

## Recession Special Feature (8-13)

We take a look at our strategy and how we're working with providers to meet the challenges posed by the recession.



### A legal aid future

Trainee solicitors  
give their thoughts on  
legal aid

## focusfeatures

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Trainee legal aid solicitors are being supported by £3 million of LSC grants. We caught up with two young recruits and asked them about their thoughts on legal aid and hopes for the future...

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Since its foundation in 1949 legal aid has become so firmly anchored into our way of life that it's hard to imagine society without it...

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# Passion for legal aid work



**Mark Workman, Editor**

## Editorial

*Enthusiasm for work is always welcome – especially when it comes from young people at the start of their careers.*

In this issue we interviewed two recruits taking advantage of the LSC Training Contract Grant Scheme. See pages 4 and 5.

They both expressed tremendous commitment to the legal aid system and are excited about their future careers. Hereford recruit Abigail Price, 24, said: 'I hate to think what our society would be like without legal aid.'

**"We had a good response to the last edition of 'Focus' following our redesign. Your thoughts about the magazine and ideas for stories are always welcome"**

Many people would have no representation and there would be a lot of injustice.'

A similar view was expressed by south London recruit Jamie Phillips, 22, who said: 'Without legal aid there would be so many upset, emotional and vulnerable people in court getting evicted without having access to advice and representation.'

## Meet client needs in the recession

Also looking to the future is Edwards Duthie, a law firm that markets itself as the largest in the East London and West Essex region.

We highlight Edwards Duthie in our 'Recession Special' on page 9. They are a very good example of how a business can be successfully reshaped to meet client needs in these difficult times.

Our 'Recession Special' also looks at what the LSC is doing to respond to the challenges of the economic downturn. And we flag up the value of Community Legal Advice Centres with an in-depth look at Leicester's new CLA centre.

There is also an in-depth look at some of the resources available from the Money Advice Trust to help debt advisers. The 'Recession Special' runs from pages 9 to 13.

## 60th anniversary of legal aid

Our anniversary on 30 July is now very close and we're planning a number of articles in coming editions of Focus. We start on pages 6 and 7 with a look at the history of legal aid and how it has become embedded into our way of life.

## Keep in touch with us

Don't forget that we're always keen to hear from you. We had a good response to the last edition of 'Focus' following our redesign. Your thoughts about the magazine and ideas for stories are always welcome.

## Reading Focus

Remember that Focus is now only available online. So it's worth checking to see if you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader. This will allow you to read the magazine how you want, allowing you to zoom into a page, view a single page, or two pages at a time.

You can also search for items and even download a copy of the document to take away with you.

Help with using Acrobat reader is available. [www.legalservices.gov.uk/help/pdf.asp](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/help/pdf.asp) or by clicking the help button on the top of this page.

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## Contact info

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## Useful links

### Corporate News -

Corporate announcements, including policy reforms and new consultation announcements

### Civil News -

News and updates for service providers working within the Community Legal Service (CLS)

### Crime News -

News and updates for service providers working within the Criminal Defence Service (CDS)

### LSC Update -

The Legal Services email alert for all service providers

### Focus Magazine -

Homepage for the Focus magazine, containing the latest issue and recent back issues

## Trainees back a legal aid future

### Interview

*Trainee legal aid solicitors are being supported by £3 million of LSC grants. We caught up with two young recruits and asked them about their thoughts on legal aid and hopes for the future...*

#### Abigail Price, 24 – Caldicotts, Hereford

'I was really happy to be taken on to the Training Contract Grant Scheme. I do a lot of crime work at the moment but I'm hoping to get more into family work in the years ahead.

'Ideally, I'd like eventually to juggle crime and family equally. But I'll have to see how practical

stuff, including a fascinating drugs conspiracy case.

'I'm an accredited police station representative, so I can often be called out in the middle of the night. Unfortunately, that's unavoidable because people seem to make a

**"It's hard work and it can be very emotional and traumatic at times... But it's really rewarding and satisfying when you help people – especially if you achieve a good outcome."**

that is for my firm. I should be fully qualified by the early part of 2011.

'I think our legal aid system is vital. It is so important that people get fair representation and access to justice regardless of how much money they have.

'I hate to think what our society would be like without legal aid. Many people would have no representation and there would be a lot of injustice.

'My own career started three years ago when I joined Caldicotts after graduating with a law degree from the University of Glamorgan.

'I wasn't sure about staying in law after I finished my degree course. I'd kept my options open by taking a minor in business studies while at university. So I went to Caldicotts as a paralegal in 2006. That meant I could do a lot of substantive legal work and think about what I wanted to do in the long term.

'But I have to say that I love it. Every day is different and I couldn't imagine doing anything else now. I've had some really interesting and exciting work. There's been a lot of Crown Court

habit of being arrested during anti-social hours! But it's important work because I'm advising and assisting people who would otherwise have no representation.

'It's hard work and it can be very emotional and traumatic at times. The clients are often frightened and vulnerable. But it's really rewarding and satisfying when you help people – especially if you achieve a good outcome.

