



Borderwise:

Legal System

This information sheet provides a general overview of how the legal system operates in the Republic of Ireland.

The Courts System

Overall responsibility for the administration of justice rests with the Attorney General and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

The Attorney General (AG) is appointed by the government and is the government's legal advisor. The AG's Office provides legal advice to the government and to government departments and offices. When people sue the State, the AG is involved. The AG must be involved in all cases where constitutional issues arise. Further information is available from the website: www.attorney-general.ie or by visiting the Departments website: www.justice.ie

The Courts Service

The Courts Service manages the courts, maintains and manages court buildings and facilities, provides support services for judges and provides information for the public. The Courts Service is not responsible for the administration of justice - that is the function of judges.

The Courts Service,
Phoenix Street North,
Smithfield,
Dublin 7
Tel: +353 1 888 6000
Website: www.courts.ie

Seeking legal Help

Should your case be one which you want to take to a solicitor, lists of practising solicitors and barristers are available from:

The Law Society of Ireland
Blackhall Place
Dublin 7
Tel: +353 1 672 4800
www.lawsociety.ie

Legal Aid

If you are having legal problems or accused of a crime and you can't afford to pay for a legal adviser you may be able to get legal aid. The Legal Aid Board provides legal aid and legal advice in civil cases to people who meet the criteria. In order to qualify you must pass both a means test and a merits test.



Going
South

How to apply?

To find out whether you qualify for legal aid, you should simply complete the Means Test Form available in the Law Centres. You will give details about your income and your expenses on a confidential basis. If your application is accepted, you will be asked to make a minimum contribution. For further information contact the Legal Aid Board: Tel. (066) 9471000 or alternatively visit the website: www.legalaidboard.ie

The Gardai (Police)

The Garda Síochána is the Irish national police force and is more commonly referred to as the Gardai. It has responsibility for carrying out all policing duties in Ireland. In addition, it provides State security services and carries out all criminal and traffic law enforcement. The Garda Commissioner who is appointed by the Government, is responsible for the day to day running of the force. It is organised into six operational regions - these are further divided into divisions and districts. The Gardai are responsible for the investigation of most crime and for traffic control. For further information: www.garda.ie

Prosecution of offences

Crimes are normally prosecuted by the Gardaí or the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). In general, the more serious offences are prosecuted by the DPP. It is possible to bring private prosecutions in certain limited circumstances. If you are unhappy about a decision of the Gardaí or the DPP in relation to a prosecution, you can complain to the Gardaí or the DPP. However, they are not under an obligation to explain their actions.

Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)
14-16 Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 678 9222
www.dppireland.ie

Prisons

The prisons are run by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Information about prisons may be obtained from:

Irish Prisons Service
IDA Business Park
Ballinalee Road
Longford
Tel: + 353 43 35100
www.irishprisons.ie

Contact Details

Borderwise, Fermanagh House, Broadmeadow Place, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, BT74 7HR
Tel: 028 66323632 (from Northern Ireland) or 048 66323632 (from Republic Of Ireland)
Email: borderwise@citizensadvice.co.uk

