

LEGAL AID INFORMATION

Legal aid can be free or with contributions. Either way – and win or lose - our fees and the expenses of your case are paid by the Legal Services Commission.

Legal aid also means that even if you lose you might not have to pay your opponent's costs.

But if you are asked to pay contributions towards your legal aid then you **must** do so. If you don't your legal aid could be **discharged**.

You *must* tell us or the Legal Services Commission if:

- You start to earn more money;
- You inherit or win any money or your savings go up;
- You have less dependants;
- Your outgoings go down.

If you don't tell us or the Legal Services Commission then your legal aid could be **discharged** or, even worse, **revoked**.

If you are better off you might be asked to pay higher contributions or you might lose legal aid altogether. (If that happens we will try to sort out how we can continue to work for you privately in a way you can afford).

You *should* tell us if:

- You lose your job or earn less money;
- You have more dependants;
- Your outgoings go up.

If you don't tell us you could be paying too much in contributions.

IF YOU WIN YOUR CASE

Usually – but not always – we recover the costs of the case from your opponent if you win. If so, you will receive all your winnings and any legal aid contributions will be returned to you.

That can only happen if your opponent has the money to pay.

If we don't recover all the costs from your opponent then any shortfall will come, first out of any contributions you have paid and, second, out of your winnings – if you have won money or property. This is called the "statutory charge". We have already given you a leaflet about that. [Note – the statutory charge does not apply to welfare benefits or cases in the Employment Appeal Tribunal.]

IF YOU LOSE YOUR CASE

If you lose you might have to pay your opponent's costs. But usually you only have to pay what you paid in contribution towards your legal aid. We will advise you if it is likely to be different.

DISCHARGE OF LEGAL AID

If your legal aid is discharged you stop having legal aid. You will still have to pay any outstanding contributions to the Legal Services Commission. If you want to continue with your case you will have to pay privately – we will try to sort something out which you can afford.

If you lose the case you will not have legal aid protection against having to pay your opponent's costs from the time your legal aid was discharged.

REVOCAION OF LEGAL AID

Revocation is more serious. If your legal aid is revoked it is as though you have never had legal aid. You have to repay the Legal Services Commission everything they have paid out and we can also charge you privately for the full cost of the case.

If you lose the case you will have no protection against having to pay your opponent's costs from the beginning of the case.

ANY PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS ask your caseworker

