



Lord Bach
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Committee - Day 1

Our ref: 319114

16 January 2012

Dear Willie,

LEGAL AID, SENTENCING AND PUNISHMENT OF OFFENDERS BILL

At committee stage on 20 December, I undertook to confirm the status of the 0845 Community Legal Advice helpline telephone number.

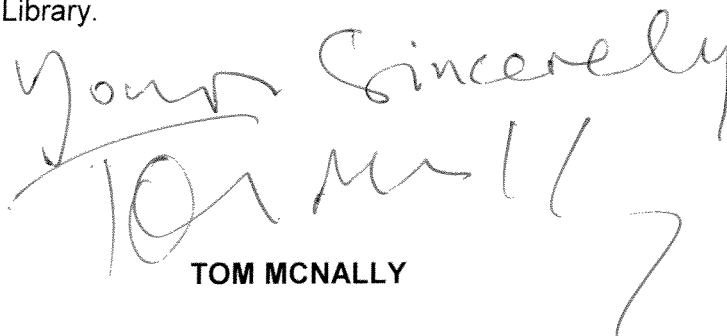
It is not a free phone number. Calls to the helpline are charged at approximately 4p per minute from a BT landline. Call charges from other landlines and mobile numbers are higher.

However, there are a number of options available to callers to minimise the cost of the call. Callers can:

- ask the helpline call operator or specialist telephone advice provider to call them back, or
- send a short mobile phone text message containing the term 'legalaid' and their name to the helpline (at number 80010) and the helpline will call them back within 24 hours, or
- complete a form online via DirectGov to request a call back at a time and in a language convenient to them.

There is currently no intention to make the helpline a free phone number. However, all of the current options available to callers to minimise the cost of the call will continue, and consideration will be given to any additional options that could be made available.

I am copying this letter to Lord Howarth who raised the point initially and will also place a copy in the House Library.

Your Sincerely

TOM McNALLY