



A guide to further sources of Legal Aid or Pro Bono support for clients in **Stirling District and the Forth Valley**

February 2025

Introduction

Stirling District Citizens Advice Bureau¹ (CAB) is a local, independent charity which provides free, impartial and confidential advice and information, empowering people in Stirling and the surrounding Forth Valley to sort out any issues or problems and realise their rights.

We're at the heart of the community and offer person-centred and holistic advice and advocacy across a wide spectrum of issues, including those relating to social security benefits, housing and energy, workplace problems, money and debt, family, healthcare and patients' rights, consumer issues, and the law and courts.

In more complex cases which require legal advice, clients need to be signposted or referred to legal professionals who operate in the category of law for which support is sought. However, we have been experiencing significant difficulties in signposting locally for both pro bono and legal aid work. Our recent research report Access to Social Justice in Stirling District and the Forth Valley (ADD [HYPERLINK](#)) evidences this dire situation and highlights serious gaps in provision of local legal aid and pro bono support.

This needs to be urgently addressed to ensure the right to access to justice is a reality for people living in Stirling and Forth Valley. While this will require concerted efforts by local and national governments, third sector organisations and the legal professions alongside adequate funding, in the meantime, **this guide outlines sources of legal assistance** both locally and nationally where clients can be referred, according to the nature of their enquiry.

This practical guide focuses on certain categories of client and/or areas of civil law for which the bureau has difficulty in identifying where to signpost or refer clients to for legal assistance or representation. We hope, however, that it will be of assistance to anyone in the Forth Valley in need of legal advice or those seeking to support others with legal problems.

The guide considers

- > types of issue that a client's **household insurance legal protection policy** may cover, thus negating the need for referral
- > categories of civil law for which legal aid assistance is available from **local solicitors**
- > Specialist charities providing legal support for issues affecting children
- > Specialist charities providing legal support around issues to do with ethnicity, migration, asylum seeking and people trafficking
- > Discrimination and 'protected characteristics' – **Scottish Just Law Centre**
- > Disability – specific legal project run by **Legal Services Agency**
- > Types of legal support on housing issues provided by **Shelter**
- > Domestic Abuse – **Scottish Women's Rights Centre**
- > Legal issues undertaken by **Edinburgh Napier University Law Clinic** who offer their services across Scotland.

¹ Stirling District Citizens Advice Bureau Ltd is an OSCR registered charity. Commonly known as Stirling District CAB or Stirling CAB, in this guide we use these names interchangeably.

1. Household Insurance Legal Protection Policy

Legal expenses insurance – also known as family legal protection – is an extra add on to household insurance that helps cover the costs of your legal fees in certain instances. It is relatively cheap – between £30 and £50 p.a. according to the level of cover.

It usually covers:

- > Personal injury claims
- > Employment disputes
- > Disagreements about property
- > Problems with the provision of goods and services

Common events that most policies include:

- > Property and neighbour disputes like disagreements about shared driveways
- > Personal injury claims such as a fall on a slippery floor
- > Consumer disputes including shoddy work

Some legal expenses policies might also include:

- > Identity theft cover for when someone opens accounts or buys products using your details
- > Jury service cover for lost earnings while you're serving on a jury
- > Inheritance disputes about something left to you in a will
- > Appeals against non-admission to a school
- > Expenses related to an HMRC inquiry into your tax return

You're typically covered for up to £100,000 in legal costs. But some home insurance legal cover only funds up to £25,000 of legal costs.

2. Solicitors local to Stirling – Civil Legal Aid provision by law category

A number of private solicitor firms local to Stirling currently provide legal support via civil legal aid. The below table indicates categories of law they cover, based on publicly available information on their websites.

Legal Aid solicitors in Stirling District

Legal Aid Category	Barton & Hendry	Dalling	Hill & Robb	Jardine Donaldson	Mailors	McCready & Co	Pollock Ross	Virgil M Crawford
Adults with incapacity and power of Attorney	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Benefits including UC								✓
Children's Cases		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Compensation and damages		✓						✓
Complaints against profession		✓						✓
Consumer problems								
Death related matters			✓				✓	✓
Debt, money and tax								✓
Discrimination & human rights								✓
Employment								✓
Family - divorce and seperation	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Family - contact and children		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Family - domestic violence		✓	✓			✓		✓
Housing and homelessness								✓
Immigration, asylum and nationality								✓
Education								✓
Medical negligence								✓
Mental health		✓	✓					✓

A black tick indicates the category of law for which they are registered to provide legal aid and have undertaken cases in the last 12 months. An orange tick indicates the category of law for which they are registered to provide legal aid but have not undertaken cases in the last 12 months.

