



**Legal Education and Empowerment Interventions  
to Improve Low-SES Consumers' Access to Justice**

Prepared for the Solicitors Regulation Authority

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## Executive summary

Individuals with a low socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely to experience legal vulnerability than high-SES individuals. Relative to high-SES consumers, low-SES consumers are less likely to report experiencing legal matters, but are even less likely to use legal services to resolve those legal matters. Therefore, although low-SES individuals report fewer legal needs, their legal needs nevertheless appear more likely to remain unmet than those of high-SES individuals. To understand this further, we conducted a randomised experiment testing the effectiveness of two actionable interventions on a sample of 812 low-SES consumers residing in England and Wales. These interventions were designed to

1. enhance consumers' ability to recognise their legal needs, and
2. increase their likelihood of using legal services to address those legal matters.

The interventions targeted two important factors underlying the heightened vulnerability of low-SES consumers, namely legal education and legal empowerment. The education intervention consisted primarily of educating respondents about what 'legal matters' are and how to recognise them. The empowerment intervention consisted primarily of informing respondents about how and where to find legal information and get legal help.

We measured the effectiveness of these interventions on respondents' ability to recognise legal matters and on their beliefs and attitudes toward the legal process.

The results support the following conclusions:

- Educating consumers on what is a legal matter successfully increased the recognition of legal matters, both in hypothetical scenarios and in personally experienced situations.
- Empowering consumers about finding legal information and getting legal help substantially increased their likelihood of using legal services.
- The empowerment intervention also reduced several barriers that often deter consumers from taking legal action. Following the empowerment intervention, consumers were less worried that
  - the legal service provider would not have their best interests in mind,
  - they would receive unfair treatment,
  - the search for a provider would be difficult,
  - taking legal action would not be worth the effort,
  - the legal process would be too long, and
  - taking legal action would be too expensive.
- The empowerment intervention also significantly increased the likelihood of
  - using a price comp
  - arison website,
  - using a customer review website,
  - consulting a local Law Centre, and

- consulting a legal advocacy group.
- Overall, low-SES consumers are relatively confident that they could get legal help if they needed it. However, they are concerned they could not afford to pay for it and they are only moderately confident that they are eligible to receive Legal Aid. Importantly, the empowerment intervention significantly increased respondents' belief that they could get free legal help if they needed it.
- The empowerment intervention made consumers feel
  - less anxious about the legal process,
  - more involved in the process, and
  - more confident in their ability to resolve legal matters.

These findings suggest that low-SES consumers' lack of legal empowerment underlies many of their unmet legal needs and that increasing their legal empowerment may effectively decrease their legal vulnerability.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Inception of the research project**

This research was commissioned by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), with the following overarching aims:

- (i) to deepen the understanding of consumer concerns and requirements for legal services,
- (ii) to identify gaps in the provision of legal services, and
- (iii) to determine whether any such gaps are detrimental and to whom.

The SRA further specified that the research should focus on individual consumers and small business owners in England and Wales. The research team consisted of consumer behaviour researchers at Bayes Business School (formerly Cass), City University of London.

The project consists of five cumulative phases, with each phase building on the findings of the previous phase. Phase 1, based on extensive desk research, provided a comprehensive examination and systematisation of existing frameworks used to segment the supply and demand of legal services in England and Wales. Guided by the findings of Phase 1, Phase 2 featured a qualitative study to assess consumers' legal needs and experiences in the legal customer journey. Phase 3 implemented a novel value-based approach for the identification of market segments based on their ideal legal service provider configuration. Phase 4 offered an in-depth examination of ethnic minorities' and low SES individuals' understanding of, attitudes toward, and barriers to accessing legal services. Phase 5, which is the focus of this report, tests policy interventions designed to improve the way individual low-SES consumers in England and Wales perceive their legal needs and access the legal services they require.

### **1.2 Scope, aims, and contributions of this report**

This report presents the results of Phase 5 of the research project: a randomised experiment that tested two different policy interventions.

Legal services offer consumers opportunities to access justice by enforcing and defending their rights, yet several studies have indicated that consumers do not always access the legal services they need (Legal Services Board, 2021; Solicitors Regulation Authority, 2017; World Justice Project, 2019).

Phase 4 of the research revealed that low-SES consumers report a lower incidence of legal issues. This result could be due to the fact that low-SES consumers actually have fewer legal needs (for example, their lower likelihood of owning a home reduces their need for conveyancing services compared with high-SES consumers). However, this result could also indicate that low-SES consumers have a lower propensity to recognise their legal needs.

The results of Phase 4 also revealed a substantial gap between legal needs and legal use for low-SES consumers compared with high-SES consumers. This result may suggest that low-SES consumers are unaware that they may access legal help or it could be due to a general lack of legal empowerment.

Since these results highlight notable potential areas of legal vulnerability for low-SES consumers, understanding and disentangling the effect of their underlying causes is important. If this is caused by their lower ability to recognise legal needs and/or low legal empowerment, carefully designed interventions could help improve these factors.

Consequently, Phase 5 tested two novel interventions to examine the effects, relative impact, and potential complementarity of these factors. One intervention aimed to improve low-SES individual consumers' understanding of what a legal matter is, thereby enhancing their propensity to recognise legal issues.

The second intervention aimed to increase respondents' awareness of

- sources of legal information,
- search strategies,
- regulatory agencies and the complaints process,
- opportunities for free legal help (e.g., Legal Aid or other assistance through local Law Centres, trade unions, and legal insurance), and
- ways to pay for legal services (e.g., 'no win, no fee' arrangements).

This was intended to enhance respondents' sense of legal empowerment.

The study offers two main contributions:

- It allows us to understand and disentangle two possible causes of heightened vulnerability among low-SES consumers; whether it is:
  - their lower propensity to recognise their legal needs (which are therefore unlikely to be addressed),

- their feelings of powerlessness when facing the legal system (which reduce their propensity to access legal services and take legal action),
  - or a combination of both factors.
- It provides an experimental test of the effectiveness of two actionable and scalable policy interventions that could improve low-SES consumers' access to justice.

## **2. Motivation and approach to the research**

### **2.1 Motivation for the research**

Every year, approximately 3.6 million adults in England and Wales experience unmet legal needs involving some dispute they are unable to address because they do not receive sufficient information, assistance, or professional help (Legal Services Board, 2021). The economic value of these unmet needs in the legal services market has been estimated at £11.4 billion annually (Ajaz et al., 2021).

Phase 4 of the research project examined multiple possible causes of consumers' inability to address their legal needs. The analysis revealed two crucial results. First, low-SES consumers reported experiencing fewer legal needs compared with high-SES consumers. This result raises an important question: whether low-SES consumers do actually experience fewer legal needs compared with high-SES consumers, or whether they are simply less likely to recognise their legal needs (but they actually experience them to the same extent as high-SES consumers or even to a greater extent). Testing an intervention designed to explain what 'legal matters' are and how to recognise them would allow us to answer this question and to understand whether low-SES consumers' vulnerability can, at least in part, be addressed through legal education.

A second important result emerging from Phase 4 is that low-SES consumers are less likely than high-SES consumers to act upon the legal needs they experience. This result appears to be related to a lack of legal empowerment observed among low-SES consumers. It raises a second important question: is it possible to mitigate low-SES consumers' vulnerability by improving their attitudes and beliefs about the legal system in order to enhance their confidence in using it? Testing an intervention designed to enhance consumers' sense of legal empowerment would allow us to answer this question and understand whether low-SES consumers' access to justice can be enhanced, at least in part, by acting on this psychological factor.

The motivation for the present research was to test two policy interventions to improve low-SES consumers' access to justice. One intervention targeted consumers' ability to recognise legal needs (legal education), whereas the other targeted consumers' propensity to act upon those needs (legal empowerment).

## **2.2 Approach to the research**

We conducted a randomised experiment on a sample of approximately 800 low-SES individuals currently residing in England or Wales. Their status as low-SES was determined relative to the median annual household income in the UK, which at the time of data collection (October 2022) was £31,400.

The experiment compared the effects of two interventions providing different types of information:

- an education intervention, which consisted primarily of explaining to respondents what 'legal matters' are and how to recognise them; and
- an empowerment intervention, which consisted primarily of informing respondents about how and where to find legal information and get legal help.

The effectiveness of the interventions was measured with respect to two different sets of relevant outcomes. The first set of measures assessed respondents' ability to recognise legal matters (in general, presented as legal scenarios, as well as their own). The second set of measures assessed respondents' beliefs and attitudes toward the legal process.

The education intervention was designed primarily to improve recognition of legal matters (i.e., the first set of measures), whereas the empowerment intervention was designed to increase respondents' sense of legal empowerment (i.e., the second set of measures). A third group, which served as a control, received the two interventions only after completing both sets of measures.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups. All of them received both the education and the empowerment interventions, but to allow a comparison of their effectiveness, the order of the interventions and measures varied across the three groups.

The remainder of this report is organised as follows. In section 3, we present an overview of the research design, the measures, and the characteristics of the sample. Section 4 presents the results of the legal education intervention. Section 5 presents



the results of the legal empowerment intervention, while section 6 offers some concluding remarks.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 Design and sample

The study included 812 low-SES residents of England and Wales divided into the following three experimental groups:

- control ( $n = 274$ ),
- education ( $n = 263$ ), and
- empowerment ( $n = 275$ ).<sup>1</sup>

Respondents were recruited from the Prolific online research panel and were paid £5 for completing the study.

For sampling purposes, we used annual household income (before tax) as a proxy for SES. Respondents reported their annual household income from the following options:

- under £20,000;
- £20,000–£29,999;
- £30,000–£39,999;
- £40,000–£49,999;
- £50,000–£59,999;
- £60,000–£69,999;
- £70,000–£79,999;
- more than £80,000;
- prefer not to say.

At the time of data collection, the median annual household income in the UK was £31,400. We therefore designated individuals whose annual household income was less than £30,000 as ‘low SES’. This is comparable to the criterion of £32,000 for ‘low income’ respondents in other recent studies (e.g., Ipsos Mori, 2016; YouGov, 2020). Given that we specifically sought a low-SES sample, we excluded from analyses all respondents who (i) reported an income of £30,000 or more or (ii) selected the ‘prefer not to say’ option. We also measured several other characteristics of low SES (e.g., education and occupation) to validate household income as a proxy for SES, as explained in more detail below.

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<sup>1</sup> The initial sample included 1,083 respondents in total, but 271 (i.e., 25% of the sample) were excluded from analyses on the basis of the following criteria: (1) not resident in England or Wales ( $n = 1$ ), (2) prefer not to report annual household income ( $n = 27$ ), or (3) annual household income of £30,000 or more ( $n = 243$ ).

Demographic measures are described in detail in Table 1. Items and response options were adopted and adapted from other recent surveys within the legal services literature (e.g., Franklyn et al., 2017; IFF Research, 2018; Ipsos Mori, 2016; Mintel, 2021; OECD and Open Society Foundations, 2019; Pleasence and Balmer, 2014; YouGov, 2020). Respondents identified their ethnicity from nineteen specific categories across five general ethnic groups listed in the 2021 UK Census. We additionally included a ‘prefer not to say’ option. In this report, ‘ethnic minority’ refers to all respondents who identified as any of the specific categories across the four general ethnic groups of Asian, Black, mixed, and other.

**Table 1. Demographic measures**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Item</b>
Age	What is your age?
Gender	What is your gender? Options: Male; female; other; prefer not to say
Ethnicity	What is your ethnic group? Options: see main text
Type of school	Which type of school did you attend for the most time between the ages of 11 and 16? Options: State-run or state-funded school; independent or fee-paying school; attended school outside the UK; don't know; prefer not to say
Education level	What is your highest level of education? Options: Masters degree or above; bachelor degree; A-level or equivalent; O-level or GCSE equivalent; other; prefer not to say
Occupation	What is your occupation? Options: management or professional; self-employed; office/administrative; manual labour; student; full-time parent/ carer/ housewife/ househusband; unemployed or casual worker; retired; other
State benefits	Do you receive means-tested state benefits (e.g., income or housing support)? Options: Yes; no
Household income	What is your annual household income, before tax? Options: see main text
Geographical region	What geographical region do you live in? Options: 11 regions; other
Crime victimisation	In the last four years, have you been the victim of a crime? Options: No; yes
Disability	The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. If you have a condition which fits the Equality Act definition, please tick 'Yes' even if you are not limited by your condition. Do you consider yourself to have a disability according to the definition in the Equality Act 2010? Options: Yes; no; prefer not to say
Primary language	What is your primary/first language? Options: English; Welsh; other
English fluency	What is your level of English fluency (i.e., reading, speaking, understanding, writing)? Options: No fluency; basic fluency; good fluency; native/fully bilingual
Internet access	Which, if any, of the following do you have access to at home or elsewhere for personal use? Please select all that apply. Options: Fixed line telephone; mobile telephone with internet access; reliable internet access into the home
Internet proficiency	How would you rate your ability to use the internet to find information? Options: I don't use the internet; bad; poor; fair; good; excellent

Overall, 50% of respondents self-identified as female, 13% identified as ethnic minorities, 7% resided in Wales, and the mean age was 42 years. Across groups, the sample displayed several characteristics that are hallmarks of low SES:

- Only 6% of the respondents attended an independent or fee-paying school;
- 48% were university educated (i.e., undergraduate or higher);
- 23% were unemployed (i.e., unemployed or casual worker, or full-time parent, carer, housewife, or househusband);
- 18% received means-tested state benefits; and
- 21% were disabled.

These findings support our assumption that the included respondents were not only low income, but also low SES more generally.

Nearly all respondents spoke either English or Welsh as their native language (93.6%), nearly all reported good or fully fluent English (99.9%), nearly all reported access to the internet either at home or on their mobile phone (99.3%), and nearly all reported good or excellent internet proficiency (96.3%).

