

LEAFLET No. 14 - CIVIL LEGAL AID FOR COMPLAINANTS IN RAPE AND CERTAIN SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES

The term '**complainant**' in this leaflet refers to a person who has made a complaint to the Gardaí about rape and / or sexual assault and in respect of which criminal proceedings have been initiated against the person alleged to be responsible.

Services provided

The Legal Aid Board provides **legal advice** and **legal aid**, i.e. representation in court, to complainants in certain cases of sexual assault.

There are **two** different services available and each of them is dealt with in turn in this leaflet.

1. Legal advice service

Legal advice is available to a complainant in a prosecution for certain sexual offences who wish to seek advice about the matter.

A person seeking **to avail of** this service does **not** have to undergo a means test or pay a contribution to the Board for this service.

2. Legal aid service

Legal aid is available to a complainant in certain sexual assault cases where the prior sexual history of the complainant is being raised by a person accused of one or more of the following offences:

- a rape offence;
- aggravated sexual assault;

- aiding, abetting, counselling and procuring aggravated sexual assault;
- aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring attempted aggravated sexual assault;
- incitement to aggravated sexual assault; or
- conspiring to commit any of the foregoing offences.

A person who seeks to avail of this service does not have to undergo a means test or pay a contribution.

Provision of solicitor / barrister

A solicitor and, where necessary, a barrister will be appointed by the Board to provide services in each individual case.

General information about both services

Essential services

These are essential and valuable services for complainants in rape and certain sexual assault cases. The Board recommends that complainants seek legal services at the **earliest** possible time.

The Board will try to nominate a solicitor and / or barrister at the first available opportunity and those applying will **not** be placed on a waiting list.

How to apply

A person looking for legal services can apply at any of the Board's law centres. For further information on applying for legal services see **Leaflet no. 11 – Applying for Legal Services**.

Details of the Board's law centres are available on www.legalaidboard.ie or by contacting:

Head Office: Legal Aid Board, Quay Street, Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry.

Local Number: 1890 615 2000

Telephone: (066) 947 1000

Fax: (066) 947 1035

Website: www.legalaidboard.ie