a court or tribunal, only a small minority of them are. The majority of people try to resolve the problem by themselves or by using advice, either formal advice from solicitors or not-for-profit advisors, or informal help from family and friends or the internet.

The Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS) is the latest in a tradition of legal needs surveys in England and Wales, beginning with the landmark Paths to Justice survey in 1997,¹ followed by the Civil and Social Justice Survey in 2001, 2004, and 2006-09,² and the Civil and Social Justice Panel Survey in 2010 and 2012.³ All of these surveys focused on adults' experiences of everyday problems which could have a legal resolution (hereafter, termed 'legal problems') and how individuals tried to resolve their problems. Similar surveys have also been conducted in at least 14 other countries. The particular value of these

¹ Genn, H. (1999).

² For example, Pleasence & Balmer (2010).

³ Pleasence et al (2011).

surveys is that they cover all legal problems that individuals have experienced, regardless of whether and how they tried to resolve their problem, and therefore capture a range of legal disputes from those resolved using formal court or tribunal proceedings to those where no action was taken to attempt to resolve them.⁴

The LPRS builds on these previous surveys to provide robust statistical data on the prevalence of civil, family and administrative justice problems in the general adult population in England and Wales, the strategies people use to resolve these problems, problem outcomes, and how these vary for different types of legal problem and for different groups of people. It provides evidence to inform our understanding of flows into the formal justice system and insight into how people seek to resolve their problems through other means. This evidence will be valuable in informing any future reforms to the justice system, and in the provision of legal advice and services.

The LPRS is of particular value given the significant reforms that have been made in the civil, family and administrative justice field since the last Civil and Social Justice Panel Survey, notably the legal aid and Jackson reforms introduced in April 2013 by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) and the changes to court fees and family justice reforms introduced in April 2014.

LASPO removed a number of civil, family and administrative justice problem types from the scope of legal aid.⁵ Legal aid continues to be available for public family law matters.⁶ Although private family law cases are largely out of scope, legal aid remains for private family law matters where there is, or is a risk of, domestic violence or child abuse and for protective measures. Legal aid continues to be available for mediation in family disputes. The Jackson reforms, which included reforms to fee and insurance arrangements, were designed to discourage unmeritorious civil litigation claims and reduce the cost burden on losing defendants.⁷

⁴ Further information on these surveys, including those conducted internationally, can be found in Pleasence et al (2013).

⁵ Legal aid is provided by the government to help meet the costs of legal advice, family mediation and representation in a court or tribunal. Legal aid is available only when certain conditions are met. These include that it is a type of case eligible for legal aid and that the individual is assessed to be not able to afford to pay for legal costs.

⁶ Public family law matters are not covered in the LPRS.

⁷ Jackson reforms available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-civil-justice-reform/2010-to-2015-government-policy-civil-justice-reform>

Reforms to court fees for civil cases were introduced in April 2014, with the aim of setting the court fees at levels to broadly recover the full costs incurred by the civil courts in dealing with these cases.⁸ Fees for employment tribunal claims were introduced in July 2013. The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a number of family justice reforms including the implementation of the single Family Court in England and Wales and the requirement for separating couples to attend a Mediation Information and Assessment meeting to consider alternatives to litigation for resolving financial and child arrangements before starting court proceedings.⁹

1.2 The Legal Problem Resolution Survey

Design

The LPRS is a nationally representative general population survey of adults aged 18 and over living in households in England and Wales. An innovative design was used, drawing on the sample of respondents interviewed for the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) to conduct 10,058 telephone interviews between November 2014 and March 2015. This approach meant that it was possible to conduct a random probability survey with a larger sample than previous surveys of this type in England and Wales within the budget available. Use of the CSEW also meant that information was available for sampled respondents who did not respond to the LPRS, giving greater scope to correct any non-response bias through statistical weighting than is usual for a general population survey.

Respondents were asked about their experiences of a range of everyday legal problems, their awareness and use of a range of advice services, their confidence in dealing with hypothetical disputes, their attitudes towards the justice system, and their personal and household characteristics.

The response rate for the LPRS is 51%. When the original CSEW response rate and consent rate to be re-contacted are taken into account, the cumulative response rate for the survey is 31%.¹⁰ Data were weighted to ensure that they were representative of the target population of adults aged 18 and over living in private households in England and Wales. Survey weights comprised a design weight, a non-response weight and a post-stratification weight.

⁸ Less the costs of fee remissions, where court users who meet eligibility requirements have their court fees waived partially or in full.

⁹ The reforms also included introducing a 26-week statutory time limit for care proceedings. Problems associated with such proceedings are not covered by the LPRS.

¹⁰ The cumulative response rate factors in the response rate to the CSEW itself (c. 75%) and the consent rate to the re-contact question within the CSEW (80%).

The survey did not cover organisations or businesses, and individuals were asked to only report problems that they experienced in a personal capacity. The survey does not, therefore, provide any estimates in relation to the experiences of organisations or businesses.¹¹ Likewise, adults who are not resident in the household population are excluded from the survey, for example those living in communal establishments such as care homes or prisons, or those who are homeless. These groups of individuals may have different experiences of legal problems. For example, Buck et al (2005) showed that adults living in temporary accommodation were far more likely to experience problems.

See Appendix A for further details of the survey methodology.

Measuring the experience of legal problems

LPRS respondents were asked whether they had experienced problems in the 18 months preceding their interview. This included problems that had started during the 18-month recall period and also those that started before but were ongoing during the period.¹² The problems may or may not have concluded at the time the interview was conducted.

Respondents were asked if they had experienced problems or disputes in 11 distinct categories. These were described as everyday problems rather than legal problems to avoid respondents using their own definition of what may or may not constitute a legal problem.¹³ Within each of the 11 categories, respondents were asked about specific problem types, resulting in 52 individual problem types being covered. The full set of problem screener questions are included in Appendix B, and an overview of the types of problem covered within each category is provided in Table 1.1.

For each of the 11 problem categories experienced, respondents were asked about how many separate problems they experienced in that category during the recall period.¹⁴

¹¹ It should be noted that the other party to the problems experienced by individuals may have been an organisation or business. There have been separate surveys that have captured the experiences of businesses and organisations directly. See for example Blackburn et al (2015).

¹² Interviews were conducted between November 2014 and March 2015, and thus all problems experienced were ongoing following LASPO reforms of April 2013, although some may have started beforehand.

¹³ Previous surveys have shown that many people do not characterise problems as legal in nature even though a legal solution is possible. For example, see Pleasence et al (2010b)

¹⁴ A respondent's ability to accurately recall and report on their experiences of legal problems may be affected by how recently the problem occurred, its duration, whether it is still ongoing, the impact the problem had on the respondent, and whether they actively took any action to try to resolve the problem.

Respondents were then asked for more information about the problems they experienced. For those respondents who experienced multiple problems, a random subset of problems was selected. Questions about how serious the problem was, any information or advice obtained to resolve the problem and whether any formal action was taken were asked for up to the two most recent problems experienced in up to four problem categories.¹⁵ One of these problems was then selected at random, and further detailed information was collected on the information or advice obtained, the advisors used, any associated costs and how these were funded, use of the court system and mediation, how the problem concluded and the impact of the problem.

Respondents were also asked whether they had been involved in divorce proceedings in the last 18 months, and if so, whether they had used a solicitor or advisor.¹⁶

¹⁵ One per cent of respondents had experienced problems in more than four problem categories. In these cases, four problem categories were randomly selected for follow-up questions.

¹⁶ This also included dissolution of a civil partnership. Unlike the CSJS and CSJPS, the LPRS does not include divorce itself as a legal problem. This is because divorce is a legal process that must be followed to legally dissolve a marriage or civil partnership. There may be no further problems or disputes associated with the divorce. See Appendix D for findings related to divorces and dissolutions of civil partnerships.

Table 1.1: Details of the 11 problem types

Problem type	Examples of problem types included
Civil legal problems	
Problems with purchasing goods or services	Purchase of faulty high-value items, defective repairs to high-value items, defective building works, services not being delivered as promised
Problems with neighbours' anti-social behaviour	Noisy neighbours, abusive neighbours, neighbours damaging respondents' property
Money problems (excluding personal debt)	Difficulties in obtaining money owed by a debtor, disputes over bills/tax assessments, being mis-sold financial products, mismanagement of pensions/investments, disputes over division of property after death
Problems with personal debt	Unable to keep up with repayments due/monies owed to creditors, harassment from creditors
Problems with living in rented accommodation	Rent arrears/eviction, repairs, failure to return deposit, issues with lease or tenancy agreement, harassment by landlord
Accidents or negligence problems	Injury or ill-health arising from accidents caused by another person, poor working conditions or negligent medical treatment
Problems with owning or buying residential property	Planning permission, rights of way/boundary/communal disputes, mortgage arrears/repossession, issues during purchase/sale
Administrative legal problems	
Employment problems	Dismissal/redundancy, not receiving employee rights, unfair treatment, discrimination
Problems with provision of state benefits	Dispute about entitlement to/amount of and delays in processing state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions, including council tax benefits and pension credit
Problems with provision of school education	Obtaining a school place, access to special needs provision, exclusion/suspension or unauthorised absences (applies to respondent if aged 18 to 21 at time of interview, or to respondents' child(ren) if they are aged 21 or under)
Family legal problems	
Problems arising from relationship breakdown – financial and child arrangements	Division of property, financial support and arrangements for care of and access to children

Comparisons with previous surveys

Although the LPRS follows in the tradition of the Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS) and Civil and Social Justice Panel Survey (CSJPS), the design has been adapted to achieve a larger number of interviews to enable robust sub-group analysis, and the content has an additional focus on information and advice obtained to help resolve problems. The main methodological differences are: the LPRS is a telephone survey whereas the CSJS and CSJPS were both face-to-face surveys; the problem categories included differed between each of the three surveys; and the LPRS (and CSJPS) included all problems experienced in the last 18 months, whereas the CSJS included 'difficult to solve' problems experienced in the last three years.

Due to these differences the figures from across the different surveys should not be directly compared. It is still possible, however, to draw some general conclusions about broad similarities and differences in findings; these are discussed in the conclusions of this report.

The previous surveys found that around a third of the population experienced legal problems, with certain sub-groups more likely to experience problems than others, particularly those vulnerable to social exclusion (such as individuals on benefits, lone parents, those with a disability, those with low incomes). Around half of problems led to adverse consequences such as stress-related illnesses, physical ill-health, or loss of confidence. Some individuals reported experiencing multiple problems, with certain problem types clustering together, such as those relating to a relationship breakdown, or economic problems.

The previous surveys also showed that individuals' resolution strategies varied, with a minority doing nothing, and larger proportions handling their problem alone or seeking advice. Those who obtained advice to resolve their problem did so from a wide range of advisors including solicitors and Citizens Advice Bureaus, as well as informal advice from friends and family. Whether they sought advice and who they sought advice from varied for different problem types. The majority of concluded problems were resolved with agreements, with only a small minority being resolved in a court or tribunal.

Wider evidence base

The LPRS is designed to provide quantitative data on the extent to which people experience legal problems and the resolution strategies that they adopt. The findings complement statistics on cases that come into the formal justice system,¹⁷ surveys of users of the formal justice system, such as the Civil Court User Survey,¹⁸ and qualitative studies that provide in-depth understanding of the pathways people use to resolve their family and civil justice problems.¹⁹ Studies have also examined the provision of the legal services and advice sector and the services that are used.²⁰

Together these studies provide an empirical evidence base on which policy development and service design and delivery in the access to justice field can be based.

¹⁷ See for example Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-justice-statistics-quarterly>

¹⁸ Hamlyn et al (2015).

¹⁹ Pereira et al (2015).

²⁰ See for example Ames et al (2015).

Structure of the remainder of the report

Chapter 2 presents findings on the prevalence of civil, administrative and family legal problems.

Chapter 3 examines the characteristics of legal problems, including their duration, how they were thought of when they began, how serious they were perceived to be, whether they led to any adverse consequences, and whether they involved any discrimination.

Chapter 4 presents findings on the resolution strategies used by people with legal problems, ranging from taking no action at all to using formal legal processes or resolution services.

Chapter 5 focuses on the use of formal legal processes and resolution services in trying to resolve problems, and if not used, the reasons they were not used.

Chapter 6 presents an overview of the types of information and advice that people obtained to help them resolve their problems.

Chapter 7 focuses on the use of legal and professional advisors and the type of help that they provided.

Chapter 8 presents findings on the use of self-help: obtaining information, advice or help from the internet, leaflets/self-help guides, friends and family, and the other side of the problem.

Chapter 9 examines the outcomes of legal problems, including how and in whose favour they were resolved, and how outcomes varied by the resolution strategies used and advice obtained.

Chapter 10 presents the conclusions from the study.

Note on the findings in this report

Survey findings are subject to a margin of error as they are based on a sample. Findings were statistically tested at the 5% significance level, and only differences which were statistically significant at that level are referred to in the text unless otherwise stated. Design factors were used in statistical tests to correct for the fact that the survey design did not use a simple random sample.

In the tables in the report where there was less than 5% in a cell this is represented by '-'. Where there were no responses in a particular category this is shown as 0. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

2. Prevalence of problems

The Legal Problem Resolution Survey (LPRS) measures people's experiences of everyday problems that *may* have a legal solution through the civil justice or tribunal system. This chapter presents the findings on the prevalence of a range of civil, administrative and family legal problems across the adult (aged 18 and over) population of England and Wales.

Respondents to the survey were asked whether, in the 18 months before interview,²¹ they had experienced problems in the following categories:

- civil problems related to purchasing goods or services, rented accommodation, owning or buying residential property, neighbours' anti-social behaviour, personal debt and other money problems (for example, being owed money by others), and injury or ill-health arising from accidents or negligence;
- administrative problems related to disputes arising from employment, the provision of state benefits or the provision of education;²²
- family problems arising from a relationship breakdown, such as division of property, financial arrangements or access to and care of children.²³

These were described as everyday problems rather than legal problems to avoid respondents using their own definition of what may or may not constitute a legal problem. This report uses the term 'legal problem' throughout, regardless of whether the respondents classified their problems as such. See Chapter 1 for further details on what is included in the problem categories.

2.1 Prevalence of legal problems

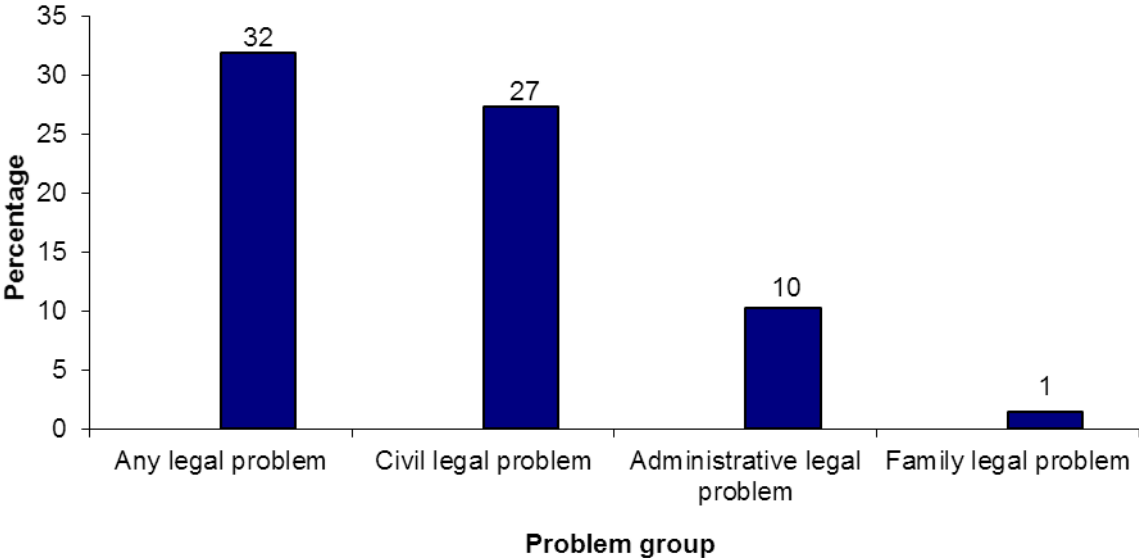
Overall, almost a third of adults (32%) reported that they had experienced one or more of the civil, administrative or family legal problems asked about in the 18 months before interview. Adults were more likely to experience certain types of problems than other types of problem. Figure 2.1 shows that just over a quarter (27%) of adults had experienced a civil legal problem, compared with a tenth (10%) of adults who had experienced an administrative legal problem and 1% who had experienced a family legal problem.

²¹ LPRS respondents were asked whether they had experienced problems in the 18 months preceding their interview. This included problems that had started during the 18-month recall period and also those that started before but were ongoing during the period.

²² Education relates to the respondent's own education if they are under the age of 21, their children's education if any of their children are aged under 21, and to both their own and their child's education if they are both under the age of 21.

²³ Experiences of divorce and dissolution of civil partnerships were captured separately in the survey, and are not included in this chapter. See Appendix D for findings.

Figure 2.1: Percentage of adults who experienced a legal problem in the last 18 months by problem type, LPRS 2014–15



The problem types most likely to be reported were those related to purchasing goods or services (8%), neighbours’ anti-social behaviour (8%) and money problems (excluding personal debt) (7%). Adults were least likely to have experienced problems relating to the provision of education (2%), owning or buying residential property (2%), or a relationship breakdown (1%) in the 18 months before interview;²⁴ see Table 2.1. As a sample survey these estimates are subject to margins of error, as measured by the confidence interval around the estimates. The LPRS has a large sample and the confidence intervals are therefore small. The confidence intervals are presented in Appendix C, Table C1.

The prevalence of problems, both overall and for the individual problem types covered, is broadly similar to those in previous surveys.

²⁴ Relationship breakdown problems exclude divorces or dissolutions of civil partnerships, which were asked about separately in the survey.

Table 2.1: Percentage of adults who experienced a legal problem in the last 18 months by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages
Civil legal problems	27
Purchasing goods and services	8
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	8
Money excluding personal debt	7
Personal debt	5
Rented accommodation	5
Accidents or medical negligence	4
Owning or buying residential property	2
Administrative legal problems	10
Employment	6
State benefits	3
Education	2
Family legal problems	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>10,058</i>

¹ People may have experienced more than one problem, and be counted more than once.

How does the prevalence of legal problems vary across different socio-demographic groups?

Whether an adult had experienced a legal problem in the 18 months before interview varied by their socio-demographic characteristics, with some groups of people more likely to report experiencing a problem than others. The key findings are discussed below.

When examining the percentage of adults who reported experiencing at least one legal problem covered by the survey the following patterns emerged: (see also Appendix C, Table C2).

- There was no difference in the proportion of men and women experiencing at least one legal problem in the 18 months before interview (both at 32%).
- There were differences by age group, however. Those aged 25–44 were most likely to experience a problem (42%), followed by those aged 18–24 (37%). Those aged 65 and over were least likely to experience a problem (18% of those aged 65–74 and 11% of those aged 75 and over).
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) adults were more likely to experience at least one legal problem than white adults (38% compared with 31%). There were no statistically significant differences among different ethnic minority groups.

- Adults with a long-standing illness or disability that limited their activities were more likely to experience problems than adults without any long-standing illness or disability or whose illness or disability were not limiting (40% compared with 31% and 27% respectively).
- Adults with higher levels of educational qualifications (degree equivalent or above – 39%, A-level or equivalent – 37%) were more likely to experience a problem than those with only lower-level qualifications (28%) or no educational qualifications (20%). This is, however, related to age, as the results show that older respondents who are less likely to experience problems are also less likely to have qualifications.
- Adults who were married/in a civil partnership (29%) or widowed (14%) were less likely to experience a problem than those in other marital status groups (35–47%).
- Over a half (55%) of lone parents²⁵ said they had experienced at least one problem, compared with 40% of adults in a household comprising a couple with dependent children, and 28% of those in adult-only households.
- Unemployed adults were more likely to experience a problem (46%) than adults who were in employment (36%) or economically inactive (22%).
- There was no significant difference in the proportion of adults experiencing problems by household income.²⁶
- Those who received means-tested state benefits, such as income support, were, however, more likely to experience a problem (46%) than those who did not receive such state benefits (30%).
- Adults who owned their homes outright were less likely to experience a problem than adults who owned their homes with a mortgage or those who rented from a social or private landlord (20% compared with 36%, 40% and 45% respectively).

Many of these characteristics can co-vary. For example, the analyses showed that older people, widowed people, those not in receipt of means-tested state benefits, the economically inactive and those in adult-only households were less likely to experience problems. These characteristics are related, with older adults being more likely to be widowed, live in adult-only households, not receive means-tested state benefits and to be retired (economically inactive).

²⁵ A lone parent is defined as one adult with dependent children living in the same household.

²⁶ This is likely to be related to the age profile of different income bands. Younger people (who are more likely to experience problems) and older people (who are less likely to experience problems) are both more likely to have lower household incomes.

Prevalence of different civil, administrative and family legal problems by socio-demographic characteristics

The patterns of socio-demographic variation in experiencing problems are reflected for those experiencing civil problems overall. This also broadly holds for administrative problems overall, although there is little difference in the proportion experiencing an administrative problem by ethnicity and educational qualifications. The proportion of adults experiencing a problem associated with a relationship breakdown is low across most groups (less than 5%), with little variation. The exception to this, unsurprisingly, is relationship status, with those who were separated (13%) or divorced/legally dissolved civil partnership (6%) and those who were classified as lone parents (19%) being far more likely to report a legal problem arising from relationship breakdown (see Appendix C, Table C3).

There is more variation, however, when looking at different types of civil and administrative problems. Some key findings at problem category level are as follows (see Appendix C, Table C4):

- Young adults aged 18 to 24 were particularly likely to report experiencing problems with rented accommodation (12% had done so, compared with 1%–3% for groups aged 45+). The prevalence of all problem types was low among those aged 65 and over.
- There were no significant differences between white and black and minority ethnic respondents in the prevalence of the individual problem types asked about, although overall black and minority ethnic adults were slightly more likely to report a civil problem than white adults (34% compared with 27%).
- Adults with a long-standing illnesses or disability which limited their activities were, not surprisingly, more likely to have experienced legal problems relating to injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence and problems relating to state benefits than non-disabled adults. These legal problems may be directly related to their disability. Adults with a limiting illness or disability were also more likely to have experienced anti-social behaviour by neighbours and personal debt problems than non-disabled adults.
- Adults with no educational qualifications tended to be less likely to experience most problem types, compared with their counterparts with qualifications.
- As discussed above, marital status and household structure were associated with family breakdown problems – as would be expected. Lone parents were also more likely to experience a range of civil problems than adults in other household

types, such as problems with personal debt, other money-related issues, rented accommodation and anti-social behaviour by neighbours. Lone parents were also more likely than adults with dependent children living as part of a couple to experience problems relating to state benefits.²⁷

- Adults who were unemployed at the time of interview were more likely than those in employment or the economically inactive to report problems with personal debt (14% had done so), rented accommodation (13%), anti-social neighbours (14%) and state benefits (10%).
- Although the overall proportion who experienced any legal problem did not vary by household income band, the experience of different problems did vary. Adults in the least affluent households²⁸ were more likely to have experienced personal debt problems (9%) than those in the most affluent households (1%). Conversely, 12% of adults in the most affluent households²⁹ had experienced other money problems (e.g. problems getting payment of money owed, disputed bills or having finances mismanaged by a professional), compared with 7% in the least affluent households. Adults in the least affluent households were more likely to have experienced issues associated with rented accommodation (9% had done so) and anti-social neighbours (11%), while those in the most affluent households were more likely to have reported problems associated with the purchase of goods or services (12%).
- Adults receiving means-tested state benefits were more likely to experience a range of civil and administrative problems than those who were not receiving state benefits (neighbour's anti-social behaviour, personal debt, rented accommodation, accidents and negligence, state benefits, education). Those receiving means-tested state benefits were also more likely to experience a problem relating to a relationship breakdown.
- Those living in rented accommodation were more likely to have problems with the home they rent (15% of those in socially rented accommodation and 18% living in privately rented accommodation) than home-owners were to have problems with the home they own (3% of those who own their home outright and 4% of those who own with a mortgage). Those in rented accommodation were also more

²⁷ Lone parents were also more likely to experience problems relating to education (such as obtaining a school place, accessing special needs support or children being suspended/excluded from school); however, this was not significant at the 5% level.

²⁸ Households with an annual household income of under £15,000.

²⁹ Households with an annual household income of £60,000 or above.

likely to have experienced problems relating to personal debt and anti-social behaviour by neighbours.

The analysis above presents a descriptive portrait of the patterns found, demonstrating that different groups tend to have experienced different problems. The nature of the associations between problems experienced and some of the characteristics examined will be complex. In some cases the problems will be very closely linked to the characteristic, for example illness or injury due to negligence leading to a long-standing disability, and in turn the disability causing a sudden loss of income and potential for debt to accumulate. Moreover, some problem types can only occur for certain groups of people, for example issues with rented accommodation would only be possible if the person had lived in rented accommodation.³⁰ The socio-demographic characteristics are measured at the time the interview occurred, whereas the legal problems had arisen or were ongoing at some point in the 18 months before interview. So for example, someone unemployed at time of interview may have experienced a problem concerning employment, such as harassment at work, and this problem led to the individual leaving their former employment. This complexity needs to be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

2.2 Experience of multiple problems

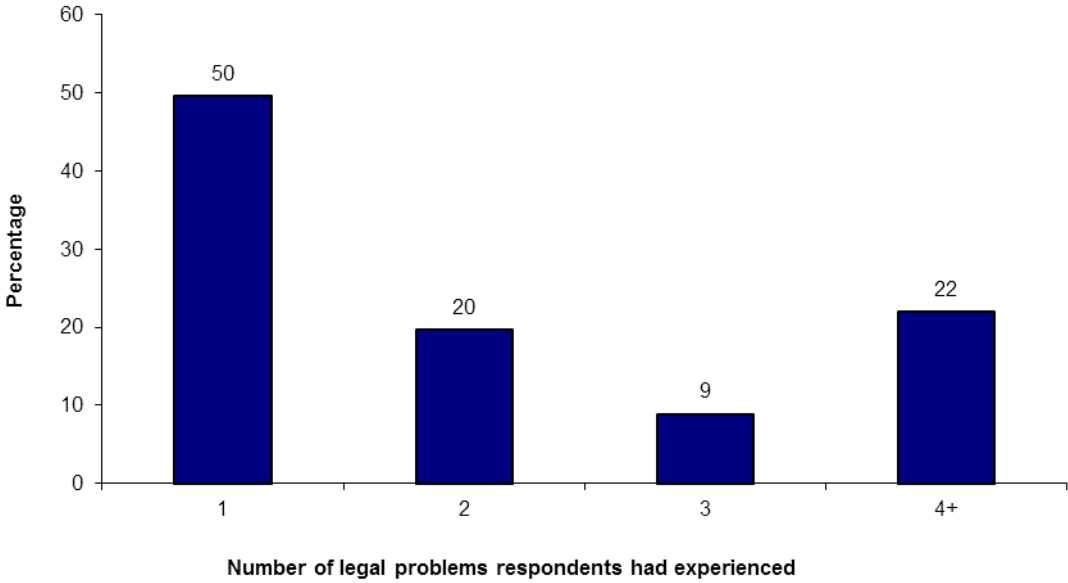
Previous surveys have shown that some groups are more likely to experience multiple problems, both within and across problem types. Groups vulnerable to disadvantage, such as lone parents, social renters, adults with a long-standing illness or disability, and adults on means-tested benefits tended to report experiencing multiple problems in previous surveys.

In the LPRS, for each problem category the respondent was asked how many types of problem in that category they had experienced in the previous 18 months. Thus it is possible to count the total number of individual problems that a respondent had during the period.

Half of adults (50%) who had experienced at least one legal problem covered by the survey in the last 18 months had experienced more than one problem in the period (20% reported experiencing two problems, 9% reported three problems, and 22% four or more problems, see Figure 2.2).

³⁰ In the LPRS interview, this problem type was only asked if the person had lived in rented accommodation at some point in the four years prior to interview. A similar approach was taken to problems with owning or buying property and employment. For each, the problem type was only asked if the individual had been in a position to have experienced the problem in the four years prior to interview. The four-year period was chosen based on previous research, to allow for ongoing problems that had arisen prior to interview to be captured even if the individual had since changed housing or employment status.

Figure 2.2: Number of legal problems respondents had experienced in the last 18 months,¹ LPRS 2014–15



¹ Base: Adults who experienced at least one problem in the 18 months before interview, excluding those who did not know how many problems they had experienced in the period.

Experiences of multiple problems across different socio-demographic groups

Some people were more likely to report experiencing multiple legal problems than others; see Appendix C, Table C5. Among those who had experienced at least one problem:

- Those aged 25 to 44 were more likely to experience four or more problems (28%), than those aged 45 or over (11% to 17% for the different age groups).
- Adults with a limiting illness or disability were more likely to experience four or more problems (32%) than those with no disability/illness (19%) or a non-limiting disability/illness (18%).
- Adults who were widowed (14%) or married (17%) were less likely to experience four or more problems than those in other marital groups (26–37%).
- Lone parents were more likely to experience four or more problems (42%) than adults living as a couple with dependent children (22%) and those living in adult-only households (20%).
- Adults who were unemployed were more likely to experience four or more problems (39%) than their counterparts who were economically inactive or in employment (21% and 20% respectively).
- Adults with a household income of under £15,000 per year were more likely to experience four or more problems (31%) than those in other household income bands (12–23%).

