

Exeter Family Court Clinic

Free support for people facing Family Court without a lawyer

What does the clinic do?

Lawyers at the clinic offer free support and guidance for people who are involved in a dispute between family members about their children. We also help with court cases regarding non-molestation or occupation orders. Appointments are for 30 minutes and are usually a one-off. We assist people who are bringing cases, or replying to them.

What doesn't the clinic cover?

We don't offer advice in relation to divorce or financial matters on separation.

We don't deal with cases where the Local Authority (social services) have started the case (care proceedings), or Special Guardianship matters.

Do I need to book?

Yes. We do not offer walk-in advice. The Personal Support Unit (PSU) can book an appointment for you. Contact them on 01392 415 335 or email exeter@thepsu.org.uk

To book you will need to fill in a booking form with your case number, and names and addresses of everyone involved in the dispute.

How quickly can I have an appointment?

As soon as one is available. We can't guarantee you an appointment before your hearing or on a particular day.

Who will I see?

You will see a qualified family lawyer who works in the local area.

What do I need to bring?

Bring a copy of all the court papers with you. It will help if you come with an idea of the sort of thing you need help with. This will help the adviser to make the best use of your short appointment time. You should come 15 minutes before your appointment time and tell the usher you are here for the clinic.

Bring a note pad and pen, and a friend or supporter if you would like. The PSU may be able to provide a volunteer to help – please ask them in advance if you can.

What will happen at my appointment?

If possible your adviser will try and look at your papers before the appointment (this is not always possible). They will explain the way the scheme works. They will give you as much support as possible in the time available, and will give you a written summary of the guidance given and any steps they have suggested you should take, or where you might look for further help or information.

What if I need a lawyer to speak for me in court?

We don't offer representation in hearings, but we may be able to refer you to the Bar Pro Bono Unit for further help. Referrals take several weeks to process and there is no guarantee of help.

What if half an hour isn't enough?

We are unable to offer longer appointments, and only offer repeat appointments if the adviser specifically recommends it.

Confidentiality

The service is confidential. We will not share the information you give us with the other people in the case or with the Judge / Magistrates dealing with it, except where the law says we must or where we are worried a person may be seriously harmed.

The Personal Support Unit (PSU) assist us with bookings. The PSU will keep your information confidential.

Where to find us

The scheme runs at Exeter Combined Court Centre, Southernhay Gardens, Exeter, EX1 1UH.

The Personal Support Unit (for bookings) is located on the second floor.

Report to the usher on the second floor 15 minutes before your clinic appointment.

Complaints and feedback

Please raise any issues with your adviser on the day, or by writing to the Exeter Family Court Clinic Committee, care of the Personal Support Unit, Exeter Combined Court Centre, Southernhay Gardens, Exeter, EX1 1UH.

Please note that neither the Personal Support Unit nor the Court Staff can give you advice about your case.

Further details of the way the clinic runs are set out in a 'clinic protocol' which is freely available from the PSU.