

# CHAPTER 1

## LEGAL SYSTEMS

### **What is law for?**

Someone alone on a desert island, cut off from the rest of the world, would need no law at all.

Introduce just one other person and the situation is transformed. If our two people are to co-exist, they will have to develop complex rules of behaviour. Most of the things we regard as crimes become possible. Many things covered by non criminal law, such as contract, or marriage, become possible. How are our people to decide what rules to follow? What happens if they disagree? What happens if a rule is broken? Our islanders are now grappling with issues of law.

It only takes two people to create the need for law. Consider modern society. The world has billions of people in it. They all have their own personalities, hopes, fears, beliefs, qualities and faults. Often they are crowded into quite small spaces. This certainly applies to England and Wales, the home of the law covered by this book. As we will see, this extends into almost all areas of life as it struggles to do the job of providing workable rules.

Without these rules, or laws, civilised life would become impossible. Society cannot be successful without effective laws. Democracy cannot exist without them. Law cannot be created or changed without a constitutional framework made for the purpose. It cannot be enforced without systems of detection, dispute resolution and enforcement.

### **Systems of law**

There are many of these. Usually they derive inspiration from a generally accepted moral code. Often this owes a lot to religion. Often it owes much to one or more political ideologies continued .....