

I am owed money from a company I did work for. Can I claim what I am owed by taking a case to court?

If your case is a simple one, the amount owed to you is less than £5000, and the case is defended, then the court will probably decide to allocate the case to the small claims track. The most common claims are for compensation for faulty services, compensation for faulty goods, disputes with employers for wages due or for money in lieu of notice. These are just examples and the small claims track can be used for other claims too.

Although you may be able to get help to prepare your case through the legal help scheme you will not be able to get legal help for representation. If the case is considered to be complex, the judge may decide to use a different procedure that means there can be a full hearing. You must have tried to settle your claim before taking court action, for example by writing to the person who owes you money. You must have also have given them time to respond. You need to keep a copy of all correspondence.

You can start a claim by filling in a claim form and taking two copies to the court. You keep a third copy for yourself. You also pay the court fee at this time. You might not have to pay the fee, depending on your financial circumstances. You can make applications online in some cases.

If there is a hearing, it will usually be informal and you and the other party will have a chance to give your reasons for starting the claim and why it is disputed. At the end of the hearing, the judge will give the judgment. If you win you get your court fees back. You can appeal against the judgment but you have only 14 days to do so.

An alternative to going to court is to take part in mediation. There will be a charge, which will depend on the size of your claim and will be shared by both sides of the dispute. To find out more, including how to find a trained mediator, ring the national mediation helpline on 0845 60 30 809.

For more information about small claims, Control & click [Small claims](#).

For more information about alternatives to going to court, click on [Alternatives to court](#).

This information applies to England and Wales

Further help

Citizens Advice Bureaux give free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to help you solve problems. Contact **Citizens Advice Islington** for further help on **0844 856 3537**.