



NFU

LEGAL SERVICES





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WELCOME

The NFU offers a fantastic legal service through our internal and external legal professionals working together for the benefit of our members. Our in-house legally qualified advisers are totally committed and dedicated to the work carried out on behalf of members, coupled with the specialist expertise of our carefully selected NFU Legal Panel Firms that have a good understanding of the issues facing the farming and growing community.

I am proud to be the Chairman of the NFU Legal Board offering financial support to our Legal Assistance Scheme (LAS) subscribers when facing hardships, and in making important decisions affecting their businesses and livelihoods.

Nick Hamer | NFU Legal Board Chairman



NFU LEGAL POLICY

In addition to our unrivalled legal service offering, the NFU has an in-house team of lawyers who advise and support its policy teams lobbying on behalf of our members.

The Legal Affairs Team provides legal advice to NFU officeholders, directors, staff and members covering a huge range of legal topics, encompassing all of the policy areas within the NFU, and across all sectors.

The team fights NFU legal cases for the industry and produces information and guidance for members on legal issues relevant to their farming and growing businesses.

I am very proud of the NFU legal offer – providing a comprehensive, professional, and united service to members when they most need our support.

Andrew Clark | NFU Director of Policy



SPECIALIST ADVICE

Our qualified team of legal and technical advisers form part of NFU CallFirst – a free* telephone helpline service exclusive to NFU members. They can provide professional advice and guidance on a comprehensive range of issues, from employment law, health and safety, and planning, to more complex legal matters; the team are there to support and help you run your business more effectively.

If more in depth advice is needed, your query will be referred to one of the NFU Legal Panel Firms within your region. Have your membership number ready so our team can answer your query as quickly and effectively as possible.

Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm (excluding bank holidays).

**Calls to 0370 numbers will be taken out of any inclusive minutes available on your mobile or landline national minutes plan. If not, it is still no more expensive than calling national rate numbers starting 01 or 02. Opening hours are subject to change.*

NFU LEGAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME

Providing financial support for legal and professional costs.

The NFU Legal Assistance Scheme (LAS) is a unique, discretionary benefits scheme offered as an optional extra to NFU Farmer & Grower members at just £38 (+VAT) a year.

With nearly 90% of our members subscribing to it, the scheme provides you with professional guidance and financial support* towards legal and other professional costs should you face a dispute relating to your farming and/or growing business.

Benefits of the NFU Legal Assistance Scheme include:

- Contribution towards professional fees
- Dedicated in-house LAS team offering professional guidance and support throughout the case
- Contribution towards mediation costs in inter-member disputes (IMDs)
- £500 towards professional fees for BPS Independent Panel Reviews
- Up to £600 towards the cost of budgetary advice for rent reviews under the NFU Tenants' First Advice Service
- Up to £300 towards the costs involved in putting up site notices in fly-grazing cases
- Contribution towards the professional costs of NVZ appeals
- Confidentiality assured.

How can I access the service?

The NFU Legal Assistance Scheme is available to you at an annual cost of £38 (+VAT) if you are an NFU Farmer & Grower member.

Should you require financial support, you must be a subscriber to the LAS at the time the dispute arises. If you are eligible, financial assistance will be considered from the date the matter is formally brought to the attention of an NFU CallFirst adviser, your local NFU group secretary, or any NFU member of staff.

**Each case is decided on its facts and legal merits, and awards are discretionary. It is important to note that the NFU Legal Assistance Scheme is not a legal expenses insurance policy, nor does it cover third party, your opponents' or any adverse costs; instead, it offers its subscribers exclusive beneficial services.*

1.



Contact NFU CallFirst on **0370 845 8458** to speak to a legal and technical adviser for preliminary advice and to make an application for LAS funding.

2.



If more in-depth advice is needed, your query will be referred to one of the NFU Legal Panel Firms in your area for a free initial discussion about your case.

3.



The firm will provide an initial report and further updates to the LAS team to consider funding towards your legal and other professional costs.

"The standout service for me is the Legal Assistance Scheme. For the past 25 years we've been a member of the scheme and wondered why, and never imagined that we would use the service. However, our wind turbine has been the cause of two judicial reviews and the LAS has supported us significantly for almost the past six years, and has awarded us more than our entire NFU membership costs since I became a member in 1989. That, to me, is incredible."

John Charles-Jones | Nottinghamshire



NFU LEGAL PANEL

Legal representation that gives you peace of mind.

The NFU Legal Panel comprises of 16 legal firms located throughout England and Wales offering NFU Farmer & Grower members local support and 12.5% discount off hourly rates directly relating to their farming or growing business.

The firms have been specifically selected by the NFU for their experience and expertise in agricultural and horticultural matters; complying with Solicitors Regulation Authority requirements. The firms can also assist in non-farming areas of law and their advice is completely impartial.

Our directory of NFU Legal Panel Firms can be found on pages 13-15 of this brochure.

Why might you need a solicitor?

- You have received a contract to sign
- You have been asked to attend an interview under caution
- You have a legal dispute
- You have received a solicitor's letter
- You are thinking of diversifying
- You have received a letter or notice from a government department or agency.