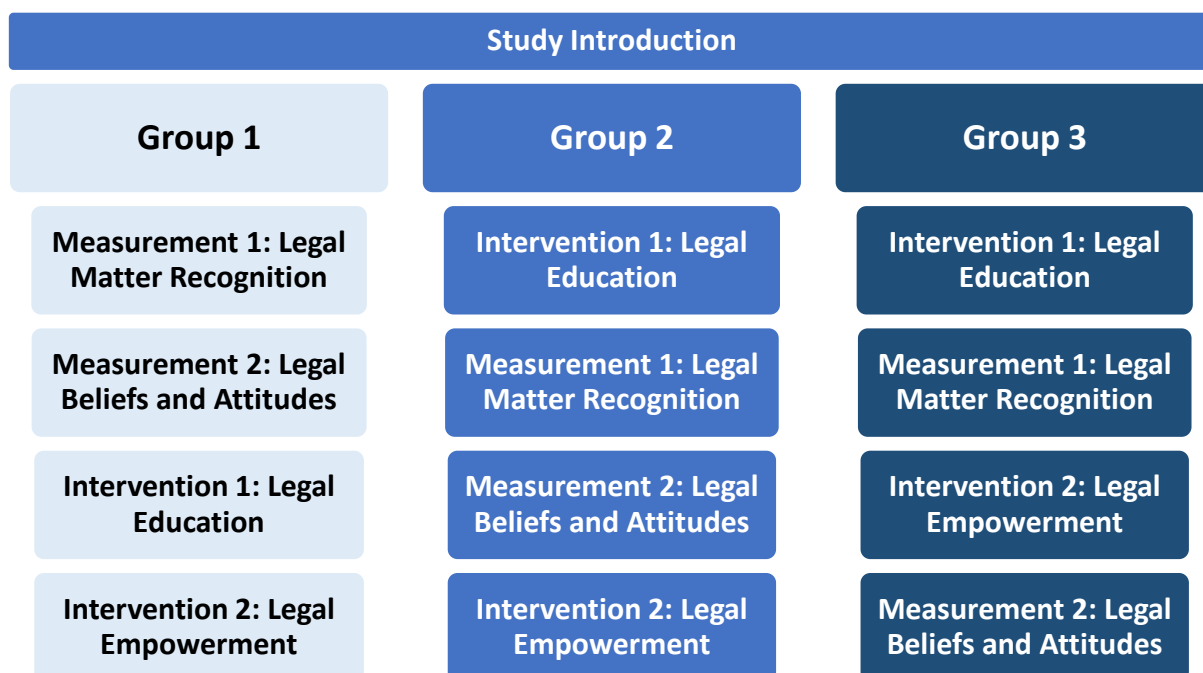
Demographic characteristics within each group are presented in Table A1 of the Appendix. Most importantly, the three groups were generally well matched on these demographic measures, though a few differences among groups did emerge (see Table A1 for detail).

### **3.2 Procedure**

The study was conducted online in October 2022. In addition to the demographic measures described above, respondents completed two blocks of interventions and two blocks of measures. The education intervention consisted primarily of educating respondents about what ‘legal matters’ are and how to recognise them. The empowerment intervention consisted primarily of informing respondents about how and where to find legal information and get legal help.

The first block of measures (measurement 1) assessed respondents’ ability to recognise legal matters. The second block of measures (measurement 2) assessed respondents’ beliefs and attitudes toward the legal process. The education intervention was designed to improve recognition of legal matters (i.e., measurement 1), whereas the empowerment intervention was designed to increase respondents’ sense of legal empowerment (i.e., measurement 2). Note that all participants completed the same blocks, but did so in different orders. The basic study flow for each group is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Study design**



Group 1 completed both blocks of measurement before the two interventions. Thus, because they received the interventions after the measurements, the interventions could not affect their responses on the measurements. Group 2 received the education intervention before the first measurement block, but received the empowerment intervention only at the end. We expected this group to show education-based improvements in measurement 1, but not empowerment-based improvements in measurement 2. Finally, Group 3 received interleaved interventions between the two measurement blocks (see Figure 1). We expected this group to show both education-based improvements in measurement 1 and empowerment-based improvements in measurement 2. Further details about each block are provided in the subsequent sections.

### 3.3 Study introduction

The introductory block consisted of three main components, which all respondents completed at the beginning of the study: (i) a definition of ‘legal matter’, (ii) a measure of legal matters experienced in the past four years, and (iii) a measure of legal services used in the past four years.

After providing informed consent, respondents read a definition and description of ‘legal matter’, as follows:

**‘A legal matter is a question or problem that is, or could be, answered or resolved by the law.** Legal matters may or may not involve the use of legal services, i.e., services for legal or law-related matters. People can experience a legal matter but choose not to use any legal services.

Legal matters can come up in lots of different ways including from planned events in your life, like buying a home or making a will. They can also appear suddenly, such as family problems, problems at work, or being accused of a crime. Other common legal matters include things like immigration and asylum, consumer rights, housing problems, and issues with debt and money.’

Respondents then indicated whether they had ‘experienced a legal matter within the last four years,’ and whether they had ‘used a legal service within the last four years.’ Note that, later in the study, respondents answered the question about legal matters again. We refer to this initial measure as ‘legal experience 1’.

### **3.4 Intervention 1: legal education**

The legal education intervention was intended to improve respondents’ recognition of legal matters. The intervention was designed to take approximately five minutes to administer, and it consisted of elaborating and clarifying the definition of a ‘legal matter’ (including examples of what is and is not a legal matter). A list of examples was provided in which residents of England and Wales are protected by the law (e.g., employment, housing, and consumer affairs). See the Appendix for full details.

The intervention was presented across five separate pages. The first four pages introduced and explained the following concepts:

1. *A legal matter is any issue that can be resolved by the law.*
2. *If there’s a law about it, then it’s a legal matter.*
3. *A legal matter can turn out to be either legal or illegal.*
4. *The law protects everyone in England in Wales in many different ways.*

Each of these four pages concluded with a simple comprehension question, which ensured respondents’ attention to and comprehension of the main point of that section. Respondents were not allowed to proceed to the next page until they had correctly answered the comprehension check; if they responded incorrectly, they

were allowed to change their response until they got it correct. The fifth and final page of the intervention contained a summary of the four concepts.

### **3.5 Measurement 1: Legal matter recognition**

We tested respondents' recognition of legal matters via the methods of signal detection theory (Tanner and Swets, 1954). In a signal detection task, each respondent undergoes several trials in which they must decide whether some 'signal' or target is present or absent. In our study, we presented 20 scenarios to each respondent (see Table 2), and for each scenario, respondents judged whether it was a 'legal matter' or not. The scenarios included 10 areas of law (e.g., housing and immigration), and for each area, we created one scenario that was a legal matter and one that was not. We selected the different scenarios to be representative of legal issues likely to be experienced both by high-SES and low-SES consumers. These judgments of whether each scenario was a 'legal matter' or not were developed in consultation with the legal team at the SRA.

**Table 2. Legal scenarios**

<b>Area of Law</b>	<b>Legal Matter?</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Consumer Affairs</b>	Y	You buy a second-hand car from an independent dealer who told you that the car had passed several of their safety checks. A couple of weeks later, you took it for its annual MoT test and the garage found some serious defects around the structural integrity of the vehicle. You contacted the car dealer but they told you it was not their problem.
	N	You have lunch at a fast food restaurant, but the burger didn't taste as good as you remember, and the chips went cold quickly. After finishing your meal, you complain to the staff and ask for your money back, but they refuse.
<b>Conveyancing</b>	Y	You have had an offer on a flat accepted. One of the reasons you like the flat was a big shed in the garden. You made it clear that you wanted the shed included with the property purchase and you made sure it was included in the list of fixtures and fittings when contracts were exchanged. However, on the day you move into the flat, you find that the shed has gone. You contact the previous owners to ask them about it and they say they have taken it with them to their new home.
	N	You are in the process of buying a flat, and have booked a final viewing appointment with an estate agent. When you made the appointment you said you needed to leave by 3pm to do the school run so the appointment was made for 2pm. However, the estate agent didn't turn up until 2:30pm and didn't let you know they were going to be late. Because they were late, you had to cut the viewing short and then had to rush to pick your child up, which was stressful. You complain about the estate agent.
<b>Criminal</b>	Y	One evening, the police arrive at your door saying that your teenage child has caused damage to a neighbour's greenhouse. You are told that your neighbour saw your child throwing stones at his greenhouse, that he has photographic evidence of this and that several panes of glass have shattered so the greenhouse is no longer useable. The police want you to bring your teenage child to the police station.
	N	You're on a long bus journey, and fortunately the bus isn't crowded. However, a person two rows up from where you're sitting keeps looking back and staring at you. Eventually they get off the bus in the city centre, and you get off four stops later. Although they never said or did anything toward you, you are worried they may be a criminal.
<b>Employment</b>	Y	Your friend thinks that she has not been given a pay rise because she is pregnant.
	N	You work a six-hour shift at a local shop, and for the past few years you have always worked the afternoon shift, from 2pm to 8pm. You like this shift, and have arranged your life around that shift. One day, however, your boss asks you to start working the morning shift instead, from 8am to 2pm. You think this is unfair.

<b>Area of Law</b>	<b>Legal Matter?</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Family</b>	Y	You and your partner are both joint registered owners of a beautiful white German Shepherd. Sadly, you have recently split up from your partner and you have moved out. You want to be able to spend time with the dog, but your partner will not let you.
	N	You and your partner have been together for nearly a year. You've had your fair share of disagreements, but overall you are happy with them and are considering staying with them for a long time. Sadly, however, one day your partner breaks up with you. You think this is unfair.
<b>Immigration</b>	Y	Your friend has a family member from India who is looking to get a visa to come and live in the UK. They are a highly skilled worker and speak excellent English. They have taken advice from an agent in India but wonder whether they should also seek immigration advice from agents in the UK.
	N	You live in a big city, and there's an area that has lots of shops and restaurants that are part of an ethnic culture that is different from yours. There are also lots of people living in that area and working in the shops that are from that culture. You wonder whether those shops should be more spread out across the city, so they're not all in one place.
<b>Housing</b>	Y	You rent a top floor flat and have six flights of stairs to climb to access your flat. When the weather is wet and cold, the stairwell fills with condensation that makes the stairs wet and slippery, even the walls are wet. You have asked the landlord to do something about the damp or at least put warning signs up, as you are worried someone will slip on the stairs, but they won't do anything about it. One day you slip and fall down the stairs, snapping an ankle ligament.
	N	You rent a furnished flat in a nice area of town, and although you generally like the flat, the sofa is not very comfortable. It supports your back well, but it's not very soft. You ask the landlord to buy a new sofa, but they refuse.
<b>Personal Injury</b>	Y	You started a new job working in a warehouse 6 months ago. Your employer never gave you any manual handling or health and safety training, and didn't give you any steel-toe safety boots to wear at work. During a recent shift a co-worker accidentally dropped a heavy box on your foot, breaking two of your toes. The injury kept you from working for over a month, so you had to borrow money from your family to pay your bills.
	N	You enjoy going for long walks in the countryside. One day you are walking in local woodland and trip on a tree root and break your leg. Fortunately another hiker is able to help get you to hospital. You later report your broken leg to the nearest café by the woodland where you fell, but they say they do not own the land.



Area of Law	Legal Matter?	Scenario
Social Welfare	Y	Your Universal credit has been sanctioned (reduced) because you didn't turn up to an interview. You couldn't get to the interview as you were caring for a sick relative who had suddenly fallen ill. You were at the hospital with your relative when the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) called your home to see where you were. You want to appeal the decision and claim your full credit.
	N	You are 17 years old and are homeless as you did not feel safe living with your parents. You are currently staying on your friend's sofa but need some help to find a place of your own.
Will and Probate	Y	Your late father altered his will with a handwritten, unwitnessed version that was only discovered after his death. You want to know whether you are entitled to some furniture that your father willed to you in that final, handwritten will.
	N	You live with your uncle and his son, who is your cousin. Although you really like your uncle, you don't get on with your cousin very well. Your uncle decides to make a will, and he tells you and your cousin that he will leave all of his belongings to his son, your cousin. You think this is unfair because you don't like your cousin.

Signal detection analysis, unlike other methods, is designed to measure and account for biases in participants' response patterns. For example, suppose that a given respondent answers affirmatively on all 10 legal matters. This might appear to indicate perfect accuracy in recognising legal matters, as the respondent correctly identified all 10 legal matters. Suppose further, however, that the respondent also answered affirmatively on all 10 scenarios that were *not* legal matters. Now we understand that the respondent was not, in fact, good at recognising legal matters. Rather, the respondent simply was biased to respond affirmatively, regardless of the scenario.

The inclusion of non-legal matters is therefore critical for measuring respondents' true ability to recognise legal matters. Indeed, signal detection analyses yield four different types of outcomes, which are presented in Figure 2 and described below in terms of legal matters.

**Figure 2. Response outcomes in signal detection analysis**

		Legal Matter?	
		Y	N
Response	Y	Hit	False Alarm
	N	Miss	Correct Rejection

- A **hit** is when a legal matter is correctly identified as a legal matter.
- A **false alarm** is when a non-legal matter is incorrectly called a legal matter.
- A **miss** is when a legal matter is incorrectly called a non-legal matter.
- A **correct rejection** is when a non-legal matter is correctly identified as a non-legal matter.

Respondents viewed each of the 20 scenarios in random order, and for each scenario they were asked ‘Is this a *legal matter*?’ Finally, we asked them again whether they themselves had experienced a legal matter in the past four years. We refer to this measure as ‘legal experience 2’. Respondents who indicated that they had experienced a legal matter were then asked to identify from a list of 14 types of legal matter (e.g., conveyancing and family) which of them they had experienced in the past four years. See Table 3 for full details.

**Table 3. Measures in the ‘study introduction’ and ‘measurement 1’ blocks**

Measure	Block	Item
Legal experience 1	Introduction	Have you experienced a legal issue within the last FOUR YEARS? Options: yes; no
Legal service user	Introduction	Have you used a legal service within the last FOUR YEARS? Options: yes; no
Legal matter recognition	Measurement 1	See text and Table 2
Legal experience 2	Measurement 1	Now that you have seen some examples of legal matters, we would like to ask you again a question that we asked you earlier: Have you experienced a legal issue within the last FOUR YEARS? Options: yes; no
Legal issues experienced	Measurement 1	Which of the following legal issues have you experienced in the last FOUR YEARS? Please select all that apply. Options: conveyancing; will writing; probate; family matters; accident or injury claims; housing, landlord or tenant problems; employment disputes; any offences or criminal charges; immigration matters; problems with consumer services or goods; advice and appeals about benefits or tax credits; debt or hire purchase problems; power of attorney; neighbour disputes; other; none

### 3.6 Intervention 2: Legal empowerment

The legal empowerment intervention was intended to increase respondents' sense of legal empowerment. This was done by informing them about sources of legal information, search strategies, regulatory agencies and the complaints process, opportunities for free legal help (e.g., Legal Aid, pro bono work, Law Centres, trade unions), ways to pay for legal services (e.g., 'no win, no fee' agreements), and so forth. The intervention was designed to take approximately five minutes to administer, and it included many screenshots from websites and organisations in the legal field (e.g., Advice Now, Citizens Advice, Gov.UK pages on Legal Aid, Law Centres Network, Legal Choices, Legal Ombudsman, and ReviewSolicitors). See Figure 3 for an example.