- Adults receiving means-tested state benefits were twice as likely to experience four or more problems (39%) than those not receiving state benefits (19%).
- Social renters (37%) and private renters (29%) were more likely to experience four or more problems than adults who owned their house outright (12%) or with a mortgage (18%).
- There was no difference by gender, ethnicity or educational qualifications in reporting multiple problems.

Overall, those groups with at least one problem who were particularly likely to experience a high number of problems in the 18-month period were those who had a limiting illness or disability, were unemployed, a lone parent with dependent children, living in a household with an annual income of under £15,000 or living in rented accommodation. These characteristics co-vary; for example, lone parents in the survey were more likely to live in rented accommodation, and have lower household incomes than other adults. These findings suggest that there is a group of the population who are more vulnerable not just to experiencing a legal problem, but to experiencing multiple problems.

The findings in this chapter show that experiencing a legal problem is a relatively common experience, with a third of adults having experienced at least one problem in the preceding 18 months. Experiencing legal problems varied for different groups of the population, with groups who may be more vulnerable to disadvantage (such as lone parents, unemployed adults, those in receipt of state benefits and adults with a long-standing limiting disability) particularly likely to experience both a legal problem overall, and multiple legal problems. There was also some variation in the types of legal problem experienced by different groups of the population, with, for example, lone parents having relatively high levels of experience of many of the problem types included in the survey.

3. Characteristics of legal problems

The LPRS is designed to capture experiences of a range of different everyday problems that may be resolved through legal routes. Although many people do not conceive of such problems as legal in nature or necessarily consider the other party to be at fault, those with such problems often experience adverse consequences as a result of the problem, for example in terms of their health or financial situation.

This chapter presents findings on the duration of legal problems and examines whether those with a problem considered it to be of a legal nature or not when it first started. It also examines whether they assigned fault or blame to anyone, their perceptions of how serious the problem was, whether they experienced any adverse consequences as a result of the problem, and whether they experienced any discrimination in relation to the problem.

All findings in this chapter relate to individuals who had experienced at least one legal problem in the 18 months before interview. Respondents who had experienced more than one legal problem were questioned about one randomly selected problem only (see Appendix A for details of the selection process).³¹ Findings have been weighted to be representative of all problems.

3.1 Concluded and ongoing problems

The problems captured in the survey included problems that had concluded in the 18-month reference period and those that were ongoing at the time of interview.

Overall, six out of ten adults (61%) reported that their legal problem had concluded³² by the time of the interview; see Table 3.1. Problems relating to a relationship breakup or personal debt were significantly less likely to have concluded (38% and 43% respectively) than most other problem types, except for problems with neighbours' anti-social behaviour or education. Almost three-quarters of problems with purchasing goods and services (74%) had concluded by the time of interview, more than all other problem types.³³

³¹ 32% of respondents had experienced at least one problem in the 18-month recall period. Of these half (50%) had experienced more than one problem.

³² Concluded problems are those which the respondent described as 'now over' or 'most likely now over' and ongoing problems are those which were 'still ongoing' or 'too early to say'.

³³ Significantly more than all other categories, except problems relating to employment, rented accommodation, or accidents and negligence, where the difference was not significant at the 5% level.

**Table 3.1: Whether legal problem had concluded by the time of the interview,¹
LPRS 2014–15**

	Percentages		
	Ongoing ²	Concluded ³	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Civil legal problems	39	61	2,176
Purchasing goods and services	26	74	418
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	46	54	404
Money excluding personal debt	40	60	430
Personal debt	57	43	187
Rented accommodation	36	64	311
Accidents or medical negligence	38	62	210
Owning or buying residential property	41	59	216
Administrative legal problems	37	63	632
Employment	32	68	316
State benefits	38	62	201
Education	47	53	115
Family legal problems	62	38	121
All legal problems	39	61	2,929

¹ Respondents who said they did not know whether their problem was concluded are excluded from this table.

² Ongoing category combines those that are 'still ongoing' or 'too early to say'.

³ Concluded category combines those that are 'now over' and 'most likely now over'.

For concluded problems where it was possible to calculate the duration,³⁴ 60% of adults reported that their problem concluded within three months of starting, with 12% reporting that their problem had lasted more than a year; see Table 3.2. The duration profile of concluded civil and administrative legal problems was similar.³⁵

The duration of ongoing problems³⁶ differed greatly from concluded problems. Almost three in ten (29%) adults with an ongoing problem reported that this had lasted more than two years, compared with 4% for concluded problems. Conversely, those with concluded problems were more likely to say they had lasted three months or less (60%) than those with ongoing problems (22%).

³⁴ Respondents were asked what month and year the problem started in, and if it had concluded the month and year it had ended. Durations were calculated from this information. If the respondent was unable to give a start date they were asked to estimate how long the problem had lasted. Respondents who did not know the start or finish date and could not estimate how long the problem lasted were excluded (246 out of 1,740 concluded problems).

³⁵ Findings for family legal problems are not shown separately as too few family problems had concluded by the time of the interview to provide reliable percentages.

³⁶ Duration of ongoing problems was estimated by measuring the length between the reported start date of the problem and the date of interview. Where a start date was not provided, these problems have been excluded (116 out of 1,189 ongoing problems).

The duration profile of concluded civil problems and administrative problems is similar. It is not possible to present reliable figures on the duration of concluded family problems due to small base numbers. Looking at ongoing family problems, however, suggests that family problems tend to last longer than civil or administrative problems.

Table 3.2: Duration of problems, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages						
	Concluded problems ³			Ongoing problems (duration to date ¹)			
	Civil	Admin- istrative	All	Civil	Admin- istrative	Family	All
0–3 months	61	60	60	20	33	4	22
4–6 months	16	16	15	15	12	6	14
7–12 months	12	12	12	18	17	8	17
13–24 months	7	10	8	19	14	32	18
More than 2 years	4	3	4	28	25	50	29
<i>Unweighted base²</i>	<i>1,102</i>	<i>352</i>	<i>1,494</i>	<i>787</i>	<i>226</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>1,083</i>

¹ Duration of ongoing problems is time from the start date of the problem to the date of the LPRS interview.

² Problems with known start dates.

³ Concluded family problems are not shown as too few family problems had concluded by the time of the interview to provide reliable percentages.

Concluded and ongoing problems by socio-demographic characteristics

Some groups of adults with problems were more likely to have an ongoing problem than others (see Appendix C, Table C6). The key differences were:

- Those aged 45–64 were more likely to have an ongoing problem (45%) than those aged 25–44 (36%).
- Those with a long-standing limiting disability or illness were more likely to have an ongoing problem (46%) than those with no disability or illness (37%).
- Adults who were divorced or separated were more likely to have an ongoing problem (50%) than those who were married (39%), cohabiting (35%) or single (39%).
- Lone parents were more likely to have an ongoing problem (53%) than couples with dependent children (41%) and adult-only households (37%).
- Those with no qualifications were more likely to have an ongoing problem (46%) than those with a degree equivalent or above (37%).
- Adults who received means-tested state benefits were more likely to have an ongoing problem (51%) than those who did not receive these benefits (38%).

- Adults who rented their home from a social landlord were more likely to have an ongoing problem (53%) than adults who owned their homes or rented them from a private landlord (all 38%).

3.2 How people thought of their problem

Respondents were asked how they had thought of their problem when it first started.³⁷

Thirty-nine per cent of respondents gave at least two descriptions of how they thought of their problem.

Around a quarter (23%) considered their problem to be a legal problem at the outset. It was far more common to consider the problem to be bad luck or part of life (54%); see Table 3.3. Even so, as these everyday problems have a legal dimension, this report uses the term 'legal problem' to cover all problems experienced by respondents, regardless of whether they were considered to be legal.

Of those who did consider the problem to have a legal dimension at the outset, many also gave a number of other descriptions, most commonly bad luck or part of life (46%) and a moral problem (41%).

The proportion of adults who thought of their problem as legal is higher compared with previous surveys. For example, around a tenth of adults in the Civil and Social Justice Panel Survey considered their problem to be legal (10% in 2010 and 11% in 2012). This apparent increase is likely to be due to the way the question was asked in the different surveys.³⁸

Overall, there was little difference between how people characterised civil problems and how they characterised administrative problems. Unsurprisingly, those who experienced a problem arising from relationship breakdown were more likely to say that their problem was a family or community issue (50%) than those who experienced an administrative (14%) or civil legal problem (17%). Adults with a relationship breakdown problem were also more likely to categorise their problem as a moral issue (44%).

³⁷ They were read a number of different possible descriptions and asked which described how they thought of the problem when it first started. The list of options was read out in a randomised order. Respondents could choose more than one answer. Although respondents were asked to consider their views when the problem first started it is possible that answers will have been influenced by how the problem later developed, and advice they may have received along the way.

³⁸ Previous surveys presented the different descriptions to respondents on a show card and asked them to choose which if any best indicated the character of the problem. As the LPRS was a telephone survey, each description was read out to respondents individually.

The problem types most commonly considered to be of a legal nature at the outset were those related to owning or buying a residential property (39% thought the problem was legal), money issues – excluding personal debt (34%), problems relating to a relationship breakdown (33%) and injury or ill-health arising from accidents or negligence (27%). Those with problems with their neighbours' anti-social behaviour were particularly likely to consider the issue to be of a criminal nature (23%).

Table 3.3: How people thought of their problem when it first started by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages							
	Bad luck or part of life	Moral	Legal	Social	Family or community	Criminal	None of these	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems	55	26	23	21	17	10	15	2,199
Purchasing goods and services	57	22	17	8	8	6	20	424
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	56	31	15	62	36	23	7	405
Money excluding personal debt	49	34	34	14	13	12	16	434
Personal debt	50	19	20	15	18	4	24	187
Rented accommodation	57	23	19	11	10	4	15	318
Accidents or medical negligence	68	16	27	11	8	11	14	212
Owning or buying residential property	45	29	39	20	25	8	10	219
Administrative legal problems	50	26	20	18	14	4	18	636
Employment	51	31	24	15	7	5	16	317
State benefits	56	18	18	14	12	2	21	202
Education	36	25	13	30	37	2	19	117
Family legal problems	63	44	33	32	50	14	2	124
All problems	54	27	23	21	17	9	15	2,959

¹ Respondents could select more than one answer; therefore percentages will not sum to 100.

3.3 Fault

LPRS respondents were asked who they thought had done something wrong or was at fault for their legal problem when it first started. Over half (55%) of adults thought that the other side was the only party at fault, with just under a tenth (7%) saying that the other side thought the LPRS respondent was at fault and one in eight adults (13%) saying that both sides thought the other side was at fault.³⁹ Interestingly, a quarter (25%) reported that neither side was at fault.⁴⁰

Table 3.4: Who respondents perceived to be at fault for the problem by problem type, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	Respondent thought the other side was at fault	The other side thought respondent was at fault	Both sides thought the other was at fault	Neither side thought the other was at fault	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Civil legal problems	55	8	13	24	2,480
Purchasing goods and services	73	1	10	16	409
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	70	2	9	19	384
Money excluding personal debt	62	6	13	19	422
Personal debt	13	30	10	47	184
Rented accommodation	38	11	14	38	303
Accidents or medical negligence	76	2	11	11	206
Owning or buying residential property	48	14	11	26	205
Administrative legal problems	51	6	16	28	832
Employment	54	3	14	28	310
State benefits	52	9	21	18	194
Education	42	5	15	38	109
Family legal problems	43	9	31	17	119
All legal problems	55	7	13	25	2,845

Adults who had experienced a problem relating to injury or ill-health arising from accidents or negligence, issues with purchasing goods and services or neighbours' anti-social behaviour were most likely to say that the other side was at fault (76%, 73% and 70% respectively). In contrast, adults who had experienced problems with personal debt were least likely to blame the other side (13%), with almost a third (30%) reporting that the other side had thought they

³⁹ This could mean that each party to the problem thought the other was at fault but not themselves, or that they each considered both parties to be partly to blame for the problem.

⁴⁰ These 'no fault' problems were similar to other problems in how serious they were considered to be and how adults tried to resolve them, although they were somewhat less likely to result in adverse consequences (35% of 'no fault' problems resulted in adverse consequences compared with 48–57% of problems where fault was assigned).

were at fault and almost half (47%) reporting that neither side thought the other was at fault. Not assigning blame to any side was also relatively common for problems associated with provision of education (38%), with rented accommodation (38%), and, interestingly, with employment disputes (28%) or issues with owning or buying residential property (26%). Reporting that both sides thought the other was at fault stood at around one in ten for most problem types, with the exception of problems relating to a relationship breakdown (31% felt both sides thought the other to be at fault) and problems with provision of state benefits (21%).

3.4 Perceived seriousness of problems experienced

Respondents to the LPRS were asked how serious they felt their problem was as a whole on a scale of 1 to 20, where 1 meant that the problem was not at all serious and 20 meant the problem was very serious. They were given examples as anchor points; a score of 4 might be purchasing a washing machine that proves to be faulty and a score of 18 might be being made homeless. The scores were then banded into three categories of 'not very serious' (1 to 5), 'fairly serious' (6 to 14) and 'very serious' (15 to 20); see Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Perceived seriousness of problems by problem type, LPRS 2014–15

	Problem seriousness ¹			Mean seriousness score	Percentages <i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious		
Civil legal problems	38	42	20	9	2,176
Purchasing goods and services	45	41	14	8	420
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	28	49	23	9	404
Money excluding personal debt	47	36	17	8	431
Personal debt	43	43	14	8	185
Rented accommodation	31	44	25	10	311
Accidents or medical negligence	29	43	28	10	207
Owning or buying residential property	43	37	20	9	218
Administrative legal problems	25	44	31	11	630
Employment	22	48	30	11	316
State benefits	31	37	32	10	200
Education	22	46	32	11	114
Family legal problems	25	38	38	11	119
All legal problems	34	42	23	9	2,925

¹ Respondents rated the seriousness of their problem on a scale of 1 to 20. Ratings of 1–5 have been classified as not very serious, 6–14 as fairly serious, and 15–20 as very serious. Don't knows and refusals have been excluded from this table.

Overall almost a quarter (23%) rated their problem as very serious. Family legal problems and administrative legal problems were more likely to be considered very serious (38% and 31% respectively) than civil legal problems (20%). The percentage considering their administrative problem to be very serious was similar for issues associated with employment disputes (30%), provision of state benefits (32%) and provision of education (32%). There was more variation in relation to civil problems, with accidents and negligence problems, issues with rented accommodation and neighbours' anti-social behaviour being particularly likely to be considered very serious (28%, 25% and 23% respectively). Those with personal debt problems and with issues with purchasing goods and services were less likely to consider the issue to be very serious (both at 14%).

Ongoing problems were more likely to be considered very serious than concluded problems (31% compared with 18%). Problems (both ongoing and concluded) that were considered to be very serious tended to be of longer duration than problems that were considered fairly or not very serious. For example, 22% of adults who rated their problem as very serious reported that their problem had been ongoing for more than two years compared with 15% of fairly serious problems and 8% of not very serious problems: see Table 3.6.

Another factor that may influence perceptions of seriousness are the negative experiences that arise due to the problem, both those directly linked to the problem and those that are more indirectly related to the problem. Later in this chapter the adverse consequences people reported experiencing are explored, alongside the perceived seriousness of the problem.

Table 3.6: Perceived seriousness of problem experienced by duration of problems,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages			
	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious	All legal problems
Duration of problem				
0–3 months	56	43	33	45
4–6 months	13	16	14	15
7–12 months	15	13	16	14
13–24 months	8	13	16	12
More than 2 years	8	15	22	14
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	<i>838</i>	<i>1,101</i>	<i>622</i>	<i>2,561</i>

¹ Problems with known start dates.

There was variation in perceptions of seriousness across different socio-demographic groups; see Appendix C, Table C7. Key differences were:

- Adults aged 75 and over were more likely than younger adults to consider their problem to be very serious (33% compared with 19–27%).
- Adults with a long-standing illness or disability which limited their activities were more likely to consider their problem to be very serious than those with a non-limiting illness or disability or no disability (35% compared with 20% and 22% respectively).
- Those who were separated or divorced were more likely to rate their problem very serious than those who were married (33% compared with 21%).
- Those with educational qualifications below A-level or equivalent and those with no educational qualifications were more likely to consider their problem to be very serious (30% and 34% respectively) compared with those with an educational qualification at degree level or above (16%).
- Adults who were unemployed or economically inactive were more likely to rate their problem as very serious (both 30%) than those in employment (20%).
- Adults with a household income of less than £15,000 were more likely to rate their problem as very serious (31% did so) than those with a higher household income of £32,000–£59,999 (19%) or £60,000 and above (16%).
- Adults who received means-tested state benefits were more likely to consider their problem to be very serious (36%) than adults not receiving means-tested benefits (21%).

Interestingly, there were no differences when looking at household structure, despite lone parents being more likely to report experiencing adverse consequences as a result of their problem (see next section).

The differences above may, at least in part, be related to the type of problems experienced and how this tends to vary across groups. Due to the relatively small number of problems within each type, it is not possible to explore this. The patterns for civil problems are, however, similar to those described above.⁴¹

⁴¹ There were many more civil problems captured (2,578 in total) than administrative and family problems (861 and 149 respectively). Table C7 in Appendix C presents the results separately for civil and administrative problems. Although many of the patterns appear similar for administrative problems, the base numbers are such that few differences attain statistical significance.

3.5 Adverse consequences

Respondents were asked whether they had experienced a range of adverse consequences as a result of their legal problem, such as stress-related illnesses, unemployment and financial strain.⁴²

Overall, just under half of adults (45%) with a problem reported experiencing one or more adverse consequence as a result of the problem, with 12% experiencing two consequences, 7% experiencing three consequences and 6% four or more; see Table 3.7. Stress or another mental health problem, loss of confidence and loss of income or financial strain were the most common consequences, with around a fifth of adults citing each of them. Just over a tenth (11%) reported experiencing physical illness, with all other consequences cited by less than a tenth.

Those who experienced a family legal problem were more likely to say they had experienced at least one adverse consequence (79%) than those who experienced an administrative (56%) or civil (40%) legal problem.

For administrative problems, adverse consequences were more common for issues associated with employment (63%) and state benefits (59%) than for educational issues⁴³ (33%). For civil problems, those whose problems concerned an injury or ill-health arising from accidents or negligence were most likely to experience an adverse consequence (66%).⁴⁴ Those who had problems with purchasing goods and service (29%), problems concerning money except personal debt (33%) or problems with neighbours' anti-social behaviour (37%) were least likely to report an adverse consequence.

As expected, the nature of adverse consequences varied by the type of legal problem experienced. In some cases the problem and consequence will be inextricably linked; for example physical illness arising from an injury and unemployment from an employment problem, while for others the impacts will be less direct, such as loss of confidence or stress-related illness as a result of a problem with personal debt. Across problem types, consequences of stress-related illness or other mental health issues, loss of confidence or loss of income or financial strain were usually those most commonly experienced. The

⁴² Respondents were read a list of potential consequences (see Table 3.7).

⁴³ Education problems may result in adverse consequences being experienced by the respondent's child, which may not be captured in this survey.

⁴⁴ Significantly higher than for all other civil problems apart from personal debt problems (51%).

exception was problems associated with accidents and negligence where physical ill-health was, not surprisingly, the most common consequence (mentioned by 53%).

Adults who experienced a family problem were more likely to experience all types of consequences than other problem types, except unemployment and damage to property. Around a half of adults with a problem linked to a relationship breakdown reported stress-related illness/mental health issues (47%) and loss of income or financial strain (54%), with around four in ten reporting loss of confidence (42%) or some form of harassment, abuse or assault as a result of the problem (38%).

Table 3.7: Adverse consequences by problem type experienced, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages												
	Stress-related illness or other mental health problem	Loss of confidence	Loss of income or financial strain	Physical illness	Harassment, abuse, assault or being threatened	Unemployment	Damage to your property	Having to move home	A break-up with a spouse or partner	Homelessness	At least one consequence ¹	None of these	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems	17	17	13	10	5	2	6	4	1	0	40	60	2,199
Purchasing goods and services	10	11	11	3	1	-	6	-	-	-	29	71	424
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	16	17	4	5	14	-	11	5	1	-	37	63	405
Money excluding personal debt	13	13	19	4	4	2	2	1	1	0	33	67	434
Personal debt	26	23	19	9	5	5	-	5	2	-	51	49	187
Rented accommodation	17	15	14	7	2	-	8	9	1	1	40	60	318
Accidents or medical negligence	25	27	17	53	5	6	4	1	-	-	66	34	212
Owning or buying residential property	21	19	16	7	8	1	9	5	-	-	45	55	219
Administrative legal problems	27	28	32	12	5	15	0	1	3	1	56	44	636
Employment	28	37	37	14	7	27	1	1	3	-	63	37	317
State benefits	30	21	42	14	-	3	-	2	3	2	59	41	202
Education	22	14	8	6	3	2	-	1	2	2	33	67	117
Family legal problems	47	42	54	18	38	10	8	28	18	7	79	21	124
All legal problems	20	20	20	11	6	5	5	4	2	1	45	55	2,959

¹ Adults may have experienced more than one type of adverse consequence and are counted in this column only once

Ongoing problems were more likely to result in adverse consequences than concluded problems (52% compared with 41%). Adults who had experienced their problem for more than a year were more likely to have reported experiencing an adverse consequence (58–61%) compared with those who experienced a problem for less than one year (34%–49%). Conversely, adults who had experienced their problem for less than three months were less likely to report experiencing an adverse consequence (34%) than problems which had lasted longer (49%–61%).

Table 3.8: Duration of problems by whether they experienced an adverse consequence,¹ LPRS 2014–15

Duration of problem	Percentages		
	At least one adverse consequence	No adverse consequence	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
0–3 months	34	66	1,085
4–6 months	49	51	384
7–12 months	49	51	372
13–24 months	58	42	319
More than 2 years	61	39	417

¹ Duration of problems includes only those problems with known start dates and for ongoing problems is calculated up to the date the interview took place.

Unsurprisingly, adults who considered their problem to be very serious were more likely to report experiencing an adverse consequence (70%), than those who considered their problem to be not very serious (26%) (see Table 3.9). Among adults with problems they considered to be very serious the most common consequences were stress-related illness or other mental health problem (41%), loss of confidence (36%), and loss of income or financial strain (34%). Among those with problems rated as not very serious each of these consequences was cited by around 10%, while among those with fairly serious problems the figure was around 20% for each consequence.

Table 3.9: Whether problem led to adverse consequences by perceived seriousness of the problem, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious
Stress-related illness or other mental health problem	9	19	41
Loss of confidence	10	20	36
Loss of income or financial strain	10	19	34
Physical illness	5	9	22
Harassment, abuse, assault or being threatened	3	6	12
Unemployment	2	5	12
Damage to your property	2	6	6
Having to move home	2	4	7
A break-up with a spouse or partner	1	1	4
Homelessness	0	0	2
At least one adverse consequence¹	26	47	70
No adverse consequences	74	53	30
<i>Unweighted base</i>	965	1,241	719

¹ Adults may have experienced more than one adverse consequence and are counted in this row only once.

Adverse consequences of problems across different socio-demographic groups

There was also some variation in the overall level of adverse consequences by socio-demographic characteristics; see Appendix C, Table C8. Among those with a legal problem, the following patterns emerged:

- Women were more likely to report an adverse consequence as a result of the problem than men (50% compared with 40%). There were, however, no clear patterns or significant differences by age group or ethnicity.
- Adults with a limiting illness or disability were more likely to experience an adverse consequence (63%) than those with a non-limiting illness or disability (44%) or those with no disability or illness (40%).
- Those who were divorced, separated or single were more likely to report adverse consequences (56%, 65% and 48% respectively) than those who were married (40%). Lone parents with dependent children were more likely to say they experienced an adverse consequence (62%) than adults living in adult-only households (45%) and/or living as a couple with dependent children (43%).
- Adults who were unemployed were more likely to experience an adverse consequence (56%) than those who were in employment (44%).

- Adults whose household income was less than £15,000 per year were more likely to experience an adverse consequence (55%) than adults living in households with a higher level of income (34%–44%).
- Adults who received means-tested state benefits were more likely to experience an adverse consequence (63%) than adults not on means-tested benefits (42%).

When looking at the four most common consequences (stress-related illness or other mental health problem, loss of confidence, loss of income or financial strain, and physical illness) experienced by different groups, similar patterns emerged; see Appendix C, Table C9.

In summary, those groups who were particularly likely to report experiencing at least one adverse consequence as a result of their legal problem were lone parents, unemployed adults, adults living in low-income households, adults on means-tested benefits and adults with a limiting illness or disability. These socio-demographic characteristics reflect their status at time of the LPRS interview, and in themselves are linked to some of the adverse consequences captured. For example, unemployment and physical illness may be a consequence of a problem. It is difficult to establish the nature of the relationship between some of the socio-demographic characteristics and consequences due to this.

3.6 Discrimination

Respondents who had experienced a civil or administrative legal problem were asked whether when thinking about the problem, they felt they had suffered any discrimination on the basis of their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion. This may have been directly in relation to when the problem arose, for example discrimination in the workplace leading to an employment problem, or may have arisen during the course of the problem, for example when seeking advice.

Overall, 13% of adults with a civil or administrative problem felt that they had suffered discrimination on the basis of at least one of these characteristics; see Table 3.10. Adults who had experienced an administrative legal problem, such as relating to their employment, state benefits or relating to their own or their child's education, were approximately twice as likely to feel discriminated against than those who had experienced a civil legal problem (22% compared with 10%). This is likely to reflect the nature of the problem experienced. The difference was mainly driven by the proportion of adults reporting being discriminated against on the basis of their disability – 8% of those who had an administrative legal problem

compared with 2% of those with a civil legal problem. Levels of perceived discrimination were broadly similar for the other characteristics.

Table C10 in Appendix C shows how adults felt discriminated against by the socio-demographic characteristics of adults who experienced a problem; 5% of women reported discrimination on the basis of gender and 1% of men. Adults in the youngest and oldest age groups were most likely to report discrimination on the basis of age (13% of those aged 18–24 and 19% of those aged 75 and over). Thirteen per cent of black or minority ethnic adults reported experiencing discrimination on the basis of their race. Those with a limiting disability were more likely to report discrimination against their disability (11%) than those with a non-limiting disability (1%).

Table 3.10: Whether people felt they had been discriminated against,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Civil problems	Administrative problems	All problems (excluding family)
Age	5	6	5
Disability	2	8	3
Gender	3	5	3
Race	3	4	3
Religion	-	1	1
Sexual orientation	-	1	1
Discriminated against on at least one characteristic	10	22	13
None of these	90	78	87
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2,199</i>	<i>636</i>	<i>2,835</i>

¹ Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages will not sum to 100.

Examining levels of discrimination by how adults rated the seriousness of their problem showed that adults who rated their problem to be very serious were more likely to report that they had suffered discrimination on at least one characteristic (24%) than those who rated their problem as not very serious (7%) (see Table 3.11).

Table 3.11: Whether people felt they had been discriminated against by perceived seriousness of problem,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious
Race	1	2	7
Gender	2	3	6
Disability	1	3	7
Sexual orientation	0	1	1
Age	4	5	9
Religion	1	1	1
Discriminated against on at least one characteristic	7	11	24
None of these	93	89	76
<i>Unweighted base</i>	939	1,193	674

¹ Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages will not sum to 100.

The findings reported in this chapter demonstrate the diverse range of experiences those with legal problems have, and how their characterisation of their problem varies. A substantial minority of problems reported to the survey either lasted more than six months, were considered very serious or led to adverse consequences. Moreover, certain groups of people with problems were particularly likely to report experiencing adverse consequences, such as disabled adults, lone parents, the unemployed, adults who received means-tested state benefits and adults living in lower-income households.

4. How people try to resolve legal problems

This chapter and the following four chapters examine how adults tried to resolve the problem they experienced, looking specifically at the types of information, advice and help they got and the processes they followed to help try to resolve the problem. This chapter focuses on the resolution strategies adopted by those with problems, ranging from no action to the use of formal resolution processes or services. Chapter 5 examines the use of formal legal and other resolution processes in more detail, including why formal resolution processes were not used. Chapters 6–8 explore the types and sources of help that adults obtained to try to resolve their problem.

All findings relate to individuals who had experienced at least one legal problem in the 18 months before interview. Respondents who had experienced more than one legal problem were questioned about one randomly selected problem only (see Appendix A for further details of the selection process). Findings have been weighted to be representative of all problems.

4.1 Resolution strategies

Not everyone who experiences a legal problem will take action to resolve it, and those that do take action vary in the action that they take, with some trying to resolve the problem on their own or using informal information or advice, some trying to resolve the problem with professional help, and some using formal legal processes such as courts and tribunals or resolution services such as mediation. Many people use a combination of different strategies when trying to resolve a problem.

Respondents to the survey who had experienced a legal problem in the 18 months prior to interview were asked about the action they took to resolve the problem, including the use of formal processes which may have been instigated by the other party to the problem rather than the survey respondent. Responses to these questions in combination with responses to questions concerning the respondents' use of information/advice were grouped into the following types of resolution strategies:

- Tried to resolve using a formal resolution process (e.g. court, tribunal, ombudsman, independent conciliation, mediation, etc.). This includes where the other party initiated this;

- Tried to resolve with legal or professional information, advice or help. This includes formal legal advisors, e.g. a lawyer, or independent professional advisors whose role is not necessarily to give legal advice, e.g. Citizens Advice;
- Tried to resolve on own through self-help (e.g. obtained own information, advice or help from internet, leaflets or self-help guides, friends and family, or the other party); and,
- Did not try to resolve the problem.

