

Brethertons BIG FAQs Series

The First Meeting With A Solicitor

For many people who suffer a spinal cord injury engaging a solicitor may be completely new and possibly daunting territory. We hope the following basic information helps explain what to expect.

What is the first meeting with a solicitor all about?

The first meeting with a solicitor is an opportunity for you to collate information about how the law can be used to help you secure often significant sums of money that you will need after spinal cord injury. It is the meeting in which the solicitor you may go on to instruct to represent you must earn your trust and confidence. Choosing the right solicitor – one with specialised and sufficient experience and expertise in assisting spinal cord injured patients and their families – is potentially one of the most important decisions you may ever make given what is at stake.

Why is the first meeting important?

Spinal cord injury claims are typically complex claims and usually involve significant sums of compensation. The solicitor you choose to assist you needs to impress you and win your trust at the first meeting and you need to feel confident they are right for you. Litigation is often difficult and intense, and you need to be comfortable that the solicitor can help navigate you through that process and remove any of the burdens you might otherwise endure so that you can live your life rather than live the claim.

When would the first meeting with a solicitor take place?

As soon as you feel comfortable enough to engage with it. Increasingly people engage solicitors very soon after the injury (sometimes in the A&E phase). That can be important where evidence needs to be preserved (say for example where a vehicle is about to be written off and crushed might be crucial in determining issues around liability or contributory negligence), and indeed where a lot needs to be achieved with early interim payments (if they can be secured) to fund discharge plans. It can pay to be cautious here though. Genuinely specialist spinal cord injury solicitors with the right expertise and experience are relatively rare (just as spinal cord injury clinicians are) and you will need that expertise, experience, and specialism in your claim. You should also expect the solicitor to meet with you as soon as practically possible after your first contact to them.

How will things progress after the first meeting?

When you are ready and comfortable that you have the information you need to make an informed choice of who you would like to represent you, you will be invited to confirm your decision so the solicitor can then engage with the formal processes by which a file is set up and work begins. You should never feel pressured in to making that decision. Neither should you feel uncomfortable about interviewing more than one prospective solicitor to be sure that you are making the right decision for you.

Where will the first meeting take place?

Ideally the meeting will be in person and that will almost always be in a private room at hospital or some other place of your choosing. Specialist solicitors travel all over the country to help spinal cord injury patients. Picking the right solicitor rather than the closest solicitor is important.

Who will be involved?

The people you wish to have near you and involved in making decisions that matter. From the solicitor's side of things, you should expect to meet the solicitor who would primarily be involved in running your case. It is not unusual for the solicitor to introduce an assistant who may assist you. It is not acceptable to meet a mere figurehead or someone who will not have any meaningful involvement with your case. The meeting is private and confidential, and you should not feel under any pressure to make a decision to go ahead. That decision is one to exercise when you are comfortable, fully informed and ready to make it.

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

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