Figure 3. Example screenshot from the legal empowerment intervention

#### 4. You can get free legal advice and, in some cases, free legal help.

All the websites that we showed you on the previous screens are free to use, providing free legal advice. Many of them also have options to email them, ring them, or visit a local office to discuss your specific legal matter. Some of them even have online training programs and videos to help you solve your legal problem, such as the example below from *Advice Now*.

**Know-How**  
Boost your legal knowledge, confidence and skills

Advice Now > Know-How

### Know-How

We want to ensure that everyone has the knowledge, confidence and skills they need to deal with everyday problems. In our Know-How section we look at the skills, attitudes and nuggets of knowledge that help you avoid or deal with problems before they get serious.

- How to prepare for seeing a solicitor or adviser
- Top Tips for dealing with problems at work
- How to negotiate with your landlord
- Last minute tips for going to court or tribunal
- Top tips on how to show a landlord you will be a good tenant
- Top tips for negotiating with shops or services

The intervention was presented across several pages that introduced and explained the following key points:

1. You can get legal help even if you aren't sure whether something is legal or illegal.

2. There are many ways to find legal help.
3. Many law services are regulated to ensure expertise and uphold standards of good service.
4. You can get free legal advice and, in some cases, free legal help.
5. There are many ways to pay for legal help.

As in the education intervention, each of the five main points concluded with a simple but compulsory comprehension check, and a final page summarised the five key points. See the Appendix for full details.

### **3.7 Measurement 2: Legal beliefs and attitudes**

This block included 21 measures of respondents' beliefs about and attitudes toward the legal system and aspects of the legal process. See Table 4 for full details.

At the beginning of the block, respondents read a scenario in which they were asked to imagine that their employer had sacked them for requesting more flexible working hours. We then asked respondents a series of seven questions related to that employment scenario:

- Whether it is a 'legal matter' ('employment matter' in Table 4);
- What barriers to accessing legal help they might experience;
- Whether they would take legal action;
- Whether they would seek legal help;
- Which people or organisations they would seek advice from;
- Which strategies they would use to search for legal help; and
- Which attributes are most important when choosing a legal service provider.

We then asked respondents six questions about their own personal circumstances with regard to getting legal help:

- Whether they think they could get legal help;
- Whether they think they could afford legal help;
- Whether they would check whether they are eligible for Legal Aid;
- Whether they think they are eligible for Legal Aid;
- Whether they think they could get free legal help; and
- Where they would look for free legal help.

Finally, we assessed eight other aspects of respondents' general legal beliefs and attitudes:

- Their sense of empowerment in choosing and using legal services;
- Their sense of capability within the legal system;
- Their sense of anxiety about the legal process;
- Their trust in the legal system;
- Their belief that the world is just;
- Their belief that people can improve their own legal circumstances;
- Their sense of active involvement in the legal process; and
- Their general sense of self-efficacy.

**Table 4. Measures in the ‘measurement 2’ block**

Measure	Item(s)
Employment matter	Imagine that you find yourself facing a significant employment dispute that is related to your dismissal by your employer: Imagine that you worked in the same job for several years, and one day you asked your employer for flexible start and finish times to handle some caring commitments you had at home. You wanted to work the same number of hours, but have the flexibility to change your start and finish times. Your employer refused your request, and even though you agreed to continue working the same start and finish times as before, your employer sacked you for not showing commitment to the working hours policy. Is this a legal matter? Options: yes; no
Barriers to access	When deciding whether or not to take legal action in this case, how likely are you to experience the following concerns? (1) Worry that the legal service may be too expensive; (2) Difficulty finding the right legal services provider for my specific needs; (3) Worry that the process may take a long time; (4) Worry that I won't be treated fairly; (5) Worry that I will not understand the process; (6) Worry that the outcome may not be worth the effort or money; (7) Worry that the legal services provider may not have my best interest in mind. Scale: 1 (extremely unlikely) - 7 (extremely likely)
Take action	In this case, would you take legal action, or do nothing? Options: do nothing; take legal action
Seek help	Legally speaking, your dismissal was unfair and illegal. Your employer did not have a legal right to sack you for asking about flexible working hours. This is a legal matter, and you are likely to be able to claim compensation (i.e., money) from your ex-employer. Now imagine that you decide to take legal action against your former employer. Please answer the following questions, assuming that you are going to take legal action for unfair dismissal. Would you be more likely to handle the matter yourself, or seek the help of a legal service provider? Options: I would handle it myself; I would seek legal help
Sources of advice	Regarding the case of unfair dismissal that you read previously: How would you seek advice about this legal matter? How likely would you be to seek advice from the following people or organisations? (1) Family or friends; (2) A legal advocacy group, such as Advice Now or Citizens Advice; (3) A lawyer or law firm; (4) A professional organisation like a trade union, estate agent or insurance company. Scale: 1 (extremely unlikely) - 7 (extremely likely)
Search strategies	Regarding the case of unfair dismissal that you read previously: How would you search for a legal service provider? How likely would you be to search for a legal service provider in the following ways? (1) Ask for recommendations from friends or family; (2) Do a general online search for lawyers; (3) Speak with or search the website of a legal advocacy group such as Advice Now or Citizens Advice; (4) Ask for a referral from a professional organisation (e.g., estate agent, insurance company); (5) Search for a price comparison website; (6) Search for a customer review website; (7) Speak with a local Law Centre. Scale: 1 (extremely unlikely) - 7 (extremely likely)



<b>Measure</b>	<b>Item(s)</b>
Choice strategies	Regarding the case of unfair dismissal that you read previously: How would you choose a legal service provider? If you were to choose a legal service provider, how important would each of the following be? (1) Their ability to clearly explain the legal process; (2) Their specialisation in your given legal issue; (3) How approachable and responsive to your queries they are; (4) The cost of their service; (5) Their ability to understand your own personal circumstances; (6) Whether they are overseen by an approved regulator. Scale: 1 (not at all important) - 7 (extremely important)
Could get legal help	If you needed legal help, given your own personal circumstances, do you think you could get it? Scale: 1 (definitely not) - 7 (definitely yes)
Could afford legal help	Given your own personal circumstances, do you think you could afford to pay for legal help? Scale: 1 (definitely not) - 7 (definitely yes)
Would check Legal Aid	Legal Aid is a benefit that some people can receive to cover some or all of their legal costs. You may be able to get legal aid if you are on a low income and your problem is serious such as being at risk of losing your home or you are at risk of serious harm. If you experienced a legal matter, would you check whether you are eligible for Legal Aid? Scale: 1 (definitely not) - 7 (definitely yes)
Eligible for Legal Aid	Given your own personal circumstances, do you think you are eligible for Legal Aid? Scale: 1 (definitely not) - 7 (definitely yes)
Could get free help	More generally, do you think you might be eligible for free legal help from any other source? Scale: 1 (definitely not) - 7 (definitely yes)
Sources of free help	If you needed legal help but couldn't afford to pay for it, where would you look for free legal help? (1) The government (i.e., Legal Aid); (2) A local Law Centre; (3) A legal advocacy group (e.g., Legal Choices, Citizens Advice); (4) A lawyer or law firm; (5) A professional organisation like a trade union, estate agent or insurance company. Scale: 1 (extremely unlikely) - 7 (extremely likely)
Legal empowerment	In general, if you were to choose and use legal services... How confident would you feel?; How knowledgeable would you feel?; How well protected by the law would you feel? Scale: 1 (none at all) - 5 (a great deal)
Legal capability	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I would be good at finding information to help resolve my legal issues; I understand my legal rights and responsibilities; I know where to get good information/advice if needed; I am confident I could achieve a fair/good outcome for my legal issues; I have a good knowledge and understanding of legal processes and of the steps to take to resolve a legal issue. Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree)
Legal anxiety	Now, thinking in general about significant legal problems - such as being unreasonably sacked by your employer, injured as a result of someone else's negligence, involved in a dispute over money as part of a divorce, or facing eviction from your home - to what extent do the following statements describe you? I am afraid to speak to people directly to press my rights; Worrying that I don't express myself clearly can stop me from acting; I avoid pressing my rights because I am not confident I will be successful; I do not always get the best outcome for myself, because I try to avoid conflict; I worry that hiring legal help is too expensive. Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree)

Measure	Item(s)
Trust in the legal system	How much do you trust the legal system in England and Wales to do what is right? Scale: 1 (not at all) - 7 (completely)
Belief in a just world	I feel that I generally earn the rewards and punishments that I get in this world; I usually receive the outcomes that I deserve; I generally deserve the things that I am accorded; I feel that I usually receive the outcomes that I am due. Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree)
Growth mindset	You have a certain amount of legal knowledge and you can't really do much to change it; Your legal knowledge is something about you that you can't change very much; You can learn new things but you can't really change your legal knowledge. Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree)
Process ownership	I am confident in my ability to manage my legal issues; I feel I can effectively manage my legal issues; I would challenge my legal services provider if I thought something was done wrong; I would not hesitate to complain if I felt something was done wrong. Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree)
Self-efficacy	I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough; If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want; It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals; I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities; When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions; I am good at finding information to help resolve problems. Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree)

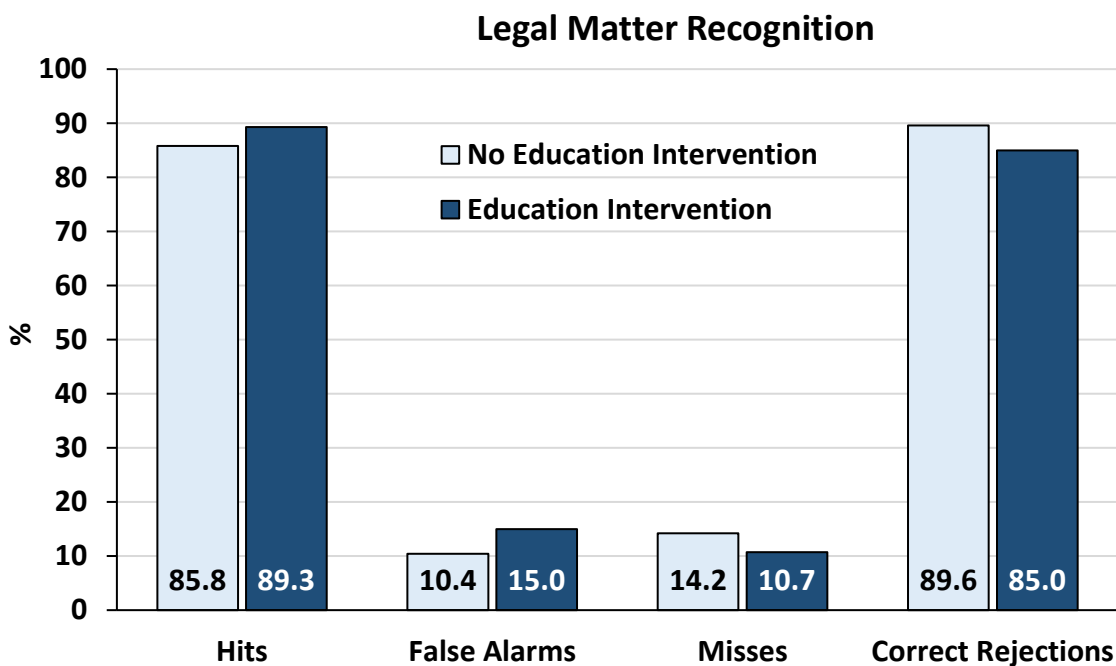
#### **4. Results: Effects of Legal Education**

Group 1 completed the measurement 1 block (legal matter recognition) before receiving any intervention (see Figure 1). By contrast, Group 2 and Group 3 both completed intervention 1 (legal education) before measurement 1 (legal matter recognition). In other words, when completing the measurement 1 block, Group 2 and Group 3 had undergone the exact same intervention. Therefore, to test whether the legal education intervention affected respondents' legal matter recognition, in this section we compare Group 1 (henceforth 'no education intervention') with Group 2 and Group 3 combined ('education intervention').

#### 4.1 Legal matter recognition

This measure entailed respondents judging whether each of 20 scenarios was a ‘legal matter’ or not. As illustrated in Figure 4 (see also Table A2 in the appendix), the legal education intervention successfully increased respondents’ correct recognition of legal matters (i.e., hits) by 3.5 percentage points. However, the education intervention also increased false alarms (i.e., incorrectly judging a non-legal matter to be a ‘legal matter’) by 4.6 percentage points. Thus, the education intervention generally increased respondents’ tendency to judge *any* legal scenario to be a ‘legal matter’, regardless of whether it truly was a legal matter or not. In other words, the education intervention appears to increase their propensity to regard an issue as potentially a legal issue. This may appear to be an increase in response bias rather than in accuracy. However, instilling the ‘benefit of the doubt’ that an issue may be legal, even when it is not, could potentially encourage low-SES consumers to search for further information to address the issue. This could, prospectively, further enhance their level of legal recognition.

Figure 4. Signal detection measures of legal matter recognition



#### 4.2 Legal matters experienced

We asked respondents twice whether they had experienced a legal matter in the past four years: first in the study introduction, and then again after the legal scenarios. The

respondents in both Group 2 and Group 3 (but not the respondents in Group 1) completed the ‘legal experience 2’ measure after the legal education intervention. The purpose of this second measure was to assess whether the education intervention increased respondents’ recognition of their own legal matters. The results are presented in Figure 5.