Almost all adults with a legal problem (90%) had taken some action on their own to try to resolve their legal problem, with almost two-fifths of adults (39%) using some form of legal or professional help and almost one fifth (17%) using a formal legal process or resolution service.⁴⁵ Very few adults (4%) did not try to resolve their problem; see Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Resolution strategies used to try to resolve legal problems, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	A formal resolution process	Legal/professional help	Self-help ¹	Did not try to resolve	<i>Unweighted base</i>
All resolution strategies used ²	17	39	90	4	2,959
Most formal resolution strategy used ³	17	27	52	4	2,959

¹ Includes sourcing own information, advice or help from internet/leaflets, family or friends, or the other side of the problem.

² Adults who used more than one strategy are included under each strategy used, and percentages will therefore not sum to 100.

³ Adults who used more than one strategy are included once only for the most formal strategy used.

Almost all adults who used a formal resolution process or legal/professional help had also tried to resolve their problem on their own in some way (such as by speaking to the other party or obtaining information themselves). The rest of this chapter examines the most formal resolution strategy used by each respondent to help resolve the problem experienced.

Looking at the most formal resolution strategy used, just over half of adults (52%) tried to resolve their legal problem without legal or professional help or use of a formal process. Over a quarter of adults (27%) said they tried to resolve their problem with legal or professional help (but without using a formal resolution process) and 17% said that formal resolution processes were used;⁴⁶ see Table 4.2.

⁴⁵ As some adults will have taken multiple actions to resolve their problem the percentages do not sum to 100.

⁴⁶ Those adults who used formal resolution processes may or may not have received legal or professional advice.

Table 4.2: Most formal resolution strategy used by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	A formal resolution process	Legal/professional help	Self-help	Did not try to resolve	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Civil problems	16	26	55	4	2,199
Purchasing goods and services	9	15	75	1	424
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	11	36	39	14	405
Money excluding personal debt	23	20	56	1	434
Personal debt	24	15	59	2	187
Rented accommodation	13	17	68	2	318
Accidents or medical negligence	22	47	28	4	212
Owning or buying residential property	15	44	39	2	219
Administrative problems	18	30	49	3	636
Employment	21	37	40	3	317
State benefits	15	22	61	2	202
Education	16	27	57	1	117
Family problems	35	40	25	1	124
All legal problems	17	27	52	4	2,959

¹ This table shows the most formal resolution strategy used. Adults who used more than one strategy are counted once in this table.

Table 4.2 shows that the most formal resolution strategy used varied by the type of legal problem experienced. Those who experienced a problem relating to a relationship breakdown were more likely to say a formal resolution process was used (35%) than those who experienced a civil (16%) or administrative (18%) problem. Those experiencing civil or administrative problems were more likely (55% and 49%) to try to resolve the problem without using legal or professional help or a formal legal process than those experiencing a problem relating to relationship breakdown (25%).

There was some variation in resolution strategy used depending on the type of civil or administrative legal problem experienced. Key findings include:

- Across all civil and administrative problem categories the majority of adults took some form of action to resolve the problem. The use of formal resolution processes was more common for problems associated with personal debt, other money-related issues, employment, and injury or ill-health arising from accidents or negligence, with around a fifth of adults with these problems saying a formal resolution process had been used.

- For a range of civil and administrative problems, the most common approach was to go no further than trying to resolve the problem alone, without legal or professional help or use of formal processes or services. Around seven in ten of those with problems relating to purchasing goods and services or rented accommodation and around six in ten of those with personal debt, other money problems or issues with the provision of state benefits or education did not go beyond this in seeking to resolve the issue.
- Those who had experienced a legal problem relating to an injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence were least likely to only resolve alone (28% did so), followed by those with issues associated with owning or buying residential property, neighbours' anti-social behaviour or employment (39%–40%).⁴⁷ Adults with these problems were more likely to obtain legal or professional help but not engage with formal resolution processes than adults with other civil and administrative problems.
- Adults who experienced a legal problem concerning their neighbours' anti-social behaviour were most likely to do nothing to resolve their problem (14% took no action to resolve the problem compared with 1%–4% for other problems).

Most formal resolution strategy by problem characteristics

Chapter 3 presents findings on the nature of problems measured in the survey, including in terms of the perceived seriousness of the problem, adverse consequences experienced and whether the problem was perceived to be a legal issue by the individual experiencing it.⁴⁸ There was some variation in resolution strategy by these characteristics, and these are summarised below. Chapter 9 explores how resolution strategies varied for different outcomes.

Adults who thought of their problem as a legal problem at the outset were particularly likely to report the use of a formal resolution process to try to resolve it (29% did so, compared with 13% of those who did not consider it to be a legal issue). Around a third of those who thought of their problem as legal (35%) tried to resolve it on their own without any legal or professional help – a figure that is perhaps higher than might be expected (see Table 4.3).

⁴⁷ Differences between problems relating to accidents and negligence and problems relating to owning and buying residential property, neighbours' anti-social behaviour and employment were not significant at the 5% level.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 3 for more details.

Table 4.3: How adults thought of the problem at the outset by most formal resolution strategy used,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	A formal resolution process	Legal/professional help	Self-help	Did not try to resolve	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Legal	29	33	35	3	679
Not legal	13	26	57	4	2,280

¹ Respondents may have used more than one resolution strategy. They are included once in this table for the most formal strategy used.

Adults who considered their problem to be very serious were much more likely to say a formal resolution process had been used than those who considered it to be not very serious (26% compared with 10%). Similarly, adults who rated their problems as very serious were more likely to get legal or professional help (from a lawyer or other independent advisor) than those who rated their problems as not very serious (33% compared with 21%). In contrast, adults who considered their problem to be not very serious were much more likely to try and resolve the problem on their own without legal or professional help or using a formal resolution process than those who considered their problem to be very serious (65% compared with 38%). The pattern was similar for civil and administrative legal problems, when examined separately (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Most formal resolution strategy used by perceived seriousness of problem,^{1, 2, 3} LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	A formal resolution process	Legal/professional help	Self-help	Did not try to resolve	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Civil problems					
Not very serious	10	19	66	5	795
Fairly serious	17	27	52	4	906
Very serious	23	34	40	3	475
Administrative problems					
Not very serious	9	25	63	3	144
Fairly serious	16	35	48	1	287
Very serious	28	28	40	4	199
All legal problems					
Not very serious	10	21	65	4	965
Fairly serious	17	30	50	3	1,241
Very serious	26	33	38	3	719

¹ Respondents may have used more than one resolution strategy. They are included once in this table for the most formal strategy used.

² Respondents rated the seriousness of their problem on a scale of 1 to 20. Ratings of 1–5 have been classified as not very serious, 6–14 as fairly serious and 15–20 as very serious. Don't knows and refusals have been excluded.

³ Results for family problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

Adults who reported experiencing adverse consequences were almost twice as likely to say that a formal resolution process had been used to resolve the problem than adults who had not experienced any adverse consequences (23% compared with 12%). Similarly, adults who reported experiencing adverse consequences were also more likely to obtain legal or professional help than those who had not experienced any adverse consequences (34% compared with 22%) and less likely to try to resolve their problem on their own (40% compared with 62%). Perhaps surprisingly, around two-fifths of adults who reported experiencing an adverse consequence as a result of their problem did not obtain legal or professional help (40%). See Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Whether problem led to adverse consequences by most formal resolution strategy used,¹ LPRS 2014–15

						Percentages
	A formal legal process	Legal/professional help	Self-help	Did not try to resolve		<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Adverse consequences	23	34	40	3		1,396
No adverse consequences	12	22	62	4		1,563

¹ Respondents may have used more than one resolution strategy. They are included once in this table for the most formal strategy used.

Most formal resolution strategy by socio-demographic characteristics

There were few statistically significant differences when looking at the most formal resolution strategy used across different socio-demographic groups (see Appendix C, Table C11). There were no differences in the use of formal resolution processes, although younger adults (aged 18–24) and those living in rented accommodation tended to be less likely to obtain legal or professional help than older adults and home-owners.

4.2 Factors associated with using a formal resolution process

These analyses show that whether adults with legal problems used a formal legal process or resolution service varied dependent on the type of problem it was, whether they had considered it a legal problem when it began, how serious they considered it to be, and whether it led to adverse consequences. There was less variation across socio-demographic groups.

These problem characteristics may not be the key factors that are associated with using a formal resolution process however, as many of these characteristics co-vary. For example,

certain types of problem are more likely to be considered legal, very serious, and lead to adverse consequences.

Logistic regression analysis was carried out to explore which factors were independently associated with using a formal resolution process.⁴⁹ The models also included the type of advice obtained. The associations reported below do not necessarily imply causal relationships. For more information on the methodology used and variables included in the models, see Appendix E.

Overall, 17% of adults with a legal problem reported that they had used a formal resolution process to help them resolve their problem.

The findings indicated that the factors that are strongly associated with using a formal resolution process were:

- **Advice obtained** – adults who had obtained formal legal or professional help were more likely to use a formal resolution process than adults who had not obtained formal legal or professional advice.
- **Type of problem** – money or personal debt problems were the only types of problem more likely to use a formal resolution process when compared to problems with purchasing goods and services.
- **Seriousness of problem** – adults who considered their problem to be very or fairly serious were more likely to use a formal resolution process than adults who considered their problem to be not very serious.
- **Whether thought of problem as legal** – adults who had thought of their problem as legal when it first started were more likely to use a formal resolution process than adults who had not thought of their problem as legal.
- **Problem duration** – adults with problems which lasted seven months or more were more likely to use a formal resolution process than adults whose problems had lasted three months or less.

Other variables were also associated with using a formal legal process or resolution service to a lesser extent. No socio-demographic characteristics were strongly associated with use of a formal resolution process. See Appendix E, Table E1 for a full breakdown of results.

⁴⁹ Reference categories for each variable included in the model were those which were least associated with the dependent variable – that is, they were least likely to have used a formal resolution process.

The results indicate that problem characteristics are strongly associated with whether a formal resolution process is used. Whether formal legal or other professional help was obtained was also strongly associated. The analysis cannot show whether this is because adults first decide to use a formal resolution process and then obtain legal or professional help to help them, or whether they obtain legal or professional help which encourages them to use a formal resolution process.⁵⁰

Interestingly, although the problem type was strongly associated with use of a formal resolution process, whether the problem concerned a relationship breakdown was not a key factor despite adults with relationship breakdown problems being far more likely to use formal resolution processes. This suggests that the use of formal processes by those with relationship breakdown problems is related to and explained by other factors.

⁵⁰ The analysis was also run without including the advice variables. That model produced the same strong factors as the model including advice (problem type, seriousness, whether thought of as legal and duration), but explained less of the variance (14% compared with 22%), suggesting that advice and resolution strategy are strongly associated with each other.

5. Use of formal resolution processes to resolve problems

The previous chapter examined the most formal resolution strategy adopted to address the legal problem the respondent experienced. Overall, 17% of adults said that a formal legal process or resolution service had been used to try and sort out the problem. This may have been initiated by either themselves or another party involved in the problem. This chapter presents more detailed findings on the type of formal resolution process used, experiences of such processes, and reasons for not using formal resolution processes.

Respondents who had experienced a legal problem were asked whether any of the following things happened as part of the problem or whilst sorting it out:

- Did you make a claim to a tribunal or court or make use of a court process, such as Money Claim Online?
- Did the other side take a claim to a tribunal or court or make use of a court process?
- Did you, or somebody acting on your behalf, contact a regulator or ombudsman?
- Did you participate in independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration?

5.1 Formal resolution strategies

Table 5.1 shows that for the majority of adults (83%) a formal resolution process was not used to try to resolve their problem. Around one in ten (9%) said that they had participated in independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration, 5% had contacted a regulator or ombudsman and 5% said there had been a court or tribunal claim, initiated either by themselves or the other party. Of those where a court or tribunal claim was made, over a quarter (27%) had also used independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration and around a tenth (9%) had contacted a regulator or ombudsman.

Those who experienced a legal problem relating to a relationship breakdown were most likely to report using a court or tribunal process⁵¹ (16%), or independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration⁵² (28%). Independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration was also relatively common among those who had an employment problem (16%), with use of an ombudsman

⁵¹ Not all differences were statistically significant at the 5% level due to small base sizes. Specifically, adults with a relationship breakdown problem were more likely to use a court or tribunal process than adults with problems relating to purchasing goods and services, neighbours' anti-social behaviour, rented or owned accommodation, employment or the provision of education (all 3% or less).

⁵² Significantly more than all legal problems other than those relating to employment (16%).

or regulator most common in those with money problems, excluding personal debt (12%).⁵³ Among civil and administrative legal problems, the use of a court or tribunal process was most common for problems relating to personal debt (12%), injury or ill-health arising from accidents or negligence (11%) and the provision of state benefits (11%).⁵⁴

⁵³ Significantly more than all legal problems other than those relating to personal debt (7%), owning or buying property (6%) or the provision of education (5%).

⁵⁴ Significantly more than problems relating to purchasing goods and services, neighbours' anti-social behaviour, rented accommodation and employment (all 3% or less).

Table 5.1: Use of formal resolution processes by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages					
	Respondent made court/ tribunal claim ²	Other side made court/ tribunal claim ²	Used independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration	Used regulator/ ombudsman	Did not use formal legal process	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil problems	3	2	8	6	84	2,199
Purchasing goods and services	2	0	3	4	91	424
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	-	0	9	2	89	405
Money excluding personal debt	7	2	8	12	77	434
Personal debt	4	9	10	7	76	187
Rented accommodation	-	1	9	5	87	318
Accidents or medical negligence	9	4	8	4	78	212
Owning or buying residential property	3	4	7	6	85	219
Administrative problems	4	2	11	5	82	636
Employment	3	-	16	5	79	317
State benefits	9	4	3	5	85	202
Education	3	1	11	5	84	117
Family problems	9	13	28	0	65	124
All legal problems	4	2	9	5	83	2,959

¹ Respondents could select more than one formal process, so percentages will not sum to 100.

² Includes court processes such as Money Claim Online. 25 respondents reported that both they and the other party had made a court or tribunal claim. They are included in both columns in this table.

Use of formal resolution processes by problem characteristics

As shown in the previous chapter, there was variation in the resolution strategies used by problem characteristics. Problems that were considered to be of a legal nature, the most serious and those where there were adverse consequences were more likely to result in the use of formal resolution processes. This pattern also holds for each type of formal process used, with problems characterised as legal, the most serious and resulting in adverse consequences being more likely to report the use of each process.⁵⁵ See Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Use of formal resolution processes by problem characteristics, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	Respondent made court/ tribunal claim ¹	Other side made court/ tribunal claim ¹	Used independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration	Used regulator/ ombudsman	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Whether thought of problem as legal at the outset					
Legal	8	5	15	10	679
Not legal	2	2	8	4	2,280
Perceived seriousness of problem					
Not very serious ²	2	1	5	4	965
Fairly serious ²	3	3	10	5	1,241
Very serious ²	7	4	14	9	719
Whether experienced adverse consequences as a result of the problem					
Experienced adverse consequences	5	4	14	6	1,377
Did not experience adverse consequences	2	1	6	5	1,582

¹ Includes court processes such as Money Claim Online. 25 respondents reported that both they and the other party had made a court or tribunal claim. They are included in both columns in this table.

² Respondents rated the seriousness of their problem on a scale of 1 to 20. Ratings of 1–5 have been classified as low, 6–14 as medium, and 15–20 as high. Don't knows and refusals have been excluded from this table.

Use of formal resolution processes by socio-demographic differences

The previous chapter showed that there were few statistically significant differences in the use of a formal resolution processes across different socio-demographic characteristics. There were similarly few significant differences in the use of different formal processes; see Appendix C, Table C12.

⁵⁵ The only exception is that problems resulting in adverse consequences were not significantly more likely to use a regulator or ombudsman.

5.2 Sources of information and advice used

The majority (70%) of those who were involved in some form of legal process or resolution service to resolve their problem said that they had either obtained legal help (14%) or other professional help⁵⁶ (44%) or both (12%).

Of those who had used a formal resolution process but not obtained any legal or professional help, most (84%) had sourced their own information or advice, for example from the internet, leaflets, family or friends, or the other side of the dispute. Four per cent of adults with a problem who had used a legal process or resolution service did so without obtaining any information, advice or help at all.

The types of advice obtained varied by the type of process used; see Table 5.3. Around a half of adults (52%) who had made a claim to a court or tribunal themselves had obtained formal legal help from a solicitor or barrister. They were significantly more likely to obtain formal legal help than adults who had used conciliation, mediation or arbitration (26%) or contacted a regulator or ombudsman (19%). Those who had made a court or tribunal claim were, however, no more likely to have obtained other professional help than those who had used conciliation, mediation or arbitration or contacted a regulator or ombudsman (around six in ten had done so in each group).⁵⁷

Over three-quarters of adults who used each type of process had sourced their own information or advice (for example, from the internet, leaflets or friends or family). Perhaps surprisingly, one in ten adults involved in a court or tribunal claim made by the other party had not obtained any advice to help them resolve their legal problem.

⁵⁶ Other professional help included any information or advice from an independent advisor other than a solicitor, lawyer or barrister; for example, any help obtained from Citizens Advice, local council services, insurance companies, trade unions, etc. See Chapter 7 for further details.

⁵⁷ Around four in ten adults involved in a claim made by the other party obtained professional advice. This is not significantly different to the figure for other legal processes, however, due to small base sizes.

**Table 5.3: Use of formal resolution processes by all types of help obtained,^{1, 2}
LPRS 2014–15**

	Percentages				
	Formal legal help	Professional help	Obtained own information	No help obtained	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Respondent made court/ tribunal claim	52	58	78	1	106
Other side made court/ tribunal claim	38	43	78	10	76
Used independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration	26	62	82	4	268
Used regulator/ ombudsman	19	59	84	2	166
Use of any formal resolution process	27	56	81	4	502

¹ Respondents may have used more than one type of help and are included in the table for each type used. Percentages will therefore not sum to 100.

² Respondents may have used more than one formal resolution process, and are included in the table for each process used.

5.3 Use of court and tribunal processes

A small minority of adults with legal problems use the court or tribunal system to help resolve the problem. In the LPRS 106 adults reported that they themselves had initiated court or tribunal proceedings and 76 adults said the other party had done so.⁵⁸ It is therefore possible to draw only high-level findings from the survey on the nature of these processes and how they are experienced by the user. Surveys that specifically target court and tribunal users provide fuller information on these issues (see for example the Civil Court User Survey 2014–15⁵⁹).

Forty-five per cent of adults whose problem was dealt with through a tribunal or court said that there had been at least one hearing. Where this was the case, 65% said that they had attended at least one hearing in person, and 34% said they had a lawyer or somebody else to represent them. See Table 5.4.

⁵⁸ 25 respondents reported that both they and the other party had initiated a court or tribunal claim in relation to their legal problem, so the total number of respondents reporting using a court or tribunal process is 157 adults.

⁵⁹ Hamlyn et al (2015).

Table 5.4: Court and tribunal hearings and attendance, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages
	<u>Problems involving a court or tribunal process</u>
Case involved no court hearings ¹	50
Don't know ¹	5
Case involved a court hearing ¹	45
<i>of which:</i>	
Attended court hearing ²	65
Had representation at court hearing ²	34

¹ Unweighted base – problems where the respondent or the other side made a claim to, or made use of, a court or tribunal process = 157.

² Unweighted base – problems which involved a court or tribunal hearing = 76. These categories are not mutually exclusive as adults could have attended a court hearing with or without representation.

A third (33%) of those who said a court or tribunal had been used said that they personally paid a fee to the court or tribunal.⁶⁰ Among those who said that they had not personally paid a fee there were various reasons given for this, including that no fee was applicable, that a fee remission had been obtained, or that a relative, friend or employer had paid. Findings were similar for both those who made the claim themselves and those who said the other party made the claim.⁶¹

Views on the use of courts and tribunals among those who did not use them

Overall, 5% of adults with legal problems had used a court or tribunal process, 14% considered using a court or tribunal but ultimately decided not to, and 80% did not consider using a court or tribunal process at all.

The rest of this section focuses on adults who did not use a court or tribunal process. Only a minority of adults with a civil or administrative legal problem who had not used a court or tribunal said that they had considered using a court or tribunal (12% and 16% respectively). Those who experienced a problem concerning a relationship breakdown and had not used a court or tribunal were more evenly split between those who had and had not considered using a court or tribunal (44% and 56% respectively); see Table 5.5.

⁶⁰ 62% said that they had not personally paid a fee, and 5% said that they did not know whether they had paid a fee or not.

⁶¹ Court fees are generally payable by the person who initiates court proceedings. If they win their case, their court fee may be reimbursed by the losing party as part of the court's judgment, which explains why some respondents who said the other party made the claim may have paid court fees.

**Table 5.5: Whether considered using a court or tribunal by problem type,¹
LPRS 2014-15**

	Percentages		
	Considered using court/ tribunal claim	Did not consider using court/ tribunal claim	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Civil legal problems	12	88	2,079
Purchasing goods and services	13	87	417
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	7	93	400
Money excluding personal debt	18	82	395
Personal debt	6	94	167
Rented accommodation	11	89	309
Accidents or medical negligence	15	85	185
Owning or buying residential property	17	83	206
Administrative legal problems	16	84	586
Employment	22	78	303
State benefits	6	94	173
Education	17	83	110
Family legal problems	44	56	97
All legal problems	14	86	2,762

¹ Includes those who experienced a legal problem but did not make use of a court or tribunal process.

Consideration of the use of the court or tribunal among those who had not used them was higher among:

- Adults who considered their problem to be legal at the outset (29% considered using a court or tribunal compared with 10% of those who did not think of their problem as legal).
- Adults who perceived their problem as very serious (24% considered using the court or tribunal compared with 7% of adults who perceived their problem to be not very serious).
- Adults who experienced adverse consequences as a result of their problem (23% considered using a court or tribunal compared with 7% of those who did experience any adverse consequences).

Of those who had considered using a court or tribunal to resolve their legal problem but ultimately did not do so, the most common reason given for not using a court or tribunal was that the problem had resolved without needing to use a court or tribunal (43%). Other common reasons given were that the problem was still ongoing and/or the respondent may still use a court or tribunal in future (14%), that court fees were too high (10%) or using a court or tribunal would have been too stressful (6%). There was little variation by the type of problem; see Table 5.6.

Among those who said the problem resolved without needing to use a court or tribunal, the most common ways the problem was resolved were directly with the other party (31%) or one of the parties (either the respondent or the other side) acted independently to sort out the problem (24%).

Table 5.6: Reasons why those who considered using a court/tribunal did not use a court or tribunal,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Civil problems	Administrative problems	All problems ³
Problem resolved without need to	46	42	43
Problem still ongoing/may do in the future	16	12	14
Court fees too high	9	4	10
It would have been too stressful	3	10	6
Other reasons ²	28	33	31
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>244</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>384</i>

¹ Includes those who considered using a court or tribunal but ultimately did not do so. Respondents could give more than one answer. Percentages will therefore not sum to 100.

² Includes less common reasons each given by less than 5% of adults.

³ Results for family problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

Adults who had not used a court or tribunal for their problem and had not considered this as an option at all were asked why they had not considered using a court or tribunal. The reasons given by this group were fairly similar to those given by those who had considered the use of a court or tribunal at some point but had ultimately not used it.

Table 5.7 shows that, among those who had not considered using a court or tribunal process at all, the most commonly given reason was that there was no need to or that the problem had resolved (mentioned by 55%), followed by the problem being too trivial (mentioned by 18%). Other reasons were each mentioned by less than 10%, including court fees being too high (6%).

Table 5.7: Reasons why did not consider using a court or tribunal by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	No need to/ problem resolved	Too trivial	Court fees too high	Other reasons ²	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil problems	55	19	7	23	1,835
Purchasing goods and services	62	19	5	19	372
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	50	26	4	22	365
Money excluding personal debt	53	19	11	23	322
Personal debt	58	7	7	26	160
Rented accommodation	51	23	7	23	280
Accidents or medical negligence	59	8	1	32	162
Owning or buying residential property	53	18	11	26	174
Administrative problems	55	17	4	27	488
Employment	50	21	5	29	231
State benefits	59	7	5	30	164
Education	63	20	0	18	93
Family problems	47	7	14	36	55
All legal problems	55	18	6	25	2,378

¹ Includes those who did not use a court or tribunal and at no point considered doing so. Respondents could give more than one answer. Percentages will therefore not sum to 100.

² Includes less common reasons each given by less than 10% of adults.

5.4 Use of conciliation, mediation or arbitration

Overall, 9% of adults with legal problems had used independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration, 11% considered using it but ultimately decided not to, and 79% did not consider using it at all.⁶²

Of those who had not used independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration, around a tenth (12%) of adults said they had considered using mediation but had decided not to, with 88% not considering this at all. This varied, however, by the type of legal problem, with over a quarter (28%) of those who had a relationship breakdown problem saying they had considered using mediation, and around a fifth of those with an education or employment problem saying this (19% and 18% respectively); see Table 5.8.

⁶² Adults who had not participated in independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration were asked whether they had considered using mediation to help resolve the problem (where mediation was defined as a neutral third party helping both sides to try to reach a solution, therefore also encompassing conciliation and arbitration).

Table 5.8: Whether considered using mediation, by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Considered using mediation	Did not consider using mediation	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Civil legal problems	11	89	2,011
Purchasing goods and services	9	91	404
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	15	85	364
Money excluding personal debt	9	91	393
Personal debt	8	92	169
Rented accommodation	12	88	287
Accidents or medical negligence	5	95	194
Owning or buying residential property	15	85	200
Administrative legal problems	14	86	555
Employment	18	82	262
State benefits	6	94	191
Education	19	81	102
Family legal problems	28	72	90
All legal problems	12	88	2,656

¹ Includes those who experienced a legal problem but did not use independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration. Respondents who gave don't know responses have been excluded from this table.

There was little variation according to problem characteristics, although adults who had experienced adverse consequences as a result of their legal problem were slightly more likely to say they had considered using mediation to help resolve their problem than those who had not had any adverse consequences (16% compared with 9%).

Among adults who had considered using mediation but ultimately did not do so, the most common reason given for not using it was that there was no need for it or the problem had resolved (37%); see Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Reasons why those who considered using mediation did not use it,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Civil legal problems	Administrative legal problems	All legal problems ³
No need to/ problem resolved	41	38	37
Didn't think it would help	11	12	12
Other party refused or uncontactable	9	11	12
May use mediation in future	8	17	11
Other reasons ²	22	18	21
<i>Unweighted base</i>	209	85	322

¹ Includes those who considered using mediation but ultimately did not do so.

² Includes less common reasons each given by less than 5% of adults.

³ Family problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

Among adults who had not considered using conciliation, mediation or arbitration the most common reason was again that there was no need to or that the problem resolved (49%), with 16% saying mediation was not appropriate for resolving their problem. Around one in ten did not think mediation would help (9%) or were not aware of the possibility of using mediation (also 9%); see Table 5.10.

There was some variation by problem type. Around a quarter of adults with problems relating to a relationship breakdown (26%) said they had not considered mediation because there was no need to or the problem had resolved, compared with around half of adults with civil legal problems (51%) or administrative legal problems (46%).

Table 5.10: Reasons why mediation not considered by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages					
	No need to/ problem resolved	Mediation not appropriate	Did not think it would help	Not aware of the possibility	Other reasons ²	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil problems	51	16	8	8	18	1,802
Purchasing goods and services	62	16	6	6	15	373
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	47	18	11	8	18	309
Money excluding personal debt	48	20	9	6	20	357
Personal debt	46	15	5	12	14	154
Rented accommodation	55	14	7	11	17	256
Accidents or medical negligence	44	8	6	14	27	182
Owning or buying residential property	47	20	14	6	16	171
Administrative problems	46	15	10	10	19	470
Employment	40	15	14	9	21	214
State benefits	50	13	7	13	16	173
Education	51	16	6	9	17	83
Family problems	26	17	14	6	35	62
All legal problems	49	16	9	9	18	2,334

¹ Unweighted base is those who did not use mediation and at no point considered doing so. Respondents could give more than one answer and so percentages will not sum to 100.

² Includes less common reasons each given by less than 5% of adults.

6. Help obtained to try to resolve problems

The previous two chapters explored the resolution strategies used by adults with legal problems and in particular the extent to which formal legal and resolution processes were used. In this and the following two chapters the nature of advice-seeking is examined, covering the range of sources of information, advice and help that people may access to deal with or resolve their problem. This chapter covers the range of sources of information, advice and help used, categorised as follows:

- formal legal help (information, advice and help from a lawyer, solicitor or barrister);
- other professional help (information, advice and help from an independent advisor whose role isn't necessarily to give legal advice e.g. Citizens Advice, local council, trade unions, other unspecified advisors);
- sourced own information (e.g. from the internet or leaflets, or family and friends or the other party); and,
- obtained no information, advice or help.

Respondents may have obtained more than one type of help, and can therefore be included in more than one category.

Chapter 7 provides further detail on legal and professional help and Chapter 8 covers self-help (that is, information, advice or help obtained from the internet, leaflets and self-help guides, family and friends, and the other side of the dispute).

All findings relate to individuals who had experienced at least one legal problem in the 18 months before interview. Respondents who had experienced more than one legal problem were questioned about one randomly selected problem only (see Appendix A for further details of the selection process). Findings have been weighted to be representative of all problems.