A photograph of two men standing on a gravel path in a rural setting. The man on the left is wearing a light-colored checkered shirt and brown trousers. The man on the right is wearing a light blue shirt and dark blue trousers. A golden retriever is sitting on the path in the foreground. The background shows a green field and a blue sky with some clouds.

"We'd never faced litigation before, and suddenly when you're in that territory you need a friendly hand – we found that through our local NFU panel solicitors who gave us the support we so desperately needed, they were brilliant."

The panel offers the following benefits to members:

- 12.5% discount on hourly rates
- Fixed fees for specified services
- Act as a one-stop shop for NFU members
- Free initial report to support your LAS funding application where appropriate
- Great accessibility with at least two firms in your region
- Comprehensive advice whatever your problem – business, property or family-related
- Deliver the NFU Contract Checking Service – helping you to understand exactly what you're signing
- Deliver the NFU Legal Health Check Service – helping to identify concerns or legal matters that may need to be addressed on your farm.

What to do if you have a legal query.



1.

Stage 1: NFU CallFirst

As part of your NFU membership you already have access to a team of legal experts at NFU CallFirst by calling **0370 845 8458**. They will offer you free initial advice and try to resolve your query.



2.

Stage 2: Referral

If the NFU legal and technical adviser is unable to resolve your query, they will refer you to one of our 16 expert NFU Legal Panel Firms local to you.



3.

Stage 3: NFU Legal Panel Firm

Your local firm will work closely with you to support your query and to assist with your application to the NFU Legal Assistance Scheme if your case is eligible for financial support.

NFU CONTRACT CHECKING SERVICE

Helping you understand exactly what you're signing.

In today's world, we all know contracts can be complex and can often be written in language that can puzzle and confuse us. You may occasionally be asked to enter into a contract that you are not entirely sure about.

Seeking early advice before signing on the dotted line can protect you from potentially costly, lengthy and stressful legal disputes in the future. That's why the NFU in conjunction with its Legal Panel Firms is delighted to offer a Contract Checking Service to NFU Farmer & Grower members. The Legal Panel Firms can undertake the work on your behalf by offering their independent professional advice to ensure you understand your rights and obligations, and are satisfied that your aims and objectives are met before you sign the contract.

When can the service be used?

- When you receive a contract from another party you are planning to trade with or buy from
- When you wish to issue a new contract yourself for a business transaction you are about to enter into with another party
- When either you or the other party propose changes to any of the terms and conditions of an existing contract.

Special Offer!

NFU Legal Assistance Scheme* subscribers can apply for financial assistance of up to a maximum of £1,000 (at £250 each) towards the cost of having four contracts checked or drafted by the NFU Legal Panel Firms

**Normal LAS rules apply*

How is the service accessed?

1.



Contact NFU CallFirst by calling **0370 845 8458**. The NFU legal and technical adviser will have a free initial discussion with you and can then make a referral to one of the NFU Legal Panel Firms. You will be referred to the relevant firm in your area, who will contact you within 48 hours to discuss your contract.

2.



The NFU Legal Panel Firm will contact you to discuss your requirements and objectives, as well as review the documentation you send to them.

They will review the contract and contact you with a fixed quote for the service based on its complexity, value and in some cases, its length. If agreed, the firm will then produce a simple report to reflect your objectives and help you to understand the contract.

The NFU has negotiated exclusive preferential rates for NFU Farmer & Grower members that start from as little as **£275.00 (+ VAT)** for the report at stage 2 (depending on the complexity and value of the contract). When you balance that cost against what the contract is going to be worth to your business, it is likely to be money well spent.

3.



If you want them to, the NFU Legal Panel Firm will consider the contract in more detail and assist in renegotiating specific terms with the other party and/or advise in further detail what the contract means for your business.

The charge at stage 3 will either be at the firm's standard hourly rates (with a 12.5% NFU discount applied), or if possible, at a fixed fee that can be agreed directly with the firm before any work is done.

NFU LEGAL HEALTH CHECK SERVICE

Identify concerns or legal matters that may need to be addressed on farm.

The NFU in conjunction with its Legal Panel Firms is pleased to offer NFU Farmer & Grower members an entirely free initial Legal Health Check in relation to their farming or growing businesses. This service aims to help identify and highlight any potential issues, legal gaps or other matters members might want to address to help secure their farming, growing or diversification businesses.

The Legal Health Check can also significantly help underpin business resilience. During the current unprecedented changing times with the future implementation of the Agricultural Transition Plan, Environmental Land Management Scheme, Lump Sum Payments to name a few, this Legal Health Check could assist in many ways - including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Property matters (includes ownership, tenancies, land registration)
- Estate planning (includes Wills, Lasting Powers of Attorney, Trust Deeds etc.)
- Business structures
- Share farming
- Contract farming
- Rights of Way (including Section 31(6) applications)
- Succession planning
- Employment
- Diversification

What does the service include?

- The service will include an initial free discussion with members either on farm or virtually as agreed with the NFU Legal Panel Firm (the process may start with the completion of an online questionnaire to help understand the nature of the business and identify the likely issues to be considered), followed by the creation of a simple report with any initial observations and/or recommendations.
- Members who then wish to take forward any recommendations identified at the report stage can then agree the scope and cost of any work to be carried out directly with the NFU Legal Panel Firm concerned.
- The terms and conditions for the Legal Health Check will be under the firm's usual T&Cs.

How much does it cost?

The initial NFU Legal Health Check Service is free and is designed to provide members with a report that highlights any concerns or legal matters that need to be addressed. Should any work be identified and subsequently commissioned, then that piece of work will be carried out at the firm's standard hourly rates (with a 12.5% NFU discount applied). Alternatively, it may be possible to agree a fixed fee directly with the firm before any work is done.

How is the service accessed?

1.



Members should call NFU CallFirst on **0370 845 8458** for a free initial discussion with an NFU legal and technical adviser who will then refer you to the appropriate NFU Legal Panel Firm in your area.

2.



The NFU Legal Panel Firm will get in touch with you to have a free initial discussion. In some cases, you may also receive an online questionnaire from the firm to start the process. The questions are to assist in highlighting the areas within your business you might want to raise with them ahead of the discussion or meeting.

3.



The NFU Legal Panel Firm will arrange a visit or a virtual discussion as appropriate and agreed with you. This will result in a brief outline report being produced to agree the areas identified that require some work to be carried out to put things right within the business.

Special Offer!

NFU members who subscribe to the NFU Legal Assistance Scheme* can apply for financial assistance of up to a maximum of £1,000 for four sets of instructions (at £250 each) generated by the Legal Health Check.

**Normal LAS rules apply*



"We really value the NFU Legal Assistance Scheme. We had an issue with livestock worrying where a dog attacked our sheep, losing seven. We rang the NFU who said they were more than happy to represent us from a legal perspective and they truly gave us the confidence to stand up in court and fight our case."

The Walmsley family | Lancashire

NFU LEGAL PANEL DIRECTORY

NORTH

Cheshire

BOWCOCK CUERDEN LLP

South Cheshire House, Manor Road, Nantwich Cheshire CW5 5LX
Contact: Lesley Smith
E: LSmith@bowcockcuerden.co.uk | T: 01270 611 106
www.bowcockcuerden.co.uk



Northumberland, North Riding, Durham and Tyne and Wear

JACKSONS LAW FIRM

17 Falcon Court, Preston Farm Industrial Estate,
Stockton on Tees TS18 3TU
Contact: Nicola Neilson
E: nneilson@jacksons-law.com | T: 01642 356 500
www.jacksons-law.com



York East Riding, York West Riding and South Yorkshire

CROMBIE WILKINSON SOLICITORS

Forsyth House, 3 Market Place, Malton YO17 7LP
Contact: Amy Clarkson
E: a.clarkson@crombiwilkinson.co.uk | T: 01653 600 070
www.crombiwilkinson.co.uk



Lancashire, Cumbria, Merseyside and Greater Manchester

NAPTHENS SOLICITORS

Darwen House, Walker Business Park, Blackburn BB1 2QE
Contact: Andrew Holden
E: andrew.holden@naphthens.co.uk | T: 01254 686 216
www.naphthens.co.uk



WALES

South to Mid-Wales

JCP SOLICITORS

Venture Court, Waterside Business Park, Valley Way, Enterprise Park,
Swansea SA6 8AH
Contact: Rhys Evans
E: Rhys.Evans@jcpsolicitors.co.uk | T: 02920 379 568
www.jcpsolicitors.co.uk



North to Mid-Wales

AGRI ADVISOR

Bala Office, 68 Stryd Fawr, Bala, Gwynedd LL23 7AD
Contact: Awel Mai Hughes
E: awel@agriadvisor.co.uk | T: 01678 444 005
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SOUTH

Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Berks, Bucks and Oxon

THRINGS SOLICITORS

Stuart Court, Salisbury Road, Romsey SO51 6DJ

Contact: Russell Reeves

E: reeves@thrings.com | T: 01794 310 300

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Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire

CLARKE WILLMOTT LLP

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Devon and Cornwall

FOOT ANSTEY LLP

Senate Court, Southernhay Gardens, Exeter EX1 1NT

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EAST

Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk

HCR HEWITSONS

50-60 Station Road, Cambridge CB1 2JH

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E: dwilkinson@hcrlaw.com | T: 01223 532 743

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Essex, Hertfordshire and Suffolk

TEES

Tees House, 95 London Road, Bishop's Stortford,

Hertfordshire CM23 3GW

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Surrey, West Sussex

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EAST

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WARNERS SOLICITORS

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warners |
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MIDLANDS

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Staffordshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire

LANYON BOWDLER

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Warwickshire and Worcestershire

SHAKESPEARE MARTINEAU

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Derbyshire

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NFU LEGAL SERVICES

NFU CallFirst: 0370 845 8458 | nfuonline.com | nfu-cymru.org.uk



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