

This leaflet describes how we can help you if you have been mistreated by the Police but Hatten Wyatt also provides a full range of legal services for private clients and businesses in Gravesend and throughout Kent and south east London.

When you need legal advice, talk to us as soon as you can. A solicitor's experience and expertise can often resolve a difficult situation before it has more permanent effects on you, your family or business. This is a summary of some matters we can help you with:

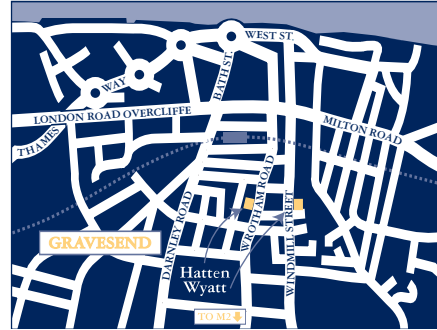
- Separation, divorce and children's issues
- Private disputes
- Personal injury
- Licensing applications
- Crime/advice at Police Station/representation in court
- Employment problems (for employees and employers)
- Buying/selling your home
- Wills, tax planning and services for older clients
- Probate
- Contesting a Will
- Commercial property transactions
- Business services
- Immigration

We are committed to provide high quality advice and service to all our clients regardless of the nature or value of the matter. Your work will be supervised by one solicitor, with access to the combined knowledge of the firm, who will keep you informed about the progress of your case, explain the legal procedures and answer your questions and take into account the longer term implications as well as the immediate benefits of our advice.



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HATTEN WYATT

Solicitors & Advocates

Established 1844

Actions against the Police





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If you think that the Police or another public authority (such as the Crown Prosecution Service, Prison or Magistrates' Court service, the Probation Service or a private security firm) have overstepped their authority, conducted their investigations incompetently or just got things wrong, we can tell you if you have a good case and if you may be able to make a claim for compensation or complaint.

Most potential claims fall into these 'cause of action' categories:

- false imprisonment
- assault and battery
- wrongful/unlawful arrest
- malicious prosecution
- trespass to land and goods
- negligence
- wrongful exercise of lawful authority
- confiscation of property
- death in custody
- human rights issues

We can advise you on the strength of your claim and give you a realistic assessment of the likelihood of success and the level of compensation you might reasonably expect. You may be entitled to compensation - 'compensatory damages' - and, in some cases, aggravated or exemplary damages. We will explain the options available to you, recommend the best course of action and implement it quickly and vigorously.

Making your claim

You should talk to your solicitor as soon as you can, while the details of the incident are still clear in your mind and the minds of the other people involved. Ideally, you should write down precisely what occurred, recording the names of people concerned, dates and times, sequence of events and all the details you remember, whether they seem important or not. There are time limits for claims which vary from one year, under the Human Rights Act, to three years in negligence cases and six years in most other matters.

Not all cases will go to court; some may be settled quickly by correspondence and others resolved through negotiation. Furthermore, if you are tried and found 'not guilty' or the case against you is not proceeded with, you will not automatically have the basis for a compensation claim.

Alternatives to compensation claims

A claim for financial compensation is not always the most appropriate way in which to pursue your complaint against the Police. If your complaint is concerned with how you were treated by individual police officers, you can report their conduct of the investigation to the relevant disciplinary and complaints service.

Each police force has such a service and the Police Complaints Authority supervises complaints referred to it. This is an independent body that will report its decision on your complaint when the Police (from a different force) have completed their inquiry.

The outcome of such an inquiry may be that the policemen/women involved will face disciplinary proceedings before their Chief Constable which may result in dismissal or some lesser punishment. You will not receive financial compensation although it does not prevent you from pursuing a separate case for damages against the individual people involved.

At a Police station: If you have been arrested, we will visit you at the Police station day or night, any day of the year. Do not make a statement or say anything until you have spoken to your solicitor.

Coming to see us: Our office is open from 9am to 5.30pm from Monday to Friday. Please telephone or call in to make an appointment, this means you will not have to wait more than a few minutes and we will have your files ready. We have ground floor meeting rooms (please tell us when you make your appointment if you prefer one of these rooms).

Coming to see you: If you cannot visit our office, we can meet you at your home, in hospital, a police station or in prison.

Fees: If you have been arrested, advice at the Police station is generally free.

Public Funding: If you qualify for Public Funding (previous called 'Legal Aid'), we will tell you. Obtaining a funding certificate depends upon the level of your income and whether your claim is strong enough to justify the use of public money. If you do not qualify, we may be able to offer a 'no win/no fee' arrangement.

Languages: In addition to English, members of staff can also speak French, Urdu, Gujarati and Punjabi. Please tell us if you would prefer to discuss your matter in a language other than English.

Your suggestions: We take pride in providing a high quality service to our clients but if, as our client, you think we can improve our service, please tell us how so we can do better next time you need us.