'From a big picture perspective the firm I am with is a small one. It has four partners and offices in Hereford and Leominster. But we do a very wide range of work and here in Hereford, where I live and work, it is one of the biggest crime firms in the city.

'I feel that we're really locked into the life of the city. It adds to the sense of satisfaction when you feel that the value of your work is recognised locally.'

### 150 organisations benefit from training grants

Caldicotts and Fisher Meredith are two out of 150 organisations receiving £3 million of grants to help train the legal aid solicitors of the future.

The awards were announced late last year and represent a 50% increase in the number of grants. Individual grants are worth up to £20,000 each.

The money is used to help support an organisation and trainee solicitor for up to four years through the Legal Practice Course and the Training Contract.

#### Biggest single funding scheme

More than 220 applications were received from organisations across England and Wales. The 150 available grants were awarded to a mixture of solicitors firms and Not for Profit organisations across England and Wales.

The scheme has been running since 2002 and is the biggest single funding scheme for trainee solicitors. So far, more than £10 million has been invested, enabling around 600 legal aid solicitors to benefit from a grant.

Organisations awarded a grant are then expected to recruit their trainee. Abigail and Jamie were taken on to the 2008 scheme, which is now closed to new entrants.

#### Contact & Information

» LSC website > About Legal Aid > Working in Legal Aid > Training Contract Grant Scheme – 2008

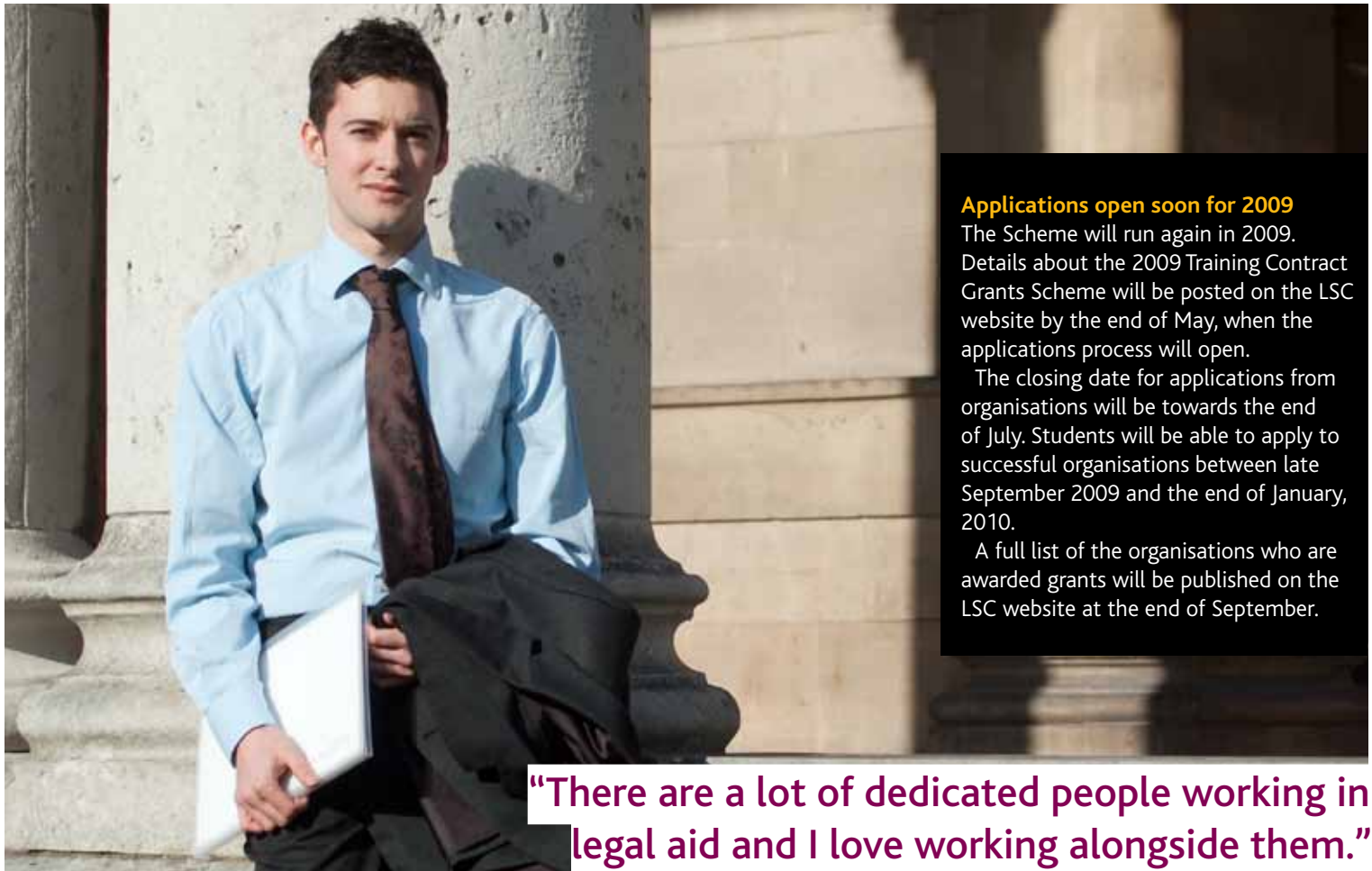
(this will be updated to 2009 in May)

» sarah.brewster@legalservices.gov.uk

» 01223 417820 for Sarah Brewster

» kim.moore@legalservices.gov.uk

» 0161 244 5027 for Kim Moores



### Applications open soon for 2009

The Scheme will run again in 2009. Details about the 2009 Training Contract Grants Scheme will be posted on the LSC website by the end of May, when the applications process will open.