Solicitor firms	Tel no.
Barton & Hendry	01786 445441
Dalling	01786 448111
Hill & Robb	01786 450985
Jardine Donaldson	01786 450366
Mailors	01786 450555
Mc Ready & Co	01786 479628
Pollock Ross	01786 449933
Virgil Crawford	01786 464055

3. Referrals for legal cases involving children

There are two main child-focused charities operating in Scotland offering legal support for children, and whilst their support may be similar, the charities differ in their realms of operation.

Clan Childlaw is the only charity in Scotland that provides free, independent legal representation exclusively for children and young people, which is child-centered by design. Lawyers work directly with children and young people whose lives are affected by legal decisions, bringing unique practice-based knowledge to every aspect of their work. This includes a helpline supporting others who help children to use their voices and their rights.

The subjects they list that they help with are - **contact and residence, appearing in court, adoption, retaining housing, leaving care, obtaining a passport, parental responsibilities and permanence**. The subjects tend to be around matters concerned with older children and teens, especially those adopted, in care or leaving care.

Advice workers and professionals working with children can contact **0808 129 0522** to speak to one of their solicitors.

The **Scottish Child Law Centre** helps all ages of children and young people, as well as parents, carers, family members and professionals who work with or for children.

Qualified solicitors can answer any question you may have relating to all areas of child-related Scots law. This includes **education, additional support needs, health, residence, contact, youth offending, accessing records, confidentiality, children's rights, children's hearings and disputes involving the court**.

Referral is made via their enquiry portal <https://sclc.org.uk/contact/>

Admin telephone no is **0131 668 4400**.

The following table gives some indication as to the similarities and differences of operation between the two charities based on information available on their websites.

Category of Law	Clan Childlaw	Scottish Child Law Centre
Children's rights	Provides advice focusing on older children and those in the care system or leaving care.	Offers advice on children's rights under Scottish law.
Care and protection	Specializes in advice on care and protection issues.	Provides advice on child protection, care, and welfare.
Family law	Limited; much focus on adoption issues, leaving care.	Covers family law issues including custody and visitation.
Education law	Provides advice on school exclusion, additional support needs.	Provides advice on education law, including school exclusions.
Mental health law	Offers advice related to mental health and children.	Offers advice on mental health law as it relates to children.
Criminal law / Youth justice	Advises on appearing in court.	Covers legal issues in youth justice and criminal cases involving minors.
Housing and Homelessness	Offers advice for young people facing housing issues.	Provides advice on housing rights for children and families.
Immigration & Asylum	Not specifically stated on website.	Offers advice on immigration and asylum law as it pertains to children.

Type of legal representation	Clan Childlaw	Scottish Child Law Centre
Courts	Represents children in court, particularly in cases impacting their rights.	No, does not provide direct court representation.
Children's hearings	Represents children in children's hearings.	Provides advice, but not representation in children's hearings.
Advocacy in legal matters	Acts as an advocate for children.	Provides general advocacy advice but not direct court advocacy.

4. Cases involving ethnic minorities, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees

There are three main charities in Scotland providing specialist support including legal help and representation for migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Although there is a certain amount of overlap between the three charitable organizations regarding some of the subjects they cover, they tend to focus on different themes, thus signposting and referral to any of them will be dependent on the circumstances of the case in question.

The **Ethnic Minorities Law Centre** focuses on issues around **Discrimination, Immigration & Asylum, Human Rights, and Employment**. Based in Glasgow, their contact details are:

Tel **0141 204 2888**

Email admin@emlc.org.uk

The **Scottish Refugee & Migrant Centre** focuses on issues to do with the **protection and safety of women and children and advocating for family reunion for** families torn apart by conflict. They operate under the umbrella organization JustRight Scotland and operate a limited Legal Advice Line for professionals and advisers.

