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INTRODUCTION

We are all bound by the law and the British legal system. The framework of the law affects us in many ways, directly and indirectly. Right throughout our lives we will need to have a basic knowledge of the law. In this way, we can operate as citizens more effectively and we can also have a greater understanding of our rights and obligations.

The book is not a detailed textbook on the law. The purpose is to outline the law, in enough depth, and ensuring that the reader has understood the law and can then apply that law in a practical way.

This book covers, in the main, the legal system as it operates in England and Wales. To cover Scottish law in the same book would have been too great a task.

An attempt has been made to outline the operation of the legal system and also to describe the players in that system, such as solicitors and barristers and to describe the framework of financial aid that can be accessed through the legal help scheme. There is a detailed chapter on putting together a small claim and going to court with that claim. For many people, the small claims court is the most common method of seeking redress against an individual or company.

The chapters that follow the small claims court cover accidents and compensation, law and the consumer, legal relationship between children and adults, financial provisions for children, divorce, bereavement and the law, producing a will, the law and neighbours, landlord and tenant and, finally, the law and the police, what to do if you are arrested and how to complain.

The more complicated our society becomes, the more it becomes controlled by laws and regulations, the more that the individual needs to know to be able to be effective. This book cannot hope to be totally comprehensive but does cover as many key areas as possible.