The closing date for applications from organisations will be towards the end of July. Students will be able to apply to successful organisations between late September 2009 and the end of January, 2010.

A full list of the organisations who are awarded grants will be published on the LSC website at the end of September.

**“There are a lot of dedicated people working in legal aid and I love working alongside them.”**

### *Jamie Phillips, 22 – Fisher Meredith, Penge, south east London*

‘It was fantastic news for me to be accepted for a training grant. But it was also good news for my firm to be able to take on an extra person. I’m starting my two year contract in September.

There would be a lot of injustices without legal aid. So many people just need another chance, or have legitimate grievances which they need help to resolve through the legal system. They have to be represented.

‘I took a law degree at King’s College, London. After graduating I started volunteering at the Streetwise Community Law Centre in Anerley, south east London.

‘It is a young persons law centre for people aged up to 25. The strength of the service the centre provides attracts a lot of very vulnerable clients and the way the solicitors handle them is really rounded.

‘It was fascinating and such a high energy place. People there shared my views on the need for access to justice and the range of issues was huge. You’d clear up one thing for a client and

then discover lots more problems they needed help with.

‘There are so many areas to choose from for anyone interested in legal aid work – everything from domestic violence to mental health and social welfare.

‘I’ve had a lot of experience in housing law and I’m looking forward to starting with Fisher Meredith, which is a big law firm in south east London. As well as continuing to volunteer with Streetwise, I have started volunteering with Greenwich Housing Rights – a leading advice centre locally.

‘It’s a fantastic buzz when you help people out. I’ve worked with a huge range of people – from young families to single people and couples.

‘Some people are really desperate and emotional. But when you hear their stories you understand why.

‘I had a single man recovering from a gambling problem which had led to him losing

his job and friends. He was going to be evicted from his flat due to rent arrears, with little chance of getting rehoused.

‘I managed to help stop the eviction at Woolwich County Court, where I work as a duty adviser for Greenwich Housing Rights. It was great to know that he would have somewhere to sleep that night!

‘Without legal aid there would be so many upset, emotional and vulnerable people in court getting evicted without having access to advice and representation. Councils and social services would be overwhelmed with people with all kinds of problems, which could and should be alleviated with early expert advice.

‘There are a lot of dedicated people working in legal aid and I love working alongside them. It is good to see so many people who feel passionately about what they are doing. I know that they can’t imagine going into private work and I feel the same way.’

## ■ Access to justice is 60 years young

*Sixty years is barely a blink in time. But since its foundation in 1949 legal aid has become so firmly anchored into our way of life that it's hard to imagine society without it...*

This year more than two million people with legal problems in England and Wales will use the legal aid system for advice and representation.

It might be at a police station when an individual has been arrested on suspicion of a crime.

Or it might be to help settle a child care dispute, to support someone trying to keep their home or to resolve a problem with debt.

The service might be delivered face to face, at a walk-in centre or by telephone – and by a solicitor, barrister, solicitor advocate or advice professional.

They are making use of a system that is founded on rights and justice.

### Push for a fairer society

This was the dream of those who lived through the Second World War and wanted a fairer society – one where people didn't have to rely on charity for funding. Their aspirations found a voice in the recommendations of the Rushcliffe Committee in 1945.

The committee looked at the provision of civil and criminal legal help for people who could not afford it. Four years later the Atlee government steered the Legal Aid and Advice Bill on to the statute book.

Its aim was to make sure that nobody should be 'financially unable to prosecute a just and reasonable claim or defend a legal right'.

Divorce was a huge issue and it drove the initial demand for legal help. A crunch point came during the Second World War. Sadly, marriages made by members of the armed forces did not work out in many cases.

By 1955 a total of 78% of all civil legal aid cases still concerned divorce. The pressure of legal aid cases led to divorce being made simpler and more civilised.

### Legal safety net

Family law is just one area where legal aid has evolved and been extended since the Legal Aid and Advice Act was enacted in 1949.

The world pre-1949 when we did not have a unified legal aid scheme is not really so long ago. But we are now at a point where new trainee



legal aid solicitors (see pages 4 and 5) cannot comprehend a society without a legal safety net for our citizens.

As Hereford trainee Abigail Price says: 'I hate to think what our society would be like without legal aid. Many people would have no representation and there would be a lot of injustice.'

### Important to change and develop

And just like the NHS, education, and social security, legal aid has to change and develop to remain sustainable and viable.

Increasing demands are being made on legal aid services – as our special section on the recession highlights in this edition of Focus. Debt, housing possession, benefits and family matters are all major issues.

