

Spinal Cord Injuries

Expertise and Understanding

Legal advice from Irwin Mitchell

This booklet provides guidance about the support systems available and the legal rights of those who have suffered a spinal cord injury.

This information relates to the law and procedures in England and Wales. Please contact us if you need advice about the law and procedure in other legal jurisdictions.

Choosing to pursue a compensation claim following a spinal cord injury is an important decision. What you need is expert advice from professionals acting in your best interest – from initial enquiry right through to successful outcome.

"I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you very much for all your efforts and hard work on my behalf, and how pleased I am with the outcome. I knew immediately that I had made the right choice... you have always been extremely professional, patient and understanding of my situation, and I couldn't have wished for anybody better to represent me".

- Terry Wyatt

Spinal cord injury has a dramatic and life changing impact on the person injured and those who are close to them. At Irwin Mitchell we know how important it is to have access to specialist legal advice, insight and practical support following such an injury. With a dedicated spinal cord injury team, we have been at the forefront of developing first class services designed specifically for those injured in this way.

Committed to the wellbeing and future financial security of all our clients, we will fight fearlessly to achieve the best outcome for you and your claim. We are renowned for our understanding of the issues affecting you and your family following a spinal cord injury, and we know what positive action to take to make a difference.

We will deliver the highest level of professional advice and expertise combined with dedication and sensitivity.

Above all, we put you first.

Talk to a specialist advisor today

Freephone **08000 23 22 33** or visit
www.irwinmitchell.com

If you have suffered a spinal cord injury as a result of an accident or incident that wasn't your fault, Irwin Mitchell can help you get the compensation and support you need and deserve.

Quality of life

Following a spinal cord injury, you will be going through a period of enormous adjustment, physically, emotionally and psychologically. It is bound to be a difficult and uncertain time and that's why you need an experienced legal team who understands all the different personal issues surrounding your new situation. The important thing now is that you are given every opportunity to rebuild and enjoy the same high quality of life you had prior to your injury.

Accident or incident

Spinal cord injuries can occur due to many reasons including:

- Violent assault
- Road traffic collisions
- Workplace accidents
- Falls
- Recreational and leisure accidents

Assume nothing

In most spinal cord injury cases, we will have to prove that someone else was at least partly to blame for your injuries, but it is important to assume nothing in this complex area of law. Even if you don't know who was to blame, in a hit and run accident for example, there might be a way to recover compensation.

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Text claim to **61993** and someone will call you back

Irwin Mitchell is one of the largest and most experienced personal injury law firms in the country. Our reputation for spinal cord injury work is second to none and every year we recover compensation for people injured in this way.

Specialist team

Employing many of the country's finest personal injury lawyers, our highly specialised Spinal Cord Injury team delivers expert, insightful and effective advice. Combining powerful legal arguments with care and consideration, we will handle your claim with strength and sensitivity to ensure the best possible outcome.

From our very first meeting all the way through your claim and even beyond, we work tirelessly, introducing forward thinking and creative new ways to present your case and improve the quality of your life.

Our service

The service we provide is about much more than securing compensation. We can help with all manner of health, social and financial issues, from arranging and purchasing specialist equipment and accommodation, to education, employment and income provision through various types of investment.

Your future health and financial wellbeing informs our every action and is central to what we do.

Our service includes:

- Immediate investigations to determine who was at fault.
- Interim payments wherever possible to help fund private healthcare, rehabilitation and financial security.
- Taking into account any worries you may have such as financial needs, state benefits and your employment or other rights.
- Expert support for you to access rehabilitation and employment opportunities.
- Specialist in-house services such as Personal Injury Trust advice, financial planning, Wills, Powers of Attorney and periodical payments.

Latest developments

Irwin Mitchell works closely with spinal injury experts across the UK and further afield, to secure the best possible results for our clients. Members of our teams regularly attend Spinal Injury Association training sessions and events to keep fully up to date with the latest developments in spinal cord injury care.

We also have a wider commitment – to seek improvements to the legal protection and levels of compensation for those who have suffered spinal cord injury.

