



**OFFICE OF THE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE  
501 COMBAT SUPPORT WING  
RAF ALCONBURY / RAF CROUGHTON, UK**



**SOLICITORS REFERRAL LIST**

**Introduction**

Attorneys in the UK can be either solicitors or barristers. Put very simply, barristers tend to practice as advocates representing clients in court, whereas solicitors tend to perform the majority of their legal work in a law firm or office setting. There are, however, exceptions to this rule in both cases. From an advocacy perspective, for example, the line between the two professions has become more blurred in recent times. Solicitors can obtain “rights of audience” which enables them to represent clients in court. This means that solicitors can now perform many of the functions of a barrister up to a certain point, although barristers are able to work in a significantly higher level of court than their solicitor counterparts.

**Legal Representation**

If you require legal representation in the UK whether civil or criminal, you would first instruct a solicitor who will advise and represent you in the relevant court. County Court deals with civil matters and Magistrates’ Court deals with criminal matters. If your case is serious enough to be elevated to a higher court such as the High Court (civil) or Crown Court (criminal), the solicitor may hire a barrister to bring the case before the Judge. The solicitor will then present you with the bill for fees to include the costs of the barrister. All law firms in the UK offer a range of legal expertise though Criminal Law and Immigration Law are not commonly offered by all.

We suggest that you ask the law firm about their costs when initially enquiring about an appointment. There is no fixed rate in the UK for a preliminary consultation. Charges/fees can be £180 or more (including VAT) per hour for an appointment. However, some law firm’s offer free initial consultations if they are kept at or under thirty minutes in duration and there is no obligation by you to retain that law firm.

Depending on the issue and the law firm, UK Legal Aid (financial help in paying solicitor/barrister costs) may be offered to you by the solicitor. They may ask basic questions about your finances over the phone or at reception, when you are booking the appointment. If you appear to qualify for whole or partial payment by the Legal Aid Board, the solicitor will be ready at your initial appointment with the necessary application forms. Therefore make sure that you are ready with details of your income, savings and outgoings and also those of your spouse.

The legal office has a list of solicitors in the local area, and solicitors that have been used before for various cases. **Please note that that the legal office or the United States Air Force cannot endorse or recommend firms of solicitors.**

**Resources**

For a listing of law firms, access the Law Society website—<https://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/>  
<https://www.gov.uk/legal-aid>

**Conclusion**

If you have further questions on contact information for solicitors in your local area, or any concerns before speaking to a solicitor, please contact the Legal Office.

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**RAF Alconbury and RAF Croughton Legal Office Hours**

All Services by Appointment Only (email [501cswja@us.af.mil](mailto:501cswja@us.af.mil))

*Tuesdays and Thursdays 1000-1200 & 1300-1400*

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Current as of June 2022