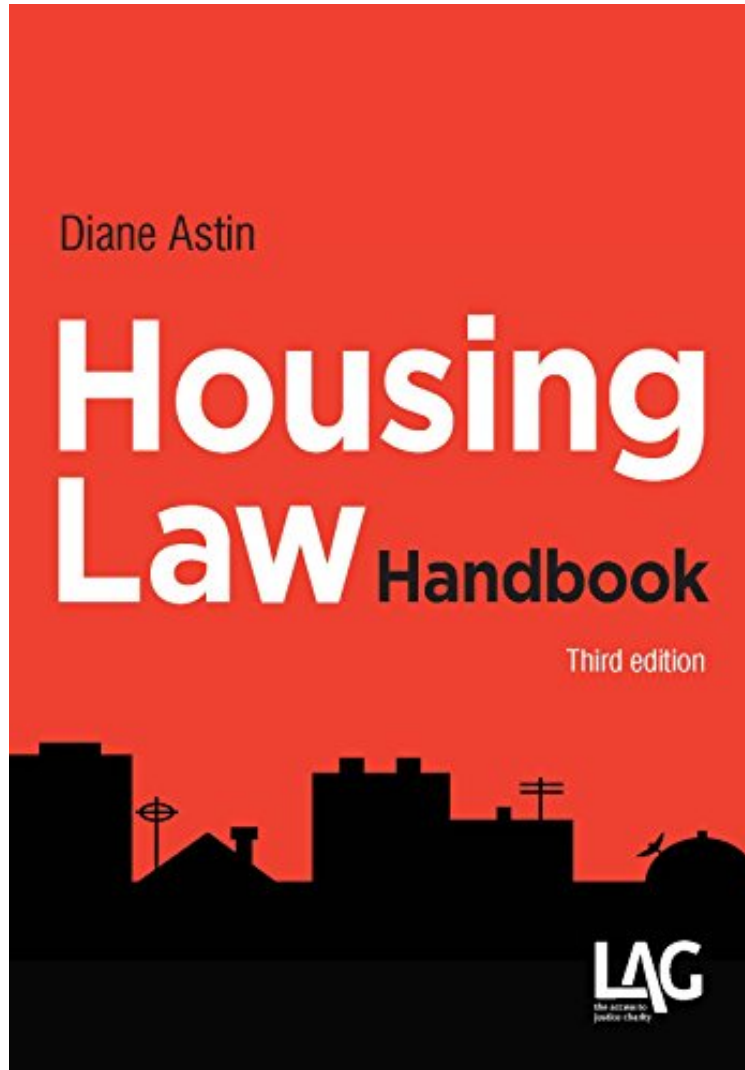


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## Housing Law Handbook

*Diane Astin*

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**Diane Astin : Housing Law Handbook** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Housing Law Handbook:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. VitalBy Phillip Taylor MBEA MOST VITAL MODERN GUIDE AND AN ESTABLISHED ESSENTIAL RESOURCE ON HOUSING FROM THE EXCELLENT LEGAL ACTION GROUPAn appreciation by Phillip Taylor MBE and Elizabeth Taylor of Richmond Green ChambersDiane Astin is on superb form with her new, third edition of the Housing Law Handbook published by the Legal Action Group in 2015 to coincide with the general election and a new government. There is much work to do in this legal sector with the implementation of the Localism Act 2011, LASPO and the Welfare Reform Act 2012 since the second edition. Whatever the future holds for housing law policy with the incoming government one thing is for sure: the end

to the old system of legal aid. This Housing Handbook is now just under 1,000 pages long but it does the one thing which Lady Hale mentions with her unarguable conclusion presented in the Sir Henry Hodge Memorial Lecture 2011 when she said that: courts are and should be a last resort but they should be a last resort which is accessible to all, rich and poor alike. As practitioners and advisers, we are very well serviced by this LAG handbook which, like all their other titles we see in court, provides just about as much access to justice as we are likely to see for the next few years unless some substantial changes occur in the provision of litigation funding for the poor. It is therefore a bit of a life-saver to many as we see further reductions in public funds made available for legal matters. Whatever the merits or defects of the current legal aid policy, the housing matter which the client comes to us with needs resolution and Astin's new edition provides an excellent service for us whilst complexity of the law and its procedures increases as access to help diminishes - that is a fact of life for us to deal with. We feel it is useful to draw the readers attention to some comments which Diane Astin passes which reflect the realisations we now face from 2015. She writes that when surveying recent development, two things stand out: First, that removing welfare benefit law from the scope of legal aid is an excellent way of heading off challenges to draconian welfare reform; and Secondly, politically motivated, piecemeal amendments to social welfare law has increased its complexity at the same time as the sources of legal help diminish. Astin finishes by saying: a prime example is housing benefit, and legal aid is no longer available to help with a housing benefit problem at an early stage. The final nail knocked in to the argument is one has to ask what use is a system of rules and appeals if both are inaccessible to the people affected by them. Too true! Actually, we have been here before with the massive civil court reorganization during the coalition period which has highlighted the serious problems by withdrawal of legal aid in court proceedings themselves which are prolonged up to four fold to cater for litigants in person. Whilst we continue to face the practical implications of less legal aid but with justice remaining accessible to rich and poor alike, it is clear that the publications from the Legal Action Group such as the new edition of this handbook provide one of the only sources of legal advice at the moment which meet this accessibility criteria for the time being. It's a slim hope, but there is the possibility of a further radical shake up of the provision of legal services between now and 2020 so that any vision for the future may not be as pessimistic as some commentators have predicted but only time will tell, and we are fortunate to have Astin to hand. So, in the meantime, thank you, Diane, and LAG. The law is set out as at 31st March 2015, including the changes made by the Deregulation Act 2015.

A comprehensive and accessible handbook that covers all the basic aspects of housing law, this book focuses on the practical: the common problems faced by advisers, court proceedings and the tactics of running a case, challenging decisions, and seeking remedies.

**About the Author** Diane Astin is a senior lecturer at the University of Westminster and the Director of the Student Law Clinic. She has many years' experience of all aspects of housing litigation both in the private and voluntary sectors. She regularly trains and lectures in housing law, community care and asylum support for organisations including LAG, Shelter, Carers UK and the Refugee Council.