

Can I handle some of my legal work myself?

What you need to know about doing legal work yourself

If you have a legal issue, you might be able to do some of the work yourself. All legal services are made up of tasks. Many people now are interested in handling some tasks themselves while paying a solicitor or legal adviser to complete others. Together, this is sometimes called an 'unbundled service'.

This approach can make getting legal advice from a regulated professional easier to afford. It could also give you a greater sense of control over your legal issue. Studies show that people who do some of the work themselves on a legal matter are just as satisfied with the overall handling of their case as those whose legal provider handled all the work. Almost 70% of people who have done some of their own legal work say they are likely to ask about doing so again.

Your legal adviser should provide you with detailed advice and help you decide what to do next. Doing some of the work yourself should help to cut the cost of the work.

Examples of doing some legal work yourself

In a divorce case, you can review the forms with your legal adviser and decide whether you need their help filling in the forms.

In probate matters, you can register the death yourself and contact banks and other organisations to close accounts and inform them of the death. You can find out if a will has been made, and you can complete a probate application online.

Potential benefits of doing legal work yourself

- Lower costs
- A greater sense of control and ownership
- Speed up the process

Potential drawbacks of doing legal work yourself

- You will need to learn about processes related to your legal issue.
- You could make mistakes that may be difficult or expensive to correct.

When can I handle some of my legal work myself?

Taking on some of the legal work yourself is more suitable in some situations than in others. If you think this approach might be right for you, speak to a solicitor or legal adviser, or to an advice organisation. Not all solicitors will offer this service or agree to work in this way, but you can shop around to find what suits you.

Here are some examples of the sorts of things you might be able to do for yourself:

- gather information and documents – birth, death and marriage certificates
- send letters
- family law – fill in divorce forms
- probate work – fill in a probate form
- actions against the police – make a complaint

Talking to a solicitor or legal adviser

If you are choosing a solicitor to help you with your legal issue, ask them questions to make sure you are choosing the right professional for you. Whether they are open to you doing some of the work yourself could be one of those questions.

If you have already chosen a solicitor to work with, you can still ask them if you could save money by taking on some of the work yourself.

Important questions to ask your legal adviser

- What tasks would they be happy for you to do yourself?
- Will there be any support for you if you get stuck or confused about a task?
- If you do some of these tasks yourself, how will it affect your overall costs?
- Are you less likely to get the outcome you want by doing some of the work yourself?
- How will you communicate with your solicitor about the tasks you are doing yourself, and will the solicitor check to make sure the work you do is correct?

What if you don't have a solicitor or legal adviser but would like to find one?

You can find a solicitor or legal adviser by visiting the Law Society's Find a solicitor [<https://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/>] website.

Learn more

If you're interested in learning more about how to handle some of your own legal work, you might find these links useful:

- UK - Applying for probate [<https://www.gov.uk/applying-for-probate/apply-for-probate>]
- UK - Represent yourself in court [<https://www.gov.uk/represent-yourself-in-court>]
- Advicenow.org.uk - How to get a divorce or end a civil partnership without a lawyer [<https://www.advicenow.org.uk/guides/how-get-divorce-or-end-civil-partnership-without-lawyer>] (free digital download, or paid printed copy)
- Advicenow.org.uk - How to deal with a section 21 eviction notice [<https://www.advicenow.org.uk/guides/how-deal-section-21-eviction-notice>]
- Policeconduct.gov.uk - Guide to the complaints process [<https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/complaints/guide-to-complaints-process>]