We now provide funding for an increasing number of not-for-profit providers offering legal aid services. These include Citizens Advice Bureaux, Law Centres and organisations like Shelter.

To help people effectively and make the most of the LSC's £2 billion funding we are transforming ourselves into a more efficient, commissioning organisation. The aim is to use our position to buy quality services for the

benefit of our clients while giving a fair deal to service providers and the taxpayer.

### Funding test cases

We continue to fund test cases in the courts – as we have throughout our 60 years. These have helped many people, improved the justice system and sometimes changed the law itself.

Our funding of the successful High Court challenge to the Government's discretionary policy towards Gurkha immigration is a classic example. The Government is now reviewing its policy in light of the judgment.

We're working hard to pilot new technologies. One example this year includes 'virtual courts' (see page 27) These work by establishing video links between police stations and a single magistrates court.

Another example is an internet booking service being tested in Cardiff, with the aim of giving asylum applicants legal advice as quickly as possible (see page 20).

We will continue to use new technologies to develop. But whether it's advanced social networks or thought-driven microchips the objective will be the same: access to justice for people who can least afford it and making sure anyone arrested has access to legal advice.

## Legal Aid timeline

### 1900 – 1939 early forms of legal aid

**1903** First form of criminal legal aid begins with limited funding from local ratepayers.

**1914** Government funded court office runs the Poor Persons Procedure for civil cases in superior courts – lawyers giving their services for free.

**1926** The Law Society takes over the Poor Persons Procedure. Matrimonial disputes make up the vast bulk of the work.

**1930** Government introduces tenet that criminal legal aid should be granted whenever it is in the 'interests of justice' to do so.

### 1940s – legal aid was born

**1944** Rushcliffe Committee set up in May 1944 to address issues around providing civil and criminal legal help for people unable to afford it.

**1949** On 30 July the Legal Aid and Advice Bill receives Royal Assent (equivalent for Scotland passed at the same time). The Act covers civil and criminal law cases and advice. Solicitors and barristers now to be paid for their services.

### 1950s – legal aid breaks new ground

**1950** The Act comes into effect very slowly. On 2 October the scheme for cases brought in the High Court (where divorce is heard) and Court of Appeal comes into effect. It is run by the Law Society through a network of local committees.

**1956** Legal aid now extends to county court cases.

**1959** A legal aid advice scheme starts, run through solicitors, for spoken advice only. Divorce rate reaches its post-War low, and so does legal aid activity.

### 1960s – legal aid advances

**1960** Taxpayers rather than local ratepayers now fund criminal legal aid. Civil legal aid extends to House of Lords cases. Financial limits in the means test go up for first time in 10 years.

**1961** Legal aid now extends to magistrates' courts for domestic proceedings – the final step of the Act.

### 1970s – legal aid on the high street

**1970** First law centre opens in west London in a butcher's shop.

**1972** Crown Court system changes and the new Family Court emerges. Duty solicitor crime scheme starts in Bristol and idea spreads.

**1973** 'Picnic table' logo is born along with the 'Green Form' scheme for civil legal aid. This is a more flexible scheme that means solicitors can carry out any legal aid service, except litigation, up to a pre-set limit (£25 to start with).

### 1980s – legal aid in police stations

**1984** National duty solicitor scheme begins for magistrates' courts. Anyone charged with an offence can consult and be represented by a solicitor on their first appearance.

**1986** Duty solicitor scheme begins in police stations as a result of the groundbreaking Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984.

**1989** The Law Society hands over management of legal aid to the new Legal Aid Board.

### 1990s – legal aid tries franchising

**1994** For the first time quality is a factor. The Legal Aid Board offers 'franchises' to providers – private practitioners and advice agencies – who meet a quality standard. But it is voluntary.



**1995** The Board sets up the Special Investigations Unit following some highly publicised cases where people leading apparently affluent lifestyles receive legal aid.

### 2000s – legal aid reforms

**2000** 1999 Access to Justice Act comes into force and the Legal Services Commission replaces the Legal Aid Board. The Act sets up legal aid under two schemes – the Community Legal Service and the Criminal Defence Service. All providers now have to have contracts with the LSC.

**2004** Community Legal Service Direct starts – now called Community Legal Advice – providing specialist civil legal advice over a telephone helpline and website.

**2006** A reform programme, based on Lord Carter's recommendations, set out to modernise the legal aid system. This includes moving providers from hourly rates to fixed payments.

**2007** First Community Legal Advice Centre opens in Gateshead. Introduction of Civil Unified Contract by LSC to bring contracts for not-for-profits and legal profession providers into one.

# Recession Special

*Fears over jobs, housing and debt are at their highest for a generation and we have set aside millions of pounds to tackle the problem. We take a look at our strategy and how we are working with providers to meet the challenges posed by the recession.*



World takes fright

Market mayhem

The world in turn

Global markets plunge

So where do we go from here?