**Figure 5. Legal matters experienced**

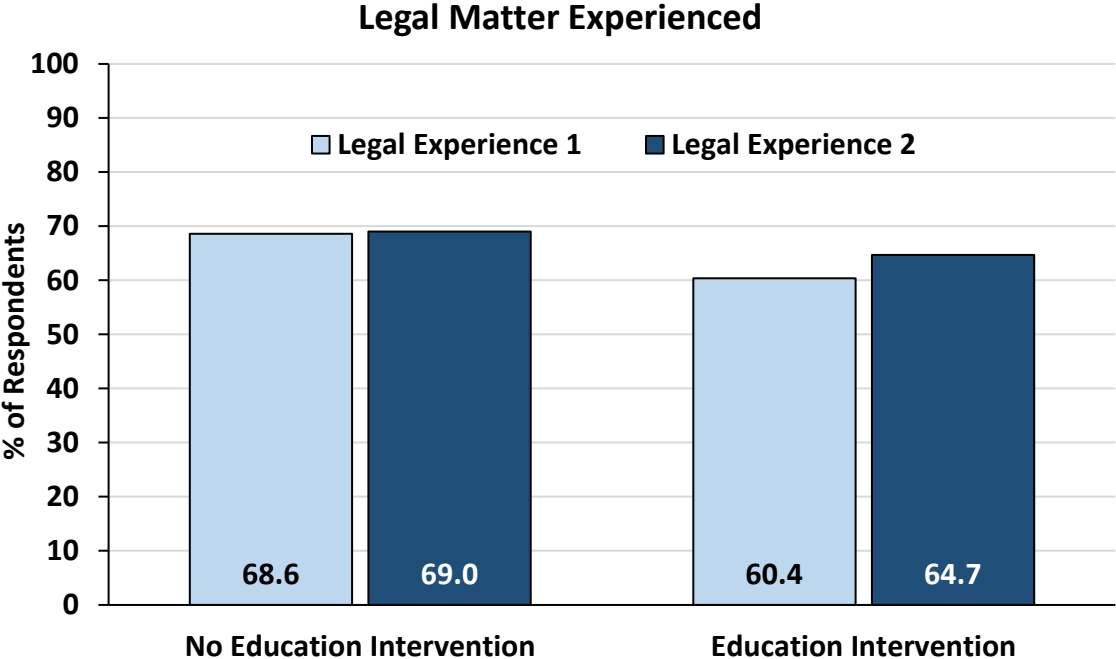


Figure 5 above presents two main results. First, the groups differed overall in their experience of legal matters. In the study introduction (i.e., legal experience 1), before respondents received any intervention, respondents in Group 1 (no education intervention) were approximately 8 percentage points more likely to report a legal experience than Group 2 and Group 3 (which are combined in this analysis as ‘education intervention’). In other words, although respondents were randomly assigned to groups, more people who had experienced legal issues just happened to be assigned to Group 1.

Second, and more importantly, the legal education intervention successfully increased the recognition of one’s own legal matters experienced by 4.3 percentage points. In other words, 60.4% of those respondents initially reported experiencing a legal matter (i.e., ‘legal experience 1’), but after the legal education intervention, 64.7% reported a legal experience (i.e., ‘legal experience 2’). In the absence of an education intervention, by contrast, the proportion of respondents who recognised having experienced a legal issue remained very consistent across the two measurements (i.e.,

68.6% and 69.0%). Therefore, educating people about how to recognise a legal matter increased their recognition of legal matters that they had experienced.

Overall, 47.5% of respondents reported using a legal service provider in the past four years, and the groups did not differ on this measure. Given that the control group ('no education intervention') experienced more legal matters than the other groups ('education intervention'; see Figure 5), it is surprising that it was no more likely to use legal services than the other groups. This could indicate unmet legal needs, particularly among control group respondents.

In summary, the legal education intervention successfully increased respondents' recognition of legal matters (i) in general and (ii) in their own recent past.

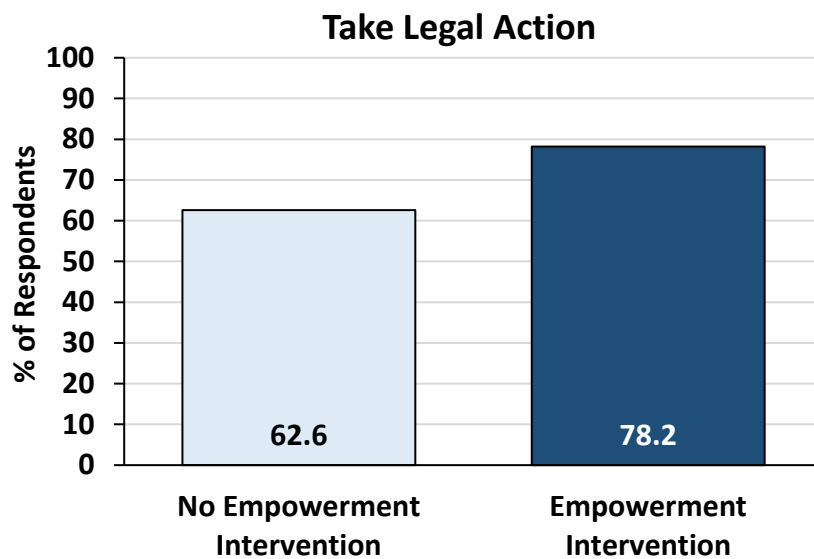
## **5. Results: Effects of Legal Empowerment**

Group 1 and Group 2 both completed the measurement 2 block (legal beliefs and attitudes) before receiving intervention 2 (legal empowerment). Only Group 3 received the legal empowerment intervention before the measurement of their legal beliefs and attitudes. In the following analyses, we therefore compare Group 1 and Group 2 combined (henceforth 'no empowerment intervention') with Group 3 ('empowerment intervention').

### **5.1 Unfair dismissal scenario**

Respondents read a scenario in which they imagined that they had been sacked by their employer for requesting more flexible work hours. Overall, 92.2% of respondents correctly recognised this to be a 'legal matter', and this measure ('employment matter') did not differ across groups. However, as indicated in Figure 6, the empowerment intervention increased the likelihood of taking legal action in this case by a very substantial 15.6 percentage points. Finally, when asked to further imagine that they do take legal action, the groups did not differ in their likelihood of seeking the help of a legal service provider for such action (overall = 92.9%). See Appendix A for full results.

Figure 6. Taking legal action in the employment scenario



Respondents also rated how deterred from taking legal action they would feel by several potential barriers to accessing legal services, and they rated how likely they would be to seek advice from various potential sources. Those results are presented in Figure 7.

In general, respondents were not particularly worried that the legal service provider would not have their best interest in mind (i.e., 'Cynical LSP'), that they would receive unfair treatment, that they would not understand the process, or that searching for a legal service provider would be difficult (Figure 7A). More important barriers to access were the following worries:

- that taking legal action may not be worth the effort or money;
- that the process would take a long time; and
- that the legal service may be too expensive.

Importantly, the legal empowerment intervention significantly reduced all of these barriers except for the worry that they would not understand the process. Specifically, the empowerment intervention significantly reduced the following worries:

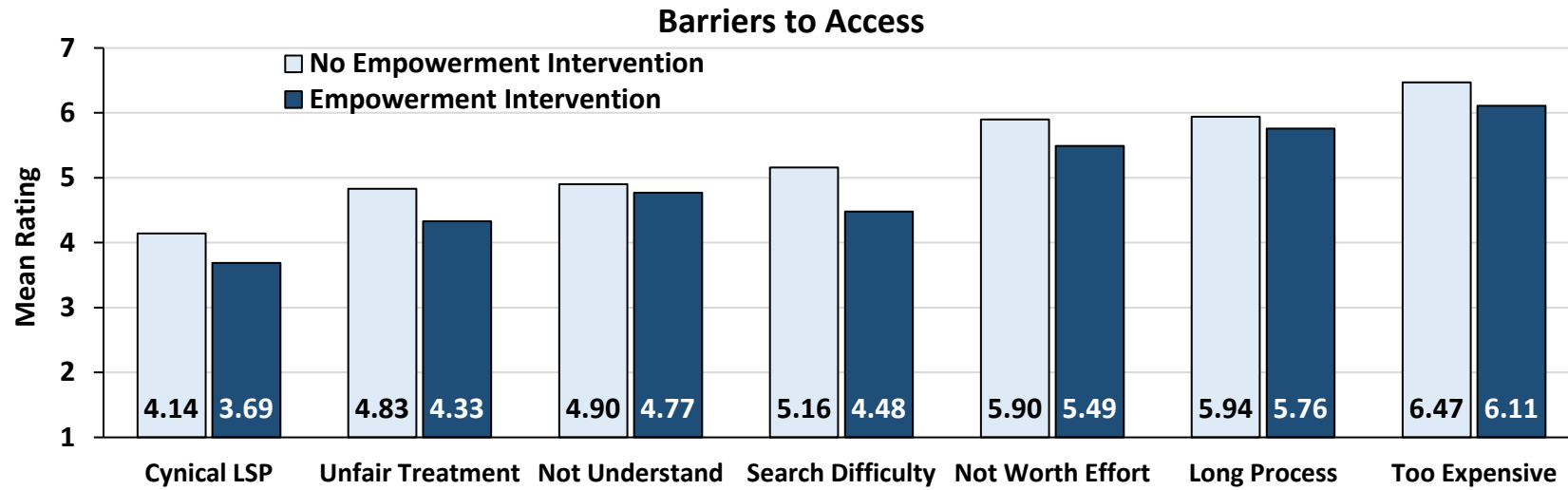
- that the legal service provider would not have their best interests in mind;
- that they would receive unfair treatment;
- that the search for a provider would be difficult;
- that taking legal action would not be worth the effort;
- that the legal process would be too long; and

- that taking legal action would be too expensive.

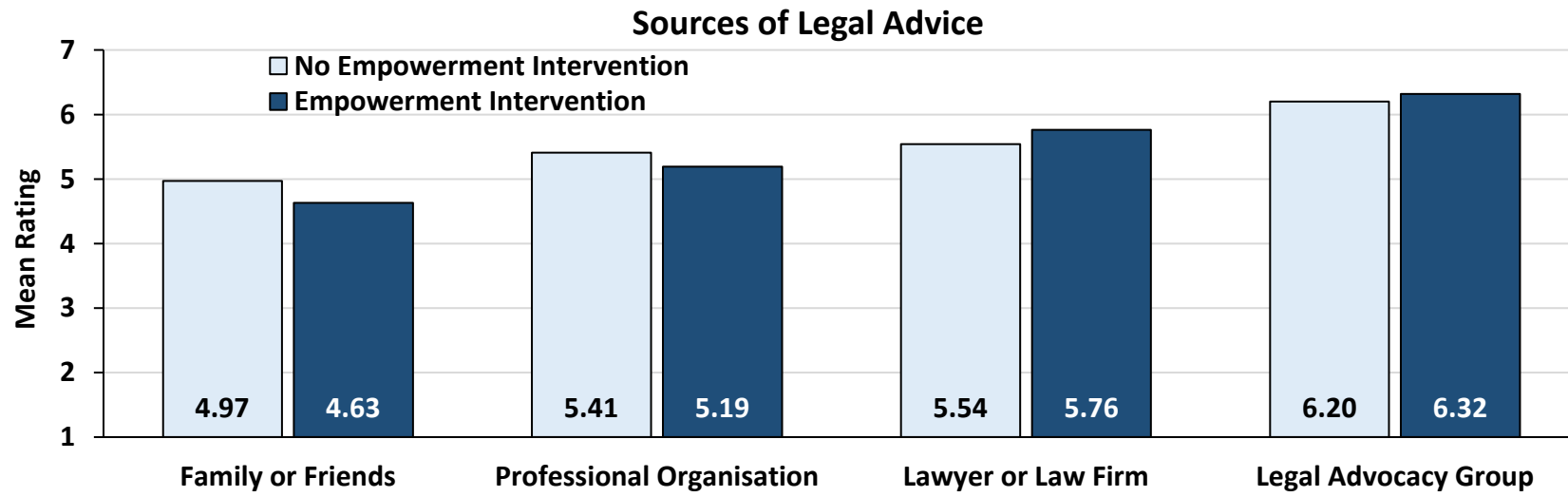


Figure 7. Barriers to accessing legal services (panel A) and sources of legal advice (panel B)

A.



B.



In terms of potential sources of legal advice, respondents were most likely to seek advice from a legal advocacy group such as Advice Now or Citizens Advice and to a lesser degree from a lawyer or law firm. They were less likely to seek legal advice from a professional organisation such as an estate agent or insurance company and from family or friends.

Again, however, the groups differed in terms of how likely they were to use those sources of legal advice. Importantly, the legal empowerment intervention significantly *reduced* the likelihood of seeking legal advice from family or friends and *increased* the likelihood of seeking advice from a lawyer or law firm. The empowerment intervention did not significantly affect the likelihood of seeking advice from a professional organisation or a legal advocacy group.

Respondents also rated the likelihood of their using various potential search strategies, as presented in Figure 8A. They were most likely to conduct a general online search for lawyers or to consult a legal advocacy group such as Citizens Advice. They were relatively unlikely to search for a legal service provider on a price comparison website or to seek a referral from a professional organisation such as an insurance agency. They were somewhat more likely to seek a recommendation from friends or family, to read a customer review website, or to consult a local Law Centre.

