

easy  
read

# The Official Solicitor

and how he or she can help you



External Solicitor

# Some of the characters in this book are:



You



The Official Solicitor



The case manager



Your solicitor

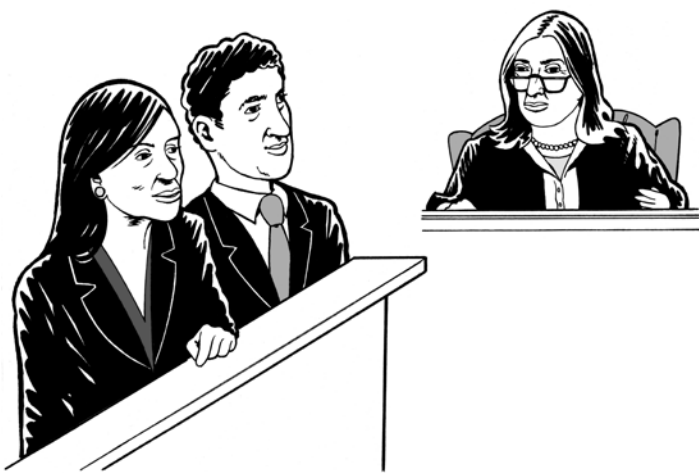
## Who is the Official Solicitor?



The Official Solicitor's full job title is the Official Solicitor to the Senior Courts.

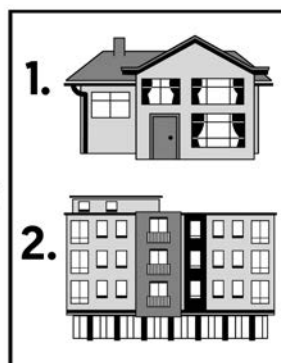


The Official Solicitor's job is to make decisions for you if you do not have mental capacity to make decisions about your court case.



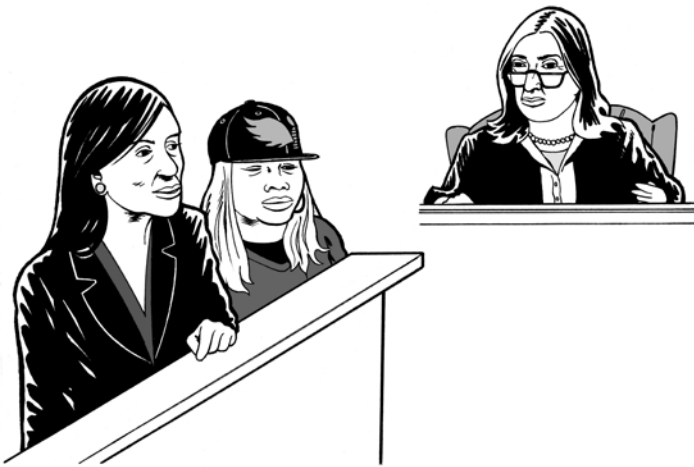
The Official Solicitor can ask a firm of solicitors to help you with your court case.

## What is mental capacity?



If you have mental capacity it means you are able to make your own decisions about something.

# Why is the Official Solicitor involved?



The Official Solicitor agrees to act because:

- you are under the age of 18;

or

- your doctor or the court do not think you can make decisions about your court case.



Legal matters can be difficult to understand and be very stressful. The Official Solicitor is here to look after your interests.

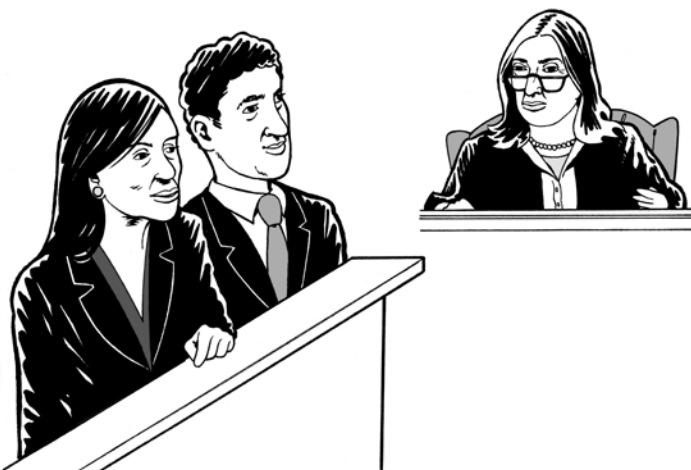
# How will the Official Solicitor help?



The Official Solicitor makes decisions about whether to start a court case, or fight it, or agree a way forward.



The Official Solicitor usually asks a firm of solicitors to help with your court case.



The Official Solicitor will arrange for solicitors to go to court for you when necessary.



The Official Solicitor can only make decisions about what is happening in your court case.



The Official Solicitor cannot make other decisions for you.

## Who can I speak to about my case?



Your solicitor is the **first** person you should contact.



The Official Solicitor has assistants to help to deal with the cases. The assistants are called case managers.



If you want to speak to your case manager, your solicitor can give you the case manager's contact details.

## Will I be asked my views?



The Official Solicitor needs to know what you want.





The Official Solicitor will make sure the judge knows what you want.



After the Official Solicitor agrees to help, the Official Solicitor will usually ask a firm of solicitors to help with your court case.



The firm of solicitors will be either the solicitor you have already met, or a new solicitor arranged for you by the case manager.





There are a few ways your solicitor may contact you:

- They may send someone to visit you



- They may write to you



- They may telephone or text you



- They may ask you to come to their office.

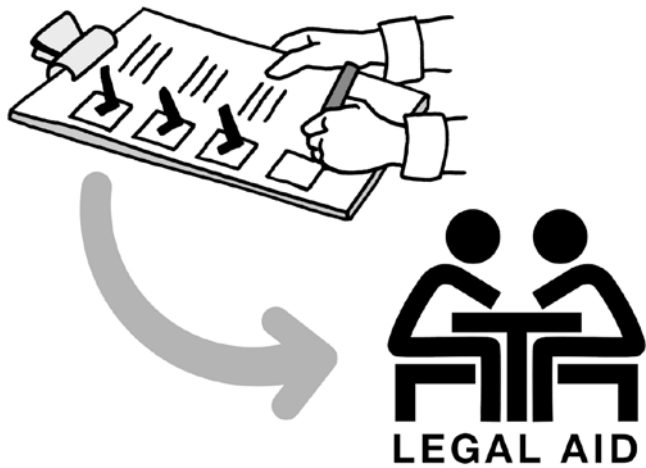
## Fees and charges



In most cases, the Official Solicitor will ask for someone else to help.



The firm of solicitors the Official Solicitor asks to help will charge you for their work.



Legal aid is help you may be able to get to pay your legal fees. Not everyone qualifies for legal aid.



If you qualify for legal aid, the firm of solicitors will be paid by legal aid.



If you do not qualify for legal aid, you will need to pay the firm of solicitors for the work they do for you.

# Complaints



If you are unhappy with the way your case is managed you should first speak to your solicitor or case manager.



If you are still unhappy you can write to the Official Solicitor's Complaints Officer. You will be given the contact details of the Complaints Officer.



There is more information about the Official Solicitor on the website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/official-solicitor-and-public-trustee/about>



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