**Working together**

Caseworkers Toby Walker and Sadaf Mir at Edwards Duthie in east London

## Lifeline for families hit by recession



*We know from our providers that the economic downturn has sparked a big increase in new clients seeking help...*

A major part of our response has been to put in place a funding lifeline. This allows for an extra 68,000 'new matter starts'. That includes about 20,000 contracts alone in housing.

It's a situation that puts extra pressure on LSC coffers. So we are working with providers to channel resources into the right areas.

**Law firm successfully reshaping business**

One provider successfully reshaping its business to meet client needs in the harsh new economic climate is Edwards Duthie. The law firm markets itself as the largest in the East London and West Essex region.

It has 135 staff and 14 partners working out of seven offices. It carries out a significant amount of social welfare law in addition to family, crime and employment law.

Equity partner David Emmerson said: 'The LSC has recently awarded us six new specialist contracts in debt, housing, family, community care, employment and welfare benefits.'

'We have a long track record of working closely with local advice agencies. Our aim is to offer the best possible specialist advice service to individuals and families feeling the pressure of the economic downturn. We're carrying out a big marketing campaign in this area across three London boroughs.'

**Partnerships with Citizens Advice Bureaux**

'We're working with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in both Leytonstone and Walthamstow. In some areas a different partner has emerged.'

For example, in Newham we're entering into a similar relationship with Community Links, a well established innovative advice provider.

'We're complementing and adding to the advice these organisations provide with our specialist lawyers. In short, our partners provide access to local people in need, and we deliver the expert advice and advocacy.'

The thinking is to provide a joined up service from one source.

Walthamstow CAB manager Steve Johnson said: 'Combining expertise is an obvious advantage to those who need help. We know what areas our partner specialises in, and they know what we do as well. A client may face repossession of their home following dismissal at work, and need welfare benefits help.'

'Between us, our partnership is able to provide advice and expertise across all these problems, all at the same local venue.'

**Contact & Information**

» [www.edwardsduthie.com](http://www.edwardsduthie.com)

» [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

## Investment to help providers meet client needs

It's vital that money available to help families and individuals survive the economic downturn is spent in the right places.

That's why we looked at feedback from providers. As a result we added employment to the list of extra new matter starts this summer.

We have also found some ways of helping providers in these difficult times.

Among the measures put in place are:

**Expansion of housing possession services**

We have increased the number of county courts where providers will help people avoid having their homes repossessed. There are now 17 new Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes covering 19 courts.

**£10m for Family and Social Welfare Law**

We awarded an extra 33,000 new matter starts in social welfare law and 30,000 in family following a civil bid round in the second half of last year. This is worth £10 million.

**Expansion of CLA telephone advice**

Clients using the CLA telephone service will benefit from longer opening hours this April. Callers will now be able to obtain advice on weekday evenings and Saturday mornings.

**Weekly payment runs for providers**

We switched from fortnightly to weekly payment runs on 1 January. This was done in a bid to help support small business providers in this economic climate.

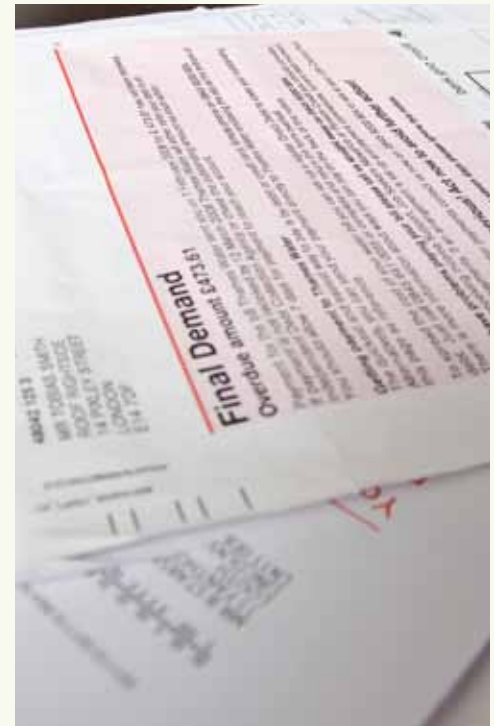
**Reconciliation of solicitor contract payments**

We have made changes to the way we reconcile solicitor contracts. This has reduced the value 'owed' to providers by £1.4m.

**Additional funding for Citizens Advice Bureaux**

The Treasury is putting in funding worth £10 million to expand local face-to-face advice for an extra 335,000 people a year. The extra money covers the period between November 2008 and March 2010.

## Resources to help advisers dealing with debt



*Debt advisers working with people with debt and mental health problems have a bank of resources they can draw on...*

Mental health awareness guidelines to encourage good practice by creditor and money/debt advisers are available for download by visiting the Money Advice Trust (MAT) website – see below.

These guidelines are a good example of a tool that can help support dialogue and negotiation when resolving debt problems.

The idea is to try and arrive at solutions that are good for both the consumer and the creditor.

### Good Practice Guidelines

Called the 'Good Practice Guidelines' they were developed following talks between advice bodies, creditor organisations and government departments.

These groups came together at a non-policy making discussion forum called the Money Advice Liaison Group (MALG).

Many of the recommendations look at

collecting evidence about the impact of mental health problems on consumer capacity to deal with their debt issues.