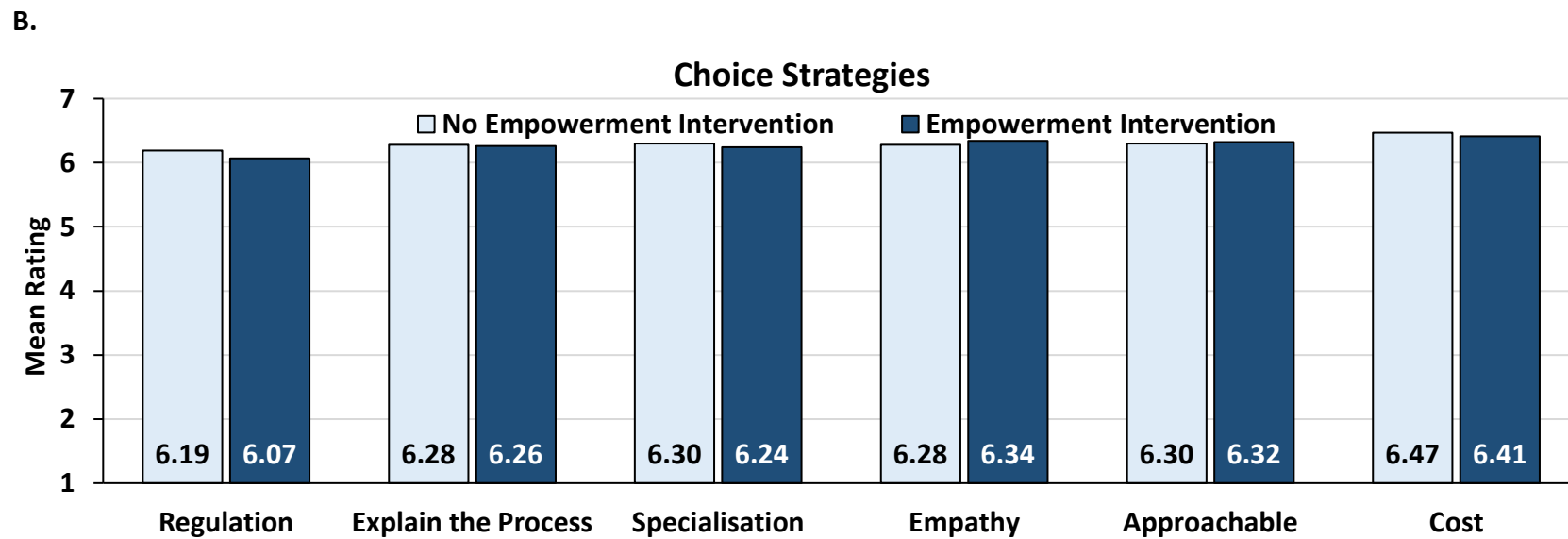
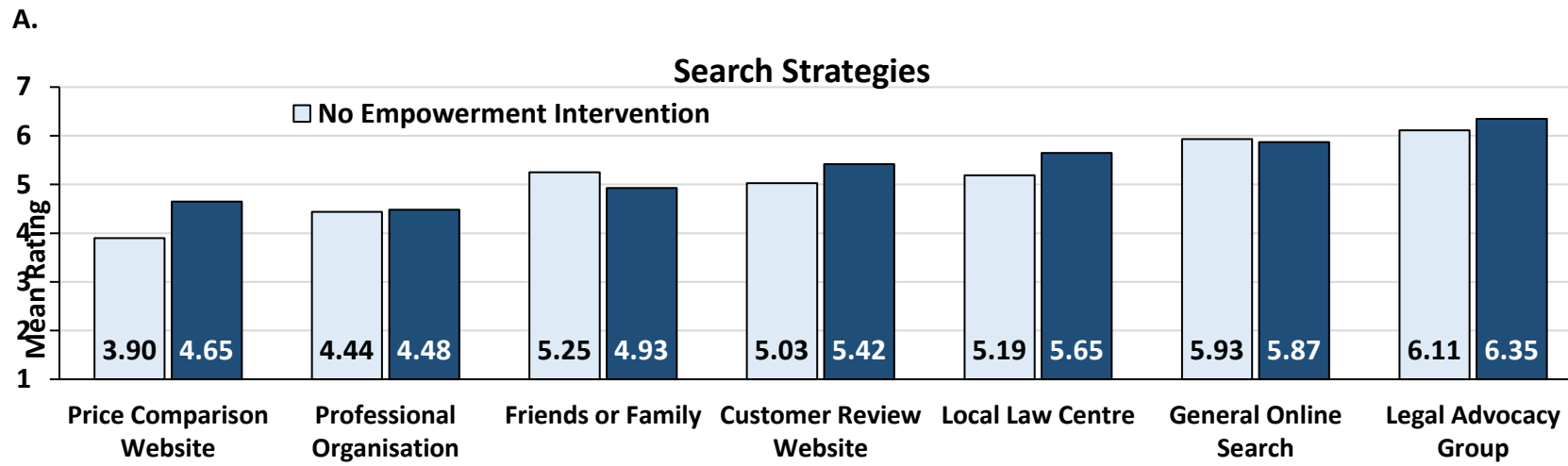
The legal empowerment intervention significantly affected respondents' evaluations of most of these search strategies. In particular, the empowerment intervention significantly increased the likelihood of using the following search strategies:

- Using a price comparison website;
- Using a customer review website;
- Consulting a local Law Centre; and
- Consulting a legal advocacy group.

However, the legal empowerment intervention also significantly *decreased* the likelihood of seeking a recommendation from friends or family. The empowerment intervention did not significantly affect the tendency to do a general online search for lawyers or to ask for a referral from a professional organisation.

Figure 8B presents respondents' ratings of the importance of various attributes when choosing a legal service provider. All six attributes were judged to be extremely important, and there was no difference between the groups in respect of any attribute.

Figure 8. Search strategies (panel A) and choice strategies (panel B)



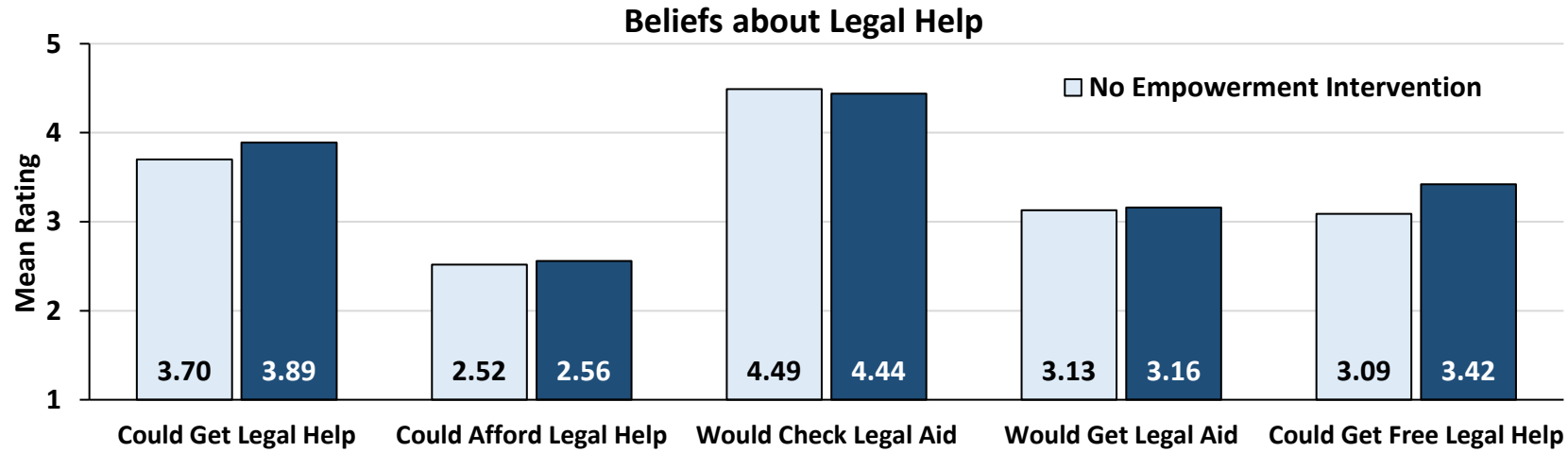
## 5.2 Beliefs about getting legal help

Respondents' beliefs about getting legal help, given their own personal circumstances, are presented in Figure 9A. In general, respondents were relatively confident that they could get legal help if they needed it; critically, moreover, the legal empowerment intervention significantly increased that belief. However, these low-income respondents did not believe that they could afford to pay for legal help. Respondents indicated that they were highly likely to check whether they are eligible for free legal help under the Legal Aid scheme, but they were only moderately confident that they are eligible to receive Legal Aid. Finally, the empowerment intervention significantly increased respondents' belief that they could get free legal help if they needed it.

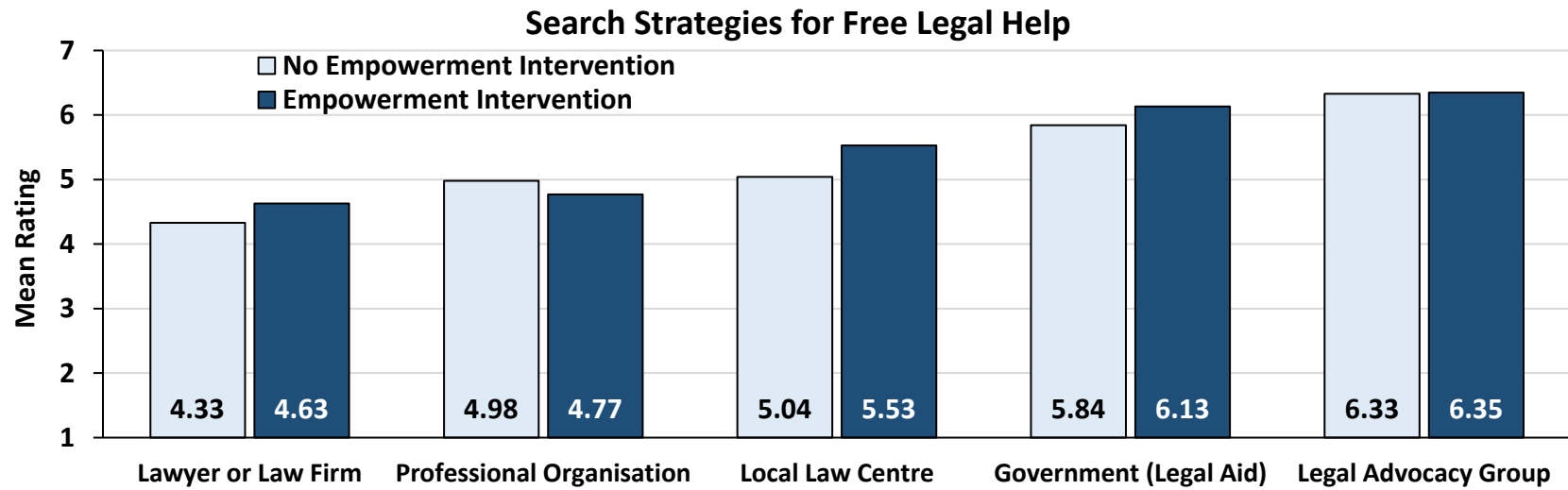
Respondents also rated how likely they were to search for free legal help through various potential sources, as presented in Figure 9B. They were relatively unlikely to consult a lawyer, a professional organisation (e.g., estate agent), or a Law Centre about finding free legal help. They were more likely to consult the government about Legal Aid, and were most likely to consult a legal advocacy group about finding free legal help. Importantly, the legal empowerment intervention significantly increased the likelihood of seeking advice from a lawyer, a Law Centre, or the government (i.e., Legal Aid). The legal empowerment intervention had no significant effect on the likelihood of seeking advice from a professional organisation or a legal advocacy group.

Figure 9. Beliefs about legal help (panel A) and search strategies for seeking free legal help (panel B)

A.



B.

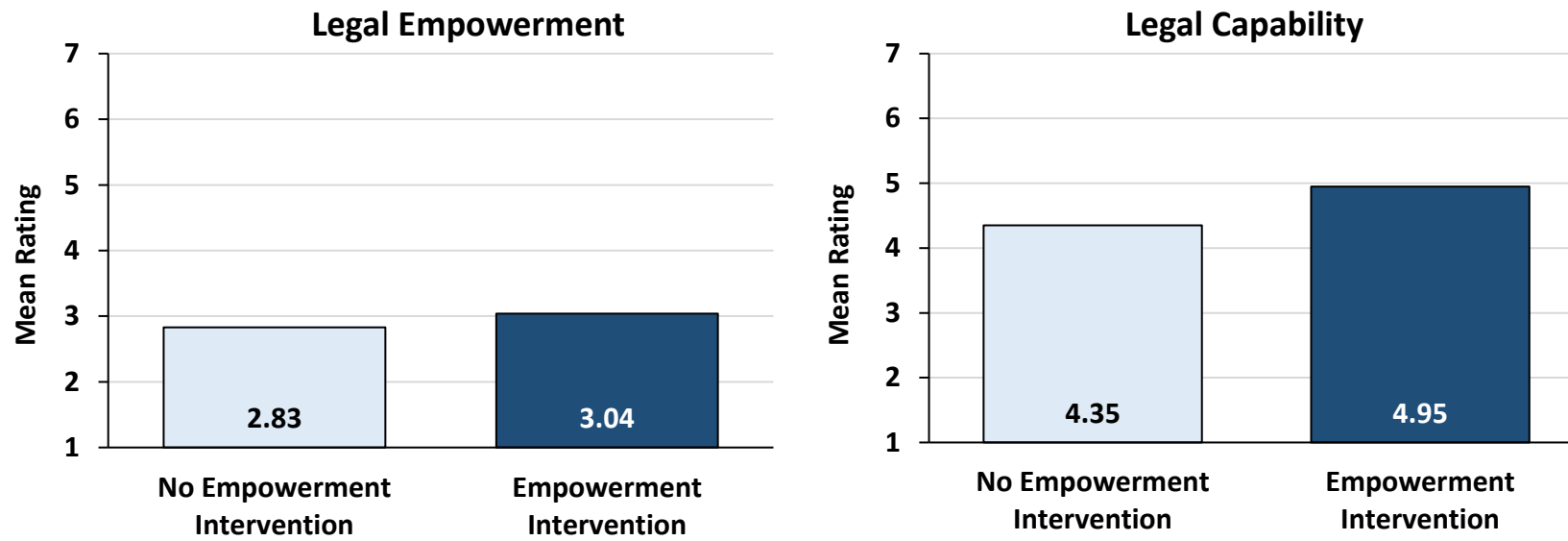


### **5.3 General legal beliefs and attitudes**

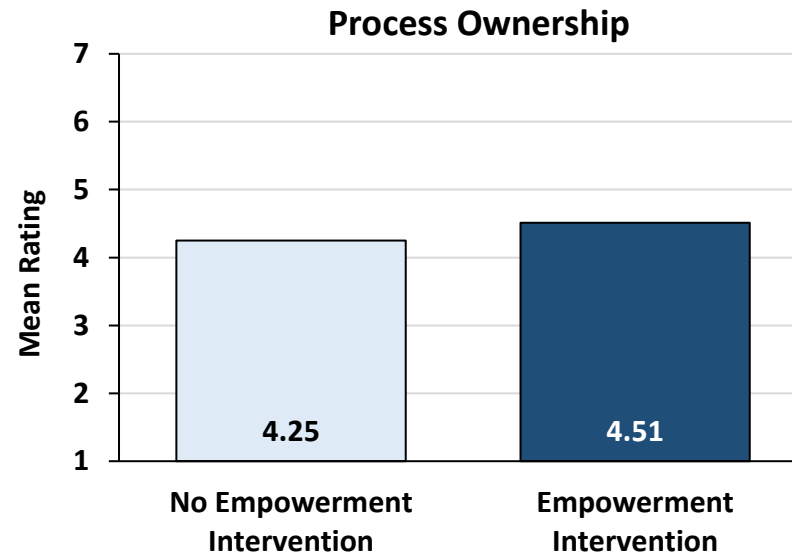
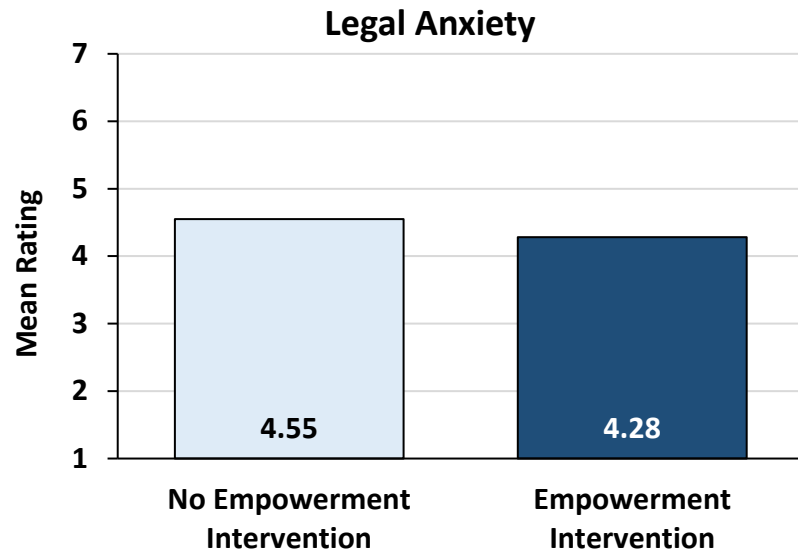
The legal empowerment intervention significantly affected four of the eight general legal beliefs and attitudes that we measured. The intervention had no effect on respondents' trust in the legal system, their belief in a just world, their belief in a growth mindset, or their sense of self-efficacy. See Appendix A for full statistical results.

