

FINANCIAL MATTERS

FACTSHEETS

sia spinal
injuries
association
FOR LIFE AFTER SPINAL CORD INJURY



WELFARE BENEFITS ADVICE

Welfare Benefits Information

If you need advice or help with a specific benefit problem, the following agencies may be able to assist you further.

Aspire Welfare Benefits Advice

T: 020 8420 6711

@: welfarebenefits@aspire.org.uk

It can be difficult to know what benefits you're entitled to and how to claim them.

Aspire's free and dedicated Welfare Benefits Advice Service is tailored to providing appropriate advice and support to people with Spinal Cord Injury. The service can help with:

- General benefits questions
- Expert advice on all benefits matters
- Support completing forms and on-line applications
- Preparing evidence and advocacy at appeal.

You can talk to Aspire's specialist Welfare Benefits Advisor by telephoning 020 8420 6711. Or you can email welfarebenefits@aspire.org.uk.

Alternatively, go to www.aspire.org.uk/welfare-benefits and click on the links, each of which will take you to a quick guide to the various benefits available and will let you know where to go for the necessary paperwork or more information. These guides include: Disability Benefits; Access to work; Unable to work; Universal Credit; Housing Benefits; Out of work; Carer's Benefits; and Welfare Benefits.

Potter Rees Dolan Serious Injury Solicitors

12 Commercial Street

Manchester M15 4PZ

Contact: Peter Renshaw

T: 0161 237 5888

Freephone: 0800 027 2557

@: peterrenshaw@prd.uk.com

W: www.prd.uk.com

Peter Renshaw, of Potter Rees Dolan, deals with benefit cases on a part-time basis.

Disability Law Service

The Foundry
17 Oval Way
London SE11 5RR
T: 020 7791 9800
W: www.dls.org.uk
@: advice@dls.org.uk

Disability Law Service's mission is to provide information, advice and assistance to those with disabilities and their carers.

You can call the Disability Law Service on the above number or why not look at one of the range of free factsheets on their website for assistance.

Disability Law Service provides free legal advice in the following areas:

- Community Care Law (advice and representation)
- Employment Law (advice and representation)
- Disability Discrimination (factsheets)
- Welfare Benefits (factsheets)

French & Co. Solicitors)

6 Derby Terrace
Nottingham NG7 1ND
T: 0115 955 1111
W: www.frenchandco.co.uk

(Areas served: East Midlands).

Able to assist clients with problems that they might have with housing issues, subject to them qualifying for legal help. This advice would be free at point of delivery. If potential clients are unable to visit the office, then it may be possible to assist them over the phone subject to completion of a means form.

Note that if the matter goes to court then certificated legal aid has to be applied for and this can require a contribution depending on means.

Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)

It is important for disabled people to get all the help that they're entitled to. Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) can provide important information about council tax and housing costs, national insurance, payment of benefits and problems with benefits.

You can get advice from the Citizens Advice network online, by visiting www.citizensadvice.org.uk, by phoning them (number in regional phone book) and in person local to you.

Law Centres

Law Centres can often help in a similar way to a CAB. Law Centre advisers are highly skilled to give disabled people the best legal advice to help them solve their problems and get on with life.

To find the nearest Law Centre, take a look at the interactive Google map on www.lawcentres.org.uk or see the Law Centres list on the same website.

All Law Centres offer face-to-face legal advice to local residents, and some run a telephone advice line. Some Law Centres also provide advice to community groups on issues such as legal structure and governance.

All Law Centres specialise in social welfare law, including welfare rights, disability rights, and discrimination amongst many others.

If a local Law Centre can't help, they will try to refer to another nearby organisation that can, or to a nationwide specialist helpline.

Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)

Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) operate across England and Wales. Scope's free helpline (**T: 0808 800 3333**) can refer disabled people to their local DPOs who provide information and advice.

The type of support they provide varies, but can include support and information about: welfare benefits; community care: equipment; independent living; and motability/transport.

Where there isn't a local disability information service in a particular area, disabled people can instead speak to Scope's helpline on **0808 800 3333** for independent and impartial emotional support or disability advice. This helpline is open from 9am to 5pm on weekdays. Alternatively, an email can be sent to helpline@scope.org.uk.

Advice Now

The www.advicenow.org.uk website provides handpicked quality information, sourced from the best providers, to help people to understand their rights and options. Areas covered, amongst many others, include benefits and health & social care.

Legal Aid In England And Wales

Someone who needs help to pay for legal advice or representation may sometimes be eligible for assistance through the legal aid scheme. Legal aid is available for some (but not all) civil and criminal matters. The Law Society's website (www.lawsociety.org.uk) lists issues which might be eligible for legal aid.

Legal aid is dependent on a person's financial position and also the strength of the case. Individuals can check if they're eligible by visiting the "Civil Legal Advice (CLA)" section of www.gov.uk, which includes an online checker.

Eligible persons can search for firms who provide legal aid in the "Find a Solicitor" section of www.lawsociety.co.uk, using the "Quick search" facility to choose the legal issue and location.

It should be emphasised that not all solicitors have a good working knowledge of the benefit rules, so it may be necessary to 'shop around' until one is found who does.

Community Legal Advice (CLA)

If they're in England or Wales, Individuals might be able to get free and confidential advice from the Civil Legal Advice (CLA) as part of legal aid. The CLA can be contacted on **T: 0345 345 4345** between 9am and 8pm, Monday to Friday. Also, between 9am and 12.30pm on Saturday.

Benefits and Work

Benefits and Work is a website which provides detailed information on benefits and related forms, together with a series of guides (some of which are downloadable). The website's address is www.benefitsandwork.co.uk

Disclaimer

This factsheet has been prepared by SIA and contains general advice only which we hope will be of use to you. Nothing in this factsheet should be construed as the giving of specific advice and it should not be relied on as a basis for any decision or action. SIA does not accept any liability arising from its use. We aim to ensure the information is as up-to-date and accurate as possible, but please be warned that certain areas are subject to change from time to time. Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, companies, products, services or publications in this factsheet does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by SIA.

Updated February 2017

ABOUT SIA

The Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) is the leading national user-led charity for spinal cord injured (SCI) people. Being user led, we are well placed to understand the everyday needs of living with spinal cord injury and are here to meet those needs by providing key services to share information and experiences, and to campaign for change ensuring each person can lead a full and active life. We are here to support you from the moment your spinal cord injury happens, and for the rest of your life.

For more information contact us via the following:

Spinal Injuries Association
SIA House
2 Trueman Place
Oldbrook
Milton Keynes
MK6 2HH

T: 01908 604 191 (Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm)

T: 0800 980 0501 (Freephone Advice Line, Mon – Fri, 11am – 1pm/2pm – 4.30pm)

W: www.spinal.co.uk

@: sia@spinal.co.uk

Charity No: 1054097

Brought to you by:

