

## **Legal services / The Terrence Higgins Trust.**

### **Contributors**

Terrence Higgins Trust. Legal Centre

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*The Terrence Higgins Trust*



## **LEGAL SERVICES**

The Terrence Higgins Trust's Legal Centre provides a range of legal and welfare rights advice services for anyone affected by AIDS or HIV infection.

**The Legal Centre** comprises the Trust's Legal Officer, Welfare Rights Officer, Legal and Welfare Assistant and some 60 volunteer lawyers and welfare rights advisers from the Legal Services Group of the Terrence Higgins Trust.

The volunteers are in private legal practice, employed in Central or Local Government, in industry or in the public law sector (Law Centres and Legal Advice Centres, Housing Advice Centres and Citizens Advice Bureaux). As a result they are able to bring a wide range of experience to the AIDS field.

The Legal Centre has been recognized as a Legal Advice Centre by the General Council of the Bar. This means that in addition to giving legal advice, its lawyers can draft legal documents and write letters on behalf of users of the service.

Advice and assistance is usually given free by volunteers. Where this cannot be done because of the complexity of the work or the amount of work involved, a list of sympathetic solicitors can be provided who will charge for their services.

The Legal Centre provides specialist legal and welfare rights advice and assistance in a whole range of areas including the following:

## **INSURANCE, MORTGAGES AND PENSIONS**

**MEDICAL MATTERS** – advice on testing for HIV infection, complaints about treatment, and AIDS and HIV related legislation

**WILLS AND POWERS OF ATTORNEY** – assisting with preparing a will or power of attorney and with the affairs of someone who has died

**SOCIAL SECURITY** – contributory, non-contributory and means-tested benefits

**HOUSING** – advice for tenants and landlords on homelessness, problems with rent and owner occupation, transfer of tenancies and repairs

**EMPLOYMENT** – advice on AIDS and HIV employment policies for employees and employers, health and safety at work, unfair dismissal, wrongful dismissal, pension rights and sick leave rights

**IMMIGRATION** – rules and practice of the UK and other countries in relation to AIDS and HIV infection

## **DEBT PROBLEMS**

**FAMILY LAW** – custody, adoption and care of children with HIV infection

## **Access to the Legal Centre:**

### **LEGAL LINE**

01-405 2381

Legal Line is a direct telephone advice and information service which operates on Wednesdays between 7 pm and 10 pm, staffed by volunteer lawyers who can advise on all the areas mentioned. If the Legal Line adviser cannot deal fully with the enquiry on the telephone, you will be referred to a member of the Legal Services Group who is an expert in that area.

### **WRITTEN ENQUIRIES**

Enquiries in writing are welcome and should be addressed to the Legal and Welfare Assistant. Please give as much information as you can and specify what help or advice is required. Please also give a telephone number (if possible) in case further information is needed.

### **URGENT PROBLEMS**

If your legal problem cannot wait until you can call Legal Line and cannot be dealt with by a written enquiry, contact the Legal and Welfare Assistant on 01-831 0330 (the Trust's Administration number) between 10 am and 5 pm on weekdays. An appointment will be made for you to see the Legal Officer or Welfare Rights Officer, or you will be referred to someone in the Legal Services Group who can help you.

## **TRAINING AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

The Legal Centre provides training courses for other lawyers, welfare rights workers, AIDS workers and employers in particular aspects of the law and AIDS and HIV infection. The Legal Officer and members of the Legal Services Group also undertake speaking engagements. A small fee (which benefits the Terrence Higgins Trust) is charged to public sector and corporate users of these services. Enquiries should be made to the Speaker's Co-ordinator at the Trust.

## **OTHER SERVICES OF THE TRUST**

The Terrence Higgins Trust provides a wide range of services to those affected by AIDS or HIV infection:

- Helpline – a telephone advice service for all problems related to AIDS or HIV infection which operates daily between 3 pm and 10 pm
- Counselling and Support Groups
- Buddies
- Practical help and support
- Health Education
- Drug Users Group
- Speakers on AIDS and HIV issues
- "Facts and Figures" – a regular bulletin providing comprehensive material about AIDS and HIV infection

The Terrence Higgins Trust is a registered charity which provides practical support, help, counselling and advice for anyone with or concerned about AIDS or HIV infection.

**Legal Line**

01-405 2381

7 pm-10 pm

every Wednesday

**Helpline**

01-242 1010

3 pm-10 pm daily

**The Terrence Higgins Trust**

**Legal Centre**

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