The four measures that the empowerment intervention did affect are presented in Figure 10. The empowerment intervention significantly increased legal empowerment and legal capability, reduced legal anxiety, and increased process ownership. In other words, respondents who received the empowerment intervention were less anxious about the legal process, were more involved in the process, and had more confidence in their ability to resolve legal matters.

Figure 10. Legal empowerment, legal capability, legal anxiety, and process ownership







## 6. Conclusions

This study builds on the results of Phase 4, which highlighted that low-SES consumers may face a much higher risk of legal vulnerability than high-SES consumers due to their inability to recognise their legal needs and/or to their lower propensity to address their legal needs. A randomised experiment tested the effectiveness of two actionable interventions to address low-SES consumers' heightened vulnerability: legal education and legal empowerment. We measured the effectiveness of these interventions on respondents' ability to recognise legal matters and on their beliefs and attitudes toward the legal process.

The results revealed that educating consumers on what legal matters are successfully increased the recognition of legal matters, both in hypothetical scenarios and in relation to matters that respondents had experienced themselves. Interestingly, the intervention also made respondents more prone to think of non-legal matters as legal. While those matters were designed to be non-legal in our scenarios, in reality the distinction between a legal and non-legal matter may be less clear and may depend on contextual factors. Therefore, prompting consumers to regard more matters as 'legal matters' may, in overall terms, be a positive outcome for increasing access to justice. We argue that it is better to incorrectly believe that a non-legal matter is a legal matter (i.e., a false alarm) than to incorrectly believe that a legal matter is a non-legal matter (i.e., a miss). In other words, the occasional false alarm is a small price to pay for increased recognition of legal needs.

The results also revealed several meaningful effects of the empowerment intervention. Empowering consumers by informing them about how and where to find legal information and get legal help

- substantially increased the likelihood of their using legal services;
- reduced several barriers that deter consumers from taking legal action;
- increased the likelihood of their using information sources such as a price comparison websites and customer review websites, local Law Centres, and legal advocacy groups;
- increased respondents' belief that they could get free legal help if they needed it; and
- made them less anxious about the legal process, more involved in the process, and more confident in their ability to resolve legal matters.

Importantly, both interventions produced favourable outcomes and took only five minutes to administer, consisting of simple content such as images and text

administered via computer. Therefore, they represent a possible low-cost and scalable solution to help address several factors contributing to low-SES consumers' reduced access to justice.

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## 8. Appendix A: Statistics

### 8.1 Glossary of statistical terms

*ANOVA* analysis of variance; a statistical test of mean differences among groups

*B* unstandardised regression coefficient; a measure of effect size

Chi-square a statistical test of association between categorical variables

$\chi^2$  the  $\chi^2$ -value is the result of a Chi-square test

*DF* degrees of freedom; the maximum number of independent values in the data

*F* the *F*-value is the result of an ANOVA

*M* mean of the data sample

*SD* standard deviation of the data sample

*p* probability; the probability of obtaining the given result by chance. When the result of a statistical test is  $p < .05$ , it is statistically “significant”, which means that the result would only be expected to occur by chance less than 5% of the time

### 8.2 Analyses

Categorical measures (e.g., yes/no responses) are analysed via logistic regression, and continuous measures (e.g., rating scales) are analysed via linear regression, with intervention (no intervention = 0, intervention = 1) as a dummy-coded predictor variable. In all tables below, significant effects are identified with bold font.

### 8.3 Statistical results

**Table A1. Demographic characteristics.**

Measure	Group			Statistic	p
	Control	Education	Empowerment		
N	274	263	275	—	—
Age	41.9	42.1	42.4	0.10	.90
% Female	50.7	51.3	49.1	0.29	.86
% Ethnic Minority	13.9	13.7	11.3	1.02	.60
% Welsh	6.9	8.0	6.9	0.30	.86
% Independent School	4.7	10.6	3.3	<b>14.08</b>	<b>.001</b>
% University Educated	48.2	53.2	41.5	<b>7.54</b>	<b>.02</b>
% Unemployed	17.5	26.6	24.0	<b>6.76</b>	<b>.03</b>
% State Benefits	38.0	30.8	35.6	3.14	.21
% Crime Victim	19.0	18.3	16.0	0.91	.64
% Disabled	23.4	22.4	18.2	2.49	.29
% Native Language	94.2	93.5	93.1	0.26	.88
% Fluent English	100.0	100.0	99.6	1.96	.38
% Internet Access	99.3	99.6	98.9	0.93	.63
% Internet Proficiency	96.0	96.2	96.7	0.23	.89

Note: 'Age' is analysed via ANOVA ( $DF = 2, 809$ ), where "Statistic" is the  $F$ -value. All other variables are analysed via Chi-square ( $DF = 2$ ), where "Statistic" is the  $\chi^2$  value.

**Table A2. Legal matter recognition.**

	Education Intervention		B	p
	No	Yes		
Hits	85.80 (13.89)	89.28 (11.02)	<b>3.47</b>	<b>.001</b>
False alarms	10.44 (12.54)	15.02 (14.64)	<b>4.58</b>	<b>.001</b>
Misses	14.20 (13.89)	10.72 (11.02)	<b>-3.47</b>	<b>.001</b>
Correct rejections	89.56 (12.54)	84.98 (14.64)	<b>-4.58</b>	<b>.001</b>

Note:  $SD$  in brackets.

**Table A3. Prior experience of legal matters and legal services.**

Measure	Education Intervention		B	p
	No	Yes		
Legal Experience 1	68.6%	60.4%	<b>-.36</b>	<b>.02</b>
Legal Service User	49.6%	46.5%	-.13	.39
Legal Experience 2	69.0%	64.7%	-.19	.22

**Table A4. Responses to the unfair dismissal scenario.**

Measure	Empowerment Intervention		<i>B</i>	<i>p</i>
	No	Yes		
Employment Matter	91.2%	94.2%	.44	.14
Take Action	62.6%	78.2%	<b>.76</b>	<b>.001</b>
Seek Help	92.2%	94.2%	.32	.30

**Table A5. Barriers to accessing legal services.**

	Empowerment Intervention		<i>B</i>	<i>p</i>
	No	Yes		
Cynical LSP	4.14 (1.71)	3.69 (1.78)	<b>-.45</b>	<b>.001</b>
Unfair treatment	4.83 (1.58)	4.33 (1.76)	<b>-.49</b>	<b>.001</b>
Not understand process	4.90 (1.70)	4.77 (1.65)	-.13	.32
Search difficulty	5.16 (1.42)	4.48 (1.64)	<b>-.68</b>	<b>.001</b>
Not worth effort	5.90 (1.29)	5.49 (1.54)	<b>-.41</b>	<b>.001</b>
Long process	5.94 (1.18)	5.76 (1.28)	<b>-.18</b>	<b>.050</b>
Too expensive	6.47 (0.95)	6.11 (1.17)	<b>-.36</b>	<b>.001</b>

Note: *SD* in brackets.

**Table A6. Sources of legal advice.**

	Empowerment Intervention		<i>B</i>	<i>p</i>
	No	Yes		
Family or friends	4.97 (1.84)	4.63 (1.91)	<b>-.34</b>	<b>.02</b>
Professional Organisation	5.41 (1.54)	5.19 (1.81)	-.22	.07
Lawyer or law firm	5.54 (1.37)	5.76 (1.15)	<b>.22</b>	<b>.02</b>
Legal advocacy group	6.20 (1.05)	6.32 (1.00)	.12	.11

Note: *SD* in brackets.

**Table A7. Search strategies.**

	Empowerment Intervention		<i>B</i>	<i>p</i>
	No	Yes		
Price comparison website	3.90 (1.82)	4.65 (1.75)	<b>.75</b>	<b>.001</b>
Professional organisation	4.44 (1.74)	4.48 (1.84)	.04	.77
Friends or family	5.25 (1.63)	4.93 (1.73)	<b>-.33</b>	<b>.01</b>
Customer review website	5.03 (1.68)	5.42 (1.44)	<b>.39</b>	<b>.001</b>
Local Law Centre	5.19 (1.45)	5.65 (1.24)	<b>.47</b>	<b>.001</b>
General online search	5.93 (1.14)	5.87 (1.16)	-.06	.48
Legal advocacy group	6.11 (1.15)	6.35 (0.90)	<b>.23</b>	<b>.003</b>

Note: *SD* in brackets.

**Table A8. Choice strategies.**

	<b>Empowerment Intervention</b>		<b>B</b>	<b>p</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>		
Regulation	6.19 (1.01)	6.07 (1.10)	-.12	.13
Explain the process	6.28 (0.84)	6.26 (0.95)	-.03	.68
Specialisation	6.30 (0.82)	6.24 (0.87)	-.06	.34
Empathy	6.28 (0.90)	6.34 (0.82)	.06	.36
Approachable	6.30 (0.83)	6.32 (0.85)	.02	.81
Cost	6.47 (0.83)	6.41 (0.81)	-.06	.34

Note: *SD* in brackets.

**Table A9. Beliefs about getting legal help.**

	<b>Empowerment Intervention</b>		<b>B</b>	<b>p</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>		
Could get legal help	3.70 (0.85)	3.89 (0.85)	<b>.18</b>	<b>.004</b>
Could afford legal help	2.52 (1.11)	2.56 (1.11)	.04	.61
Would check Legal Aid	4.49 (0.80)	4.44 (0.86)	-.05	.41
Eligible for Legal Aid	3.13 (1.12)	3.16 (1.05)	.02	.77
Could get free help	3.09 (0.91)	3.42 (0.96)	<b>.34</b>	<b>.001</b>

Note: *SD* in brackets.

**Table A10. Search strategies for free legal help.**

	<b>Empowerment Intervention</b>		<b>B</b>	<b>p</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>		
Lawyer or law firm	4.33 (1.70)	4.63 (1.69)	<b>.30</b>	<b>.02</b>
Professional Organisation	4.98 (1.69)	4.77 (1.80)	-.22	.09
Local Law Centre	5.04 (1.55)	5.53 (1.40)	<b>.49</b>	<b>.001</b>
Government (Legal Aid)	5.84 (1.39)	6.13 (1.14)	<b>.29</b>	<b>.003</b>
Legal Advocacy Group	6.33 (0.98)	6.35 (0.89)	.03	.72

Note: *SD* in brackets.

**Table A11. Legal beliefs and attitudes.**

	<b>Empowerment Intervention</b>		<b>B</b>	<b>p</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>		
Legal Empowerment	2.83 (0.86)	3.04 (0.88)	<b>.21</b>	<b>.001</b>
Legal Capability	4.35 (1.19)	4.95 (1.01)	<b>.61</b>	<b>.001</b>
Legal Anxiety	4.55 (1.39)	4.28 (1.44)	<b>-.27</b>	<b>.009</b>
Trust in the Legal System	4.56 (1.31)	4.65 (1.33)	.09	.35
Belief in a Just World	4.49 (1.09)	4.52 (1.12)	.03	.72
Growth Mindset	5.29 (1.31)	5.10 (1.39)	-.19	.052
Process Ownership	4.25 (1.24)	4.51 (1.18)	<b>.26</b>	<b>.004</b>
Self-Efficacy	4.68 (1.03)	4.73 (1.04)	.05	.54

Note: *SD* in brackets.



## 9. Appendix B: Interventions

### 9.1 Education intervention

# What is a legal matter?

## 1. A legal matter is any issue that can be resolved by the law.

Something is a *legal matter* if there is a law that regulates the given behaviour. For example, in England and Wales, there are laws about how fast we can drive a car (i.e., the speed limit). This means that whether the driver of a car was speeding (i.e., driving faster than the speed limit) is a *legal matter*.

In England in Wales, when there is no law regulating a given behaviour, by default that behaviour is *legal*. For instance, there is no law about chewing gum. Everyone is free to either chew gum or not. Because there's no law forbidding or regulating this behaviour, it is *not* a legal matter.

[Comprehension check, then page break]

## 2. If there's a law about it, then it's a *legal matter*.

When thinking about whether something is a *legal matter*, ask yourself: Do you think there is a law about this? In other words,

- Do you know of any laws about this behaviour?
- Do you think this behaviour is the sort of thing that there might be laws about?

If the answer to either of these questions is "yes", then it probably *is* a legal matter.

For example, suppose that a married couple decide to get divorced, and both parents want to keep custody of their child. You might not know exactly what the laws about child custody are, but you may know that there are some laws about child custody. This means that it is a *legal matter*. Or suppose that your landlord wants to kick you out of your flat (i.e., evict you) because you won't agree to pay higher rent. You may not know for sure whether there are laws about this, but it does seem to you like the sort of thing that there *might* or *should* be a law about. This is also likely to be a legal matter. Even if you aren't *sure* whether there is a law about something, if it seems like something that there *probably* is a law for, then it is probably a *legal matter*.

Bottom line: If there's a law about it, then it's a *legal matter*.

[Comprehension check, then page break]

### 3. A *legal matter* can turn out to be either legal or illegal.

Continuing with the example of driving a car, whether the driver has exceeded the speed limit (i.e., speeding) is a legal matter, because applying the law will resolve the issue. There are laws about how fast you can drive, and applying those laws will determine whether the driver was speeding or not. But even though this is a *legal matter*, it does not mean that the driver's behaviour was *legal*.

- If the driver did *not* exceed the speed limit, then they have not broken the law. This means that their behaviour was *legal*.
- However, if the driver *did* exceed the speed limit, then they have broken the law. This means that their behaviour was *illegal*.

So remember: A *legal matter* can turn out to be either legal or illegal.

[Comprehension check, then page break]

### 4. You have many different legal rights. The law protects everyone in England in Wales in many different ways.

There are laws protecting your rights in all the following areas:

- **Family issues** such as divorce and child custody
- **Accident or injury**
- **Housing, landlord and tenant issues**
- **Employment:** employee rights at work, health and safety
- **Criminal offences**, such as theft, damage to property, or harm to people or animals
- **Immigration**, such as help with residence and citizenship issues
- **Consumer affairs:** protection and safeguards when you buy or sell goods and services
- **Benefits and taxes:** help with getting access to benefits and tax credits
- **Debt or hire problems**, such as working out a payment plan for money you owe
- **Neighbour disputes**
- **Conveyancing:** legal work having to do with buying or selling property
- **Will and probate:** A will lets you decide what happens to your possessions after your death. Probate is the legal right to deal with someone's possessions (their "estate") when they die.

As a general rule, laws are intended to protect people. So when thinking about whether something is a legal matter – in other words, whether it's something that you think there may be laws for – think about whether it's an issue where some people may need to be protected or helped in some way.

[Comprehension check, then page break]

In this session we have reviewed four important facts.

1. A *legal matter* is any issue that can be resolved by the law.
2. If there's a law about it, then it's a *legal matter*.
3. A *legal matter* can turn out to be either legal or illegal.
4. You have many different legal rights. The law protects everyone in England in Wales in many different ways.

## How can I get legal help?

### 1. You can get legal help even if you aren't sure whether something is legal or illegal.

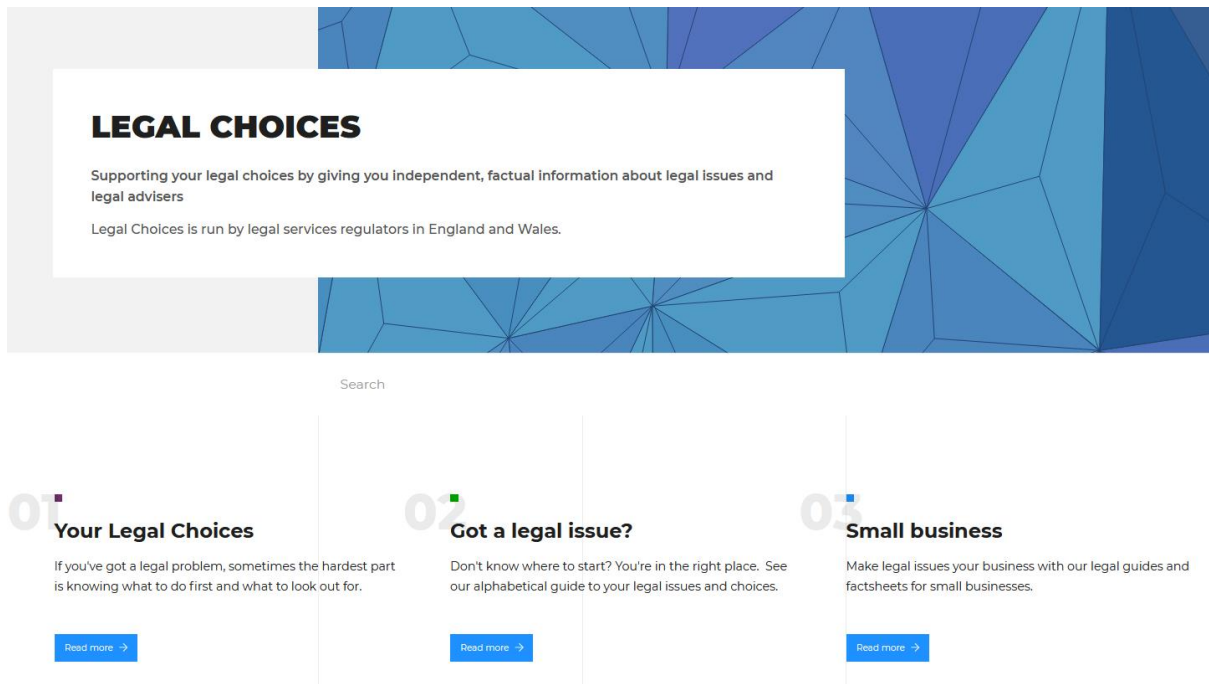
If you are unsure whether something is legal or illegal, or even if you are unsure whether it's a legal matter at all, you can get free advice to help find out.

There are several legal advocacy groups that will help you find out whether you have a legal case. Some of them are charities, like *Advice Now* and *Citizens Advice*, and the government also provides some advice on legal matters.

To give you an idea of what these organisations do, on the next pages of this survey we will show you some of their websites.

- **Note that we are only showing you screenshots, not their live websites, so you will not be able to click and open any links in this survey.**
- For each screenshot that we show you, we want you to take a good look at the image, so you will not be able to advance to the next page until you have viewed it for at least 10 seconds. **After 10 seconds, the 'page advance' button will appear, but of course you can continue to view the page for as long as you'd like.**

A good source of information is the *Legal Choices* website, shown below. This website can help you find out whether you have a legal issue or not, and if so, how to address that issue.



*Legal Choices* also has a lot more detailed information about many different types of legal matters.

### **Need somewhere to start? You're in the right place.**

Sometimes the hardest thing about legal issues is knowing where to start to get them sorted.

It can be tricky to work out if you actually need help from a lawyer, let alone how to go about finding one.

Some legal issues appear over time, giving you the chance to weigh up your options. For example, if you decide to buy a house there might be spare time to plan and work through your choices for taking care of the legal side of things.

In other situations such as family problems that suddenly spiral out of control, or being accused of a crime, you probably won't have a great deal of time to make your choices. Luckily there is lots of information out there that can help, whatever your situation. It's really just a case of knowing where to find it.

Here you can find our tips for surviving all sorts of legal issues, to help you work out what your legal choices are:

- [Arrested](#)
- [Asylum](#)
- [Carers](#)
- [Claims](#)
- [Costs](#)
- [Courts](#)
- [Debts](#)
- [Emigration](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Families](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Ideas](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Injuries](#)
- [Legal documents](#)
- [Negligence](#)
- [Pets](#)
- [Probate](#)
- [Rights](#)
- [What to expect from your lawyer](#)
- [Wills](#)

Below is the main website for *Advice Now*. As you can see, they also provide information on many different types of legal matters.

advicenow

Our other work Categories Browse A-Z Search DONATE

**Categories**  
Find the best information

Advice Now > Categories

## Categories

Many of us experience problems which affect our rights, for example, a problem with something we've bought, our boss, benefits, housing or family relationships.

What's your problem about? Choose a category to view our handpicked pieces of quality information, sourced from the best providers, to help you understand your rights and options.

- > **Benefits**
- > **Communications and media**
- > **Consumer affairs**
- > **Education and training**
- > **Employment**
- > **Environment and countryside**
- > **Family and personal**
- > **Government, law and rights**
- > **Health and social care**
- > **Housing and homelessness**
- > **Immigration and nationality**
- > **Money and tax**
- > **Police and crime**
- > **Transport, travel and leisure**

And for each legal matter, *Advice Now* provides a lot more detailed information. For example, below is the information available regarding Benefits.

## Categories

Many of us experience problems which affect our rights, for example, a problem with something we've bought, our boss, benefits, housing or family relationships.

What's your problem about? Choose a category to view our handpicked pieces of quality information, sourced from the best providers, to help you understand your rights and options.

### Benefits

- > Benefit administration
- > Benefit appeals
- > Benefit claims and payments
- > Benefit fraud
- > Benefits for families and children

[VIEW ALL](#) >

### Communications and media

- > Carers benefits
- > Housing related benefits
- > Income support
- > Job seeking benefits
- > Older persons benefits

### Consumer affairs

- > Retirement pensions
- > Sickness and disability benefits
- > Social fund payments
- > Tax credits
- > Universal credit

### Education and training

### Employment

### Environment and countryside



As another example, below is the main website for *Citizens Advice*.

The screenshot shows the Citizens Advice website homepage. At the top left is the Citizens Advice logo. At the top right, there is a language selector for 'Cymraeg' and a 'Sign in' link. Below this is a search bar. A dark blue navigation bar contains the following categories: Benefits, Work, Debt and money, Consumer, Housing, Family, Law and courts, Immigration, Health, and More from us. Below the navigation bar, there is a location selector for 'England'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 1. A large purple section with the heading 'Welcome to Citizens Advice' and the sub-heading 'How can we help?'. It features a search bar with the placeholder text 'Search for advice'. 2. A 'Popular advice' section listing several topics: 'Get help with the cost of living', 'Grants and benefits to help you pay your energy bills', 'Get help with bills', 'Check if you can pay less council tax', 'How to read your smart electricity meter', 'Check what benefits you can get', and 'Claim compensation if your flight's delayed or cancelled'. 3. A 'Volunteer with us' section with the text: 'Over 20,000 highly trained volunteers support the delivery of our service. Our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds and find volunteering rewarding, challenging and fun. We have a range of roles in local Citizens Advice and Witness Service, want to find out more?' and a button labeled 'Our volunteer opportunities'. 4. A 'Policy research and campaigns' section with the text: 'See our latest campaigns', 'Read our policy research work', and 'Find out about the impact of our advice'. It includes an illustration of three stylized human figures. 5. A 'Find your local Citizens Advice' section with the text: 'For more information and advice', a search bar with the placeholder 'Enter your postcode or town', and a 'Search' button. It includes an illustration of a magnifying glass.

They also provide a lot more detailed information about several different types of legal matters. Below is an example of Work-related matters.

Benefits Work Debt and money Consumer Housing Family Law and courts Immigration Health More from us

England > Work

## Work

Having a job is an essential part of most people's lives. When you are in work, you can be faced with many difficult issues, so it is essential to know what your rights are. Here you can find out more about those rights and how to solve problems.

### Rights at work

Your basic rights including pay, contracts, holiday and sick pay, agency workers' rights, flexible working and parental rights.

### Problems at work

[Dealing with a problem at work](#)  
[Using early conciliation](#)  
[Making a settlement agreement with your employer](#)  
[Employment tribunals](#)  
[Dealing with grievances at work](#)  
[View all](#)

### What help can I get with a problem at work

Information on sources of help to deal with problems in the workplace, including trade unions, legal help, advice agencies and other organizations.

### Discrimination at work

Check if you're being discriminated against in the workplace and find out how to solve your problem.

### Leaving a job

Get help if you've been dismissed or are being made redundant. You can also check how to solve problems with resigning from a job and getting a job reference.

### If you're injured because of an accident at work

What to do if you've had an accident at work.

### Check your rights at work if you're under 18

Young people's rights to working hours, rest breaks, pay, and holiday. Find out what types of work 16 and 17 year olds can do.

### Right to work in the UK

Check if you have the right to work in the UK and how to prove it to your employer.

### Work search

Search for articles in our work section.

These organisations also provide general information about how the legal process works, as shown below.

## Law and courts

You can find out more about your rights, as well as what to do if you face discrimination, need legal advice or have to go to court without a lawyer.

### Legal system

[Finding free or affordable legal help](#)

[Rape and sexual assault](#)

[Going to court without a solicitor or barrister](#)

[If you have a court hearing by phone or video call](#)

[Small claims](#)

[View all](#)

### Claiming compensation for a personal injury

How you can take legal action if you want to claim compensation for a personal injury.

### Discrimination

Check if you've experienced discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 and what you can do about it.

### Parking tickets

How to appeal a parking ticket and stop being chased because of one.

### Civil rights

[Human rights](#)

[Young people's rights](#)

### Law and courts search

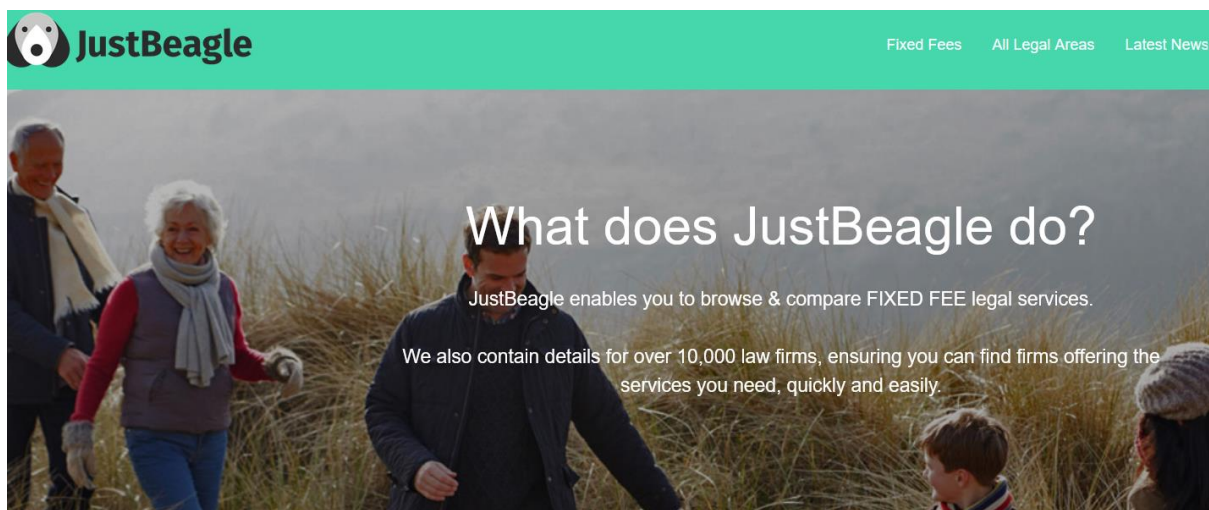
Search for articles in our law and rights section.

These are only a few of the helpful websites for law-related matters, and there are many more. Many of them also have a phone number that you can ring or a web form to ask specific questions about your situation. So whenever you think you may be experiencing a legal matter, just remember: You can get legal help even if you aren't sure whether something is legal or illegal. There are many organisations dedicated to helping protect you and your rights.

## 2. There are many ways to find legal help.

People seek legal advice in many different ways and from many different sources, including the following.

- **Family and friends:** Sometimes family and friends have experienced the same or a similar issue before, and they can help you figure out what to do.
- **Online search:** Many people search for legal help on the internet, for example by searching for lawyers near where you live (e.g., “lawyers in Leicester”), or in a specific area of law (e.g., “family lawyer”). This could also include websites like we showed you on the previous screens.
- **Legal advocacy groups:** This includes charities and the government, such as *Legal Choices*, *Legal Advice*, and *Citizens Advice* that we showed you on the previous screens. You can also ring these organisations or even visit a local office if you prefer.
- **Lawyers:** These are usually solicitors and barristers who are highly trained in legal matters, and they may be available for in-person or online meetings.
- **Price comparison website:** These are websites that compare certain legal services not only on price, but also on service ratings. Below is one example.



### Who are we?

Searching for solicitors and providers of other professional services can be confusing, stressful and usually expensive.

JustBeagle is here to change that. We will help you quickly find all legal service providers close to your chosen location and show you any fixed fee prices available.

### Our websites

 LegalBeagles®

Our consumer forum




- **Customer review website:** These are websites that provide customer reviews of legal services in different locations and areas of law. For example, below is a screenshot from *ReviewSolicitors* for personal injury lawyers in Leicester.