6.1 Sources of information, advice and help

Overall, around one in ten adults (12%) with a legal problem said that they had obtained formal legal help to try to resolve their problem, while around a third (32%) obtained professional help from someone other than a legal professional. Almost three-quarters of adults (73%) said they had sourced their own information in trying to resolve their problem, for example from the internet or leaflets or family or friends. Many of those who had sourced

their own information had also obtained legal or professional help. Just under half of adults with legal problems (45%) had only sourced their own information, without recourse to legal or professional help. Less than a fifth of adults (16%) said they did not obtain any help at all to try to resolve their problem; see Table 6.1.

Chapter 4 showed that 4% of adults did not try to resolve their problem at all, lower than the percentage (16%) who did not obtain any help. This suggests that some adults try to resolve their problem on their own without obtaining any information, advice or help from other sources.

Table 6.1: Types of help obtained by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	Formal legal help	Professional help	Obtained own information	No help obtained	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems	11	29	70	18	2,199
Purchasing good and services	4	18	81	15	424
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	2	43	49	30	405
Money excluding personal debt	12	28	76	14	434
Personal debt	4	26	70	19	187
Rented accommodation	4	22	74	21	318
Accidents or medical negligence	45	30	66	11	212
Owning or buying residential property	25	39	77	11	219
Administrative legal problems	8	38	79	12	636
Employment	15	44	77	12	317
State benefits	2	30	76	13	202
Education	1	35	85	9	117
Family legal problems	45	46	80	5	124
All legal problems	12	32	73	16	2,959

¹ Respondents may have used more than one type of help and are included in the table for each type used. Percentages will therefore not sum to 100.

Table 6.1 shows that those with a problem linked to relationship breakdown were far more likely to obtain legal help or professional help and less likely to obtain no help at all, than those with civil or administrative legal problems.

There were, however, some differences depending on the type of civil or administrative legal problem experienced. The key findings are as follows:

- Adults who had experienced a problem relating to injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence were more likely to obtain formal legal help (45%) than those who had experienced all other types of civil or administrative legal problem.

This could be related to the provision of no-win no-fee arrangements for personal injury claims.

- Formal legal help was obtained by a quarter (25%) of those with an issue with property they owned or were buying, 15% of those with an employment dispute and 12% of those with a money problem (excluding personal debt). For all other civil and administrative legal problems less than 5% obtained legal help.
- The use of other professional information, advice or help sources was far more common than the use of legal help for all problems, with the exception of injury or ill-health arising from accidents or negligence. The use of other professional help ranged from just over four in ten among adults who had problems with neighbours' anti-social behaviour or employment disputes (43% and 44% respectively) to just under a fifth among those with problems purchasing goods and services (18%).
- Across all but one of the problem types, at least two-thirds of adults had sourced their own information and advice, such as through the internet or leaflets. Self-help is therefore, by far, the most commonly used approach to source advice. The exception to this is adults who had problems with their neighbours' anti-social behaviour.
- For all problems, only a minority of adults did not obtain any form of information or advice. For most civil and administrative problems this ranged from 9% to 15%. It was far higher among adults who had problems with neighbours' anti-social behaviour (30% did not obtain any help), followed by those with personal debt (19%) or rented accommodation (21%) problems.

As discussed above, many of those who sourced their own information or advice from the internet, self-help literature or other people (friends or family, or the other side of the problem), also obtained formal legal or other professional help in dealing with their problem. Four out of ten adults who sourced their own advice did so – over a tenth (13%) had obtained legal help from a solicitor, lawyer or barrister, and almost a third (32%) had obtained professional help from another type of advisor.⁶³

⁶³ 5% of adults who sourced their own advice also obtained both formal legal and other professional advice.

Types of help obtained by problem characteristics

The types of help obtained varied according to how respondents characterised their problem with regard to legality, seriousness, and the adverse consequences experienced; see Table 6.2.⁶⁴ The key findings are:

- Adults who thought of their problem as a legal problem when it first started were more likely to obtain formal legal help (25%) than those who did not consider it to be a legal problem at the outset (8%).
- Those who perceived their problem to be very serious were more likely to obtain formal legal or professional help (18% and 43%) than those who considered their problem to be not very serious (6% and 22%).
- Adults who experienced adverse consequences (such as mental or physical ill-health, or loss of income, etc.) were more likely to obtain formal legal help (17%) and professional help (41%) than adults who did not report any adverse consequences arising from their problems (7% and 24%).
- Adults who did not report adverse consequences arising were almost twice as likely to get no advice (20% compared with 11% of those with adverse consequences).

Table 6.2: Types of help obtained by problem characteristics,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	Formal legal help	Professional help	Obtained own information	No help obtained	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Legal	25	41	77	11	679
Not legal	8	29	72	18	2,280
Not very serious ²	6	22	71	19	965
Fairly serious ²	12	33	75	15	1,241
Very serious ²	18	43	73	13	719
Experienced adverse consequences	17	41	75	11	1,377
Did not experience adverse consequences	7	24	71	20	1,582

¹ Respondents may have used more than one type of help and may therefore be included in this table more than once. Percentages will therefore not sum to 100.

² Respondents rated the seriousness of their problem on a scale of 1 to 20. Ratings of 1–5 have been classified as not very serious, 6–14 as fairly serious, and 15–20 as very serious. Don't knows and refusals have been excluded from this table.

⁶⁴ See Chapter 3 for more details on these measures.

Types of help obtained by socio-demographic characteristics

There was some variation in the types of information, advice and help used based on adults' socio-demographic characteristics, and also depending on their use of the internet in general. See Appendix C, Table C13. The key differences were as follows:

- Adults aged 45–64 most commonly used legal or professional help (14% and 38%).⁶⁵ Adults aged 75 and over were least likely to source their own information (59%), perhaps because they are less likely to use the internet.
- Almost a quarter (24%) of black and minority ethnic adults did not obtain any information, advice or help in relation to their problem compared with 15% of white adults.
- Adults in employment were almost twice as likely as unemployed adults to obtain formal legal help (13% compared with 7%), although they were no more likely to obtain other professional help or obtain their own information or advice.
- Almost a quarter (23%) of adults without any formal qualifications obtained no help at all. Among those with degrees or A-levels or equivalent level qualifications the figures were 14% and 16% respectively. This was mainly a result of those with no qualifications being less likely to seek their own help (levels of legal and professional help were similar across groups).
- Whether an adult obtained formal legal help increased as household income increased. Overall, 7% of adults with a problem who lived in a household with an income of less than £15,000 per year obtained legal help, compared with 17% of those who lived in a household with an income of £60,000 or more. There were no significant differences, however, in obtaining other professional help or in sourcing their own information or advice.
- Possibly related to income, private and social renters were less likely to obtain formal legal help than home-owners (both who own their home outright or with a mortgage).

6.2 Factors associated with obtaining legal or professional help

The analyses above show that whether adults with legal problems obtained formal legal or professional help varied dependent on their age, household income, whether they were employed and whether they owned or rented their home. It also varied by problem type and characteristics, as well as how they had tried to resolve their problem. Many of these characteristics co-vary. For example, middle-aged adults may be more likely to be employed,

⁶⁵ 45–64-year-olds were significantly more likely to obtain formal legal help than adults aged 18–24 and significantly more likely to obtain professional help than adults aged 18–44 at the 5% level.

own their own home and have a higher household income than other adults, and certain types of problem are more likely to be considered legal, very serious, and lead to adverse consequences.

Logistic regression analysis was carried out to explore which of these factors were independently associated with obtaining legal or professional help – associations do not necessarily imply causal relationships. Similarly, the survey may not capture all the relevant factors associated with obtaining legal or professional help. For more information on the methodology used and variables included in the models, see Appendix E.

Overall, 2,959 respondents to the survey had a legal problem, with 39% reporting that they had obtained some form of legal and/or professional help in relation to their problem.

The findings indicated that the factors that are strongly independently associated with obtaining formal legal or professional help (listed in order of strength of association) were:

- **Type of problem** experienced – adults with problems relating to a relationship breakdown, or injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence, were far more likely to obtain legal or professional help than adults with problems purchasing goods and services. Adults with problems owning or buying property, employment, neighbours' anti-social behaviour, education provision and money (excluding personal debt) were also more likely to obtain legal or professional help than adults with problems purchasing goods and services.
- **Resolution strategy** – adults who had used a formal legal process or resolution service to try to resolve their legal problem were more likely to obtain legal or professional help than those who had not used a formal legal process or resolution service.
- **Seriousness of problem** – adults who considered their problem to be very or fairly serious were more likely to obtain legal or professional help than adults who considered their problem to be not very serious.
- **Whether thought of problem as legal** – adults who had thought of their problem as legal when it first started were more likely to obtain legal or professional help than adults who had not thought of their problem as legal.
- **Age** – adults aged 25 and above were more likely to obtain legal or professional help than adults aged between 18 and 24.

- **Adverse consequences** – adults whose problems led to adverse consequences were more likely to obtain legal or professional help than adults who had not experienced adverse consequences as a result of their problem.
- **Problem duration** – adults with problems which had lasted four months or more were more likely to obtain legal or professional help than adults whose problems had lasted three months or less.

Other variables were also associated with obtaining legal or professional help to a lesser extent. See Appendix E, Table E2 for a full breakdown of results.

This indicates that problem characteristics are strongly associated with whether legal or professional help is obtained, with most of the key factors being related to the problem itself. Whether a formal legal process or resolution service was used was also strongly associated. The analysis cannot show whether this is because adults first decide to use a formal resolution process and then obtain legal or professional help to assist them, or whether they obtain legal or professional help which encourages them to use a formal resolution process.

The analysis also suggests that obtaining formal legal or professional help does not depend much on an adult's socio-demographic characteristics, as only age was strongly associated with it.

7. Use of legal or professional help to resolve problems

Overall, around two-fifths (39%) of adults who had experienced a legal problem in the 18 months before interview obtained some form of legal (12%) and/or professional information, advice or help (32%) for their problem. This chapter presents detailed findings about the legal and professional help obtained, including who provided it and what was provided.

In this chapter, help from legal and professional advisors is combined, including both formal legal help from solicitors and barristers, and other professional help from independent advisors whose role is not necessarily to give legal advice (e.g. Citizens Advice, local council advice service, trade unions and insurance companies).

7.1 Advice providers

There is a wide range of sources who can provide legal/professional help to help resolve legal problems. Table 7.1 shows the most commonly used sources of help. Those adults who obtained legal or professional help most often received this from a solicitors' firm (26% of adults who obtained legal/professional help). The next most commonly used advice provider was Citizens Advice (18%).

Table 7.1: Advice providers,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages	
	Adults who got legal/professional help ²	All adults with legal problems ³
A solicitors' firm	26	10
A Citizens Advice Bureau (or Citizens Advice nationally)	18	7
A local council advice service	14	5
Trade Unions/Unions	9	3
An insurance company legal advice service	8	3
(Local) Police/Community Police	7	3
A barrister	3	1
Estate agency/Landlord	3	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1,227</i>	<i>2,959</i>

¹ People or organisations who advised a minimum of 3% of those who obtained advice from an advisor are shown in this table. Other advisors were also contacted. Some respondents contacted more than one advisor and have been included for each advisor they contacted.

² Percentage of adults who obtained legal or professional help for their problem.

³ Percentage of all adults with legal problems, including those who obtained no legal/professional help for their problem.

There was some variation in which type of advisors were contacted according to the type of legal problem experienced; see Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Advice providers by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages										
	Solicitors' firm	Citizens Advice	Local council advice service	Trade unions	Insurance company's legal advice service	Police	Debt advice organisation	Mediation Service	Child Support Agency	Other provider	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems	26	16	16	2	12	9	4	-	-	39	841
Purchasing goods and services	12	23	3	3	13	3	0	1	0	70	79
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	5	5	46	-	3	35	0	0	0	29	198
Money excluding personal debt	32	18	3	2	6	3	4	0	1	51	167
Personal debt	9	45	3	0	2	0	40	1	0	17	62
Rented accommodation	11	26	21	5	2	-	0	2	0	51	80
Accidents or medical negligence	63	8	0	3	42	3	0	-	0	21	133
Owning or buying residential property	39	9	24	0	8	4	2	0	0	45	122
Administrative legal problems	14	20	9	30	2	1	-	1	0	40	291
Employment	21	11	2	47	1	1	0	-	0	31	177
State benefits	5	49	10	0	3	0	1	2	0	41	69
Education	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
Family legal problems	62	24	8	-	0	2	0	16	17	23	95
All legal problems	26	18	14	9	8	7	3	2	1	38	1,227

¹ Includes adults who obtained legal or professional help for their problem. Respondents may have used more than one type of advice provider and are included in the table for each type used. Percentages will therefore not sum to 100.

Around a quarter (26%) of adults who obtained legal/professional help from an advisor for a civil legal problem contacted a solicitor. There was, however, variation by the type of civil legal problem experienced. Key findings are detailed below.

- Adults who obtained legal/professional help for an injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence were most likely to use a solicitor (63%). This compares to 39% of those who obtained help for a legal problem relating to buying or owning a home and 32% of those who obtained help for a legal problem with money (excluding personal debt). For other civil problems the use of a solicitor among those obtaining legal/professional help was even less common.
- Adults who obtained legal/professional help for an injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence were also more likely to get help from an insurance company (42%) than those who got help for any other civil legal problem (ranging from 2% to 13%).
- Few (5%) of those who obtained legal/professional help for a problem with their neighbours' anti-social behaviour did so from a solicitor. They were far more likely to get help from a local council (46%) and/or the police (35%). A local council advice service was also used by 24% of those obtaining legal/professional help for a problem relating to buying or owning residential property, and by 21% of those obtaining advice with regard to rented accommodation.
- Adults obtaining legal/professional help for a personal debt problem were most likely to get this from Citizens Advice (45%) and/or a debt advice organisation (40%).
- Citizens Advice was also a relatively common source of advice among adults who obtained legal/professional help for a problem with rented accommodation (26%), a problem with purchasing goods and services (23%), or a money-related problem (excluding personal debt) (18%).

For those adults who obtained legal/professional advice for an administrative legal problem, the source of this advice was related to the type of legal problem experienced:

- Almost half (47%) of those who obtained legal/professional help for an employment problem did so from a trade union and around one in five (21%) contacted a solicitor.
- Around half (49%) of those obtaining legal/professional help for a problem concerning state benefits got it from Citizens Advice.

- The number of respondents with a dispute over the provision of education who obtained some form of help is too small to present reliable figures on, although, not surprisingly, the local council and a school or teacher were referred to by many respondents as a source of advice.

For those obtaining legal/professional help from an advisor for a legal problem relating to a relationship breakdown, the majority (62%) contacted a solicitor or barrister. Around a quarter (24%) contacted Citizens Advice and/or the local council advice service and 16% of those who used an advisor contacted a mediator.

Multiple sources of help

Among adults who obtained some form of legal or professional help, around three-quarters (76%) reported getting it from one type of provider. Almost a fifth (18%) said they obtained help from two types of advice provider, and 6% said they used three or more sources.

Looking specifically at those who got help from a solicitors' firm, half (52%) had also obtained help from at least one other legal or professional source. The most common sources used alongside the solicitors' firm were an insurance company's legal advice service (17% of those who had obtained help from a solicitor also used this), Citizens Advice (12%) and barristers (11%).

The LPRS could not capture the sequencing of advice-seeking behaviour in detail. It did, however, ask those who had used more than one legal or professional source who they had contacted first and who they had contacted most recently. Almost a quarter (23%) of adults who obtained help from more than one type of provider had contacted Citizens Advice first, 16% had contacted an insurance company's legal advice service first, 15% had contacted a solicitors' firm and 9% had contacted a local council's advice service first. A third of adults who obtained help from more than one type of provider (35%) said that their most recent advisor was a solicitors' firm. These findings suggest that generally adults do not approach solicitors for legal advice initially, but seek other sources first.

7.2 Types of help and advice received

Respondents were asked which types of help they got from the last legal/professional advisor they contacted about their legal problem.⁶⁶ This advisor was a solicitor in a fifth (21%) of cases and Citizens Advice or a local council advice service in around a tenth of cases (11% and 9% respectively).

As the findings relate to the 'last' advisor only, and almost a quarter of those who obtained legal/professional help had contact with more than one advisor, the findings only provide a partial picture of type of advice received. Table 7.3 shows there was some variation in the types of advisor contacted depending on problem type.

Table 7.3: Last legal/professional advisor contacted, by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages					
	A solicitors' firm or barrister	Citizens Advice	A local council advice service	Another advice service or organisation	Somebody else	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems	22	10	12	27	28	820
Purchasing goods and services	10	12	1	36	39	75
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	2	2	39	14	41	197
Money excluding personal debt	25	12	1	38	24	161
Personal debt	8	34	2	43	12	62
Rented accommodation	11	22	10	22	35	78
Accidents or medical negligence	59	4	0	26	10	128
Owning or buying residential property	31	5	14	19	29	119
Administrative legal problems	13	15	4	47	21	280
Employment	18	7	0	53	22	171
State benefits	6	41	7	30	16	66
Education ²	-	-	-	-	-	43
Family legal problems	44	9	3	34	9	92
All legal problems	21	11	9	33	25	1,192

¹ Includes adults who obtained legal or professional help for their problem.

² Results for education problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

⁶⁶ If the respondent had contacted one legal/professional advisor they were asked about that advisor; if they had contacted more than one then they were asked about the 'last' legal/professional advisor they had contacted. The types of help provided could relate to help that the selected advisor had provided during the course of the problem, and not only in relation to the last occasion of contact.

Type of help and advice received by problem type

The majority of adults who obtained help from a legal/professional advisor said that the (last) advisor had provided help to understand the situation or their options (82%), suggestions on what they should do (76%) or help to understand their legal rights (70%). Around three-fifths (62%) said they had gained moral support. The provision of more direct help was less common, with 52% of adults with legal/professional help reporting that the (last) advisor acted on their behalf, 39% saying that they helped prepare documents and 3% saying they represented them in a court or tribunal. See Table 7.4.

The overall pattern is mirrored when looking at adults who had obtained legal/professional help for a civil legal problem. The majority said their (last) advisor provided help to understand the situation or their options (80%) or suggestions on what they should do (75%) and very few (2%) obtained representation in a court or tribunal.

For those who had obtained legal/professional help for an administrative legal problem the responses were similar, although they were more likely to have obtained moral support from their (last) advisor (74% compared with 58% for civil problems) and obtained suggestions on where they could get further help (55% compared with 41%).

Those who obtained legal/professional help for a legal problem connected to a relationship breakdown were more likely to have obtained help to understand their legal rights (89%) and representation at a court or tribunal (13%) from their (last) advisor than their counterparts with a civil (66% and 2% respectively) or administrative (77% and 2% respectively) legal problem.⁶⁷

Due to the relatively small number of respondents who had obtained help from an advisor within each individual problem type, many apparent differences do not reach statistical significance at the 5% level. The following findings are however statistically significant:

- Adults who had a legal problem concerning an injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence were more likely to report that their (last) advisor had acted on their behalf (79%) than all other problem types (31%–54%) except those relating to debt (55%) or a relationship breakdown (57%).

⁶⁷ The difference between those obtaining help to understand their legal rights for family and administrative problems was not significant at the 5% level.

- Less than half of adults with legal problems relating to their neighbours' anti-social behaviour (44%) said that their advisor had help them to understand their legal rights, compared with 60%–89% of almost all other types of problem.⁶⁸
- Adults with legal problems relating to their neighbours' anti-social behaviour or purchasing goods and services were less likely to report that their advisor had helped them to prepare documents (19% and 20% respectively) than all other problem types (41%–62%) other than problems relating to rented accommodation (24%).

⁶⁸ The difference between problems relating to neighbours' anti-social behaviour and purchasing goods and services was not significant at the 5% level.

Table 7.4: Type of help received from last advisor contacted,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages								
	Help you understand the situation or your options	Suggest what you should do	Help you understand your legal rights	Give you moral support	Act on your behalf	Suggest where you could get further help	Help you prepare documents (e.g. letters or forms)	Represent you in a court or tribunal	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems	80	75	66	58	54	41	36	2	820
Purchasing goods and services	79	70	60	46	31	33	20	0	75
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	68	71	44	63	54	34	19	0	197
Money excluding personal debt	85	79	76	56	49	43	41	3	161
Personal debt	92	90	80	76	55	64	62	2	62
Rented accommodation	79	76	69	62	42	44	24	3	78
Accidents or medical negligence	83	73	77	58	79	41	49	5	128
Owning or buying residential property	81	72	66	51	54	42	45	2	119
Administrative legal problems	87	77	77	74	47	55	45	2	280
Employment	90	76	87	73	50	54	44	2	171
State benefits	76	74	67	73	48	44	45	4	66
Education ²	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
Family legal problems	92	82	89	56	57	60	44	13	92
All legal problems	82	76	70	62	52	46	39	3	1,192

¹ Includes adults who obtained legal or professional help for their problem. Respondents could receive more than one type of help therefore percentages will not sum to 100.

² Results for education problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

Type of help received by advisor type

Table 7.5 shows the type of help obtained from the last legal/professional advisor the respondent contacted by type of advisor. Solicitors/barristers and Citizens Advice were most likely to provide help with understanding legal rights (89% and 83% respectively).

Unsurprisingly, solicitors/barristers were also more likely to act on the respondent's behalf (in 70% of cases) and help prepare paperwork (62%) than other providers. Citizens Advice were more likely to provide suggestions for where the respondent could get further help (73%) than other advice providers (38%–47%).

Table 7.5: Type of help received by advice provider,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	A solicitors' firm or barrister	Citizens Advice	A local council advice service	Another advice service or organisation	Somebody else
Help you understand your legal rights	89	83	50	75	50
Help you understand the situation or your options	88	86	71	88	73
Suggest what you should do	81	85	70	78	68
Act on your behalf	70	31	44	52	47
Help you prepare documents (e.g. letters or forms)	62	43	23	39	21
Give you moral support	52	71	57	69	62
Suggest where you could get further help	43	73	43	47	38
Represent you in a court or tribunal	9	2	0	2	0
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>279</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>352</i>	<i>298</i>

¹ Includes adults who obtained legal or professional help for their problem. Respondents could obtain more than one type of help from the last advisor they contacted and therefore percentages will not sum to 100.

How advisors were contacted

Adults who had obtained information, advice or help from a legal/professional advisor were asked about how they had communicated with the (last) advisor.⁶⁹ The most common method for communicating with advisors was via telephone or text message (73%), with 50% saying they had seen the advisor in person. Seeing the advisor in person was particularly common if the advice service was Citizens Advice (mentioned by 69% using Citizens Advice), while telephone or text messages was a common form of communicating for solicitors/barristers (mentioned by 82%). See Table 7.6.

⁶⁹ The figures relate to any ways in which the respondent had communicated with the advisor during the problem (last advisor if more than one legal/professional advisor had been used).

Table 7.6: How advisors were contacted,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages					
	A solicitors' firm or barrister	Citizens Advice	A local council advice service	Another advice service or organisation	Somebody else	All
By telephone/text message	82	53	72	77	71	73
By email/via Internet	57	20	34	49	35	42
Saw the advisor in person	49	69	43	40	58	50
By post	48	9	24	28	16	27
<i>Unweighted base</i>	279	130	123	352	298	1,182

¹ Includes adults who obtained legal or professional help for their problem. Respondents could select more than one answer; therefore percentages will not sum to 100.

Quality of service

Almost all adults who had contacted a legal or professional advisor felt that the (last) advisor had treated them with respect (97%) and 64% felt that the (last) advisor had helped resolve or reduce the problem (around 35% said that they had made no difference and less than 1% that they made the problem worse). There was no statistically significant variation by the type of advisor. Satisfaction levels with the information, advice or help obtained from the (last) advisor were generally high at over 80% for all types of advisor with the exception of a local council advice service (73%); see Table 7.7.

Table 7.7: Quality of service,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages					
	A solicitors' firm or barrister	Citizens Advice	A local council advice service	Another advice service or organisation	Somebody else	All
Whether felt treated with respect by last advice provider						
Treated with respect	99	99	92	97	96	97
Not treated with respect	1	1	8	3	4	3
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	274	130	121	348	292	1,165
Whether the last advisor contacted helped to resolve or reduce the problem						
Helped resolve or reduce the problem	69	60	58	64	64	64
Made the problem worse	1	0	1	1	-	1
Made no difference	30	40	41	35	36	35
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	269	128	120	345	283	1,145
Satisfaction with advice provided						
Very/quite satisfied	91	88	73	86	84	85
Not very/not at all satisfied	9	12	27	14	16	15
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	275	130	122	348	289	1,164

¹ Includes adults who obtained legal or professional help for their problem and answered the question.

7.3 Paying for advice

All adults who obtained help from a legal or professional advisor were asked about the costs of the help received and how this was funded (separately asked of each distinct type of legal/professional advisor used). Respondents may find it difficult to report accurately on costs of services and how this was funded if they did not directly pay for it themselves. The following findings represent the answers respondents gave.

Overall, 15% of those who received help from a legal or professional advisor said that they had to pay for all or some of the help received. Adults who got help or advice from a solicitors' firm or barrister were most likely to have paid for all or some of their advice with over a third (35%) doing so, compared with 1%–21% of those who got help from other types of advisor; see Table 7.8.

Table 7.8: Whether paid for help by advice provider,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages			
	Paid for all help obtained	Paid for some of the help obtained	Did not pay for any help	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
A solicitors' firm or barrister	23	12	65	279
Citizens Advice	4	0	96	130
A local council advice service	0	1	99	123
Another advice service or organisation	17	4	79	352
Somebody else	1	0	99	298
All legal problems	11	4	84	1,182

¹ All problems where help was received from a legal or professional advisor.

Respondents who got help from a solicitors' firm and said they had not paid for all of it were asked who had paid. Around a quarter (26%) said that an insurance company had paid, 19% said that it had been funded by a 'no win no fee' agreement, 11% said a relative, friend or employer had paid, 10% said that it had been funded by legal aid, 6% said a trade union had paid, and 37% said someone else had paid for the solicitor.

Adults who obtained legal/professional information, advice or help for a relationship breakdown problem were more likely to pay for all or some of their help (46%) than those with administrative or civil legal problems (20% and 10% respectively); see Table 7.9. These patterns are likely to relate to the type of advisors used for different problem types, with, for example, higher use of solicitors among those with relationship breakdown problems.

Table 7.9: Whether paid for help by problem type, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages			
	Paid for all help obtained	Paid for some of the help obtained	Did not pay for any help	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Civil legal problems	7	3	90	841
Purchasing goods and services	6	4	91	79
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	1	-	99	198
Money excluding personal debt	13	5	82	167
Personal debt	2	1	98	62
Rented accommodation	0	2	98	80
Accidents or medical negligence	4	5	90	133
Owning or buying residential property	23	6	71	122
Administrative legal problems	15	5	80	291
Employment	22	6	73	177
State benefits	3	3	93	69
Education	-	-	-	45
Family legal problems	33	13	54	95

Amount paid for help

Overall, 40% of adults who paid for legal/professional help paid £500 or less for this, with 29% paying over £1,000. When looking at those who received help from a solicitors' firm however, a quarter (26%) paid £500 or less and 39% over £1,000; see Table 7.10. Around a fifth of adults who had paid for all or some of the help they received did not say how much they had paid.

Table 7.10: Amount paid for help obtained,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages	
	Total paid to solicitors ¹	Total paid to all advisors
£100 or less	7	19
£101–£500	19	21
£501–£1,000	16	11
£1,001–£5,000	23	17
£5,001–£10,000	10	5
£10,001 or higher	7	8
Don't know/refusals	19	20
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>192</i>

¹ Includes adults who paid for all or some of the legal or professional help they obtained.

² Other advisor types are not shown separately due to small bases.

Use of ‘no win no fee’ agreements

Adults who are injured or experience ill-health due to an accident or negligence may be able to use a ‘no win no fee’ agreement (or conditional fee arrangement) to get help from a solicitor for their problem. This means they may not have to pay any upfront legal fees.

Almost all (94%) of those who obtained help from a solicitor for this type of problem said they did not pay for all of it. Among this group, 56% said an insurance company had paid for some of it and 46% said they had used a ‘no win no fee’ agreement to help pay.⁷⁰

A fifth (19%) of those with a legal problem of this type who had not used a ‘no win no fee’ agreement said they had considered using such an agreement. Reasons given by some of those who had considered using a ‘no win no fee’ agreement but not ultimately done so were that their solicitors were chosen by someone else (such as an insurance company) and the problem was still ongoing so they may yet still use one (the number of respondents is too small to present percentages). Of those who did not consider using a ‘no win no fee’ agreement, around half said this was because they did not need or want a lawyer (see Table 7.11).

Table 7.11: Reasons why adults with an accident or medical negligence problem did not consider using a ‘no win no fee’ arrangement,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages
	Accident or medical negligence problems
Did not need/want a lawyer	53
Preferred to pay a different way	16
May do so in the future	7
Do not know what no win no fee arrangements are	2
Did not know no win no fee available	1
Other	22
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>136</i>

¹ Respondents could cite more than one reason and therefore percentages may not sum to 100.

7.4 Reasons why legal or professional help not used

As discussed earlier, 39% of adults had obtained legal or professional help in relation to their problem. Very few adults who said they did not get help from a legal or professional advisor reported that they had tried to do so but were unable to (6%), while 11% said that they had considered getting help from a legal or professional advisor but decided not to do so.

⁷⁰ Respondents could select more than one answer, so percentages do not sum to 100. Other answers mentioned by few respondents were legal aid, relatives, friends or employers, and trade unions.

