

# Ask your lawyer

Understanding the law and the legal system can be hard. Asking your lawyer questions can help make the process easier and clearer.

Below you will find a range of questions you may want to ask when you meet your lawyer for the first time. You can use this document when you speak to your lawyer to ask questions that might help you understand the legal process and your case.

Not all of these questions will apply to you, so you don't have to ask all the questions that are here.

## Before and at your first appointment

### Questions you can ask to find if a lawyer is right for you:

Do you have experience in managing cases like mine?

What areas of law do you work in?

Do you have any testimonials or reviews I can read?

### Questions you can ask about what a lawyer might charge you for in the first appointment:

Do you charge for the first appointment?

How long is the first appointment?

What will we do in the first appointment?

How much will it cost me for you to review any documents I give you?

### Questions you can ask your lawyer about preparing for the first appointment:

What should I do to prepare?

What do you need from me?

Do you offer any assistance like translation services or provide information in Easy English?

### Questions you can ask your lawyer to see if they're right for you:

What experience do you have in cases like mine?

What are my options in this situation? Which option do you recommend and why?

What is the most likely outcome for my case?

How will you manage my case? For example, will we go to court?

How often will you update me on my case?

Will you update me via phone or email?

Who else will be working on my case?

Will you be overseeing a junior lawyer?

## Your lawyer's ethical obligations

Lawyers have strict ethical obligations to their clients, as well as to the court and the justice system. These obligations are set out as part of the law and in lawyers' professional rules of conduct.

### Questions you can ask your lawyer about their duty to the court:

Is there particular information about me that you need to share with the court?

In what circumstances would you not do what I asked you to?

What will you do if the other party's lawyers are being impolite/disrespectful or misleading the court?

### Questions you can ask your lawyer about how they will manage your case and acting in your best interests:

What do you consider when you advise me on the best approach to my case?

How will we communicate along the way?

How will we check in to make sure we're on track or discuss any changes in direction? Will we have regular discussions?

How will you charge me for these catch ups?

What happens if we disagree on how we should run my case?

What happens if my circumstances change?

What happens if I don't get the outcome I'm looking for?

**Questions you can ask your lawyer about keeping information confidential:**

How will you keep my information confidential?  
Are there any limits to keeping my information confidential?  
In what circumstances would you tell someone information about me or my case?  
Are there other lawyers in your office who will also work on my case?  
If we need a barrister, what information will they know?  
Will we need any expert reports or witnesses?  
If so, what will you tell them about me or my case?

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**Questions you can ask your lawyer about conflict of interest:**

Are you, or your practice working for someone else related to my case?  
Have you done a conflict of interest check?  
Have you, your practice, or any other lawyer working on my case ever worked for someone related to my case?  
If you are acting or have acted for someone else related to my case, how will you put my interests first?  
What steps do you have in place to stop other lawyers at your practice who have worked for someone related to my case seeing my information?

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**Questions to ask your lawyer about legal professional privilege:**

What can I say to other people about the legal advice you give me?  
Is there information we discuss that I shouldn't tell anyone else?  
Are my documents protected under legal professional privilege?  
Under what circumstances will our communications and documents no longer be confidential (where we lose privilege)?  
When and how will we communicate in relation to sensitive information?  
What happens if a privileged document is disclosed?

## Costs and billing

**Questions to ask your lawyer about costs:**

Will I be charged for a consultation/appointment?  
How do you charge? E.g. hourly rate or fixed price?  
If we go to court will my costs change?  
Are there other reasons my costs will change?  
How will you let me know if my costs change?  
Are there any extra costs?  
When will I be billed?  
How long will I have to pay?  
Do you offer payment options?