This chapter first explains the meaning of law. It then discusses the historical development and characteristics of English law, and the different types of law (public law, private law, criminal law, and civil law). Laws are rules and regulations which govern the activities of persons within a country. In England and Wales, laws are composed of three main elements: legislation which is created through Parliament; common law; and, until the UK leaves the EU, directly enforceable EU law. This chapter also considers the terminology used for criminal prosecutions and civil actions, and outlines the legal profession in England and Wales.
1. The Nature of English Law