### Standard evidence form

A specific form has also been developed to help advisers request relevant information in this area.

The Debt and Mental Health Evidence Form (DMHEF) was developed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists for MALG and is also available from the MAT website – see below.

### Common Financial Statement

The Common Financial Statement (CFS) is another important tool used in debt negotiation. It is widely used across the advice sector to ensure realistic repayment proposals that stand the test of time – see accompanying article.

### Contact & Information

- » [info@moneyadvicetrust.org](mailto:info@moneyadvicetrust.org)
- » 020 7489 7796 (Money Advice Trust)
- » 0808 808 4000 (National Debtline)
- » 0800 197 6026 (Business Debtline)

## Vital tool to assess client's finances

The Common Financial Statement (CFS) is a budgeting tool that provides an open and transparent account of a client's income and expenditure.

It is prepared in a consistent and standardised format, and is co-sponsored by the Money Advice Trust (MAT), the British Bankers' Association (BBA), and the Finance and Leasing Association (FLA).

The CFS was first published in November 2002 and has been changed and improved considerably during the time it has been in use.

### Trigger figures

The statement has a number of trigger figures covering certain areas of expenditure like telephone, travel and housekeeping. These change according to the size of the families.

Trigger figures are calculated using Office of National Statistics (ONS) data. They help creditors and advisers identify spending levels which, unless exceeded, are deemed reasonable. So they do not require any explanation.

In order to access CFS trigger figures, you must first apply for a licence via the Money Advice Trust website (see panel).

This licence attracts no charge, but is governed by eligibility criteria, such as the expectation that an applicant holds a Consumer Credit licence. Equally, certain conditions of use apply.

### Electronic updates

Important developments relating to the CFS will be communicated to all CFS licence holders via electronic updates on a quarterly basis. That

includes any revisions to trigger figures and CFS guidance materials.

It is planned to update the trigger figures in spring 2009, following the recent publication of the latest wave of ONS data.

To date, MAT has issued more than 400 licences to a diverse range of organisations. These include the free-to-client and commercial advice sector, registered social landlords, commercial and third sector credit providers, and local authority departments.

### Contact & Information

- » [www.moneyadvicetrust.org](http://www.moneyadvicetrust.org) (to see CFS pages on the MAT website)
- » 0121 410 6264 (Louisa Parker)
- » [louisa@moneyadvicetrust.org](mailto:louisa@moneyadvicetrust.org)

## Free money advice from independent trust

*Most of you will be familiar with National Debtline and Business Debtline – two well known helplines offering free, independent and expert money advice to individuals and micro-businesses...*

These telephone helplines are run by the Money Advice Trust (MAT). This is a charity formed in 1991 to increase the quality and availability of free, independent money advice in the UK.

MAT works in partnership with government, the private sector and the UK's leading money advice agencies.

These include:

1. AdviceNI
2. AdviceUK
3. Citizens Advice
4. Citizens Advice Northern Ireland
5. Citizens Advice Scotland
6. Consumer Credit Counselling Service
7. Institute of Money Advisers
8. Money Advice Scotland
9. Payplan

The idea is to:

- support individuals and businesses with unmanageable debt
- increase availability of free money advice to people with debt problems
- improve quality of money advice
- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery.

The money advice sector has, historically, seen a wide array of different advice providers offering good quality money advice.

The Money Advice Trust provides a co-ordinating role, helping to create common high standards of service and a joint approach to addressing unmanageable debt of UK consumers.

## Good mental health in uncertain times



*Mental Health Action Week starts on 12 April and is focusing on overcoming fear and anxiety – especially relevant in these difficult times for the economy...*

During economic uncertainty fear and anxiety are likely consequences of less secure jobs and the withdrawal of cheap credit.

So it is particularly appropriate that overcoming fear and anxiety is the choice of topic for this year's Mental Health Week, which runs from 12-18 April 2009.

Unsurprisingly, research undertaken by the Legal Services Research Commission (LSRC) has found a significant link between the experience of rights problems and mental illness.

### Improve health and justice outcomes

Problems were also linked in the research to additional stress-related illness. The LSRC concluded that more effective coordination of mental health and legal services is likely to improve health and justice outcomes for those suffering from mental disorders.

For many mental health service users, fear and anxiety is particularly focused on the prospect of being sectioned under the Mental Health Act. So it is essential that, if sectioned, they are able to access advice and representation from a publicly funded and quality assured mental health provider.

The LSC funds around 35,000 mental health cases each year, and of those around 85% are related to patients seeking discharge from their detention under section.

### Defending a patient's liberty

The work carried out by our providers is critical in defending a patient's right to liberty. Also, empowering those who are deprived of their liberty in very testing circumstances.

Providers are uniquely placed to interact with a number of agencies and services on behalf of clients. So they are in a good position to identify the types of support a client would most benefit from and how to gain access to those services.

In our recent consultation 'Bid rounds for 2010 contracts' we have proposed a greater recognition of that referral role. This would

ensure that clients are able to access the range of support that may help them with their problems and aid their recovery.