Irwin Mitchell's first commitment is to you, and in achieving the best outcome for your claim. We'll ensure that you are well cared for throughout the process and do everything we can to secure the compensation to which you are entitled.

Campaign for improvements

At Irwin Mitchell we have a long history of campaigning with leading organisations active in all manner of personal injury. Together with these groups we seek improvements in health and safety to prevent accidents wherever possible, and to improve the quality of life and levels of compensation for those who have suffered injury.

Recognition

Our ground-breaking support for clients with serious injury has been recognised many times, and we have recently been presented with the claimant's solicitors Rehabilitation First award. A further indication of our good work in this area is our commitment to involve spinal cord injury case managers, who can organise therapy and support, rehabilitation providers and other professional therapists at every opportunity.

Over and above

Irwin Mitchell has long been considered a leader in developing new and innovative services for people suffering from a spinal cord injury. We strive to help those whose circumstances may not allow a claim as much as those who can. We are sponsors and fund raisers for several leading spinal cord injury charities and support groups - and a large number of our team volunteer their skills at national, local and individual level.

Share the care

We know that it is important to recognise the huge commitment and sacrifice of family members and carers who help individuals with spinal cord injury. We have always taken care to offer our full assistance to those providing immediate support to the injured and seek to promote the value of this help through awareness and fund raising.

The main charities and groups we work with in this area are:

- Aspire
- SIA
- Brain and Spine Foundation
- Back Up

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If you have suffered a spinal cord injury it is important to seek legal advice as soon as possible. Even if you don't know whether you are entitled to make a claim or not, you should speak to one of our specialist advisors right away.

You can talk to a specialist advisor today on freephone **08000 23 22 33**

Free advice

The sooner you contact us the better your chances of making a successful claim. To find out if your circumstances could lead to a claim contact us on the number above or visit our website and complete the online claim form.

Once you have made contact, we will give you free advice on whether we think you could make a claim. It is then up to you to decide to proceed. Should you wish to go ahead we will make an appointment to see you at a convenient time and place.

"The family are delighted that you have been able to achieve this result for us. It is a huge relief. Thank you very much for your skilful and sensitive handling of the situation. We have felt very well cared for by you through a very stressful time".

- Jean Keene

In many personal injury cases there are strict time limits on when you have to start court proceedings for your claim. For this reason it is vital that you seek advice from one of our specialist advisors immediately.

Time limits

In English law and in most cases the time limit for starting a personal injury claim is three (3) years from the date of the accident or incident giving rise to your injury. However, that limit can vary and may be shorter or extended depending on the circumstances of your case.

More detail

In the case of accidents outside England and Wales time limits may be less and in some cases where the injuries are caused by criminal assault the time limit for making a claim may also be different.

The sooner you contact us the better we are able to prepare your claim, but in any case we will give you clear advice about the time limits that apply to your particular circumstances.

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If you are unsure whether you have a claim, or even if you think the accident might have been your fault, you must always call us to talk it over. We'll assess your case free of charge, tell you what we think and then you can decide if you want to go ahead.

Track record

At Irwin Mitchell, we have a long track record of winning compensation cases where the client initially thought they did not have a claim, or that the law did not protect them.

What are my chances of winning?

When you contact us we will give you realistic advice on the chances of winning based on the information you provide. It is not possible to give a definitive answer on any case, however, the more information we have the more accurate an assessment we can make.

We will always give you an honest, straightforward opinion.

If you are worried about legal costs, don't be.

Contacting us for initial advice on your claim will cost you nothing. If we advise you to pursue a claim with us, we will review all the options for funding it.

At Irwin Mitchell our preferred option is our "No Cost To You" scheme which under a "no win no fee" agreement means that:

- If you win you keep 100% of your compensation.*
- If you lose, you pay nothing.**
- There are no hidden costs

When we discuss your claim in more detail we will tell you if the "No Cost To You" option is available or if we need to look at other funding options.

You may for example be able to fund your case through trade union membership or legal expenses insurance.

*Does not apply to group actions or accidents and illnesses outside England and Wales and is subject to compliance with the terms of your funding arrangements.

