



# YOUR GREEN GREEN GRASS OF HOPE

## EXPERT ADVICE JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY

By *Melissa Jones*

### One of the most helpful and cost saving **BIGGA membership benefits** is our **Greenkeepers Legal Assistance (GLA) helpline**.

As a member of our Association specialist legal advice is available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week, arranged by Arc Legal Assistance. The protection is not just limited to supporting you, as Arc is on hand to make sure you and your family get the best and most relevant protection you all need.

Not only can GLA offer advice on employment issues, consumer problems and personal injury cases but they can also give guidance on any personal legal matter, including will writing, moving home, matrimonial issues or discuss any motor offence cases.

Access to unlimited telephone legal advice is included as part of the service and the BIGGA scheme also offers a reassuring benefit of covering the costs of arranging representation at Employment Tribunals and internal disciplinary hearings with your employer. In addition, cover can extend to include legal costs incurred to deal with a consumer dispute and to pursue a personal injury claim.

#### So how does it work?

The legal advisors are based in Sheffield; they are all qualified lawyers who undertake continuous in-house training in order to answer your calls as effectively as possible.

Arc have been working in partnership with Heath Lambert, the UK's leading independent insurance broker and employee benefits consultants, to provide the specialist legal costs and advice BIGGA members and their families need, since early 2007.

#### EXAMPLE CLAIMS

Not sure if your situation is a legal matter worth pursuing? The Greenkeepers Legal Assistance (GLA) helpline provides practical information on the legal issues affecting you today. BIGGA knows that the most difficult thing about the law is finding out how it applies to your specific circumstances. Here are some examples of claims that have been made...

#### Employment...

An individual had been subjected to sustained criticism from his direct manager over a period of 18 months. When it became too much, he decided to resign. Arc's solicitors started proceedings for constructive dismissal against the individual's previous employer and, as a result an agreement was reached with a cash award, company car and future reference for the member.

#### Consumer Dispute...

As a result of a commissioned full structural survey, the insured purchased a 250 year-old listed property. Following storm damage to the roof which resulted in an insurance claim, the insurance assessor reported that there were pre-existing problems which necessitated the entire replacement of the roof structure. The insured contacted the helpline wishing to make a claim for breach of contract against the original surveyor.

Arc instructed their solicitors to arrange for a subsequent survey to establish how much the original purchase price would have been affected had the faults with the roof been identified in the original survey.

Having quantified the claim, Arc's solicitors issued proceedings against the original surveyor. An out of court settlement was agreed and the insured received significant compensation. All legal



costs and disbursements including the surveyors 'expert report' fee were covered under the legal expenses insurance.

### Personal Injury...

When an individual's son was assaulted and badly injured by door staff in a nightclub, he contacted the helpline for advice. As a result of negotiations, Arc instructed specialist solicitors, who were able to secure a substantial amount of compensation for the individual's son.

Government statistics show that the number of accident claims increased by over 8% in 2006-07, and according to experts this is expected to continue to rise over the next five years.

The BIGGA scheme not only provides prompt specialist advice for members, but also assistance for their family too.

### Legal Helpline Statistics

- In November 2008 a total of 64 calls were handled by GLA of which 75% were employment related with 9% family and personal related calls. The total call duration was 599 minutes, an average of 9.4 minutes per call.
- In October 2008 a total of 77 calls were handled by GLA of which 58% were employment related and 12% were consumer related.
- In September 2008 a total of 64 calls were handled by GLA of which 58% were employment related.
- In August 2008 a total of 47 calls were handled by GLA of which 83% were employment related.
- In July 2008 a total of 74 calls were handled by GLA of which 69% were employment related.
- During the year September 2007 to August 2008 GLA helped over 500 callers to legal advice.

### Useful Employment Law Websites

ACAS

- [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Good for downloadable documents policies and procedures.

Health and Safety Executive

- [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Good for download information on health and safety for particular industries.

Equal Opportunities Commission

- [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

Good for practical examples of the application of equal opportunities.

Disability Rights Commission

- [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

Good for explanation of rights for disabled employees. Telephone helpline available to employees only.

UK Visas

- [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)

Joint initiative of the Commonwealth and Home Office giving clear information in relation to visa requirements.

### GREENKEEPERS LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- Freephone number - 0800 177 7891 (remember to have your BIGGA membership number to hand)
- Access 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Assistance for you and your family (living at the same address)
- Legal advice on employment, personal injury and consumer matters
- Cover for medical costs and expenses - for personal injury sustained in an accident (where recoverable from the person responsible)
- Legal expenses up to £50,000 per annum