## Personal Injury solicitors near Leicester, Leicestershire

SORT BY: **Rating** Distance



---



**DPP Law Ltd**

★★★★★ (67)

Humberstone House, Humberstone Gate, LE1 1WB  
0.5 miles away  
www.dpp-law.com


 

[Add Review](#)

Recommended by **10/10** clients

**FEATURED LAW FIRM**


---



**Bond Adams LLP**

★★★★★ (155)

Richmond House, 94 London Road, LE2 0QS  
1.0 miles away  
www.bondadams.com



[Add Review](#)

Recommended by **10/10** clients

Including recent reviews by Yusuf and Mr Muhammed.

**FIRM**

All in all, there are many different ways that you can find legal help.

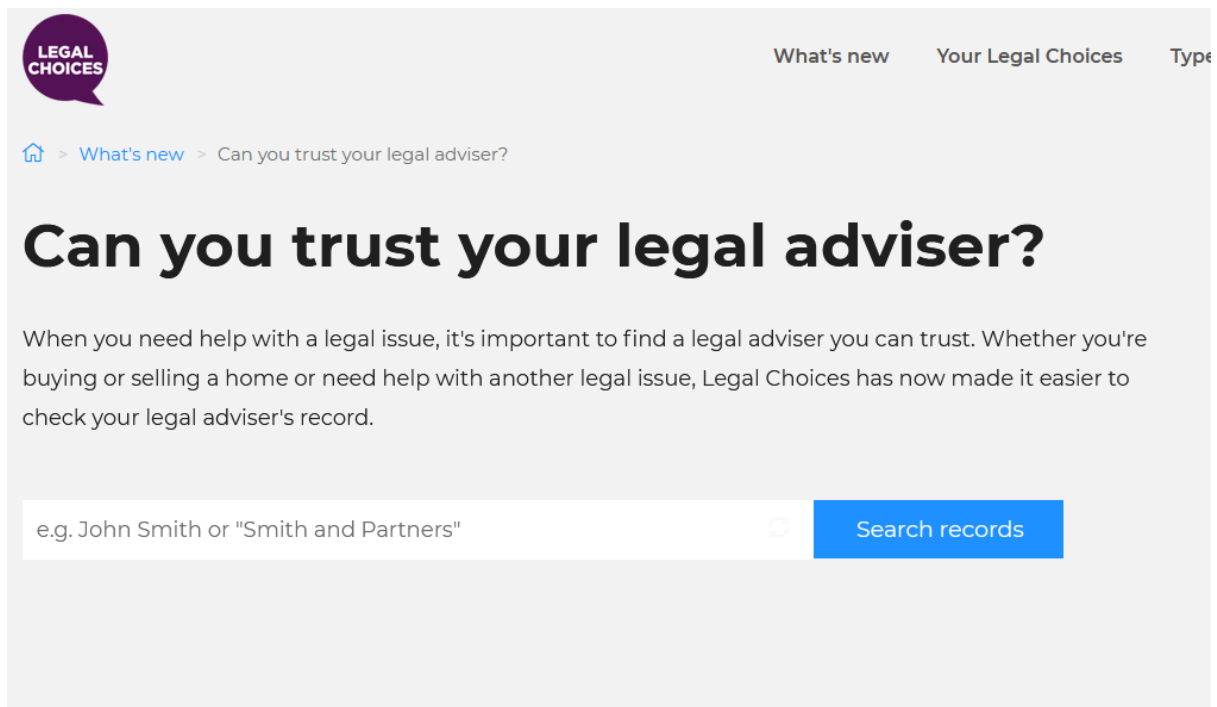
### **3. Many law services are overseen by approved regulators to ensure expertise and uphold standards of good service.**

Many law services and lawyers are *regulated* by organisations approved by the government. This means that they are qualified, and that they are bound to uphold a good standard of service. In other words, these are lawyers and services that are guaranteed to meet some standards of good behaviour, and if they don't, the regulator can take action against them.

#### **Examples of regulated lawyers are:**

- **Solicitors** can provide legal advice on a broad range of legal matters, though most solicitors specialise in one area of law; they are regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.
- **Barristers** are lawyers who often appear in court; they are regulated by the Bar Standards Board.
- **Notaries** authenticate signatures and documents; they are regulated by the Faculty Office.
- **Licensed Conveyancers** handle the legal and administrative procedures involved in buying and selling property; they are regulated by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers.

You can also check a lawyer's disciplinary and regulatory record. *Legal Choices*, for example, helps you look up a lawyer's record easily online, as shown below.



The screenshot shows the 'LEGAL CHOICES' website. At the top left is the logo, and at the top right are navigation links: 'What's new', 'Your Legal Choices', and 'Type'. Below the navigation is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > What's new > Can you trust your legal adviser?'. The main heading is 'Can you trust your legal adviser?'. Below the heading is a paragraph: 'When you need help with a legal issue, it's important to find a legal adviser you can trust. Whether you're buying or selling a home or need help with another legal issue, Legal Choices has now made it easier to check your legal adviser's record.' Below the paragraph is a search bar with the placeholder text 'e.g. John Smith or "Smith and Partners"', a refresh icon, and a blue button labeled 'Search records'.

**Enter the name of a person or firm above** to check whether legal services regulators have published disciplinary decisions about them. Or read on to learn more about choosing a legal adviser you can trust.



It's also important to know that, if you feel that you have been treated poorly or unfairly, you have the right to complain to the *Legal Ombudsman*. Their website is shown below.

**LEGAL OMBUDSMAN**

Accessibility · Cymraeg · Cookies · Privacy

How We Work   Make A Complaint   Information Centre   Who We Are   Working For Us   Contact Us

Search   BrowseAloud

# Complaining isn't easy. We're here to make sure it's straightforward and fair.

FIND OUT HOW TO COMPLAIN →

Information for  
**Consumers**

Resources for  
**Complaint  
handling**

Information for  
**Legal service  
providers**

Some lawyers and law services, however, are *unregulated*. This means that they do not have any regulatory body overseeing their work.

**Examples of unregulated lawyers are:**

- **Charity and trade union advisers** may offer legal support for members of their groups or the general public.
- **Paralegals** have some legal training and can work on some legal matters, but have not been qualified by any regulatory body.

Sometimes other businesses can also provide legal advice even though they are not regulated legal service providers, such as:

- **an accountant**
- **a bank or building society**
- **an estate agent**
- **an insurance company**

Unregulated lawyers like these may charge lower fees than regulated lawyers, or could even be free, and they may be a good option depending on your circumstances. Importantly, though, with unregulated lawyers you won't get the same protections you would with a regulated lawyer. For example, you can only complain to the Legal Ombudsman if you have used a regulated legal service provider. If you choose to use an unregulated legal service, the Legal Ombudsman will not be able to consider your case.

## 4. You can get free legal advice and, in some cases, free legal help.

All the websites that we showed you on the previous screens are free to use, providing free legal advice. Many of them also have options to email them, ring them, or visit a local office to discuss your specific legal matter. Some of them even have online training programs and videos to help you solve your legal problem, such as the example below from *Advice Now*.

### Know-How

Boost your legal knowledge, confidence and skills

Advice Now - Know-How

### Know-How

We want to ensure that everyone has the knowledge, confidence and skills they need to deal with everyday problems. In our Know-How section we look at the skills, attitudes and nuggets of knowledge that help you avoid or deal with problems before they get serious.



How to prepare for seeing a solicitor or adviser



Top Tips for dealing with problems at work



How to negotiate with your landlord



Last minute tips for going to court or tribunal



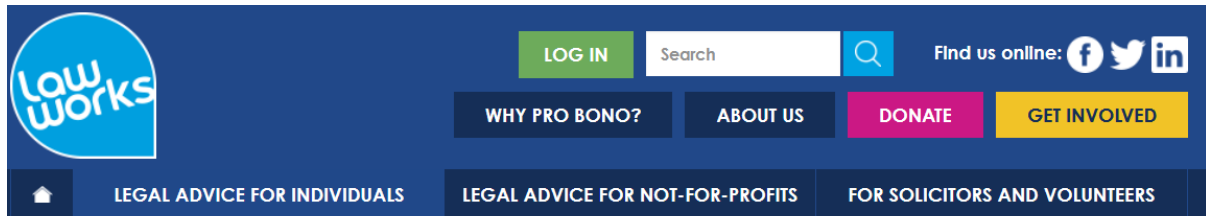
Top tips on how to show a landlord you will be a good tenant



Top tips for negotiating with shops or services



Some other organisations and lawyers offer appointments where you can meet them and discuss your legal issue for a short period of time without any charge. These sessions can help you get a feel for your options, while also helping the lawyer to work out if they are able to take on your case. An example of a free advice clinic from *Law Works* is shown below.



Home » Legal advice for Individuals » Find a legal advice clinic near you

## Find a legal advice clinic near you

### Welcome to the legal advice clinic search

Click on the title to see the LawWorks page for the clinic, which will provide further details about eligibility criteria and how to access the clinic.

Legal advice for  
individuals

Free advice clinics

In addition to free legal *advice*, depending on your circumstances, you may also be able to get free legal *help*.

**Law Centres** are legal practices that are charities. They believe that everyone should have access to justice, so they target their services at the most disadvantaged people in their communities. Law Centres specialise in social welfare law: they help people save their homes, keep their jobs and care for their families. The services of a Law Centre are normally free to eligible clients living in its area. There are Law Centres across the UK, as shown below.



**Law Centres Network**

Law Centres Network    **About Law Centres**    LCN's work    Policy a

**About Law Centres**

- How Law Centres started out
- The first thirty years
- Law Centres on Google maps**
  - > Geographically
  - > **Alphabetically**
- No local Law Centre?
- Set up a Law Centre
- Vacancies
- Volunteer at a Law Centre

**Law Centres**

- > Bristol Law Centre
- > Cambridge House Law Centre
- > Camden Community Law Centre
- > Central England Law Centre (Birmingham)
- > Central England Law Centre (Coventry)
- > Citizens Advice Bradford & Airedale and Bradford Law Centre
- > Cumbria Law Centre
- > Derbyshire Law Centre
- > Ealing Law Centre
- > Equality and Employment Law Centre
- > Gloucester Law Centre
- > Greater Manchester Law Centre
- > Hackney Community Law Centre
- > Hammersmith & Fulham Law Centre
- > Haringey Law Centre
- > Harrow Law Centre
- > Hillingdon Law Centre
- > Isle of Wight Law Centre
- > Islington Law Centre
- > Kirklees Citizens Advice & Law Centre
- > Law Centre (Northern Ireland)

**Legal Aid** is a benefit that some people can receive to cover some or all of their legal costs. You may be able to get legal aid if you are on a low income and your problem is serious such as being at risk of losing your home or you are at risk of serious harm. Whether you get legal aid will depend on the type of case and your financial situation. Some legal aid is means-tested, where your income and family circumstances, such as the number of children you have and living costs, are considered to see if you are eligible. Legal aid can cover some types of non-criminal (i.e., “civil”) legal cases, and including things like debt, housing and discrimination issues.

The government provides guidance on Legal Aid, as shown below.

# Legal aid

## Contents

- Overview
  - [What you can get](#)
  - [Eligibility](#)
  - [How to claim](#)
  - [Funding for exceptional cases](#)
  - [Domestic abuse or violence](#)
  - [Legal problems abroad](#)
- 

## Overview

Legal aid can help meet the costs of legal advice, family mediation and representation in a court or tribunal.

You'll usually need to show that:

- your case is eligible for legal aid
- the problem is serious
- you cannot afford to pay for legal costs

You could for example get legal aid if:

- you or your family are at risk of abuse or serious harm, for example [domestic violence](#) or forced marriage
- you're at risk of homelessness or losing your home
- you've been accused of a crime, face prison or detention
- you're being discriminated against
- you need [family mediation](#)
- you're adding legal arguments or bringing a case under the Human Rights Act



**You'll usually need to show that you cannot afford to pay for this help. You may have to pay some money towards the legal costs of your case or pay costs back later.**

The government also has an online tool to help you find out whether you are eligible for Legal Aid.

## Check if you can get legal aid

Legal aid can help pay for legal advice.

You'll be asked general questions about your legal problem and your income and savings. You'll be told where you can get legal advice.

This guide is also available [in Welsh \(Cymraeg\)](#).

[Start now >](#)

### Before you start

You can only check for non-criminal ('civil') cases. If you've been charged with a crime, ask your solicitor or barrister if you're able to get criminal legal aid.

You'll only get guidance on whether or not you can get legal aid - you will not get a final decision until you speak to an adviser.

### Related content

[Legal aid](#)



## 5. There are many ways to pay for legal help.

In addition to the possibilities for free legal help described on the previous pages, there are also several different payment options that may be available if you do need to pay for your legal help.

**Unbundling:** Your lawyer may be able to separate out the different tasks that are required to solve your legal problem, and you can choose to do some of the tasks to reduce the cost of the legal service. For example, if you have an employment issue, one of the tasks might be to retrieve your job contracts from your previous and current employers. If this is a task that you think you could do on your own, such as by speaking directly with your employers to ask for the documents, then you could agree to do this. You would agree with your lawyer which tasks you will do and which tasks they will do, and because your lawyer then would not have to do all the tasks themselves, their fee for the legal service may be lower.

**Legal insurance:** When you take out an insurance policy, such as home, motor or breakdown cover, you might be given the option to include legal expenses insurance. This usually means that if the policy-holder is involved in a particular event that leads to legal action, the insurance policy should cover the legal costs involved. This could be things like fees for lawyers, court fines, or legal costs awarded to the other side.

**“No win, no fee” arrangements:** Depending on the issue you're facing you might find that some lawyers are prepared to offer services to you on a **no win no fee** basis. If you have an agreement like this and lose your case, you will not owe your lawyer any payment. And if you win your case, usually you will pay your lawyer's fees with the money awarded to you from the losing side.

**Damages-based agreements (DBA)** – you agree with your solicitor to pay a set percentage of the compensation you receive if you win your case.

**Payment over time:** Sometimes law firms will allow you to make payments over time. For example, you might be able to pay your legal costs in four instalments over a year.

In summary, depending on your circumstances, you may be able to get free legal help. And even if you do need to pay for legal help, there are many different ways to pay. Lawyers may be able to provide the flexibility to help you afford legal help when you need it.

In this session we have reviewed five aspects of how you can get legal help.

- 1. You can get legal help even if you aren't sure whether something is legal or illegal.**
- 2. There are many ways to find legal help.**
- 3. Many law services are regulated to ensure expertise and uphold standards of good service.**
- 4. You can get free legal advice and, in some cases, free legal help.**
- 5. There are many ways to pay for legal help.**