**Subject to entering a 'No Win, No Fee' agreement with us and complying with its terms.

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The amount of compensation you receive will depend on many factors, including how seriously you have been injured, how the injury has affected your life, how much money you are considered to have lost and will lose as a consequence and the extra support you will need in the future.

Individually assessed

From the outset, our team will advise you on how the Courts approach the assessment of compensation and how this fits with your circumstances. The fact is that we are all different and the consequences of a similar injury will vary from person to person. The Courts will always assess your claim on an individual basis and award compensation according to its findings.

If your claim is progressed under Irwin Mitchell's 'No Cost to You' scheme, you will receive 100% of any compensation awarded to you.*

Keeping you informed

As we learn more about you and your injury, and obtain further evidence such as medical reports, we will be able to provide a more accurate idea of what the Court is likely to award to you. You can be assured that we will do everything we can to recover the maximum amount of compensation available to you and organise payment terms to suit your immediate and ongoing needs.

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We will investigate your case thoroughly by gathering witness statements, accident reports and other relevant details about your accident, injuries and ongoing requirements. All this information will be collated and presented to the Courts.

"We found you very professional as well as approachable, helpful and caring. We can now move on and look forward to a more stable and secure future. I am sure that this would not have happened without yourselves being involved".

- Jayne Merrett

Insurance

A claim will then be made against the relevant person or body, and it is likely that their insurance company will get involved. We will then wait for a response from the insurance company you are claiming against. This can go one of two ways; either they will decide to meet your claim, or they will not.

Don't panic if an insurance company turns down your claim at first as this often happens - it does not mean that your claim will fail.

Out of Court

The vast majority of cases are settled before they go to Court, however, some will end up going before a Judge. It can take a lot of time to prepare a case for Court so you will need to be prepared for delays. Don't worry, this is normal and we will keep you informed all the way through.

We know this is a lot to take in but we will guide you through the process making your claim as easy and stress-free as possible.

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At Irwin Mitchell we understand that contacting a lawyer might seem like a big step, especially if you haven't done it before. That's why we go out of our way to make sure that if you get in touch with us we make you feel welcome, relaxed, safe and secure.

We understand the issues affecting you and your family following a spinal cord injury and our renowned team of specialists will fight tirelessly to ensure that you get the best compensation, medical care, rehabilitation and support possible.

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Freephone

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www.irwinmitchell.com

Spinal Injuries Association (SIA)

SIA House
2 Trueman Place
Oldbrook
Milton Keynes
MK6 2HH

Telephone: 0845 678 6633
Email: sia@spinal.co.uk
Website: www.spinal.co.uk
Freephone helpline: 0800 980 0501

Aspire

National Training Centre
Wood Lane
Stanmore
Middlesex
HA7 4AP

Telephone: 0208 954 5759
Email: info@aspire.org.uk
Website: www.aspire.org.uk

The Back Up Trust

Jessica House
Red Lion Square
191 Wandsworth High Street
SW184LS

Telephone: 0208 875 1805
Email: admin@backuptrust.org.uk
Website: www.backuptrust.org.uk

Brain and Spine Foundation

7 Winchester House
Carnmer Road
Kennington Park
London
SW9 6EJ

Telephone: 0207 793 5900
Email: info@brainandspine.org.uk
Website: www.brainandspine.org.uk

Carers UK

20 Great Dover Street
London
SE1 4LX

Telephone: 0207 378 4999
Email: info@carersuk.org
Web: www.carersuk.org
Carers Line: 0808 808 7777

Design and Manufacture for Disability (DEMAND)

The Old Chapel
Lammard Road
Abbots Langley
Hertfordshire
WD5 0GQ

Telephone: 01923 681800
Email: info@demand.org.uk
Website: www.demand.org.uk

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Disabled Drivers Association

Ashwellthorpe
Norwich
NR16 1EX

Telephone: 01508 489449
Email: enquiries@mobilise.info
Website: www.mobilise.info