Tel **0141 406 5353**

The **Scottish Anti-Trafficking and Exploitation Centre (SATEC)** supports migrant victim-survivors of trafficking and/or exploitation. by providing legal advice and representation. As such their work may be often focused on illegal practices and criminal enterprises. Supporting victim-survivors at all stages of their recovery 'journey', SATEC provides access to their legal surgery which must be undertaken by completing their referral form via this link

<https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk/need-help/make-a-referral/>.

The following table gives some indication of the areas of law they each cover and may be helpful in deciding on the circumstances of any given case, which organization may be the most suitable to contact for further support.

Category of Legal Representation	Ethnic Minorities Law Centre	Scottish Refugee and Migrant Centre	Scottish Anti-Trafficking and Exploitation Centre
Child Protection		Provides a child-centered legal service which specifically focuses on the areas where refugee and migrant children find it difficult to realize their rights, including in the immigration/ asylum and childcare system systems. Delivers specialist second-tier advice, as well as training and outreach, to better professional understanding of refugee and migrant children's rights.	Provides specialist legal advice and representation on all civil legal matters relating to an individual's experience of trafficking and/or exploitation.
Women		Provides specialist, early and targeted legal casework to migrant women and girls in the fields of asylum and immigration law and other relevant legal matters, including FGM, Forced Marriage, Domestic Violence and anti-trafficking.	Provides specialist legal advice and representation on all civil legal matters relating to an individual's experience of trafficking and/or exploitation.
Discrimination	Expertise working at a high level in most of the following individual discrimination rights; responsibilities and duties of employers; equality provisions under the Equality Act 2010; issues related to protected characteristics; and discrimination law generally and outside the realm of employment.		

Family reunion		<p>Operates The Scottish Family Reunion Service (SFRS) in collaboration with British Red Cross Society to provide an enhanced casework service for refugees who wish to bring their family members to Scotland.</p> <p>Specialises in reuniting families that have been torn apart by conflict and persecution.</p>	Provides specialist legal advice and representation on family reunification.
Homelessness & Housing	Limited to cases involving discrimination or harassment.	Gives legal advice in partnership with housing charities with a focus on improving asylum accommodation.	Ensures access to emergency support such as housing.
Asylum & Immigration	<p>Provides full legal advice and representation in respect of Asylum claims in the UK.</p> <p>Immigration lawyers regularly advise on a very broad range of personal immigration matters and have in-depth knowledge of the systems and procedures to ensure that your application is processed with minimal stress.</p>	<p>Second Tier Immigration & Asylum Advice Line</p> <p>Provides free, confidential advice for advisers or professionals in Scotland.</p> <p>Telephone: 0141 406 5353</p> <p>When: Wednesdays, 2pm-4pm</p> <p>How often: Weekly</p> <p>Who for: Advisers or professionals in Scotland seeking 2nd tier advice relating to immigration and asylum law.</p>	Provides specialist legal advice and representation on all civil legal matters relating to an individual's experience of trafficking and/or exploitation.
Employment Law	Presents cases at Tribunals across the UK for the full spectrum of Employment Tribunal claims.	Provides legal advice and representation in employment discrimination cases.	Provides legal support in cases of exploitation.
Social Welfare Law	Yes, advises on social welfare issues, especially those impacting ethnic minorities (e.g., benefits, access to services).	Yes, advises on social welfare law for migrants and refugees.	Yes, offers advice for victims of trafficking and exploitation.

Human Rights	Focuses on protecting the human rights of ethnic minorities in various legal contexts es, advises and representation on asylum and immigration law.	Yes, focuses on protecting the human rights of migrants and refugees.	Provides specialist legal advice and representation on all civil legal matters relating to an individual's experience of trafficking and/or exploitation
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5. Discrimination and Human Rights – Scottish Just Law Centre

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful in the UK to treat someone less favourably than others because they have a ‘protected characteristic’ – this is known as discrimination.

The protected characteristics in the Act are:

- > Age
- > Disability
- > Gender reassignment (trans identity)
- > Marriage and civil partnership
- > Pregnancy and maternity
- > Race (including traveller ethnicity)
- > Religion or belief
- > Sex
- > Sexual orientation

For people from a minority ethnic background or who are migrants or refugees, the organisations above may be the more appropriate place to refer to for legal support.

