



CHILD PROTECTION: DUTY LAWYER SERVICE

This factsheet has information about the Legal Aid WA Child Protection Duty Lawyer Service at the Children’s Court in Perth.

What is the Child Protection Duty Lawyer Service?

The Child Protection Duty Lawyer Service is a free service to help people with their child protection cases. The service most commonly helps parents but can sometimes assist grandparents or other relatives.

The Duty Lawyer Service is located at the Children’s Court in Perth and is available from 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Who can use the duty lawyer service?

You can ask to speak to the Legal Aid WA duty lawyer service if you don’t already have a lawyer.

When can the duty lawyer service help you?

The duty lawyer service can help in a number of situations including:

- if you have a Child Protection case in the Children’s Court,
- if you don’t have a court case but Child Protection has become involved with your family. For example, if Child Protection is investigating some concerns they have about your family,
- if you are attending a pre-birth signs of safety meeting with Child Protection, or
- if a protection order has been made but you are having problems. For example, if Child Protection has cut back your contact with your children.

Can the duty lawyer represent you in the Children's Court?

The duty lawyer can represent people in court in some cases – this means going into court with you to assist you.

The duty lawyer can help with all different types of hearings such as mention hearings and pre-hearing conferences, but they cannot represent you at trial.

How much help the duty lawyer service will be able to provide will depend on how many other people also need help on that day.

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What else can the duty lawyer service help with?

The duty lawyer service can sometimes help with preparing court documents and negotiating with Child Protection.

If the duty lawyer service cannot help you, the service will try to help you get help from somewhere else. This might include helping you to apply for a grant of legal aid if appropriate.

The service can refer you to other legal and support services. For example, family violence counselling, or drug and alcohol counselling.

How can I get help from the duty lawyer service?

You can attend the duty lawyer service in person at the Children's Court in Perth or you can phone the service on (08) 9218 0160 for advice, information and referrals.



What are some tips for seeing the duty lawyer?

If you have a case in court it is important to get to court early to have enough time to speak to the duty lawyer. Try to get to court at least half an hour before your court case.

If your case is at court, you can call the service to book an appointment before your court dates. Appointments can be in person, or by phone if you can't get to court.

Where can you get more information?

You can get more information on Legal Aid WA's Child Protection duty lawyer service by:

- calling the service directly on (08) 9218 0160,
- calling the Legal Aid WA Infoline on 1300 650 579, or
- chatting to us online on our InfoChat service at www.legalaid.wa.gov.au

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