Looking specifically at those who did not obtain help from a solicitor or barrister (regardless of whether they had considered doing so) the reasons given for this were that they did not need help or knew enough themselves (28%), the problem was not important enough (22%), that the problem resolved without the need for advice (20%), or because of cost (16%); see Table 7.12. Results were similar for those who had experienced a civil or administrative legal problem. Those who had experienced a legal problem relating to a relationship breakdown were less likely to say that the problem was not important enough (3% compared with 23% for those with civil and 22% for administrative legal problems) and more likely to say that cost was a reason (34% compared to 15% for those with civil and 16% for administrative legal problems).

Table 7.12: Reasons for not contacting a solicitor or barrister by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages					
	Did not need their help	Problem not important enough	Problem resolved without need for their advice	Cost	Other reasons	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems	29	23	21	15	17	1,958
Purchasing goods and services	34	21	28	11	12	410
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	20	32	20	13	20	390
Money excluding personal debt	32	18	20	18	17	383
Personal debt	36	15	18	19	10	180
Rented accommodation	27	28	20	16	18	309
Accidents or medical negligence	27	15	15	9	34	124
Owning or buying residential property	26	18	23	22	20	162
Administrative legal problems	24	22	18	16	25	584
Employment	20	26	18	14	27	270
State benefits	24	21	21	20	20	198
Education	33	17	14	13	25	116
Family legal problems	26	3	12	34	19	61
All legal problems	28	22	20	16	19	2,603

¹ Respondents could give more than one answer so percentages will not sum to 100.

The reasons for not obtaining help from a solicitor or barrister also varied by the perceived seriousness of problems. Table 7.13 shows that adults who assessed their legal problem as not very serious were more likely to say that they did not need help (33%), the problem was not important enough (28%) and that the problem resolved without the need for advice (23%) compared with those who had assessed their problem as being very serious (23%, 16% and 16% respectively). Those who had assessed their problem as being very serious

were significantly more likely to cite cost as a reason for not contacting a solicitor or barrister (21%) compared with those who had assessed their problem as being not very serious (12%).

Table 7.13: Reasons for not contacting a solicitor or barrister by perceived seriousness of the problem,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages					
	Did not need their help	Problem not important enough	Problem resolved without need for their advice	Cost	Other reasons	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems						
Not very serious	33	28	23	12	11	746
Fairly serious	27	21	22	17	20	796
Very serious	24	16	19	19	25	396
Administrative legal problems						
Not very serious	33	31	25	7	14	139
Fairly serious	23	23	18	15	28	265
Very serious	19	16	12	23	30	174
All legal problems²						
Not very serious	33	28	23	12	12	905
Fairly serious	26	21	21	16	22	1,087
Very serious	23	16	16	21	26	582

¹ Respondents could give more than one answer so percentages will not sum to 100.

² Results for family problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

8. Self-help

Chapter 6 showed that almost three-quarters (73%) of adults with a legal problem had obtained information themselves from the internet, leaflets or self-help guides or from family, friends or the other party. Self-help was common across most problem types and most groups, although those aged 75 and over and with no qualifications were somewhat less likely to source their own information.

This chapter looks at the types of self-help used by adults with legal problems and the extent to which they vary for different types of problem and across different socio-demographic groups.

8.1 The use of self-help for legal problems

Table 8.1 shows that adults with legal problems most commonly reported obtaining information, advice or help from their friends and family, or the other side of the problem or dispute⁷¹ (both 44%). Around a third of adults with problems (35%) obtained information or advice from the internet,⁷² and around a tenth (11%) had used leaflets, books or self-help guides.

Table 8.1: Types of self-help,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages
Got information, advice or help from:	
the internet	35
leaflets, books or self-help guides	11
friends and family	44
the other side of the problem	44
At least one form of self-help	73
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2,959</i>

¹ Includes all adults with problems. Adults are counted in this table for each form of self-help they obtained.

Overall, internet use for a range of purposes was common among adults in the survey – with 85% of all adults surveyed and 93% of those with a legal problem saying that they used the internet for personal use on at least a weekly basis. Most adults used the internet for

⁷¹ Relates specifically to getting information, advice or help from the other side of the problem. Other adults may also have spoken to the other side during the course of their problem, but did not report that the other side provided help.

⁷² This continues the upward trend observed in previous surveys. In the 2001 Civil and Social Justice Survey, 4% of adults had used the internet to help resolve their problems, rising to 10% in 2004, 16% in 2006–09, 19% in the 2010 Civil and Social Justice Panel Survey (CSJPS), and 24% in the 2012 CSJPS.

transactional purposes, such as online banking. Around nine out of ten of those with internet access felt very or fairly confident in assessing the accuracy and reliability of information they found on the internet; see Appendix C, Table C14. Given that over 80% of adults with a legal problem appeared to be proficient in using the internet, 35% getting advice or help from the internet in relation to their problem appears low.

Around a half of adults who had obtained information, advice or help from the internet, leaflets and self-help guides, friends and family or the other side also obtained help from a legal or professional advisor, with around a tenth getting help from a solicitor; see Table 8.2. Adults who used more than one type of self-help were more likely to also get legal or professional help.⁷³

Table 8.2: Whether adults who obtained their own information, advice or help also got legal/professional help,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages			
	Got information, advice or help from:			
	the internet	a leaflet or self-help guide	friends and family	the other side of the problem
Also got help from a legal or professional advisor ¹	49	55	43	38
Legal or professional advisor used:²				
A solicitors' firm or barrister	12	12	11	7
Citizens Advice	7	8	6	5
A local council advice service	4	6	3	3
Another advice service or organisation	16	17	13	12
Somebody else	8	9	9	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>956</i>	<i>305</i>	<i>1,207</i>	<i>1,301</i>

¹ Includes adults who obtained their own information, advice or help to resolve their problem. Adults may have used more than one source of self-help. They are included in the table for each source used.

² Most recent advisor contacted. Some adults may have contacted more than one advisor. The base includes adults who did not contact an advisor.

The use of self-help by problem type

The extent of self-help varied by problem type as follows:

- Adults with legal problems relating to education provision were more likely to use the internet to get advice (57%) than adults with any other type of civil or administrative legal problem (15%–40%), with the exception of those with problems relating to owning or buying property (43%) or provision of state benefits (46%).

⁷³ 32% of adults who used one type of self-help also got legal/professional help, increasing to 39% of adults who used two types of self-help and 54% of those who used three or four types of self-help.

- Adults with legal problems relating to state benefits, education provision or a relationship breakdown were more likely to get information from a leaflet, book or self-help guide (22%–23%) than adults with other types of problem (4%–9%), except for those relating to owning or buying property (16%) or employment (14%).
- Over two-thirds of adults with relationship breakdown problems (68%) reported getting information, advice or help from their friends and family, significantly higher than all other types of problem (32%–47%) with the exception of those with problems relating to employment (58%) or education provision (56%).
- Adults with problems relating to purchasing goods and services or education provision were particularly likely to report having obtained information, advice or help from the other side of the problem (60% and 59% respectively).
- Adults with problems concerning their neighbours' anti-social behaviour were least likely to have obtained help from the internet (15%), their friends or family (32%) or the other side (23%).⁷⁴ This is likely to be partly related to the fact that these adults are also significantly less likely to try to resolve their problem at all; see Table 4.2.

⁷⁴ The differences in those receiving help from friends and family were not significant at the 5% level between neighbours' anti-social behaviour and problems relating to money, debt and state benefits, or for those receiving help from the other side of the problem between neighbours' anti-social behaviour and problems relating to accidents and negligence or family breakdown.

Table 8.3: Self-help by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Got information, advice or help from:				<i>Unweighted base</i>
	the internet	a leaflet or self-help guide	friends and family	the other side of the problem	
Civil legal problems	32	8	41	42	2,199
Purchasing goods and services	40	7	45	60	424
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	15	4	32	23	405
Money excluding personal debt	40	7	38	44	434
Personal debt	27	9	35	42	187
Rented accommodation	30	6	47	45	318
Accidents or medical negligence	30	9	45	27	212
Owning or buying residential property	43	16	45	51	219
Administrative legal problems	44	18	51	50	636
Employment	39	14	58	45	317
State benefits	46	23	34	51	202
Education	57	22	56	59	117
Family legal problems	46	23	68	36	124
All legal problems	35	11	44	44	2,959

¹ Adults may have used more than one type of help and are included in the table for all types.

The use of self-help by problem characteristics

Those who had thought of their problem as legal at the outset were more likely to have used the internet to get information to help them resolve their problem (47%) than adults who had not considered the problem to be of a legal nature (32%). Those who thought of their problem as legal were also slightly more likely to get information from a leaflet, book or self-help guide (14% compared with 10%). There were no significant differences in whether adults obtained information, advice or help from their friends and family, or the other side of the problem; see Table 8.4.

Table 8.4: Self-help by whether people thought of their problem as legal,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Got information, advice or help from:				<i>Unweighted base</i>
	the internet	a leaflet or self-help guide	friends and family	the other side of the problem	
Legal	47	14	48	43	679
Not legal	32	10	43	44	2,280

¹ Adults may have obtained more than one type of help and are included for each type.

Adults who considered their problem to be very serious were twice as likely to have obtained information from a leaflet, book or self-help guide than those who considered their problem to be not very serious (14% compared with 7%). There were no differences in adults' use of the internet or the other side of the problem; see Table 8.5.

Table 8.5: Self-help by perceived seriousness of problem,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Got information, advice or help from:				Percentages
	the internet	a leaflet or self-help guide	friends and family	the other side of the problem	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems					
Not very serious	31	5	37	45	795
Fairly serious	35	8	45	39	906
Very serious	29	11	39	44	475
Administrative legal problems					
Not very serious	38	16	42	50	144
Fairly serious	48	19	56	53	287
Very serious	46	18	51	46	199
All legal problems²					
Not very serious	33	7	39	46	965
Fairly serious	39	11	49	42	1,241
Very serious	35	14	44	45	719

¹ Adults may have used more than one type of help and are included for each type. Respondents rated the seriousness of their problem on a scale of 1 to 20. Ratings of 1–5 have been classified as not very serious, 6–14 as fairly serious, and 15–20 as very serious. Don't knows and refusals have been excluded from this table.

² Findings for family problems are not shown separately due to small bases.

Adults who reported experiencing adverse consequences as a result of their problem were more likely to have obtained information, advice or help from their friends and family than those who did not experience adverse consequences. There were no significant differences in the use of the internet, leaflets, books or self-help guides, or the other side of the problem; see Table 8.6.

Table 8.6: Self-help by whether experienced adverse consequences,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Got information, advice or help from:				Percentages
	the internet	a leaflet or self-help guide	friends and family	the other side of the problem	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Experienced adverse consequences	38	12	50	44	1,377
Did not experience adverse consequences	33	9	39	44	1,582

¹ Adults may have used more than one type of help and are included for each type.

The use of self-help by socio-demographic characteristics

There was some variation in adults' use of the internet to obtain advice for their legal problem by their socio-demographic characteristics as follows:

- Older adults (aged 65 and over) were less likely to use the internet for advice (10%–19%) than adults aged under 65 (33%–41%).
- Related to age, widowed adults were less likely to use the internet for advice (13%) than married, cohabiting, single and separated adults (33%–44%).
- Economically inactive adults were less likely to use the internet for advice (25%) than employed adults (40%).⁷⁵
- Adults with no qualifications were less likely to use the internet for advice (16%) than all other adults (30%–43%).⁷⁶
- Those with an annual household income of £32,000 or less were less likely to use the internet for advice (29%–33%) than those with a household income of £60,000 or more (48%).

As expected, adults who reported having used the internet for online banking or government transactions were particularly likely to use the internet to get information or advice relating to their legal problem (40%). Adults who did not use the internet for online banking or government transactions but did use the internet for other purposes were less likely to use the internet for information or advice with regard to their problem (18% of those who used the internet for online shopping had used it in relation to their legal problem, as did 23% of those who used the internet for email or social networking). Adults who did not use the internet for any of these purposes rarely used the internet in relation to their problem (2%).

There were no significant differences in the extent of using leaflets, books or self-help guides by socio-demographic characteristics, other than that those aged 75 or over were less likely to do so (4%) than those aged 25–64 (11%–12%).

There was some variation in whether adults got information, advice or help from their friends and family by their socio-demographic characteristics as follows:

- Women were more likely to get help from their family and friends than men (48% compared with 40%).

⁷⁵ This is likely to be linked to the age profile of employment as older adults are more likely to be economically inactive than younger adults.

⁷⁶ This is also likely to be linked to the age profile of qualifications as older adults are more likely to have no qualifications than younger age groups.

- Younger adults (aged 18–44) were more likely to get help from their family and friends (49%–62%) than adults aged 45 and over (32%–35%).
- Married adults were less likely to get help from their family and friends (39%) than cohabiting adults (48%), single adults (51%) and separated adults (56%).
- Adults with A-levels (49%) or degrees (47%) were more likely to get help from their family and friends than adults with other qualifications or no qualifications (38% and 36% respectively).
- Perhaps related to age, adults who owned their home with a mortgage or who rented from a private landlord were more likely to get help from their family and friends (44%–49%) than adults who owned their home outright (35%).

There was little variation in the proportion of adults who got information, advice or help from the other side, other than that white adults were more likely to do so than adults from a BME background (45% compared with 35%) and adults with degrees were more likely to do so than adults with no qualifications (47% compared with 36%). See Appendix C, Table C15.

Information obtained from the internet and leaflets

Those who used the internet to get information or advice were asked what they achieved from the internet; see Table 8.7.

Table 8.7: What help adults got from the internet,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages			
	Civil	Admin- istrative	Family	All problems
Identify a source of advice	74	71	80	73
Obtain online information about how to sort out the problem	72	68	82	72
Obtain online information about your rights	65	80	84	71
Find contact details for an advisor	52	51	75	53
Obtain documents needed to resolve the problem	30	24	18	28
Use an online claim or dispute resolution system	11	5	9	9
Achieved something else	9	8	0	8
<i>Unweighted base (adults who obtained information from internet)</i>	621	276	59	956

¹ Respondents could get more than one type of help and therefore percentages will not sum to 100.

Over 70% of adults who used the internet when trying to resolve their legal problem identified a source of advice, obtained online information about how to sort out the problem or obtained information about their rights. Interestingly, those who had experienced an

administrative legal problem were more likely to obtain online information about their rights (80%) compared to those who had experienced a civil legal problem (65%) which could be related to the availability of information regarding the different areas of law. Around half (53%) of adults used the internet to find contact details for an advisor. Nine per cent of those who had used the internet in relation to their problem had used an online claim or dispute resolution system.

Findings were similar for those using leaflets, books or self-help guides to help sort out the problem; see Table 8.8.

Table 8.8: Help adults got from leaflets, books and self-help guides,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages			
	Civil	Admin- istrative	Family ²	All problems
Obtain information about how to sort the problem	72	76	-	73
Obtain information about your rights	65	78	-	70
Identify a source of advice	63	75	-	67
Find contact details for an advisor	59	53	-	55
Obtain something else	6	11	-	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	163	113	29	305

¹ Respondents could get more than one type of help and therefore percentages will not sum to 100.

² Findings for family problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

9. Outcomes of legal problems

This chapter examines the outcomes of the legal problems that adults experienced. The LPRS captured both problems which had and had not resolved by the time of the interview.

This chapter looks at the outcomes of all legal problems and subsequently examines resolved and unresolved problems separately.⁷⁷ It looks at how problems were resolved by the resolution strategies used, the problem characteristics, and in whose favour the problem was resolved. It then considers problems that are unresolved and compares the problem characteristics of those problems adults are planning to resolve against those that adults do not plan to resolve. Finally, this chapter compares a subset of resolved problems, those resolved through an action, against unresolved problems where some action has been taken to resolve.

9.1 Outcomes of all legal problems

Table 9.1 shows the overall outcomes of all legal problems. Overall, over half of adults with problems (55%) reported that their problem was resolved by the time of the interview. The rest of this chapter looks separately at resolved and unresolved problems.

Table 9.1: Outcomes of legal problems, by problem type,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages			
	Civil	Administrative	Family	All problems
Resolved problems:				
As a result of action ²	43	38	32	41
Sorted itself out	10	17	3	11
Other	3	2	3	3
Unresolved problems:				
Plan to resolve in future	27	25	38	27
Do not plan to resolve in future ³	18	19	24	18
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	<i>2,137</i>	<i>622</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>2,876</i>

¹ Don't know responses have been excluded from this table.

² Problems resolved through decisions made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, through conciliation, mediation or arbitration, through direct agreement with the other party or by the respondent or other party taking independent action to resolve the problem.

³ Do not plan to resolve in future includes problems that respondents stated were 'concluded but that they were "putting up with it"'.

⁷⁷ Resolved problems are those which the respondent described as concluded as a result of an action, because it sorted itself out or another reason. Unresolved problems comprise ongoing problems (whether or not the respondent planned to resolve them in future), and concluded problems where the respondent stated that they were putting up with it.

9.2 Resolved problems

Table 9.2 shows the most formal resolution strategies and advice used in resolved problems. The majority of adults with resolved problems (54%) had used self-help only, a quarter (25%) had used legal or professional help and around a fifth (18%) had used a formal process, such as a court or tribunal hearing or mediation, to resolve their problem. Similarly, when examining the most formal type of information, advice or help obtained to resolve a problem, almost half of adults with resolved problems (47%) did not obtain formal legal or professional help and obtained their own information only to resolve the problem. Almost one-fifth of adults with resolved problems (16%) did not obtain any help at all in resolving their problem.

Table 9.2: Most formal resolution strategy and help obtained for all resolved problems,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages
	All resolved problems
Most formal resolution strategy used	
A formal resolution process	18
Legal/professional help	25
Self-help ²	54
Did not try to resolve ³	-
Most formal type of help obtained	
Formal legal help	11
Professional help	26
Obtained own information	47
No help obtained	16
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	<i>1,559</i>

¹ Respondents who used more than one resolution strategy or type of advice have only been included once for the most formal type used. See Appendix C, Table C16 for a breakdown by all resolution strategies used and all advice obtained.

² Self-help includes gathering information and advice from leaflets, self-help guides and the internet.

³ Due to low base numbers percentages for 'Did not try to resolve' cannot be displayed separately.

How the problem was resolved

Respondents with resolved problems were asked how their problem had ended. Overall, almost three-quarters (73%) of resolved problems were resolved through some form of action: 7% were resolved due to a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party such as a regulator or the police, 41% resolved through agreement with the other party, either involving independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration (7%) or direct with the other party (34%), and 26% said that they or the other side of the problem acted

independently of each other to sort it out. A fifth (21%) said the problem just sorted itself out or that they moved on.

Overall, the picture for resolved civil problems and administrative problems was similar (see Table 9.3), although those with a resolved administrative legal problem were more likely to say that the problem just sorted itself out or that they moved on (29% compared with 18% for civil problems). The number of family legal problems which had resolved is too small to present figures on.

There was, however, variation for different types of civil and administrative legal problem. For example, adults with a resolved personal debt problem were more likely to have resolved their problem directly with the other party (53%) than those experiencing problems relating to neighbours' anti-social behaviour (18%), accidents and negligence (23%) and employment (29%).⁷⁸ Those experiencing a legal problem with their neighbours' anti-social behaviour were more likely to say that the problem just sorted itself out or they moved on (33%) compared with those experiencing most other civil legal problems (12%–19%).⁷⁹ A relatively high proportion of those with problems with neighbours said it ended due to a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party. This is likely to be due to police involvement in these disputes as formal processes were not commonly used by the respondent for these types of problem (see Chapter 4).

⁷⁸ Differences between problems relating to personal debt and other types of problem were not significant at the 5% level.

⁷⁹ Differences between problems relating to neighbours' anti-social behaviour and problems relating to rented accommodation or accidents and negligence were not significant at the 5% level.

Table 9.3: How problems were resolved by problem type for all resolved problems, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages							<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
	Of a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, such as a regulator or the police	Through conciliation, mediation or arbitration run by an independent person or organisation	Directly with the other party	You or the other side acted independently of each other to sort it out	The problem just sorted itself out, or you moved on such as leaving a job or moving home	Other		
Civil legal problems	8	7	35	26	18	6	1,167	
Purchasing goods and services	2	3	42	34	12	6	274	
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	21	3	18	14	33	10	198	
Money excluding personal debt	6	10	35	30	14	5	215	
Personal debt	1	8	53	24	12	3	82	
Rented accommodation	2	9	41	26	19	3	168	
Accidents or medical negligence	15	11	23	22	19	10	114	
Owning or buying residential property	11	4	35	25	17	8	116	
Administrative legal problems	3	6	31	26	29	5	348	
Employment	0	8	29	25	35	3	186	
State benefits	8	3	32	30	24	3	106	
Education	1	7	38	19	22	13	56	
All resolved legal problems¹	7	7	34	26	21	6	1,559	

¹ Results for family problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

How the problem was resolved by problem characteristics

There were few differences in how problems were resolved based on whether people had considered their problem to be legal when it began. There were, however, some differences by perceived seriousness and adverse consequences.

Adults who considered their problem to be very serious were more likely than those who considered their problem as not very serious to have resolved their problem through a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party (11% compared with 4%) or through conciliation, mediation or arbitration (12% compared with 5%); see Table 9.4. Conversely, they were less likely to have resolved their problem through a direct agreement with the other party (20% compared with 42%). These aspects may be interlinked as involvement of a court, tribunal or other independent party may in itself increase the likelihood of considering a problem to be very serious.

Table 9.4: Perceived seriousness by how problems resolved for all resolved problems, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious
Of a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, such as a regulator or the police	4	7	11
Through conciliation, mediation or arbitration run by an independent person or organisation	5	7	12
Directly with the other party	42	32	20
You or the other side acted independently of each other to sort it out	27	25	26
The problem just sorted itself out, or you moved on such as leaving a job or moving home	18	23	22
Other	5	6	9
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	<i>608</i>	<i>647</i>	<i>298</i>

Adults who experienced adverse consequences were twice as likely to have resolved their problem through a formal process than those who did not experience adverse consequences (10% compared with 5%), and somewhat less likely to have resolved their problems through an agreement with the other party (29% compared with 37%); see Table 9.5.

Table 9.5: Whether problem led to adverse consequences by how it resolved for all resolved problems, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages	
	Adverse consequences	No adverse consequences
Of a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, such as a regulator or the police	10	5
Through conciliation, mediation or arbitration run by an independent person or organisation	9	6
Directly with the other party	29	37
You or the other side acted independently of each other to sort it out	22	29
The problem just sorted itself out, or you moved on such as leaving a job or moving home	23	19
Other	7	5
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	625	934

How the problem was resolved by socio-demographic characteristics

How the problem was resolved showed very little variation by socio-demographic characteristics. See Appendix C, Table C17.

How the problem was resolved by the most formal resolution strategy used

Table 9.6 shows for resolved problems how the most formal resolution strategy used related to the way the problem finally ended.

Among those with a resolved problem who had tried a formal resolution process, 18% said that their problem had resolved through a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party and 26% through conciliation, mediation or arbitration. This is perhaps lower than expected. A fifth (22%) said that they had resolved their problem directly with the other party after a formal resolution process was used, and 17% said they or the other side had acted independently to sort out the problem. Some possible explanations for this are that the two parties involved reached an agreement to settle their dispute outside the formal process after it has begun, or that one side began formal proceedings which prompted the other party to sort out the problem independently.

For resolved problems where formal resolution processes were not used, the most common ways the problem was resolved were directly with the other party, one of the parties acting independently, and the problem just sorting itself out.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Some adults who had not reported using a formal resolution process said that their problems ended as a result of a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party. As 'independent party' includes the police, this suggests that the problem may have resolved as a result of police intervention.

Adults who tried to resolve their problem using self-help only (that is, they had sourced their own information, advice or help from friends and family, the other party, the internet or leaflets and self-help guides) were most likely to say that their problem had ended through a direct agreement with the other party (42%).

The number of respondents with resolved problems who reported they had taken no action to resolve the problem is too small to present reliable percentages. The most common answer given was, however, that the problem has sorted itself out.

Table 9.6: How problems were resolved by most formal resolution strategy used for all resolved problems,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	A formal resolution process	Legal/professional help	Self-help
Of a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, such as a regulator or the police	18	11	1
Through conciliation, mediation or arbitration run by an independent person or organisation	26	6	2
Directly with the other party	22	28	42
You or the other side acted independently of each other to sort it out	17	24	30
The problem just sorted itself out, or you moved on such as leaving a job or moving home	11	23	21
Other	6	8	5
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>427</i>	<i>821</i>

¹ Respondents who used more than one resolution strategy have only been included once for the most formal type used.

How the problem was resolved by the most formal type of help obtained

The patterns seen when examining the most formal resolution strategies used were reflected when looking at the most formal type of information, advice and help adults used in trying to resolve their legal problems; see Table 9.7.

For example, 14% of resolved problems where formal legal help was obtained were resolved through the decision of a court, tribunal or other independent party, and 16% through conciliation, mediation or arbitration. For these problems it was more common for the problem to be resolved through a direct agreement with the other party (25%) or by either them or the other side acting independently to sort it out (24%). The legal help they obtained may still have informed their decisions and actions.

Adults who sourced their own information, advice or help were more likely to have resolved their problem directly with the other party (42%) and less likely to have resolved their problem through a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party (1%) than those who obtained legal or professional help.

Table 9.7: How problems were resolved by most formal type of help obtained for all resolved problems,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages			
	Formal legal help	Professional help	Obtained own information	No help obtained
Of a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, such as a regulator or the police	14	13	1	7
Through conciliation, mediation or arbitration run by an independent person or organisation	16	13	3	2
Directly with the other party	25	25	42	29
You or the other side acted independently of each other to sort it out	24	20	29	28
The problem just sorted itself out, or you moved on such as leaving a job or moving home	12	23	19	30
Other	9	6	6	4
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	<i>172</i>	<i>442</i>	<i>697</i>	<i>248</i>

¹ Respondents who obtained more than one type of help have only been included once for the most formal type obtained.

In whose favour did the problem resolve?

Among adults who said their problem was resolved, 47% said that the problem was resolved all or mostly in their favour and an additional 11% felt that it was somewhat in their favour; see Table 9.8. Around a quarter (24%) felt that it was evenly split between each side and 9% felt that it was all or mostly in the favour of the other side.⁸¹

Those who had experienced a civil legal problem were more likely to say the problem was resolved all or mostly in their favour (51%) than those who had an administrative problem (38%) and less likely to say the problem resolved all or mostly in favour of the other side (6%) compared with those who had an administrative problem (17%).

⁸¹ The other side of the problem may have been a business or organisation, and therefore not covered by this survey.

Table 9.8: In whose favour was the problem perceived to have resolved, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Civil	Administrative	All resolved legal problems ¹
All or mostly in the respondent's favour	51	38	47
Somewhat in the respondent's favour	10	14	11
Evenly split i.e. partly in respondent's favour, partly in favour of the other side	24	23	24
Somewhat in favour of the other side	4	5	4
All or mostly in favour of the other side	6	17	9
It just ended - in no one's favour	4	2	4
Don't know	2	1	1
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	<i>1,167</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>1,559</i>

¹ Results for family problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

Looking at different types of problem, those whose problem was related to an injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence were most likely to say the problem was resolved in their favour (75%)⁸² and those with a personal debt problem were least likely to say it had resolved in their favour (25%).⁸³ For resolved personal debt problems the most common result was that it was evenly split between the two parties (52%); see Table 9.9. Almost one-third of adults with a problem concerning state benefits (31%) said that the problem resolved in favour of the other side.⁸⁴

⁸² Differences between accidents and negligence and problems relating to consumer issues, neighbours' anti-social behaviour, money or education were not significant at the 5% level.

⁸³ The difference between problems relating to personal debt and state benefits was not significant at the 5% level.

⁸⁴ This is higher than for all other problem types, though only significantly higher for the following problems: illness or injury arising from an accident or negligence or their neighbours' anti-social behaviour, purchasing goods and services, rented accommodation and personal debt.

Table 9.9: In whose favour the problem was resolved, by problem type for all resolved problems,⁴ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	In the respondent's favour ¹	Evenly split	In favour of the other side ²	It just ended – in no one's favour	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Civil legal problems	62	24	10	4	1,150
Purchasing goods and services	70	19	6	5	273
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	64	24	5	7	191
Money excluding personal debt	71	13	14	2	213
Personal debt	25	52	17	5	82
Rented accommodation	54	31	12	2	167
Accidents or medical negligence	75	18	3	4	110
Owning or buying residential property	50	26	18	6	114
Administrative legal problems	53	23	22	2	341
Employment	52	25	21	2	183
State benefits	51	18	31	1	104
Education	60	25	12	3	54
All resolved legal problems³	59	24	13	4	1,535

¹ 'In the respondent's favour' combines responses 'All or mostly in your favour' and 'somewhat in your favour'.

² 'In favour of the other side' combines responses 'All or mostly in favour of the other side' and 'somewhat in favour of the other side'.

³ Results for family problems are not shown separately due to small base sizes.

⁴ Don't know responses are not included in this table.

In whose favour did the problem resolve by problem characteristics

There was little variation in whose favour problems had resolved by whether the problem was considered to be of a legal nature at the outset, and how serious the problem was considered to be.

Those whose problem resolved in the other side's favour were more likely to say that they experienced an adverse consequence as a result of the problem than those who said it resolved in their own favour or was evenly split (58% compared with 35% and 38%). This suggests that the outcome can itself lead to or exacerbate adverse consequences related to the problem (see Table 9.10).

Table 9.10: Whether the problem led to an adverse consequence by whose favour it resolved in for all resolved problems, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages			
	In the respondent's favour	Evenly split	In favour of the other side	It just ended – in no one's favour
Adverse consequences	35	38	58	46
No adverse consequences	65	62	42	54
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	935	348	192	60

In whose favour did the problem resolve by socio-demographic characteristics

There was little variation in whose favour problems were resolved across different socio-demographic groups, although adults aged 65–74 were more likely to say that the problem resolved in their favour (68%) than those aged 25–44 (50%); see Appendix C, Table C18.

In whose favour the problem was resolved by the most formal resolution strategy and help obtained

There were no significant differences in whose favour the problem was resolved based on the resolution strategy used; see Table 9.11. These findings suggest that adults take the most appropriate action to resolve their problems as the use of formal resolution processes or legal help is not warranted in all cases.

Table 9.11: In whose favour the problem was resolved by the most formal resolution strategy for all resolved problems,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	In the respondent's favour	Evenly split	In favour of the other side	It just ended – in no one's favour	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
A formal resolution process	66	20	14	-	266
Legal/ professional help	59	22	15	4	417
Self-help	57	27	12	4	814

¹ Respondents who used more than one resolution strategy have only been included once in this table for the most formal strategy used. Findings for respondents who did not try to resolve their problem are not shown due to small bases.

There was also little variation by the most formal type of help obtained for the problem; see Table 9.12. From these findings it is not possible to conclude that using self-help only or not obtaining any help are as effective as more formal legal processes or advice. These findings instead could suggest that adults select the most effective resolution strategy for their

problem, as earlier findings (see tables 4.1 and 6.1) demonstrated that many adults use multiple resolution strategies and sources of advice.

Table 9.12: In whose favour the problem resolved by most formal type of help obtained for all resolved problems,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages				
	In the respondent's favour	Evenly split	In favour of the other side	It just ended – in no one's favour	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Formal legal help	60	25	14	1	171
Professional help	62	19	15	4	432
Obtained own information	59	25	12	3	689
No help obtained	51	29	13	7	243

¹ Respondents who obtained more than one type of help have only been included once in this table for the most formal type of help they obtained.

9.3 Unresolved problems

This section of the chapter considers those problems that were unresolved at the point the interview took place. Six per cent of adults with legal problems reported that their problem was over but they were putting up with it, and two-fifths (39%) reported that their problem was ongoing. These problems have been classified as 'unresolved problems' in this chapter. Table 9.13 shows that around two-thirds (60%) of those with unresolved problems at the time of the LPRS interview had plans to take some action to resolve the problem in the future.⁸⁵

Overall, there was no difference between civil and administrative legal problems. There was some variation across different types of legal problem; however, due to the small number of unresolved problems few differences were statistically significant. Adults with problems concerning their neighbours' anti-social behaviour (52%) were less likely to say they planned to resolve their problem in future than adults with problems relating to personal debt (71%) or rented accommodation (70%).

⁸⁵ Respondents who had reported that their problem was over but they were putting up with it were not asked whether they had plans to try to resolve the problem in future, because they considered their problem to have ended. They have therefore been classified as not having plans to resolve their problem in future.

Table 9.13: Whether plan to resolve problem in future by problem type for all unresolved problems, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Plan to resolve in future	Do not plan to resolve in future	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Civil legal problems	61	39	970
Purchasing goods and services	60	40	140
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	52	48	198
Money (excluding personal debt)	61	39	199
Personal debt	71	29	100
Rented accommodation	70	30	143
Accidents or medical negligence	51	49	92
Owning or buying residential property	59	41	98
Administrative legal problems	57	43	274
Employment	52	48	124
State benefits	56	44	91
Education	69	31	59
Family legal problems	62	38	73
All unresolved legal problems	60	40	1,317

Whether plan to take further action by problem characteristics

There were no significant differences between whether adults with unresolved problems planned to resolve the problem in future or not when looking at whether they considered the problem to be legal at the outset, how serious the problem was perceived to be or whether adverse consequences had been experienced. This is interesting, as it may be expected that those who consider their problem to be more serious or experience an adverse consequence are more likely to plan to pursue resolution of the problem.

Table 9.14: Whether plan to resolve problem in future by problem characteristics for all unresolved problems, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Planned to resolve	Did not plan to resolve	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Whether problem was considered legal at the outset			
Legal	60	40	328
Not legal	60	40	989
Perceived seriousness of problem			
Not very serious	58	42	341
Fairly serious	59	41	566
Very serious	63	37	395
Whether problem led to adverse consequences			
Adverse consequences	60	40	717
No adverse consequences	60	40	600

Whether plan to take further action by socio-demographic characteristics

The proportion of adults with unresolved problems who planned to take further action to resolve their problem was similar across socio-demographic groups. The only difference was that adults aged 75 years and over were less likely to plan to resolve their problem in future (42%) than those aged 45–64 years (64%); see Appendix C, Table C19.

Whether plan to take further action by the most formal resolution strategy tried and help obtained so far

Adults who at the time of interview had tried to resolve their problem using formal legal processes (60%), legal or professional help (59%) or on their own (62%) were much more likely to say they would try to resolve their problem in the future than those who did not try to resolve at all (32%).

Similarly, those who obtained no information, advice or help for their problem were less likely to want to resolve their problem in the future (49%) than those who did obtain help;⁸⁶ see Table 9.15.

Table 9.15: Most formal resolution strategy and help used by whether plan to resolve in the future for all unresolved problems, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Plan to resolve in future	Do not plan to resolve in future	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Most formal resolution strategy used so far¹			
A formal resolution process	60	40	219
Legal/professional help	59	41	402
Self-help	62	38	634
Did not try to resolve ³	32	68	62
Most formal type of help obtained so far²			
Formal legal help	66	34	172
Professional help	57	43	406
Obtained own information	64	36	519
No help obtained ³	49	51	220

¹ Respondents who used more than one resolution strategy have only been included once in this table for the most formal strategy used.

² Respondents may have obtained more than one type of help. They are included in this table once for the most formal type they obtained.

³ Some adults who obtained no help tried to resolve their problem on their own.

⁸⁶ Significantly so compared with those who sourced their own help and those who obtained formal legal help. For those who obtained professional help the differences are not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Whether plan to take further action by duration of problem

There were no statistically significant differences in the length of problems and whether respondents were planning to resolve the problem in future.

Table 9.16: Duration of unresolved problems by whether they plan to resolve them,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages		
	Plan to resolve in future	Do not plan to resolve in future	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
0–3 months	57	43	285
4–6 months	60	40	154
7–12 months	62	38	189
13–24 months	61	39	206
More than 2 years	65	35	333

¹ Includes all problems with known start dates. For problems which were reported as still ongoing at the time of the interview, this is duration to date of interview.

Adults who give up trying to resolve their problem

This section of the chapter considers two subsets of adults: those who have given up trying to resolve their problem and those who have resolved their problem through taking an action. Overall, 38% of adults with an unresolved problem said that they had tried to resolve it in some way and had decided at the time of the interview to take no further action to resolve the problem despite it being unresolved.⁸⁷ These adults had essentially given up on trying to resolve their problem. The following analysis examines the profile of these adults and their problems and compares it to the profile of adults who reported that their problems had resolved as a result of some form of action⁸⁸ (75% of all resolved problems).

Socio-demographic characteristics

Table C20 in Appendix C shows the socio-demographic profiles of these two groups: adults who had taken some action to resolve their unresolved problem but had decided to take no further action at the time of interview; and adults whose problems had resolved as a result of some form of action. There was little variation between the two groups and no differences that were significant at the 5% level due to the small base numbers.

⁸⁷ Respondents who had reported that their problem was over but they were putting up with it were not asked whether they had plans to try to resolve the problem in future, because they considered their problem to have ended. They have therefore been classified as not having plans to resolve their problem in future.

⁸⁸ Comprising decisions made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, through conciliation, mediation or arbitration, through direct agreement with the other party, or by the respondent or the other party taking independent action to resolve the problem.

Variation in problem types experienced

The profile of problems experienced by the two groups was similar, although adults who tried to resolve their problem and gave up were less likely to have problems related to purchasing goods and services and rented accommodation, than adults whose problems had resolved as a result of action; see Table 9.17.

Table 9.17: Whether problem resolved through an action or gave up trying to resolve by problem type, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages	
	Tried to resolve but gave up	Problem resolved through an action
Civil legal problems	70	75
Purchasing goods and services	11	18
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	15	10
Money excluding personal debt	14	14
Personal debt	7	6
Rented accommodation	9	14
Accidents or medical negligence	8	7
Owning or buying residential property	7	6
Administrative legal problems	25	22
Employment	12	11
State benefits	8	7
Education	5	4
Family legal problems	5	3
<i>Unweighted base</i>	496	1,146

Variation in problem durations

Adults who tried to resolve their problem and gave up were more likely to report that their problem had lasted more than two years than adults whose problems had resolved as a result of action (23% compared with 4%) and far less likely to report that their problem had lasted three months or less (29% compared with 61%).

Table 9.18: Whether resolved or not by problem duration,¹ LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages	
	Tried to resolve but gave up: duration to date	Problem resolved through an action: duration of problem
0–3 months	29	61
4–6 months	14	16
7–12 months	17	12
13–24 months	17	7
More than 2 years	23	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	430	1,000

¹ Includes all problems with known start dates. For problems which were reported as still ongoing at the time of the interview, this is duration to date of interview.

Variation in problem characteristics

Adults who tried to resolve their problem and gave up were more likely to think their problem was very serious and to have experienced adverse consequences than adults whose problems had resolved as a result of action; see Table 9.19.

Table 9.19: Whether resolved or not by problem characteristics, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages	
	Tried to resolve but gave up	Problem resolved through an action
Not very serious	28	43
Fairly serious	45	40
Very serious	27	17
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	490	1,143
Adverse consequences	54	38
No adverse consequences	46	62
<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	496	1,146

Variation in most formal resolution strategy tried and help obtained

Examining the most formal resolution strategy used by adults who had given up trying to resolve their problem and adults whose problems had resolved as a result of some action shows that a similar proportion of each group had used a formal resolution process, and self-help. Adults who had tried to resolve their problem and given up were, however, slightly more likely to have used legal or professional help than adults whose problems were resolved through an action (32% compared with 24%).

Similarly, when examining the most formal type of help obtained, comparable proportions of both groups had obtained formal legal help, or sourced their own information, but a slightly higher proportion of adults who had tried to resolve their problem and given up had obtained professional help than adults whose problems were resolved through an action (34% compared with 25%).

Overall, around a fifth (18%) of those who had tried to resolve their problem and given up said that they had used a formal resolution process (such as a court, tribunal, mediation or conciliation) to resolve their problem, and almost half (45%) had obtained formal legal or professional help (11% and 34% respectively).

Table 9.20: Most formal resolution strategy¹ used by whether resolved or not, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages	
	Tried to resolve but gave up	Problem resolved through an action
Most formal resolution strategy used so far¹		
A formal resolution process	18	20
Legal/professional help	32	24
Self-help	51	55
Did not try to resolve ²	0	1
Most formal types of help obtained³		
Formal legal help	11	12
Professional help	34	25
Obtained own information	41	49
No help obtained	14	14
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>496</i>	<i>1,146</i>

¹ Respondents who used more than one resolution strategy have only been included once in this table for the most formal strategy used.

² 1% of adults who did not try to resolve their problem said that it had concluded as a result of action, suggesting that this was due to action taken by the other side.

³ Respondents who have obtained more than one type of help have only been included once in this table for the most formal type of help obtained.

These findings demonstrate that just over a half of problems resolved with an action are resolved without use of formal processes or legal or professional help, while in around a half of unresolved problems where action has been taken, the use of formal processes or legal or professional help had not been effective in resolving the issue. So while use of formal processes or legal or professional help may be appropriate and effective means for some, this is not universal, and other factors such as the type and complexity of the problem or an adult's capability in dealing with legal issues and information are likely to be more important influences on whether problems are resolved or not. It is not possible to explore the effectiveness of decision making and choices people make about resolution strategies from the survey data.

10. Conclusions

The main aim of the Legal Problem and Resolution Survey was to provide robust quantitative evidence on the civil, administrative and family legal problems experienced by adults in England and Wales.

Experiencing a legal problem is a relatively common experience, with a third of adults having experienced at least one problem in the preceding 18 months, although many people who do have such a problem do not classify it as a legal issue themselves and most problems are dealt with without the use of any legal or formal resolution processes or legal advice. Thus the problems that result in formal legal action are a very small part of a much larger pool of problems that people experience and, for the most part, deal with alone or without legal or professional help. These findings are in line with those from previous surveys. Understanding the overall picture and the extent to which individuals are able to deal with their problems through less formal means is important in considering what access to justice represents for different groups, and how people can best be supported in resolving issues effectively and quickly.

Previous surveys have shown that some vulnerable groups of the population were far more likely to experience problems than others.⁸⁹ The LPRS similarly finds that experiencing legal problems varied for different groups of the population, with lone parents, unemployed adults, those in receipt of means-tested state benefits and adults with a long-standing limiting disability particularly likely to experience legal problems. These groups were also more likely to experience multiple problems, again in line with previous survey findings. Having a low household income was not related to experiencing a legal problem overall, but was related to experiencing multiple legal problems. These findings suggest that groups who are less likely to have access to financial resources and who may be more vulnerable to disadvantage are more susceptible to problems.

There was some variation in the types of legal problem experienced by different groups of the population. Lone parents could be expected to have high levels of experience of relationship breakdown problems, but they also had relatively high levels of most of the other problem types included in the survey (personal debt, other money problems, rented accommodation, neighbours' anti-social behaviour and state benefits). Adults with a long-standing or limiting disability were particularly likely to experience problems relating to injury

⁸⁹ See for example Balmer (2013).

or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence and, along with unemployed adults and adults who received means-tested state benefits, they were also relatively likely to experience problems with provision of state benefits, personal debt, and their neighbours' anti-social behaviour. Adults with lower household incomes were more likely to experience problems with personal debt, rented accommodation and neighbours' anti-social behaviour, whereas adults with higher household incomes were more likely to experience problems with purchasing goods and services and money (excluding personal debt).

For many people the problems they experienced were significant, with four in ten adults with a problem saying the problem lasted for more than six months, almost half reporting at least one adverse consequence arising from the problem – most commonly stress or other mental health problem, loss of confidence or loss of income or financial strain – and a quarter considering the problem to be very serious. This pattern is again broadly similar to those found in previous surveys.⁹⁰ Thus the ability of people to understand and deal effectively with their problem is important in minimising the negative consequences that they may experience and in ensuring a solution is found.

Most people did indeed take active steps to try to understand or sort out the problem that they faced, usually turning to non-legal professional advisors or sourcing their own information, advice or help to try to resolve the issue. The proportion of adults who took some form of action to try to resolve their problem appeared to be higher compared with previous surveys.⁹¹ Relatively few problems involved the use of a legal process or formal resolution service, or formal legal help.

Adults' experiences of their problem and how they went about trying to deal with the problem varied somewhat across different types of legal problem. Broadly, problems related to a relationship breakdown had a different profile to civil and administrative legal problems.

Adults who experienced problems related to a relationship breakdown were more likely than adults with most other types of problems to say that it had been ongoing for more than two years. They were also more likely to consider their problem to be very serious, and to report experiencing a range of adverse consequences as a result of the problem. How adults with relationship breakdown problems tried to resolve their problem also differed somewhat, as

⁹⁰ See for example Balmer (2013).

⁹¹ The measures are not directly comparable to previous surveys due to differences in how these questions were asked in the different surveys.

they were more likely to use a formal legal process or resolution service, and more likely to obtain formal legal help and to pay for all or some of the help they received.

There was considerable variation across the different types of civil and administrative legal problem. For example, adults who experienced injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence were particularly likely to consider their problem to be very serious, to have experienced adverse consequences as a result of the problem, and to obtain formal legal advice. Almost all adults with accidents and negligence problems who had obtained formal legal advice from a solicitor said they had not paid for all of it, commonly citing insurance companies or the use of 'no win no fee' agreements to help pay for it.

While there were some broad patterns for different types of problem, within each problem type there was also considerable variation in the perceived seriousness of the problem and how people went about trying to resolve it.

There were very few differences between different socio-demographic groups in the resolution strategy they used, including no differences based on their household income, and socio-demographic characteristics were not associated with using a formal resolution service when the problem characteristics and use of help were taken into account. The key factors that were associated with the use of formal resolution processes, in addition to problem type, were problem duration, perceived seriousness, whether it was considered a legal issue at the outset and the use of formal legal help.

Socio-demographic characteristics were, however, related to whether an adult obtained formal legal help to resolve their problem. Adults who had lower household incomes, and perhaps related to this, younger adults, unemployed adults and those who rented their homes, were less likely to obtain formal legal help than other adults, although they were not necessarily less likely to obtain other professional help (that is, from an independent advisor such as Citizens Advice or an insurance company). Reflecting the resolution strategy findings, adults were more likely to have obtained formal legal help if they thought of their problem as legal when it began, considered it to be very serious and reported that it had led to adverse consequences, or if their problem related to a relationship breakdown or injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence.

Informal self-help was the most common strategy used to try to resolve legal problems, with adults commonly reporting getting information, advice or help from their friends and family or the other side of the problem. The use of the internet as a source of information or advice

has increased compared with previous surveys, but still remains relatively low compared to the high proportion of adults who report using the internet for other purposes (such as online banking or government transactions).

The findings from the survey show that the types of legal problem people commonly encounter present a complex and variable set of circumstances and issues and they cannot be easily categorised based on a single dimension, such as the type of legal dispute. The provision of help, advice and services to support people with such problems therefore needs to be sufficiently broad and flexible to meet a diverse range of needs.

The advice-seeking behaviour of those with problems shows that a range of different legal and professional advisors were used, with many using more than one type of provider, alongside self-help. The help received from providers was also wide ranging, and in two-thirds of cases it appeared that the help served to resolve or reduce the problem experienced.

The LPRS included a mix of resolved and unresolved problems. Many of the resolved problems were resolved without the use of any formal resolution process or service. Of those problems that had resolved six in ten were resolved by both parties to the problem directly engaging with each other or by one of the parties acting independently.

Overall, almost one-fifth of all adults with a problem were not planning to take action to resolve the problem in future (12%) or were 'putting up' with the problem (6%). While some of these problems were considered to be not very serious and did not lead to any adverse consequences, other problems did have a significant negative impact on the adults experiencing them.

Comparing adults with a problem who had tried to resolve it at some point but subsequently given up with those whose problems had resolved as a result of some form of action, shows that those who had given up were more likely to have problems they considered to be very serious and that had resulted in adverse consequences. The patterns of resolution strategies and help obtained differ only slightly between the two groups, suggesting that other factors (related to the problems themselves or the adults experiencing them) influence whether problems resolve or not. There were also no significant socio-demographic differences between the groups.

There is a small group of adults with problems which impact significantly on them who, despite using a variety of resolution strategies, fail to resolve their problem. An adult's confidence and capability are likely to be a key influence on their behaviour and how they respond to their legal problem. In some cases, the use of formal resolution processes or legal help may not be warranted and the problem can be resolved using only self-help, and adults with these problems take the appropriate level of action to resolve their problems. In other cases, adults' willingness to engage with their problems or their willingness to compromise to reach a conclusion may influence how they choose to resolve their problem.

Overall, the findings suggest that adults vulnerable to disadvantage are more likely to experience problems, and so could benefit from some targeted support. More work is however needed to explore what support would be most useful, as the findings did not illuminate what works best in helping adults to successfully resolve their legal problems, with little variation by the resolution strategies or advice obtained. Other research has shown that knowledge is a key influence on people's behaviour when dealing with legal problems. Being able to access and understand information about possible options is an important influence in how people try to resolve their legal problems. Individual capability and confidence are also important, with some people able to fully understand the available resolution options, and therefore able to either handle their problems using only self-help sources or know what kind of professional help would be suitable and know when and how to access it. Conversely, others with lower levels of legal capability and confidence may be discouraged from trying to resolve their problem if they are unable to access or understand relevant information, advice or help.⁹²

The LPRS has captured a wealth of data, including some areas which have not been covered in this report, such as public awareness of legal services, attitudes to the Justice System and self-perception of legal capability. Further analysis of the data can be undertaken to explore these issues, and the data will be made available to the wider research community in due course.⁹³

⁹² Pereira et al (2015).

⁹³ The data will be deposited at the UK Data Service; see <https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/>

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Appendix A

Methodology

The Legal Problem and Resolution Survey (LPRS) is a telephone-based survey. Around 10,000 adults aged 18 and over living in households in England and Wales were interviewed between November 2014 and March 2015, and asked about their experiences of a range of everyday problems that could have a legal resolution. The survey was designed and delivered by TNS BMRB in partnership with Professor Pascoe Pleasence and Dr Nigel Balmer.

Sample

The LPRS is a random probability general population survey, covering adults aged 18 and over living in households in England and Wales. The survey sample was drawn from respondents who had been interviewed for the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) between September 2013 and December 2014 who had agreed to be re-contacted for further research. The CSEW is a very large and high-quality survey, interviewing around 35,000 adults a year.⁹⁴

The CSEW was used as a sampling frame as telephone numbers were available for a randomly selected, representative group of adults. Use of CSEW also meant that information was available for sampled CSEW respondents who did not respond to the LPRS, giving greater scope to correct any sample bias through statistical weighting than is usual for a general population survey.

The sample selected for the LPRS was based on a probability proportionate to size sampling plan whereby the probability of drawing a CSEW respondent into the sample frame was

- proportionate to their CSEW weight
- inversely proportionate to their estimated probability of agreeing to be re-contacted for further research at the end of CSEW⁹⁵
- inversely proportionate to their estimated probability of responding to the LPRS once sampled⁹⁶

⁹⁴ For further information on the CSEW, see its user guide here: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/crime-statistics-methodology/user-guides/index.html>. The CSEW includes adults aged 16 and over, and the 16- and 17-year-olds were included in the sample frame for the LPRS as they may have turned 18 at the point of the LPRS interview. At the start of the LPRS interview any respondents who had not turned 18 were identified and the interview ended.

⁹⁵ As estimated through a logistic regression model of the CSEW (July 2013 to June 2014) predicting re-contact agreement (defined as agreeing to re-contact at the end of the CSEW and providing a valid telephone number).

⁹⁶ As estimated from the 2011 CSEW re-contact experiment study which had involved re-contacting CSEW respondents. The predictors for successful response were then applied to the CSEW respondents eligible for

This approach was designed to maximise the probability of achieving a representative achieved sample of respondents for the LPRS.⁹⁷

Interviewing

Interviews were conducted between 24 November 2014 and 31 March 2015.

A letter was sent to all sampled respondents in advance of the telephone interview explaining the purpose of the study, that it was being conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Justice and why their help was being sought. Sampled respondents were then contacted via telephone, provided with more information about the survey and asked to take part.

All interviews were conducted by telephone, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing. Respondents were able to request that the interview be conducted in Welsh or another language.

Questionnaire

The LPRS questionnaire was developed by Professor Pascoe Pleasence and Dr Nigel Balmer, working in partnership with TNS BMRB and Ministry of Justice analysts. The questionnaire draws on the approaches of previous legal needs surveys, particularly those conducted in England and Wales, although questions were adapted to reflect the evidence priorities of the Ministry of Justice and for suitability for the telephone administration of the survey. The telephone approach not only influenced how questions were designed for administration (e.g., due to lack of show cards being available) but also the overall content of the questionnaire, as telephone surveys are generally shorter in length compared with face-to-face surveys to secure a good response rate and maintain respondents' interest and attention during the survey.

TNS BMRB conducted several rounds of testing, including cognitive testing, a small-scale telephone pilot and the full dress rehearsal. The questions were further refined as a result. The questionnaire was structured as follows:

the LPRS to estimate the probability of responding to the LRPS once sampled, with a scaling factor applied to adjust the likely response down to reflect the LPRS being a longer interview than the CSEW re-contact study.
⁹⁷ This is because the LPRS sampling frame over sampled CSEW respondents with larger weights in the CSEW and those with a lower probability of taking part in the LPRS (due to a higher probability of non-contact or of not taking part for other reasons).

Table A1: Structure of questionnaire

Questionnaire module	Content
Demographics	Core socio-demographic questions e.g. age and gender and those linked to the types of problem people may experience to enable appropriate question filtering, e.g. marital status, employment status, housing tenure.
Capability	Confidence in dealing with hypothetical problems without professional advice or support.
Awareness and use of sources of advice	General awareness of different advice/information sources for legal problems and direct contact with such services.
Digital capability	Access to and use of internet for personal use, including use for government services/transactions.
Problem identification	Whether experienced a range of legal problems in the 18 months prior to interview (see Appendix B for details on the types of problem covered within the 11 problem categories).
Initial problem follow up	Number of problems experienced in each category. For up to eight problems experienced (counted as most recent and second most recent in up to four problem categories ⁹⁸) questions were asked on the seriousness of the problem, types of information, advice and help used, and use of formal legal processes and resolution services to resolve the problem.
Main problem follow up	For one problem, detailed questions were asked on advice-seeking behaviour, problem duration and outcome, approaches to resolving the problem, how the problem concluded and the impact of the problem. For individuals experiencing more than one category of problem, a weighted random probability approach was used to select the category to be asked about, and the first or second most recent problem within that category was selected at random. ⁹⁹
Divorce ¹⁰⁰	Experience of divorce/dissolution of a civil partnership proceedings in the preceding 18 months and if so, use of legal professionals and payment of court fees.
Attitudes to civil and family courts	Confidence in civil and family courts and attitudes towards lawyers' fees.
Detailed demographics	Educational qualifications, income and state benefits, health and wellbeing.

LPRS respondents were asked whether they had experienced 11 distinct categories of problem in the 18 months preceding their interview.¹⁰¹ These were described as everyday problems rather than legal problems to avoid respondents using their own definition of what may or may not constitute a legal problem.¹⁰² Respondents were asked about specific

⁹⁸ 1% of respondents had experienced more than four categories of problem in the preceding 18 months. Where this occurred, four categories were randomly selected for follow up.

⁹⁹ The weighting strategy was designed to give less commonly occurring problems a greater chance of selection (e.g. relationship breakdown and education problems), and the most commonly experienced problems a lesser chance of selection (e.g. problems with purchasing goods and services and neighbours' anti-social behaviour).

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix D for findings related to divorce.

¹⁰¹ This included problems that had started during the recall period and also those that started before but were still ongoing during the period. The problems may or may not have concluded by the time the interview was conducted.

¹⁰² Previous studies have shown that many people do not characterise problems as legal in nature even though a legal solution is possible. For example, see Pleasence et al (2010).

problem types within each of the 11 categories, resulting in 52 individual types of problem being covered; see Table 1.1. The full set of problem identification questions are included in Appendix B.

The average (mean) interview length was 23 minutes, although there was considerable variation, particularly depending on the number of problems the respondent had experienced in the last 18 months. Around a half (56%) of interviews were conducted in less than 20 minutes, 26% took between 20 and 30 minutes and 16% took between 30 and 60 minutes.

Response rates

Table A2 shows a detailed breakdown of the fieldwork outcomes and response rates for the LPRS.

Table A2: LPRS fieldwork outcomes

	Number N	Issued cases %	In-scope cases %
Total issued	22,318	100%	
Number unobtainable	1,480		
Wrong number/not known at number	614		
Moved	169		
Died	60		
Under 18	103		
No contact made ever after 40 calls ¹⁰³ out of scope	145		
Total out of scope	2,571	12%	
Total in scope	19,747		100
Hard refusal	3,441		17
Soft refusal/deferral	482		2
Proxy refusal	104		1
Total refusals	4,027		20
No contact made ever after 40 calls - in scope ¹⁰⁴	1,194		6
Total non-contact	1,194		6
Unavailable during fieldwork period	117		1
Incapable of interview	586		3

¹⁰³ In sampled cases called 40 times without the call being answered (i.e. any mixture of the following outcomes: no reply, engaged, fax, unobtainable) an assumption was made that a proportion of such cases were likely to be out of scope. The proportion applied here was 10.8% (the same proportion classified as being out of scope in cases where contact was made).

¹⁰⁴ Excludes 145 non-contact cases assumed to be out of scope, see footnote 103.

	Number N	Issued cases %	In-scope cases %
Abandoned interview	368		2
General call back	246		1
No reply/engaged ¹⁰⁵	3,151		16
Total unproductive	4,468		23
Total interviews	10,058		51
LPRS response rate			51 ¹⁰⁶
LPRS conversion rate ¹⁰⁷		45	
Overall response rate (including the CSEW response and consent to re-contact rates)			31

When the response rate to the CSEW itself (c. 75%) and the response rate to the re-contact question within the CSEW (80%) are factored in the LPRS cumulative response rate is 31%.

Weighting

All findings in this report have been weighted to ensure that they are representative of all individuals, including representative of all individuals with legal problems. The weights used comprised a design weight, a non-response weight and a post-stratification weight. The design weight accounted for respondents' differential probabilities of being selected first into the CSEW sample and then into the LPRS sample, the non-response weight accounted for the probabilities of responding to the LPRS once sampled, and the post-stratification weight matched the profile of LPRS respondents to the target population.

Analysis

All analysis was conducted using weighted data. Percentages are based on those who gave a valid answer to the question, excluding all those who answered 'don't know' or 'refused', unless otherwise stated. Unweighted bases – the number of respondents who answered each question – are shown in tables. Due to varying levels of missing answers the actual sample sizes vary across questions. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Where multiple responses were allowed at a question, percentages will add to more than 100%.

¹⁰⁵ These cases differ from non-contact cases as contact was made at some point during the fieldwork period.

¹⁰⁶ Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

¹⁰⁷ The conversion rate is the total number of interviews achieved divided by the total sample issued within the survey (10,058/22,318).

