

Brethertons BIG FAQs Series

Four Questions – And More Questions – To Ask A Solicitor

When you first meet the solicitor you may then instruct to help with your spinal cord injury compensation claim it is important you use the meeting to gather information from them so you can make an informed decision about whether to place your instructions with them. These four (and more) questions may help get you to the crux of things quickly. A specialist spinal cord injuries solicitor with sufficient experience and expertise in dealing with claims like yours will be more than happy that you asked. You may wish to use the questions outlined below (or variations on them) to help shape your first meeting with a solicitor so you achieve what you need to at the meeting and so that you can then take things forward.

What are the four questions?

Experience suggests that most people engaging a solicitor for the first time, and particularly in connection with a spinal cord injury claim, tend to value answers to the following questions in the initial meeting with their solicitor:

- Have I got a case?
- What level of compensation will I receive?
- How long is it likely to take?
- How much is it going to cost me?

An experienced solicitor specialising in spinal cord injury claims will have no trouble in answering these once they have established some information from you about the circumstances of your injury.

Why just four questions?

Obviously, the questions above can involve answers that go beyond yes and no or a number. But any prospective client should not hesitate in asking whatever they need to ask the solicitor if having answers to those questions helps them decide to instruct the solicitor. There is no wrong or right number of questions and there are no wrong or right questions to ask.

Other questions you may care to ask include:

- How many spinal cord injury cases have you dealt with?
- What were the outcomes of those cases?
- How long did those cases take to conclude?
- Will an early interim payment be likely?
- What is involved in making a claim?
- What contact will I have with you while the claim progresses?
- Can you help with my immediate needs – financial, powers of attorney, benefits, discharge home, care and case management?
- What other help and support might be available to me?
- How would you propose to take things forward?
- Why should I offer my instructions to you/your firm?

When should I be asking these questions?

In our view these are the questions most people would regard as being worth asking in order to make an informed decision about which solicitor to instruct after a spinal cord injury. Of course, it is important that the solicitor is able to answer the questions satisfactorily and in a way that inspires confidence in them.

How will I be able to check the solicitor's answers?

Solicitors are duty bound to answer truthfully – and it would be a significant alarm bell to you if you didn't believe the responses you received to any question you raise. That said if you did want to explore some of the discussion afterwards asking clinicians who may have an awareness of the solicitor or firm; visiting their website and also checking in legal directories available online will quickly help verify what you were told. If in doubt do not hesitate to ask again; and equally do not be afraid of asking to speak with previous clients the solicitor has helped.

Where can I find out more about the solicitor, my claim and what's involved?

Never hesitate to ask the solicitor directly if there is something you are not sure about. They are there to help you. The firm's website and of course any literature you may have been given may also be helpful to you. The Law Society, the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, The Chambers and Partners Guide To The Legal Profession, and The Legal 500 all have 'find a solicitor' functions on their websites. Different solicitors engage to different extents with social media channels.

Who should I ask these questions of?

Ask questions of the solicitor you meet. The person you meet should be the person who will have day to day responsibility for your case – and they should be involved in that from day one. Figureheads for the firm, client liaison or relationship managers and others who will have little involvement in your case are probably not the key people you need to question at the outset if your case will be handled by someone else.

If you would like any more information or have any questions, please contact:

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'We help achieve financial security and enable independence after spinal cord injury'