Disability Living Foundation

380-384 Harrow Road
London
W9 2HU

Telephone: 0845 130 9177
Email: info@dlf.org.uk
Website: www.dlf.org.uk

Disability Sport

Belle Vue Centre
Pink Bank Lane
Manchester
M12 5GL

Telephone: 0161 953 2499
Email: info@des.org.uk
Website: www.disabilitysport.org.uk

Independent Living Fund

PO Box 7525
Nottingham
NG2 4ZT

Telephone: 0845 601 8815
Email: funds@ifl.org.uk
Website: www.ifl.org.uk

The Inspire Foundation

Spinal Treatment Centre
Salisbury District Hospital
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP2 8BJ

Telephone: 01722 336262 ext 2465
Email: inspire@freeuk.com
Website: www.inspire-foundation.org.uk

Contact a Family

209-211 City Road
London
EC1V 1JN

Telephone: 0207 608 8700
Helpline: 0808 808 3555
Email: info@cafamily.org.uk
Website: www.cafamily.org.uk

Mobility Information Service

20 Burton Close
Dawley
Telford
TF4 2BX

Telephone: 01743 340269
Email: mis@nmcuk.freemove.co.uk
Website: www.mis.org.uk

Motability

City Gate House
22 Southward Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HB

Telephone: 0845456 4566
Email: Use online enquiry form
Website: www.motability.co.uk

Regain

78 Shirburn Road
Watlington
Oxfordshire
OX49 5BZ

Telephone: 01491 613980
Email: enquiries@regainsportscharity.com
Website: www.regainsportscharity.com

Spinal Research

Bramley Business Centre
Station Road
Bramley
Guildford
Surrey
GU5 0AZ

Telephone: 01483 898 786
Email: Online Enquiry Form
Website: www.spinal-research.org

Sportability

Laynes House
526-528 Watford Way
London
NW7 4RS

Telephone: 0208 959 0089
Email: info@sportability.org
Website: www.sportability.org.uk

Spinal Cord Injury Centres

Belfast

Musgrave Park Hospital
Spinal Cord Injuries Centre
Stockman's Lane
Balmoral
Belfast BT9 7JB

Telephone: 028 9066 9501

Dublin

National Medical Rehabilitation Hospital
Rochestown Avenue
Dunlaoghaire
Dublin
Eire

Telephone: 00 3531 235 5000

Glasgow

Queen Elizabeth National Spinal Injuries Centre
Southern General Hospital
1345 Govan Road
Glasgow G51 4TF

Telephone: 0141 201 2555

Middlesbrough

The North of England Spinal Injuries Centre
The James Cook University Hospital
Marton Road
Middlesbrough
Cleveland TS4 3BW

Telephone: 01642 850850

Oswestry

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The Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries

The Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic
Hospital
Oswestry
Shropshire SY10 7AG

Telephone: 01691 404000

Rookwood

Welsh Spinal Injuries and Neurological Rehabilitation Centre

Rookwood Hospital
Fairwater Road
Llanfaff
Cardiff CF5 2YN

Telephone: 029 2041 5415

Salisbury

The Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre

Salisbury District Hospital
Odstock Road
Salisbury SP2 8BJ

Telephone: 01722 336262

Sheffield

The Princess Royal Spinal Injuries Centre

Northern General Hospital
Osborne Building
Herries Road
Sheffield S5 7AU

Telephone: 0114 271 5644 (unit)

Telephone: 0114 243 4343 (hospital)

Southport

The Regional Spinal Injuries Centre

Southport and Formby General Hospital
Town Lane
Kew
Southport PR8 4LP

Telephone: 01704 547471

Stanmore

The London Spinal Injuries Centre

Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital
Brockley Hill
Stanmore HA7 4LP

Telephone: 020 8954 2300

Stoke Mandeville

National Spinal Injuries Centre

Stoke Mandeville Hospital
Mandeville Road
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire HP21 8AL

Telephone: 01296 315000

Wakefield – Pinderfields

Yorkshire Regional Spinal Injuries Centre

Pinderfields General Hospital
Aberford Road
Wakefield WF1 4DG

Telephone: 0844 811 8110

Freephone **08000 23 22 33**

www.irwinmitchell.com/personalinjury

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Irwin Mitchell

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