Survey findings are subject to a margin of error. Findings were statistically tested at the 5% significance level, and only differences which were statistically significant differences are referred to in the text unless otherwise stated. Design factors were estimated and used in statistical tests to correct for the fact that the survey design did not use a simple random sample.

Note on findings

A respondent's ability to accurately recall and report on their experiences of legal problems may be affected by how recently the problem occurred, its duration, whether it is still ongoing, the impact the problem had on the respondent, and whether they actively took any action to try to resolve the problem. Problems which occurred earlier in the recall period, were shorter, had concluded, were less serious, did not lead to any adverse consequences, or where the respondent took no action to resolve it, may therefore be under-represented in the survey findings.

Appendix B

Problem identification questions

All respondents were asked the following questions to identify the full range of legal problems that they had experienced in the 18 months before interview. Some questions were, however, not asked of respondents if they were not relevant based on respondents' characteristics as captured by the initial demographic questions. For example, questions on problems with rented accommodation were only asked to respondents who had lived in rented accommodation in the four years before interview.

The initial problem category asked about was rotated, so that respondents were asked the following questions in different orders. This was to randomise any order effects (such as respondents being less likely to report problems in the later categories they were asked about).

Questions:

I'd now like to ask you about your recent experience of problems that people may encounter in everyday life.

Please only include issues that you have personally experienced, not situations where you have helped someone else or where the issue has been experienced by your employer or by any business you may run.

Please include any issues you have experienced since [date: 18 months before interview, hereafter REFERENCE DATE] including any which started before but were ongoing in REFERENCE DATE.

The following questions may seem a little repetitive, but it is important that we ask them all so that we are able to obtain a complete picture across the population.

(First/Next), I'd like to ask you about problems related to **purchasing goods or services**. Since REFERENCE DATE have you had any problems or disputes to do with any of the following ...

1. Problems related to purchasing faulty vehicles or other high-value items
2. Defective repairs to a vehicle, or other high-value items
3. Defective building work or work by tradespeople such as plumbers
4. Services that were substantially short of what was promised, such as holidays.
5. Major disruption in the supply of utilities such as water, gas, internet
6. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

(First/Next), problems concerning **employment**. Since REFERENCE DATE have you had any problems or disputes to do with any of the following ...

1. Being threatened with or being sacked or made redundant
2. Getting pay or a pension to which you were entitled
3. Other rights at work, e.g. maternity leave, sickness pay, holiday entitlement, or changes to your terms and conditions
4. Unsatisfactory or dangerous working conditions
5. Unfair disciplinary procedures or other treatment
6. Harassment or discrimination at work
7. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

(First/Next), problems with **anti-social behaviour by neighbours**. Since REFERENCE DATE have you had any problems or disputes to do with any of the following...

1. Regular and excessive noise by neighbours
2. Threats, harassment or violence from neighbours
3. Damage to your property or garden by neighbours
4. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

(First/Next), problems concerning **owning or buying residential property, excluding in a business capacity**. Since REFERENCE DATE have you had any problems or disputes to do with any of the following ...

1. Planning permission or consent
2. Selling or buying property, such as a misleading property survey, or problems with a lease
3. Communal repairs or maintenance
4. Repossession of your home
5. Being several mortgage payments in arrears
6. Squatters
7. Boundaries, rights of way or access to your property – including passage of services such as water over other people's land
8. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

(First/Next), problems concerning **living in rented accommodation**. Since REFERENCE DATE have you had any problems or disputes to do with any of the following ...

1. Getting a deposit back
2. Being several rent payments in arrears
3. Being evicted or being threatened with eviction
4. Getting the landlord to do repairs or maintain the property
5. Problems agreeing the terms of your lease or tenancy agreement
6. Problems with the transfer of lease or tenancy
7. Harassment by your landlord
8. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

(First/Next), problems to do with **debt** Since REFERENCE DATE have you had any problems or disputes to do with any of the following ...

1. Being behind with and unable to pay
 - (i) Credit cards, store cards or personal loans – excluding mortgages
 - (ii) Hire Purchase or on-credit purchases
 - (iii) Council tax or income tax
 - (v) Other household bills such as electricity, internet or TV licence
 - (vi) Fines
2. Severe difficulties managing to pay money you owed – including to family or friends excluding rent or mortgages payments
3. Harassment from people or businesses to whom you owed money
4. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

(First/Next), problems related to **money**. Since REFERENCE DATE have you had any problems or disputes to do with any of the following ...

1. Getting someone or a business to pay money that they owe you
2. Insurance companies unfairly rejecting claims
3. Incorrect information about you leading to a refusal of credit
4. Disagreement over division of property after death
5. Being given incorrect information or advice from a professional that led you to buy insurance, pensions, mortgages or other financial products
6. Mismanagement of a pension fund or an investment resulting in financial loss
7. Incorrect or disputed bills, excluding rent/mortgage payments or tax assessment
8. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

(First/Next), problems concerning **state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions, including council tax benefits and pension credit**. Since REFERENCE DATE have you had any problems or disputes to do with any of the following ...

1. Your entitlement to state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions
2. Getting the right amount of state benefits, tax credits, or state pensions
3. Problems relating to delays processing a claim or application for these state benefits/credits
4. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

And since REFERENCE DATE have you had any problems linked to the **break-up of a relationship or disputes over children**. Such as problems or disputes to do with any of the following ...

1. The division of property, finances, other assets, debts
2. Obtaining or agreeing to pay maintenance from or to a former partner excluding payments for children
3. Obtaining or agreeing to pay child support payments
4. Agreeing where children should live and how much time they spend with each parent.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

Next, problems concerning **education**. Since REFERENCE DATE have you (or 'your children' if child aged under 21) had any problems or disputes to do with any of the following ...

1. Obtaining a place at a school (you/your children) are or were eligible to attend
2. You/your children receiving an appropriate education, for example, access to special needs support
3. (You/your children) being excluded or suspended from school
4. School or local authority action following repeated truancy or other unauthorised absence
5. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

Next, problems concerning **accidents or health**. Have you suffered any injury or health problem since REFERENCE DATE, as a result of any of the following ...

1. An accident caused by someone else
2. Poor working conditions
3. Negligent or wrong medical treatment
4. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these

Appendix C

Socio-demographic tables

Table C1: Experience of legal problems by problem type, with confidence intervals,¹ LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 2)

	Percentages	95% Confidence Interval	
		Low	High
Civil legal problems	27	26	28
Purchasing goods and services	8	8	9
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	8	8	9
Money excluding personal debt	7	7	8
Personal debt	5	5	6
Rented accommodation	5	5	6
Accidents or medical negligence	4	3	4
Owning or buying residential property	2	2	3
Administrative legal problems	10	10	11
Employment	6	6	7
State benefits	3	3	4
Education	2	2	2
Family legal problems			
Relationship breakdown	1	1	2
All legal problems	32	31	33
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>10,058</i>		

¹ People may have experienced more than one problem, and be counted more than once.

Table C2: Experience of legal problems by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 2)

	Percentages		
	Experienced a problem	Did not experience a problem	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Sex			
Male	32	68	4,820
Female	32	68	5,238
Age			
18–24	37	63	473
25–44	42	58	2,417
45–64	31	69	3,842
65–74	18	82	2,096
75+	11	89	1,227
Ethnicity			
White	31	69	9,272
BME	38	62	734
<i>Mixed</i>	44	56	101
<i>Asian or Asian British</i>	32	68	311
<i>Black or Black British</i>	45	55	200
<i>Chinese or other</i>	38	62	122
Long-standing illness or disability			
Yes, limits activities	40	60	2,043
Yes, does not limit activities	27	73	1,547
No long-standing illness or disability	31	69	6,386
Marital status			
Married/In a civil partnership	29	71	5,248
Cohabiting	38	62	1,032
Single	39	61	1,692
Separated	47	53	178
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	35	65	929
Widowed	14	86	973
Employment status			
In employment	36	64	5,324
Unemployed	46	54	457
Inactive	22	78	4,267
Highest qualification			
Degree equivalent or above	39	61	3,124
A-level or equivalent	37	63	1,649
Other qualification	28	72	2,843
No qualifications	20	80	2,332

	Percentages		
	Experienced a problem	Did not experience a problem	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Household structure			
Single adult with dependent children	55	45	376
Couple with dependent children	40	60	1,833
Adult-only household	28	72	7,848
Household income			
Less than £15,000	34	66	2,441
£15,000–£31,999	32	68	2,684
£32,000–£59,999	33	67	2,573
£60,000 or above	36	64	1,203
Income unknown	20	80	1,157
State benefits			
Receives means-tested state benefits	46	54	831
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	30	70	9,227
Tenure			
Owned outright	20	80	4,136
Owned with mortgage	36	64	2,866
Social rented	40	60	1,297
Private rented	45	55	1,122
Other	31	69	603

Table C3: Experience of problems by socio-demographic characteristics and problem type, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 2)

	Percentages			
	Civil legal problem	Administrative legal problem	Family legal problem	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Sex				
Male	28	9	1	4,820
Female	27	11	2	5,238
Age				
18–24	31	13	2	473
25–44	36	16	3	2,417
45–64	26	10	1	3,842
65–74	17	1	-	2,096
75+	11	-	-	1,227
Ethnicity				
White	27	10	2	9,272
BME	34	12	1	734
<i>Mixed</i>	33	17	1	101
<i>Asian or Asian British</i>	29	10	-	311
<i>Black or Black British</i>	41	16	1	200
<i>Chinese or other</i>	36	9	1	122
Long-standing illness or disability				
Yes, limits activities	36	14	2	2,043
Yes, does not limit activities	24	7	1	1,547
No long-standing illness or disability	26	10	1	6,386
Marital status				
Married/In a civil partnership	25	9	-	5,248
Cohabiting	33	14	2	1,032
Single	33	14	3	1,692
Separated	40	15	13	178
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	31	11	6	929
Widowed	13	1	-	973
Employment status				
In employment	30	13	2	5,324
Unemployed	38	23	3	457
Inactive	20	4	1	4,267
Highest qualification				
Degree equivalent or above	33	12	1	3,124
A-level or equivalent	31	13	2	1,649
Other qualification	24	10	2	2,843
No qualifications	18	5	1	2,332

	Percentages			
	Civil legal problem	Administrative legal problem	Family legal problem	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Household structure				
Single adult with dependent children	44	25	19	376
Couple with dependent children	33	17	1	1,833
Adult-only household	25	7	1	7,848
Household income				
Less than £15,000	30	11	2	2,441
£15,000–£31,999	28	11	1	2,684
£32,000–£59,999	27	11	1	2,573
£60,000 or above	31	9	1	1,203
Income unknown	18	5	1	1,157
State benefits				
Receives means-tested state benefits	41	19	5	831
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	26	9	1	9,227
Tenure				
Owned outright	18	4	1	4,136
Owned with mortgage	30	12	1	2,866
Social rented	36	15	2	1,297
Private rented	41	14	4	1,122
Other	23	14	1	603

Table C4: Experience of problem types by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 2)

												Percentages
	Purchasing goods and services	Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	Money (excluding personal debt)	Personal debt	Rented accommodation	Accidents or medical negligence	Owning or buying residential property	Employment	State benefits	Education	Relationship breakdown	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Sex												
Male	9	8	8	5	5	4	2	6	2	2	1	4,820
Female	7	9	6	6	5	4	3	7	4	2	2	5,238
Age												
18–24	7	10	7	7	12	5	0	10	3	1	2	473
25–44	10	11	9	8	8	5	3	10	5	3	3	2,417
45–64	9	7	8	5	3	4	3	6	3	2	1	3,842
65–74	6	5	4	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	2,096
75+	5	3	3	0	1	1	1	-	0	-	-	1,227
Ethnicity												
White	8	8	7	5	5	3	2	6	3	2	2	9,272
BME	9	12	8	8	8	6	3	8	3	2	1	734
<i>Mixed</i>	8	15	3	4	16	3	2	15	4	2	1	101
<i>Asian or Asian British</i>	8	10	8	7	5	5	3	5	3	2	0	311
<i>Black or Black British</i>	7	10	13	15	9	8	2	12	3	2	1	200
<i>Chinese or other</i>	11	16	5	3	8	6	5	6	2	1	1	122
Long-standing illness or disability												
Yes, limits activities	11	12	9	10	8	7	3	7	7	2	2	2,043
Yes, does not limit activities	8	6	8	3	4	3	2	5	3	1	1	1,547
No long-standing illness or disability	8	7	7	4	5	3	2	7	2	2	1	6,386
Marital status												
Married/In a civil partnership	9	6	7	4	2	3	3	6	2	2	0	5,248
Cohabiting	9	11	9	6	9	3	2	9	5	2	2	1,032
Single	8	11	9	8	11	5	1	9	4	2	3	1,692
Separated	8	8	11	16	7	6	4	5	8	5	13	178
Divorced/Legally dissolved partnership	9	10	8	10	7	3	3	6	6	3	6	929
Widowed	4	4	3	1	1	2	2	0	1	-	-	973

Percentages

	Purchasing goods and services	Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	Money (excluding personal debt)	Personal debt	Rented accommodation	Accidents or medical negligence	Owning or buying residential property	Employment	State benefits	Education	Relationship breakdown	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Employment status												
In employment	9	9	9	5	5	4	3	9	3	2	2	5,324
Unemployed	9	14	9	14	13	3	1	12	10	3	3	457
Inactive	6	6	5	4	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	4,267
Highest qualification												
Degree equivalent or above	13	8	10	3	6	3	4	8	3	2	1	3,124
A-level or equivalent	9	11	9	7	7	4	2	8	4	2	2	1,649
Other qualification	5	8	6	6	4	4	1	6	3	2	2	2,843
No qualifications	4	6	3	4	3	3	1	3	2	1	1	2,332
Household structure												
Single adult with dependent children	9	15	13	18	12	6	2	10	12	10	19	376
Couple with dependent children	10	10	9	7	5	4	3	9	5	5	1	1,833
Adult-only household	8	7	7	4	5	3	2	5	2	0	1	7,848
Household income												
Less than £15,000	6	11	7	9	9	4	2	6	5	2	2	2,441
£15,000–£31,999	8	8	6	7	6	4	2	7	4	2	1	2,684
£32,000–£59,999	10	7	8	3	3	4	3	8	3	2	1	2,573
£60,000 or above	12	7	12	1	3	3	5	7	0	3	1	1,203
Income unknown	5	6	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	1	1	1,157
State benefits												
Receives means-tested state benefits	9	15	10	16	15	6	3	5	13	5	5	831
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	8	7	7	4	4	3	2	7	2	2	1	9,227
Tenure												
Owned outright	7	4	5	1	0	2	3	3	1	1	1	4,136
Owned with mortgage	10	8	9	4	1	5	4	8	3	3	1	2,866
Rented from a social landlord	6	15	8	14	15	5	0	5	8	4	2	1,297
Private rented	10	12	10	10	18	4	1	9	5	2	4	1,122
Other	5	7	6	5	4	4	0	10	3	1	1	603

Table C5: Number of problems experienced by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 2)

	Number of problems experienced				Percentages
	1	2	3	4+	Unweighted base (=100%)
Sex					
Male	50	21	8	20	1,364
Female	49	18	9	24	1,451
Age					
18–24	44	25	10	21	172
25–44	44	19	9	28	995
45–64	54	20	9	17	1,139
65–74	65	17	6	11	369
75+	68	16	5	11	139
Ethnicity					
White	50	20	8	22	2,545
BME	45	18	13	24	259
<i>Mixed</i>	49	14	16	22	38
<i>Asian or Asian British</i>	49	20	11	19	93
<i>Black or Black British</i>	33	25	14	28	83
<i>Chinese</i>	83	-	-	17	6
<i>Arab</i>	35	12	13	41	9
<i>Other ethnic group</i>	51	4	12	33	30
Long-standing illness or disability					
Yes, limits activities	43	17	8	32	716
Yes, does not limit activities	50	20	11	18	374
No long-standing illness or disability	51	21	9	19	1,708
Marital status					
Married/In a civil partnership	54	19	10	17	1,347
Cohabiting	47	21	5	27	360
Single	43	22	10	26	609
Separated	39	17	8	37	74
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	43	14	10	34	290
Widowed	68	12	6	14	133
Employment status					
In employment	49	21	10	20	1,798
Unemployed	40	15	6	39	196
Inactive	54	17	7	21	818

	Number of problems experienced				Percentages
	1	2	3	4+	<i>Unweighted base</i>
					<i>(=100%)</i>
Highest qualification					
Degree equivalent or above	50	21	10	19	1,092
A-level or equivalent	47	20	7	26	559
Other qualification	49	17	10	24	726
No qualifications	54	18	7	21	411
Household structure					
Single adult with dependent children	32	15	11	42	194
Couple with dependent children	48	20	10	22	694
Adult-only household	52	20	8	20	1,927
Household income					
Less than £15,000	42	19	9	31	701
£15,000–£31,999	47	20	11	23	720
£32,000–£59,999	54	19	8	19	783
£60,000 or above	56	22	10	12	416
Income unknown	56	19	5	20	195
State benefits					
Receives means-tested state benefits	37	15	9	39	358
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	51	20	9	19	2,457
Tenure					
Owned outright	61	20	7	12	780
Owned with mortgage	53	19	10	18	961
Social rented	35	18	10	37	432
Private rented	39	22	9	29	468
Other	54	20	6	20	166

Respondents who did not experience any legal problems are excluded from this table

**Table C6: Status of problem by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15
(Chapter 3)**

			Percentages
	Ongoing	Concluded	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Sex			
Male	38	62	1,416
Female	41	59	1,513
Age			
18–24	39	61	180
25–44	36	64	1,030
45–64	45	55	1,185
65–74	37	63	386
75+	42	58	147
Ethnicity			
BME	38	62	272
White	40	60	2,645
Long-standing illness or disability			
Yes, limits activities	46	54	757
Yes, does not limit activities	44	56	390
No long-standing illness or disability	37	63	1,762
Marital status			
Married/In a civil partnership	39	61	1,387
Cohabiting	35	65	368
Single	39	61	646
Separated	51	49	80
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	50	50	307
Widowed	48	52	139
Employment status			
In employment	38	62	1,849
Unemployed	43	57	215
Inactive	43	57	861
Highest qualification			
Degree equivalent or above	37	63	1,122
A-level or equivalent	37	63	584
Other qualification	43	57	756
No qualifications	46	54	433
Household structure			
Single adult with dependent children	53	47	208
Couple with dependent children	41	59	711
Adult-only household	37	63	2,010

	Percentages		
	Ongoing	Concluded	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Household income			
Less than £15,000	44	56	753
£15,000–£31,999	39	61	751
£32,000–£59,999	39	61	798
£60,000 or above	35	65	419
Income unknown	39	61	208
State benefits			
Receives means-tested state benefits	51	49	382
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	38	62	2,547
Tenure			
Owned outright	38	62	800
Owned with mortgage	38	62	985
Social rented	53	47	467
Private rented	38	62	494
Other	33	67	174

Respondents who did not experience any legal problems are excluded from this table

Table C7: Perceived seriousness of legal problems by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 3)

	Percentages											
	All legal problems				Civil legal problems				Administrative legal problems			
	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Sex												
Male	35	43	22	1,419	39	42	18	1,090	25	46	29	294
Female	33	42	25	1,506	37	41	22	1,086	25	43	32	336
Age												
18–24	38	43	19	180	41	44	15	129	30	44	26	44
25–44	35	44	21	1,027	40	43	17	691	25	47	29	271
45–64	32	41	27	1,184	36	41	23	856	22	41	37	285
65–74	34	42	24	386	35	41	24	355	31	43	25	27
75+	31	36	33	147	31	36	33	144	50	50	0	3
Ethnicity												
BME	24	48	28	271	28	47	26	210	11	54	34	53
White	36	41	22	2,643	40	41	19	1,957	26	43	30	575
Long-standing illness or disability												
Yes, limits activities	27	38	35	760	32	36	32	559	15	41	45	173
Yes, does not limit activities	35	43	22	390	38	42	20	309	26	42	33	69
No long-standing illness or disability	37	44	20	1,755	40	43	16	1,291	28	46	26	386
Marital status												
Married/In a civil partnership	36	43	21	1,383	41	42	18	1,065	22	46	32	305
Cohabiting	39	39	22	366	39	41	20	264	39	35	27	83
Single	32	45	23	644	35	45	20	450	23	44	33	162
Separated	27	38	35	80	38	26	35	46	20	65	16	18
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	29	39	33	311	34	35	31	222	21	56	24	50
Widowed	27	41	32	139	27	42	32	127	35	34	32	12
Employment status												
In employment	36	44	20	1,843	40	44	15	1,296	25	46	29	458

	Percentages											
	All legal problems				Civil legal problems				Administrative legal problems			
	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious	Unweighted base (=100%)	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious	Unweighted base (=100%)	Not very serious	Fairly serious	Very serious	Unweighted base (=100%)
Unemployed	27	42	30	215	27	41	32	138	25	43	31	67
Inactive	33	37	30	863	36	37	27	740	21	37	41	103
Highest qualification												
Degree equivalent or above	39	45	16	1,120	43	44	13	846	28	48	23	237
A-level or equivalent	35	42	23	585	40	42	18	413	23	46	31	135
Other qualification	31	39	30	756	34	39	26	542	21	39	39	185
No qualifications	26	40	34	430	28	39	33	347	22	43	35	68
Household structure												
Single adult with dependent children	26	47	27	205	28	47	25	82	23	51	26	64
Couple with dependent children	35	42	23	707	41	40	18	455	23	44	33	232
Adult-only household	35	42	23	2,013	37	42	20	1,639	26	43	30	334
Household income												
Less than £15,000	27	42	31	753	31	42	27	538	20	41	40	172
£15,000–£31,999	32	43	24	748	36	43	21	567	23	47	29	154
£32,000–£59,999	40	41	19	798	45	40	15	576	27	44	29	199
£60,000 or above	41	43	16	421	45	43	12	329	30	44	26	77
Income unknown	29	43	28	205	30	41	29	166	28	51	21	28
State benefits												
Receives means-tested state benefits	23	42	36	380	26	41	33	245	16	41	43	102
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	36	42	21	2,545	40	42	18	1,931	26	45	29	528
Tenure												
Owned outright	36	41	23	805	39	40	21	687	25	45	31	103
Owned with mortgage	36	44	19	981	41	44	16	678	26	48	26	263
Social rented	27	37	36	466	30	37	33	336	18	35	47	114
Private rented	35	43	22	492	40	43	17	359	19	42	39	94
Other	34	45	21	171	35	45	20	108	33	46	20	55

Table C8: Percentage of respondents who experienced an adverse consequence by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 3)

	Percentages		
	At least one adverse consequence	No adverse consequences	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Sex			
Male	40	60	1,435
Female	50	50	1,524
Age			
18–24	42	58	181
25–44	47	53	1,040
45–64	47	53	1,199
65–74	41	59	389
75+	35	65	149
Ethnicity			
BME	52	48	276
White	44	56	2,671
Long-standing illness or disability			
Yes, limits activities	63	37	767
Yes, does not limit activities	44	56	395
No long-standing illness or disability	40	60	1,777
Marital status			
Married/In a civil partnership	40	60	1,396
Cohabiting	49	51	372
Single	48	52	655
Separated	65	35	80
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	56	44	314
Widowed	47	53	140
Employment status			
In employment	44	56	1,865
Unemployed	56	44	220
Inactive	46	54	870
Highest qualification			
Degree equivalent or above	41	59	1,133
A-level or equivalent	48	52	589
Other qualification	49	51	766
No qualifications	47	53	437
Household structure			
Single adult with dependent children	62	38	209
Couple with dependent children	43	57	715
Adult-only household	45	55	2,035

	Percentages		
	At least one adverse consequence	No adverse consequ- ences	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Household income			
Less than £15,000	55	45	761
£15,000–£31,999	44	56	758
£32,000–£59,999	43	57	803
£60,000 or above	34	66	424
Income unknown	46	54	213
State benefits			
Receives means-tested state benefits	63	37	389
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	42	58	2,570
Tenure			
Owned outright	36	64	813
Owned with mortgage	45	55	988
Social rented	56	44	474
Private rented	45	55	499
Other	50	50	175

Table C9: The four most common adverse consequences by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 3)

	Percentages				
	Stress-related illness or other mental health problem	Loss of confidence	Loss of income or financial strain	Physical illness	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Sex					
Male	15	16	17	8	1,435
Female	26	25	22	13	1,524
Age					
18–24	15	16	21	5	181
25–44	19	21	21	11	1,040
45–64	25	22	20	13	1,199
65–74	18	18	11	11	389
75+	16	16	4	8	149
Ethnicity					
BME	19	26	22	11	276
White	21	19	19	11	2,671
Long-standing illness or disability					
Yes, limits activities	40	31	26	23	767
Yes, does not limit activities	20	20	18	10	395
No long-standing illness or disability	14	17	17	7	1,777
Marital status					
Married/In a civil partnership	18	17	17	10	1,396
Cohabiting	19	18	21	8	372
Single	20	24	23	10	655
Separated	34	32	32	20	80
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	37	32	25	18	314
Widowed	25	25	8	16	140
Employment status					
In employment	18	19	20	10	1,865
Unemployed	30	27	24	12	220
Inactive	25	21	16	14	870
Highest qualification					
Degree equivalent or above	17	18	19	9	1,133
A-level or equivalent	21	21	24	11	589
Other qualification	22	22	19	13	766
No qualifications	27	24	14	14	437

	Percentages				
	Stress-related illness or other mental health problem	Loss of confidence	Loss of income or financial strain	Physical illness	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Household structure					
Single adult with dependent children	31	32	34	11	209
Couple with dependent children	18	17	20	9	715
Adult-only household	21	20	18	12	2,035
Household income					
Less than £15,000	31	28	24	14	761
£15,000–£31,999	18	20	20	9	758
£32,000–£59,999	17	17	19	10	803
£60,000 or above	12	13	14	7	424
Income unknown	22	22	15	16	213
State benefits					
Receives means-tested state benefits	34	32	29	18	389
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	18	18	18	10	2,570
Tenure					
Owned outright	17	17	12	11	813
Owned with mortgage	20	19	20	11	988
Social rented	32	27	24	15	474
Private rented	17	20	22	8	499
Other	19	21	22	11	175

Table C10: Percentage of respondents who experienced discrimination types by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 3)

	Percentages				
	Race	Gender	Disability	Age	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Sex					
Male	2	1	3	5	1,398
Female	3	5	4	6	1,437
Age					
18–24	4	3	1	13	174
25–44	3	3	2	2	973
45–64	3	4	5	4	1,154
65–74	1	5	2	11	384
75+	3	2	7	19	149
Ethnicity					
BME	13	2	3	4	268
White	1	3	3	6	2,555
Long-standing illness or disability					
Yes, limits activities	3	4	11	9	738
Yes, does not limit activities	3	3	1	6	381
No long-standing illness or disability	3	3	1	4	1,697
Marital status					
Married/In a civil partnership	3	2	3	4	1,382
Cohabiting	3	2	1	6	352
Single	3	4	3	7	622
Separated	2	5	4	5	64
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	2	6	7	6	273
Widowed	4	7	7	17	140
Employment status					
In employment	3	3	1	4	1,774
Unemployed	6	2	6	4	208
Inactive	3	3	7	10	849
Highest qualification					
Degree equivalent or above	3	2	2	5	1,095
A-level or equivalent	3	4	4	5	552
Other qualification	2	4	3	6	734
No qualifications	5	3	5	8	421
Household structure					
Single adult with dependent children	2	6	5	2	148
Couple with dependent children	4	3	3	2	694
Adult-only household	2	3	3	7	1,993

	Percentages				
	Race	Gender	Disability	Age	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Household income					
Less than £15,000	4	5	7	9	718
£15,000–£31,999	3	2	2	5	729
£32,000–£59,999	1	3	2	4	779
£60,000 or above	3	2	1	2	408
Income unknown	4	3	3	9	201
State benefits					
Receives means-tested state benefits	4	4	10	4	354
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	3	3	2	6	2,481
Tenure					
Owned outright	2	3	3	7	795
Owned with mortgage	2	3	2	3	947
Social rented	3	3	8	6	457
Private rented	4	4	1	6	460
Other	5	2	4	10	167

Respondents who did not experience any legal problems are excluded from this table

Table C11: How respondents tried to resolve their problem by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 4)

	Percentages				
	A formal resolution process	Legal / professional help	Self-help	Did not try to resolve	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Sex					
Male	17	26	53	4	1,435
Female	17	28	51	3	1,524
Age					
18–24	17	16	64	3	181
25–44	15	28	53	4	1,040
45–64	20	31	46	3	1,199
65–74	15	28	54	2	389
75+	16	27	51	6	149
Ethnicity					
BME	16	23	56	5	276
White	17	28	52	3	2,671
Long-standing illness or disability					
Yes, limits activities	20	30	47	3	767
Yes, does not limit activities	16	27	55	3	395
No long-standing illness or disability	16	27	54	4	1,777
Marital status					
Married/In a civil partnership	17	29	50	4	1,396
Cohabiting	13	26	57	4	372
Single	18	23	56	3	655
Separated	18	30	48	3	80
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	18	30	48	3	314
Widowed	15	39	44	3	140
Employment status					
In employment	16	28	52	4	1,865
Unemployed	18	24	57	2	220
Inactive	19	27	50	4	870
Highest qualification					
Degree equivalent or above	15	28	55	3	1,133
A-level or equivalent	17	26	54	4	589
Other qualification	19	29	49	4	766
No qualifications	20	26	49	6	437
Household structure					
Single adult with dependent children	22	32	43	3	209
Couple with dependent children	16	28	53	3	715
Adult-only household	17	26	53	4	2,035

	Percentages				
	A formal resolution process	Legal / professional help	Self-help	Did not try to resolve	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Household income					
Less than £15,000	18	25	53	3	761
£15,000–£31,999	16	26	55	3	758
£32,000–£59,999	17	28	51	4	803
£60,000 or above	17	32	47	3	424
Income unknown	15	25	56	4	213
State benefits					
Receives means-tested state benefits	21	27	49	3	389
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	16	27	53	4	2,570
Tenure					
Owned outright	17	28	49	5	813
Owned with mortgage	15	34	48	3	988
Social rented	21	23	52	4	474
Private rented	16	21	59	4	499
Other	17	20	61	2	175

Respondents may have used more than one resolution strategy. They are included once in this table for the most formal strategy used.