We are also very conscious that a client's experience of the mental health justice system itself can often be confusing and itself a source of anxiety.

### Improve client experience

In order to improve the client experience and promote efficiency we have established a strong relationship with the Tribunal Service, Mental Health (TSMH) and are forging local relationships with the NHS.

In 2008/9 (the first year of this mental health 'Whole System Initiative'), we helped TSMH reduce the tribunal application backlog (from c. 1,200 in early 2008 to c. 700 in March 2009) through promotion of electronic working and the correct use of TSMH forms.

### Establish links

We have also started to establish links with Mental Health Act Administrators based in local hospitals. This is to ensure that those with mental health problems are referred fairly to the most appropriate mental health providers.

One of the key issues to tackle in the future is ensuring that NHS and private hospital staff produce timely and high quality medical reports and attend tribunal hearings so that they aren't unnecessarily adjourned.

Working with the NHS will involve holding hospitals to account so that they stick to procedures. Also, to encourage the appropriate use of their Mental Health Act detention powers.

### Contact & Information

- » [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)
- » [oliver.toop@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:oliver.toop@legalservices.gov.uk) (Mental health law)
- » [liz.long@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:liz.long@legalservices.gov.uk) (Whole System Initiatives)

## Spotlight on Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre

*When times are hard the need for access to legal advice is never more important – as shown by the increasing workload at Leicester’s new Community Legal Advice Centre...*



### Planning ahead

Debt caseworker Jim Coulson (right) with adviser Gavin George

## CLA centres show worth in hard times



*As a recession bites, the most vulnerable in society really start to feel the pressure...*

That’s when ordinary people with already difficult legal circumstances can need extra help as mounting debt, job troubles, welfare or housing problems seem almost impossible to escape from.

Community legal advice centres aim to help combat this by providing a ‘one-stop shop’ for free, confidential, expert legal advice.

Leicester’s centre is now based permanently in Charles Street in the city centre after starting out in temporary premises in April last year. And they’ve never been busier. For example, drop-in cases are now averaging between 30 and 40 cases every day – straight off the street.

Leicester centre manager Sue Taylor said: ‘We’ve made a big effort to be imaginative in how we reach out to the local community. As well as our main office we have ‘outreach locations’ across the city.

‘We also run ‘money awareness’ sessions, work closely with customers and their carers

and liaise directly with the city’s employment services and housing associations.’

The ‘money awareness’ sessions form a key plank in the drive for public legal education, which is being backed by Legal Aid Minister Lord Bach. He has described the work in Leicester as ‘fantastic’.

The centre also has links with the local Surestart when working with lone parents and run a series of workshops at a community college.

And the hard work is paying dividends as the centre meets the challenge of a growing workload to give more clients the help they need.

By the end of December, 1,458 clients were helped with ‘specialist cases’ and 4,000 clients with ‘generalist’ cases had been dealt with.

Since launch generalist cases have increased more than five-fold and specialist cases have doubled.

## Measuring the team’s success

*Customer feedback from regular surveys is very positive about the centre...*

These show that 94% of people accessing the service felt it to be ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ with the remaining 6% describing it as ‘good’.

- Typical comments from clients include:
- ‘Staff are very friendly, non-judgmental and knowledgeable...’
- ‘The service could not be bettered’

Measuring the success of the work that the centre does is vital in establishing just how much of a difference the service is making to the lives of real people.

One of the ways the LSC does this is measuring ‘substantive benefit outcomes’. This is a complicated-sounding way of saying how much of a difference the team are making to the lives of individuals.

In the real world, a ‘substantive benefit outcome’ might be a loan renegotiated to smaller repayments or a home prevented from being repossessed – anything that means that the individual is better off than they were before.

The positive feedback the centre has received is very rewarding for staff. One of the team’s frontline advisers trainee solicitor Harjit Gill said: ‘I enjoy the job because it has a lot of variety, requires flexibility and is demanding. I feel a real sense of achievement every day.’

Leicester centre manager Sue Taylor said: ‘The team has had a great start since we opened for business and everyone deserves a big thank you.

‘But we’re determined to look forward, build on our tremendous success so far and help even more people in the city.’

## Partnership funding establishes new service



*Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre*

*is jointly funded by the LSC and the local city council...*

The tender was won in December 2007 by A4e, an organisation committed to 'improving people's lives', and Howells, the 'Citizen's Solicitor'.

The centre officially opened for business in July 2008. But it actually swung into operation in temporary premises several months earlier in April – administering help and advice on a range of legal issues.

Finding and recruiting staff with the necessary skills was a major undertaking. Including the centre manager Sue Taylor there

are eight administration staff employed through A4e and 15 'generalist' advisers, caseworkers and solicitors through Howells.

After the move to permanent offices 'outreach locations' were set up in May and July. Centre manager Sue Taylor arrived in time for the official launch date on July 14.

A great sign that the centre was well and truly established came in December. That was when the Legal Aid Minister Lord Bach paid a visit – helping to raise the public profile of the centre.