For other ‘protected characteristics’ the [Scottish Just Law Centre](#) (SJLC) would likely be more suitable. The SJLC aims to reduce discrimination and disadvantage in Scotland by helping people use equality and human rights law as an effective tool for social change.

People working in an organization that represents individuals as **frontline advisers or support workers can make a referral to them on behalf of a client or service user** who has experienced discrimination or a breach of their human rights in Scotland.

Referral must be made via their online link form -

<https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk/need-help/make-a-referral/>

6. Disability – Legal Services Agency - Disability and Social Justice Project

Established in 2023, the **Disability and Social Justice Project** provides specialist legal advice, assistance, and representation for disabled people throughout Scotland. The team includes those with lived experience of disability providing them with a unique understanding of the issues that disabled people face in enforcing their rights.

Their office is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. To refer a client, speak to a member of staff by calling **0141 353 3354** or Freephone **0800 316 8450**.

email at mail@lsa.org.uk

Examples of claims dealt with to date – discrimination, housing, benefits, guardianship.

7. Housing and Homelessness – Shelter Housing Law Service

The **Shelter Scottish Housing Law Service** helps people access justice by providing specialist and expert advice and representation on housing law.

Solicitors work alongside advisers, providing them with legal support and representation to help their clients with housing issues across Scotland covering the following areas of law:

- > Evictions
- > Mortgage repossessions
- > Homelessness
- > Dampness and disrepair
- > Unlawful evictions
- > Abandonment

For citizens of Stirling, funded by the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB), the **Housing Law and Debt Advice Project** aims to help people stave off evictions and repossessions as well as in Tayside, Falkirk, Clackmannan and the Borders.

Representation is provided to clients facing heritable court eviction and mortgage repossession actions and ensures that people who are homeless and haven't been able to obtain appropriate alternative accommodation are able to access local advice, assistance and representation. Legal area covered: debt, eviction, mortgage repossession.

Advice Helpline No **0808 800 4444**

8. Domestic abuse victims – Scottish Women’s Right Centre

The **Scottish Womens’ Rights Centre’s 08088 010 789 Helpline** supports women aged 16 and over who have been affected by violence and abuse in Scotland, providing initial information and support. If a client requires initial legal information, one of their solicitors will call the client back to discuss any questions - all services are free and confidential.

Appointment based legal advice surgeries are available to discuss cases in detail with one of their solicitors and get more specific legal advice.

Two different surgeries are available depending on client circumstances:

- > General advice surgeries for women who have experienced any form of abuse
- > Immigration advice surgeries for women who have experienced gender-based violence and immigration issues

Appointments are generally available **every Thursday at 11am, 12pm and 2pm.**

To book an appointment:

Call **0141 331 4183** - phone or video appointments may be held. Maximum appointment time is one hour. Free translator provided if necessary.

For urgent legal advice the SWRC provides an online list of recommended solicitors for contact.
<https://www.scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk/support-find-solicitor/>

Court representation is provided by Just Right Scotland LLP.

9. Edinburgh Napier University Law Clinic

Edinburgh Napier Law Clinic has been included here because, unlike university law clinics in other Scottish cities that only support local residents, they have indicated that they will take cases from further afield.

Advice from the law clinic is given by law students under the careful supervision of legal professionals and is underwritten by requisite insurance.

The Clinic currently offers free legal advice in **employment, private housing and consumer matters**.

Although unable to represent clients in court, the Clinic is an advice agency accredited by the [Faculty of Advocates Free Legal Services Unit \(FLSU\)](#). Where appropriate, cases may be referred to the FLSU for representation.

Types of case they state that they can handle are outlined in the following table.

Employment Law	Housing Law	Consumer Contract Law
Employment contracts	Repairs disputes	Contract validity
Pay disputes	Neighbour disputes	Unfair contract terms
Workplace discrimination	Landlord/tenant responsibilities	Breach of contract
Disciplinary procedures	Tenancy deposits	Consumer protection
Dismissal	Evictions	

Please note that they cannot provide advice on Housing Benefit and related matters or issues concerning the sale or purchase of heritable property.

Phone: **0131 455 2689** (please leave a voicemail with your name & number)
or submit an enquiry <https://enlc.co.uk/contact-us/>

www.stirlingcab.org.uk

 **stirlingcabcharity**

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