Table C12: Use of formal resolution processes by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 5)

	Percentages				
	Respondent made court/ tribunal claim ¹	Other side made court/ tribunal claim ¹	Used independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration	Used regulator/ ombudsman	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Sex					
Male	4	3	8	6	1,435
Female	3	2	10	5	1,524
Age					
18–24	2	0	12	6	181
25–44	3	2	9	4	1,040
45–64	6	4	10	6	1,199
65–74	2	1	6	9	389
75+	5	2	7	7	149
Ethnicity					
BME	3	3	8	6	276
White	4	2	10	5	2,671
Long-standing illness or disability					
Yes, limits activities	5	4	10	6	767
Yes, does not limit activities	3	3	8	6	395
No long-standing illness or disability	3	2	9	5	1,777
Marital status					
Married/In a civil partnership	5	2	9	6	1,396
Cohabiting	3	1	8	5	372
Single	3	3	12	5	655
Separated	5	4	8	5	80
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	3	6	8	5	314
Widowed	2	0	10	6	140
Employment status					
In employment	3	2	10	5	1,865
Unemployed	4	5	8	3	220
Inactive	5	3	9	7	870
Highest qualification					
Degree equivalent or above	3	2	8	6	1,133
A-level or equivalent	4	3	11	4	589
Other qualification	4	3	10	5	766
No qualifications	5	2	10	6	437

	Percentages				
	Respondent made court/ tribunal claim ¹	Other side made court/ tribunal claim ¹	Used independent conciliation, mediation or arbitration	Used regulator/ ombudsman	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Household structure					
Single adult with dependent children	3	6	15	2	209
Couple with dependent children	5	2	9	5	715
Adult-only household	3	2	9	6	2,035
Household income					
Less than £15,000	3	3	10	4	761
£15,000–£31,999	3	2	9	6	758
£32,000–£59,999	3	1	9	6	803
£60,000 or above	6	3	8	5	424
Income unknown	1	3	9	6	213
State benefits					
Receives means-tested state benefits	7	5	10	5	389
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	3	2	9	6	2,570
Tenure					
Owned outright	5	2	9	5	813
Owned with mortgage	4	2	9	5	988
Social rented	5	5	11	4	474
Private rented	2	2	10	6	499
Other	2	2	10	8	175

¹ Includes court processes such as Money Claim Online. 25 respondents reported that both they and the other party had made a court or tribunal claim. They are included in both columns in this table.

Table C13: Types of help obtained by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 6)

	Percentages				
	Formal legal help	Professional help	Obtained own information	No help obtained	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Sex					
Male	11	31	71	16	1,435
Female	12	32	75	16	1,524
Age					
18–24	7	21	78	18	181
25–44	12	30	75	15	1,040
45–64	14	38	71	15	1,199
65–74	10	32	68	18	389
75+	9	34	59	24	149
Ethnicity					
BME	9	25	66	24	276
White	12	33	74	15	2,671
Long-standing illness or disability					
Yes, limits activities	12	35	71	16	767
Yes, does not limit activities	10	31	75	14	395
No long-standing illness or disability	12	31	73	16	1,777
Marital status					
Married/In a civil partnership	13	33	73	16	1,396
Cohabiting	10	28	76	14	372
Single	9	29	73	18	655
Separated	22	30	80	10	80
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	14	35	70	16	314
Widowed	9	40	68	13	140
Employment status					
In employment	13	31	74	16	1,865
Unemployed	7	30	72	17	220
Inactive	10	34	71	16	870
Highest qualification					
Degree equivalent or above	12	30	77	14	1,133
A-level or equivalent	11	29	76	16	589
Other qualification	12	35	69	16	766
No qualifications	10	33	61	23	437

	Percentages				
	Formal legal help	Professional help	Obtained own information	No help obtained	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Household structure					
Single adult with dependent children	15	36	73	14	209
Couple with dependent children	11	32	77	13	715
Adult-only household	11	31	71	18	2,035
Household income					
Less than £15,000	7	31	71	18	761
£15,000–£31,999	10	32	72	16	758
£32,000–£59,999	13	32	75	14	803
£60,000 or above	17	35	77	14	424
Income unknown	15	25	67	20	213
State benefits					
Receives means-tested state benefits	9	37	70	18	389
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	12	31	73	16	2,570
Tenure					
Owned outright	14	33	69	17	813
Owned with mortgage	15	35	75	13	988
Social rented	7	34	68	20	474
Private rented	7	27	76	16	499
Other	9	24	77	18	175
Use of internet services					
Use internet for banking or government transactions	12	31	75	15	2,379
Use internet for online shopping	8	36	63	20	201
Use internet for email/social networking	6	30	65	18	98
Do not use internet for any of the above	9	38	60	19	281

Respondents may have used more than one source of advice. They are included once in this table for each source of advice used and percentages will not sum to 100.

Table C14: Internet use, LPRS 2014–15

	Percentages	
	All adults	Adults with legal problems
How often use internet for personal use		
At least once a week	85	93
Once a month	1	1
Less than once a month	1	0
Never (includes those without access to internet)	13	6
<i>Unweighted base (all adults/all adults with legal problems)</i>	<i>10,058</i>	<i>2,959</i>
Most transactional use of internet¹		
For online banking and/or government transactions	74	84
For online shopping	8	6
For email and/or social networking	5	3
For none of these purposes (includes those without access to internet)	14	7
<i>Unweighted base (all adults/all adults with legal problems)</i>	<i>10,058</i>	<i>2,959</i>
Confidence in own ability to assess whether internet information is accurate or reliable		
Very or fairly confident	90	91
Not very or not at all confident	10	9
<i>Unweighted base (adults with access to internet)</i>	<i>8,396</i>	<i>2,699</i>

1 Respondents could select more than one answer. They have been counted once for the most transactional purpose they used.

Table C15: Self-help by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 8)

	Got information, advice or help from:				Percentages
	the internet	a leaflet or self-help guide	friends and family	the other side of the problem	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Sex					
Male	36	10	40	42	1,435
Female	35	11	48	45	1,524
Age					
18–24	37	9	62	39	181
25–44	41	11	49	45	1,040
45–64	33	12	35	43	1,199
65–74	19	8	32	47	389
75+	10	4	32	35	149
Ethnicity					
BME	29	9	43	35	276
White	37	11	44	45	2,671
Long-standing illness or disability					
Yes, limits activities	33	10	40	44	767
Yes, does not limit activities	36	11	41	47	395
No long-standing illness or disability	36	11	46	43	1,777
Marital status					
Married/In a civil partnership	37	12	39	45	1,396
Cohabiting	44	12	48	45	372
Single	33	8	51	41	655
Separated	34	12	56	49	80
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	24	11	42	42	314
Widowed	13	8	43	38	140
Employment status					
In employment	40	11	45	45	1,865
Unemployed	33	13	47	38	220
Inactive	25	9	39	42	870
Highest qualification					
Degree equivalent or above	43	11	47	47	1,133
A-level or equivalent	39	12	49	44	589
Other qualification	30	11	38	41	766
No qualifications	16	7	36	36	437

Percentages

	Got information, advice or help from:				<i>Unweighted base</i>
	the internet	a leaflet or self-help guide	friends and family	the other side of the problem	
Household structure					
Single adult with dependent children	35	11	49	47	209
Couple with dependent children	45	13	47	47	715
Adult-only household	31	9	42	41	2,035
Household income					
Less than £15,000	29	9	44	39	761
£15,000–£31,999	33	12	45	42	758
£32,000–£59,999	40	11	43	49	803
£60,000 or above	48	12	44	46	424
Income unknown	21	8	47	38	213
State benefits					
Receives means-tested state benefits	32	12	41	43	389
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	36	10	45	44	2,570
Tenure					
Owned outright	26	9	35	44	813
Owned with mortgage	43	12	44	45	988
Social rented	26	14	39	43	474
Private rented	36	8	49	45	499
Other	42	9	62	35	175
Use of internet services					
Use internet for banking or government transactions	40	11	46	45	2,379
Use internet for online shopping	18	10	34	37	201
Use internet for email/social networking	23	5	31	34	98
Do not use internet for any of the above	2	8	33	35	281

Respondents may have used more than one source of advice. They are included once in this table for each source of advice used and percentages will not sum to 100.

Table C16: Resolved problems by how people tried to resolve their problem, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 9)

	Percentages
	All resolved problems
All resolution strategies used¹	
A formal process	18
Legal/professional help	37
Self- help	92
Did not try to resolve	3
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1,559</i>
Most formal resolution strategy used²	
A formal process	18
Legal/professional help	25
Self-help	54
Did not try to resolve	-
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1,559</i>
All types of advice obtained¹	
Formal legal advice	11
Professional advice	30
Obtained own information	75
Did not obtain information or advice	16
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1,559</i>
Most formal type of advice obtained²	
Formal legal help	11
Professional help	26
Obtained own information	47
No help obtained	16
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1,559</i>

¹ Respondents could use more than one resolution strategy or type of advice and have been included for each type used.

² Respondents who used more than one resolution strategy or type of advice have only been included once for the most formal type used.

Table C17: How the problem resolved by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 9)

	Percentages							
	Of a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, such as a regulator or the police	Through conciliation, mediation or arbitration run by an independent person or organisation	Directly with the other party	You or the other side acted independently of each other to sort it out	The problem just sorted itself out, or you moved on such as leaving a job or moving home	Other		<i>Unweighted Base</i>
Sex								
Male	6	7	34	25	22	7		769
Female	8	7	34	26	20	5		790
Age								
18–24	4	11	33	29	20	2		97
25–44	5	6	35	26	22	5		571
45–64	9	6	33	23	20	8		603
65–74	11	5	32	27	19	6		214
75+	11	6	20	33	22	7		73
Ethnicity								
BME	8	6	25	33	23	6		145
White	7	7	35	25	20	6		1,408
Long-standing illness or disability								
Yes, limits activities	10	7	32	28	19	5		360
Yes, does not limit activities	7	5	36	22	22	7		200
No long-standing illness or disability	6	7	34	26	21	6		991
Marital status								
Married/In a civil partnership	8	7	34	27	19	6		763
Cohabiting	5	5	37	24	26	4		212
Single	6	9	33	27	20	6		330
Separated	3	3	47	27	13	7		41
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	12	5	33	17	25	8		141
Widowed	10	5	17	32	24	12		70

Percentages

	Of a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, such as a regulator or the police	Through conciliation, mediation or arbitration run by an independent person or organisation	Directly with the other party	You or the other side acted independently of each other to sort it out	The problem just sorted itself out, or you moved on such as leaving a job or moving home	Other	<i>Unweighted Base</i>
Employment status							
In employment	6	7	36	25	20	6	1,006
Unemployed	7	5	31	30	26	1	106
Inactive	11	7	29	27	20	6	444
Highest qualification							
Degree equivalent or above	7	6	35	26	20	5	631
A-level or equivalent	5	10	32	30	20	4	323
Other qualification	7	7	33	24	20	9	385
No qualifications	10	6	32	21	25	6	205
Household structure							
Single adult with dependent children	6	10	41	21	12	9	92
Couple with dependent children	7	6	33	27	21	6	372
Adult-only household	7	7	34	26	22	5	1,095
Household income							
Less than £15,000	8	7	31	27	20	7	372
£15,000–£31,999	9	7	33	22	23	6	410
£32,000–£59,999	4	7	38	28	18	6	433
£60,000 or above	8	8	32	30	18	4	244
Income unknown	5	3	35	15	34	9	100
State benefits							
Receives means-tested state benefits	10	6	41	24	15	4	167
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	6	7	33	26	21	6	1,392
Tenure							
Owned outright	9	5	31	29	20	6	442
Owned with mortgage	7	8	34	25	20	6	545
Social rented	9	5	35	25	20	6	190

Percentages

	Of a decision made by a court, tribunal or other independent party, such as a regulator or the police	Through conciliation, mediation or arbitration run by an independent person or organisation	Directly with the other party	You or the other side acted independently of each other to sort it out	The problem just sorted itself out, or you moved on such as leaving a job or moving home	Other	<i>Unweighted Base</i>
Private rented	5	9	33	25	22	7	277
Other	4	5	41	25	23	3	102

Table C18: In whose favour the problem resolved by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 9)

	Percentages				
	In the respondent's favour	Evenly split	In favour of the other side	It just ended – in no one's favour	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Sex					
Male	60	23	13	4	758
Female	58	25	13	3	777
Age					
18–24	55	28	13	4	96
25–44	56	27	14	4	564
45–64	62	20	14	4	594
65–74	72	16	7	4	210
75+	69	21	6	4	70
Ethnicity					
BME	48	33	15	4	138
Non-BME	60	23	13	4	1,392
Long-standing illness or disability					
Yes, limits activities	64	20	12	4	352
Yes, does not limit activities	65	22	10	2	195
No long-standing illness or disability	57	26	14	4	980
Marital status					
Married/In a civil partnership	61	23	12	4	752
Cohabiting	53	28	15	5	210
Single	58	25	15	3	324
Separated	52	31	17	0	40
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	59	24	13	4	140
Widowed	67	18	8	8	67
Employment status					
In employment	58	25	14	4	998
Unemployed	54	24	20	2	104
Inactive	65	23	9	4	430
Highest qualification					
Degree equivalent or above	60	23	13	4	622
A-level or equivalent	61	24	12	4	319
Other qualification	58	25	13	3	380
No qualifications	55	28	13	4	200

	Percentages				
	In the respondent's favour	Evenly split	In favour of the other side	It just ended – in no one's favour	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Household structure					
Single adult with dependent children	55	31	15	0	90
Couple with dependent children	57	23	16	4	369
Adult-only household	60	24	12	4	1,076
Household income					
Less than £15,000	58	27	12	3	362
£15,000–£31,999	57	24	14	6	404
£32,000–£59,999	59	24	14	3	430
£60,000 or above	64	23	11	2	241
Income unknown	56	22	16	6	98
State benefits					
Receives means-tested state benefits	59	27	10	4	164
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	59	24	13	4	1,371
Tenure					
Owned outright	66	18	11	5	436
Owned with mortgage	61	20	15	3	539
Social rented	51	36	8	5	186
Private rented	53	29	13	5	270
Other	57	28	14	1	101

Table C19: Whether respondent plans to resolve their problem in future by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 9)

	Percentages		
	Planned to resolve	Did not plan to resolve	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Sex			
Male	58	42	622
Female	61	39	695
Age			
18–24	58	42	80
25–44	59	41	438
45–64	64	36	565
65–74	58	42	161
75+	42	58	73
Ethnicity			
BME	63	37	119
Non-BME	60	40	1,193
Long-standing illness or disability			
Yes, limits activities	59	41	385
Yes, does not limit activities	69	31	184
No long-standing illness or disability	58	42	737
Marital status			
Married/In a civil partnership	60	40	601
Cohabiting	59	41	153
Single	57	43	299
Separated	87	13	37
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	54	46	160
Widowed	66	34	67
Employment status			
In employment	60	40	814
Unemployed	65	35	105
Inactive	57	43	397
Highest qualification			
Degree equivalent or above	61	39	476
A-level or equivalent	61	39	247
Other qualification	59	41	358
No qualifications	54	46	217
Household structure			
Single adult with dependent children	58	42	112
Couple with dependent children	64	36	326
Adult-only household	58	42	879

	Percentages		
	Planned to resolve	Did not plan to resolve	<i>Unweighted base (=100%)</i>
Household income			
Less than £15,000	60	40	364
£15,000–£31,999	63	37	328
£32,000–£59,999	59	41	353
£60,000 or above	61	39	172
Income unknown	47	53	100
State benefits			
Receives means-tested state benefits	62	38	205
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	59	41	1,112
Tenure			
Owned outright	52	48	344
Owned with mortgage	61	39	419
Social rented	65	35	268
Private rented	66	34	211
Other	50	50	69

Table C20: Adults who gave up trying to resolve their problem or problem resolved through an action by socio-demographic characteristics, LPRS 2014–15 (Chapter 9)

	Percentages	
	Tried to resolve but gave up	Problem concluded through an action
Sex		
Male	49	49
Female	51	51
Age		
18–24	13	14
25–44	43	47
45–64	32	29
65–74	6	7
75+	6	3
Ethnicity		
BME	11	13
White	89	87
Long-standing illness or disability		
Yes, limits activities	26	20
Yes, does not limit activities	9	10
No long-standing illness or disability	65	70
Marital status		
Married/In a civil partnership	47	50
Cohabiting	15	15
Single	27	26
Separated	1	2
Divorced/Legally dissolved civil partnership	8	5
Widowed	3	2
Employment status		
In employment	64	69
Unemployed	9	8
Inactive	27	23
Highest qualification		
Degree equivalent or above	38	44
A-level or equivalent	20	24
Other qualification	27	22
No qualifications	16	10
Household structure		
Single adult with dependent children	9	6
Couple with dependent children	30	30
Adult-only household	61	64
Household income		
Less than £15,000	26	24
£15,000–£31,999	23	24

	Percentages	
	Tried to resolve but gave up	Problem concluded through an action
£32,000–£59,999	28	29
£60,000 or above	15	18
Income unknown	8	5
State benefits		
Receives means-tested state benefits	16	12
Does not receive means-tested state benefits	84	88
Tenure		
Owned outright	23	21
Owned with mortgage	34	37
Social rented	16	11
Private rented	17	20
Other	11	11
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>496</i>	<i>1,146</i>

Appendix D

Experience of divorce and dissolution of civil partnerships

The LPRS measured legal problems arising from relationship breakdown in the same way as the range of civil and administrative legal issues, through the detailed screening questions to establish relevant experiences in the 18 months prior to interview (see Appendix B for further details). In addition, the LPRS separately captured information on divorce as a legal process.¹⁰⁸ Although divorce is by definition linked to a relationship breakdown, specifically a marriage or civil partnership, it does not necessarily indicate any legal dispute. That is, the separation may have been amicable and no disputes around finances, property or children may have arisen. Another difference between divorce and the legal problems covered by the survey is that the formal dissolution of a marriage or civil partnership must be dealt with as a legal process by a court, whereas all other legal problems covered by this survey can be resolved without using formal court proceedings (and in fact, only a minority of problems are resolved in a court or tribunal, see Chapter 4).

One per cent of adults had experienced a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership in the 18 months before interview (62% reported that their divorce was completed at time of interview, while 38% said that the process was still ongoing). Of those who had been through a divorce/dissolution 58% had filed the court papers themselves, with 28% of this group completing the court paperwork themselves (71% had received help with completing the paperwork from somebody else). The most common source of help was a solicitor (85% of respondents who received help with their paperwork reported receiving it from a solicitor, with the remaining 15% stating a friend had helped them).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Including dissolutions of civil partnerships.

¹⁰⁹ Overall, of all adults who filed court papers, 60% said a solicitor had helped them with their paperwork.

Appendix E

Multivariate analysis

Logistic regression analyses were carried out to explore which factors were independently associated with using a formal legal resolution process and with obtaining legal or professional advice. This was to examine which factors had an independent relationship with the variables of interest, taking into account the effect of other variables/factors.

Forward stepwise logistic regression methods were used, as the analysis was exploratory rather than testing a theory. Two models were run as follows:

- Whether a formal legal process or resolution service was used;
- Whether legal or professional advice was obtained.

Each model included only respondents who had experienced a legal problem. There may be further factors that are associated with using a formal resolution process or obtaining legal/professional advice that are not included in these analyses or the LPRS questionnaire.

Data preparation

Prior to running the regression analyses, the data were prepared and many variables were recoded. The dependent variables for each model were recoded into binary variables. In addition, 'don't knows' and refusals were coded as missing (and therefore excluded from the analyses) unless they formed 5% or more of the responses, in which case they were recoded into a single dump category.

The relationships between the dependent variable and the explanatory, independent variables were then explored (using crosstabs), and reference categories for each variable were selected such that the reference category was generally the least associated with the dependent variable. Correlations were then run, and multicollinearity tested for, to ensure that the independent variables were not highly correlated (none had an absolute correlation score greater than 0.6).

The following tables show the models that were produced. Variables are listed in order of the strength of their association with the dependent variable (that is, in the order that they were included in the model). Variables which were found to be strongly associated with the dependent variable (that is, they explained more than 1% of the total variance) are listed in a

footnote to each table. Variables which were included in the analysis, but not found to be statistically significantly associated with the dependent variable, are also listed in a footnote.

Table E1: Factors associated with using a formal resolution process (using logistic regression), LPRS 2014–15

	Odds ratio ⁵	Confidence interval	Significance ⁶
Most formal type of advice obtained			
<i>Did not obtain advice</i>	1.00		
Obtained formal legal advice	4.74	3.33 - 6.76	*
Obtained professional (but not legal) help	3.01	2.30 - 3.94	*
Obtained own information	0.48	0.29 - 0.80	*
Type of problem experienced			
<i>Purchasing goods and services</i>	1.00		
Employment	1.30	0.81 - 2.07	
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	0.64	0.37 - 1.08	
Owning or buying residential property	0.54	0.29 - 1.02	
Rented accommodation	1.01	0.59 - 1.70	
Personal debt	2.21	1.30 - 3.77	*
Money (excluding personal debt)	1.96	1.25 - 3.08	*
Provision of state benefits	0.89	0.48 - 1.64	
Relationship breakdown	1.28	0.69 - 2.37	
Education	1.36	0.73 - 2.53	
Accidents or medical negligence	0.98	0.57 - 1.69	
Perceived seriousness of problem			
<i>Not very serious</i>	1.00		
Fairly serious	1.40	1.06 - 1.86	*
Very serious	1.94	1.42 - 2.65	*
Whether the adult thought of the problem as a legal problem			
<i>Thought of problem as legal</i>	1.00		
Did not think of problem as legal	1.78	1.40 - 2.26	*
Duration			
<i>0–3 months</i>	1.00		
4–6 months	1.30	0.92 - 1.82	
7–12 months	1.66	1.19 - 2.32	*
13–24 months	1.58	1.12 - 2.25	*
More than 2 years	1.95	1.40 - 2.72	*
Housing tenure			
<i>Private rented</i>	1.00		
Owned outright	0.92	0.64 - 1.32	
Owned with mortgage	0.69	0.50 - 0.96	*
Social rented	1.15	0.80 - 1.66	
Other	0.81	0.51 - 1.30	
Constant	0.05		
Unweighted base	2,504		
Nagelkerke R square⁷	.216		

- ¹ Variables are listed in order of strength of association with the dependent variable (use of formal resolution processes). The following variables were strongly associated (i.e. contributed 1% or more to the variance explained by the model): the most formal type of advice obtained; the type of problem experienced, how serious the adult perceived the problem to be; whether they thought of the problem as a legal problem, and the duration of the problem (for ongoing problems, this was duration to the point of interview).
- ² Variables included in the analysis but not found to be statistically significantly associated with the dependent variable were: age, whether received means-tested benefits, sex, ethnicity, disability status, marital status, economic status, highest qualification, household structure, household income, use of internet services, whether the problem led to adverse consequences.
- ³ Categories in italics are those which were used as reference categories.
- ⁴ The logistic regression was carried out using the Forward Stepwise method in SPSS.
- ⁵ Odds ratios of greater than one indicate relatively higher odds of using a formal resolution process than the reference category in that variable; less than one indicate relatively lower odds.
- ⁶ ** denotes a statistically significant impact of that variable on the dependent variable (at the 5% level).
- ⁷ The Nagelkerke R square statistic indicates the extent to which the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the model. In this case, 22% of the variation was explained by the variables included in the model.

Table E2: Factors associated with obtaining legal or professional help (using logistic regression), LPRS 2014–15

	Odds ratio ⁵	Confidence interval	Significance ⁶
Type of problem experienced			
<i>Purchasing goods and services</i>	1.00		
Employment	3.59	2.51 - 5.14	*
Neighbours' anti-social behaviour	3.53	2.45 - 5.08	*
Owning or buying residential property	3.64	2.38 - 5.58	*
Rented accommodation	1.23	0.83 - 1.82	
Personal debt	1.35	0.85 - 2.12	
Money (excluding personal debt)	1.63	1.14 - 2.34	*
Provision of state benefits	1.06	0.67 - 1.68	
Relationship breakdown	6.47	3.67 - 11.41	*
Education	1.64	1.01 - 2.67	*
Accidents or medical negligence	5.41	3.57 - 8.21	*
Whether adult used a formal resolution process to try and resolve the problem			
<i>Used a formal resolution process</i>	1.00		
Did not use a formal resolution process	3.87	3.03 - 4.94	*
Perceived seriousness of problem			
<i>Not very serious</i>	1.00		*
Fairly serious	1.68	1.36 - 2.08	*
Very serious	1.91	1.47 - 2.48	*
Whether the adult thought of the problem as a legal problem			
<i>Thought of problem as legal</i>	1.00		
Did not think of problem as legal	1.75	1.42 - 2.16	*
Age			
18–24	1.00		*
25–44	1.62	1.18 - 2.22	*
45–64	2.00	1.44 - 2.78	*
65–74	2.18	1.39 - 3.43	*
75+	2.46	1.39 - 4.35	*
Whether the problem led to adverse consequences			
<i>Experienced adverse consequences</i>	1.00		
Did not experience adverse consequences	1.58	1.30 - 1.91	*
Duration of the problem			
<i>0–3 months</i>	1.00		
4–6 months	1.46	1.12 - 1.89	*
7–12 months	1.80	1.38 - 2.35	*
13–24 months	1.48	1.12 - 1.97	*
More than 2 years	1.40	1.06 - 1.84	*

	Odds ratio ⁵	Confidence interval	Significance ⁶
Ethnicity			
<i>White</i>	1.00		
BME	1.40	1.06 - 1.85	*
Household income			
Under £15,000	0.78	0.60 - 1.01	
<i>£15,000–£32,000</i>	1.00		
£32,000–£60,000	1.05	0.82 - 1.34	
£60,000 or above	1.45	1.08 - 1.93	*
Income unknown	0.94	0.61 - 1.44	
Whether receives means-tested benefits			
<i>Receives means-tested benefits</i>	1.00		
Does not receive means-tested benefits	1.42	1.06 - 1.91	*
Constant	0.04		
Unweighted base	2,504		
Nagelkerke R square⁷	0.29		

¹ Variables are listed in order of strength of association with the dependent variable (use of formal resolution processes). The following variables were strongly associated (i.e. contributed 1% or more to the variance explained by the model): type of problem experienced, whether they used a formal resolution process, perceived seriousness of problem, whether they thought of the problem as legal, age, whether the problem led to an adverse consequence and duration of problem (for ongoing problems, duration to the point of interview).

² Variables included in the analysis but not found to be statistically significantly associated with the dependent variable were: sex, disability status, marital status, economic status, highest qualifications, household structure, housing tenure, use of internet services.

³ Categories in italics are those which were used as reference categories.

⁴ The logistic regression was carried out using the Forward Stepwise method in SPSS.

⁵ Odds ratios of greater than one indicate relatively higher odds of obtaining legal or professional advice than the reference category in that variable; less than one indicate relatively lower odds.

⁶ ** denotes a statistically significant impact of that variable on the dependent variable (at the 5% level).

⁷ The Nagelkerke R square statistic indicates the extent to which the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the model. In this case, 29% of the variation was explained by the variables included in the model.

Appendix F

Glossary

Administrative legal problem – a problem that would be mainly dealt with by a tribunal. Administrative problem types included in the LPRS relate to employment, the provision of state benefits and the provision of education.

Civil legal problem – a problem that would be mainly dealt with by a county court. Civil problem types included in the LPRS relate to purchasing goods and services, neighbours' anti-social behaviour, debt, personal injury, and buying, owning or renting property.

Conciliation, mediation or arbitration – the use of an independent and impartial third party to resolve disputes outside the court or tribunal. Generally, conciliation and mediation are non-binding whereas arbitration is binding on both parties to the dispute.

Family legal problem – a problem that would be mainly dealt with by the Family Court. Family problems included in the LPRS relate to disputes arising from a relationship breakdown, such as parental disputes concerning children, and financial provisions.

Formal legal help – information, advice or help to resolve a legal problem received from a solicitor, lawyer or barrister.

Professional help – information, advice or help to resolve a legal problem received from an independent professional advisor whose role is not necessarily to provide legal help.

Formal resolution process – comprises court or tribunal cases, other court processes (such as Money Claim Online), contacting a regulator or ombudsman, or participation in conciliation, mediation or arbitration.

Legal or professional help – information, advice or help to resolve a legal problem received from either a lawyer, solicitor or barrister or other independent professional advisor whose role is not to provide legal help.

Legal problem – a problem or dispute that *could* be resolved through the court or tribunal system.

Ombudsman – an independent, impartial person appointed to investigate complaints about organisations.

Self-help – obtaining information, advice or help to resolve a legal problem from friends and family, the other side of the dispute, the internet, or leaflets, books and self-help guides.