

*Helping our clients to achieve*

## **Article**

### **How to select, find and get the most out of your solicitor**

Date: May 2009

by **Sheila Glyn-Owen**, managing partner, Phillips Solicitors

Telephone 01256 854637 email [sglyn-owen@phillips-law.co.uk](mailto:sglyn-owen@phillips-law.co.uk)

#### **How to select a firm**

'Visiting a solicitor may seem a daunting experience but it need not be. The first step is to select one that's right for you' says Sheila Glyn-Owen, managing partner at Phillips. Recommendation from a friend or colleague is often the best way, provided the firm specialises in the service that you need. There are useful websites too that offer a search facility for accredited firms, such as [www.lawyerlocator.co.uk](http://www.lawyerlocator.co.uk) and [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk). Take a look at your chosen firm's website, it can tell you a lot about their services and their approach.

Once you have selected a firm, you need to make an appointment. Simply give the firm a call and they will be happy to discuss which member of staff is most appropriate for your particular matter, as well as details of any fixed fee interviews, hourly rates and what conditions need to be met should you qualify for the legal aid system.

#### **Preparing for your first meeting**

Solicitors are trained to help you achieve what you want so the more preparation you do before the meeting, the more you'll get out of it.

Make a list of the main points you want to make or the questions you want to ask. Get together any paperwork that is relevant and put it in some kind of order, such as date order, so you can refer to it quickly. This will make it easier for your solicitor to understand your circumstances and give you proper advice.

You may like to take someone with you for moral support or to help you remember what's said, so mention this when making your appointment. Check how long the meeting will last so that you don't suddenly find that 'time is up' before you've made all your points. Have your notes in front of you, tick off each point as it's covered, and don't be afraid to ask if anything is said that you don't understand. Lawyers should be your most powerful ally, whether for business or

## *Helping our clients to achieve*

personal matters, so you must trust them and show all your relevant information. Finally, your solicitor will send you a letter summarising your discussion, their advice and how much any future action may cost.

So how much might all this cost you? There is no universal answer to this because each case is different. But solicitors have to be transparent about hourly fees, fixed and varying costs and will always advise you of the different fee rates for different levels of legal staff.

Sheila concludes: 'If you follow this advice you should be able to successfully choose the right solicitor and come out of your first meeting feeling confident about using your solicitor, understanding everything that your solicitor told you, that he/she fully understands your problem and that you are clear about how much this could cost if you go ahead.'

**Sheila Glyn-Owen is managing partner at Phillips Solicitors**

**Call Sheila on her direct line: 01256 854637**

**[www.phillips-law.co.uk](http://www.phillips-law.co.uk)**

**Phillips Solicitors – helping our clients achieve**