**Helping clients in Leicester**  
Adviser Laura Beddard



### Case Study

## Helping hand saves Kathy from eviction

**Kathy Brown\* successfully avoided being evicted from her home with the help of Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre.**

Kathy had fallen into mortgage arrears after been made redundant and her mortgage lender had started possession proceedings. She first consulted a solicitor at the Leicester centre in June 2008.

She was advised that it would be some time before the Department for Work & Pensions would increase her jobseeker's allowance payments to assist her with the payment of her monthly mortgage instalments. So, if she wanted to retain her home, she had to find a new job.

Happily, she succeeded shortly before proceedings began at Leicester County Court. Her solicitor was able to persuade the district judge to make a suspended possession order.

That allowed Kathy to keep her home as long as she paid the usual monthly mortgage instalments of £25 a month for arrears.

Unfortunately, she was not able to make the required payments. The mortgage lender obtained a possession warrant and she was due to be evicted from her home on 12 December. Four days before the

hearing she returned to the Community Legal Advice Centre for more help.

Her solicitor helped her to apply to the county court for an order suspending the possession warrant. He represented her at the hearing and successfully persuaded the district judge to suspend the possession warrant on the same terms as previously.

It was agreed there should be a further hearing in three months to see if Kathy had been able to keep up with her payments. In her favour was the fact that her hours of work had gone up from 22 to 39 hours. This increase in wages would allow her to apply for working tax credit.

Sadly, despite help from a CLA money adviser Kathy was again not able to make the required payments.

A further possession warrant was issued for her eviction and scheduled for execution on 23 February 2009.

Kathy was assisted to make a further application to the court for suspension of the warrant. She followed advice from the CLA to make additional payments by the time of the hearing of her application on 19 February. The mortgage lender agreed that the possession warrant would be suspended on the same terms as previously.

\*We've changed the name of the client to protect her identity

## ■ Online tool helps map areas of need

*Fans of Google Maps will quickly see the benefits of a new online tool showing areas of relative need for legal services across England and Wales. Researcher Ash Patel from the Legal Services Research Centre (LSRC) explains the thinking behind the tool and how it was developed...*

A new online tool is being developed to help users gain a quick insight into the level of need in different parts of England and Wales.

Eventually, people will be able to choose between a social welfare law or a family model to use with the tool. This can be overlaid on to a map or satellite image, which is fully navigable. So users can zoom in and out of areas of particular interest when assessing need levels.

At the moment only one preliminary social welfare law model (SWL) is available for use with the tool. This covers:

- employment
- debt problems
- welfare benefits
- housing

### Speedy start to enquiries

The tool is not a complete answer and it will still be necessary to look at other relevant data and use local knowledge. But it does give an extremely useful and speedy start to any enquiries.

You can try the tool out by using the link under 'Contact & Information' (see below).

A second preliminary 'family model' will be added to the tool in the near future. This looks specifically at vulnerability to family problems.

Both models have been developed as part of a project called 'Analysis of Spatial Dimensions of Legal Need Service Delivery' managed by the LSRC.

This project uses the models to estimate the relative level of advice need in different parts of England and Wales. It achieves this by combining the LSRC's Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS) data with general small geographic area data e.g. census data. Additional CSJS data will soon be added to both models.

### Using the tool

Anyone familiar with Google Maps should find the tool simple to use.

You can call it up by using the link under

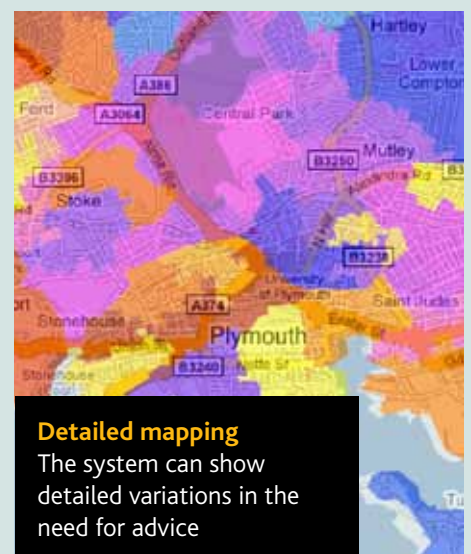
### Big picture from small areas

Developing the preliminary models to be used with the online tool meant collapsing data from the first two years of the Civil and Social Justice Survey into a certain geographic area.

In this case the LSRC opted to use the Office for National Statistics' Lower Super Output Area (LSOA).

LSOAs are one type of a set of 'geographies' referred to as Super Output Areas (SOAs), which were developed after the 2001 Census. Unlike other geographies SOAs are a set of areas of consistent size, whose boundaries do not change. LSOAs are the smallest type of SOA, usually containing a population of around 1,500 people

Once CSJS data are aggregated to LSOAs, a statistical model is applied to predict the proportion of respondents reporting a social welfare law or family problem. This is based on a range of social and demographic characteristics (e.g. the proportion of lone parents in a given LSOA). These model estimates are then applied to external data



(e.g. census data) for each LSOA in England and Wales.

For every LSOA, each model yields a proportion. This is the proportion of people within each LSOA who would be predicted to report one or more problem in each of the models (i.e. social welfare law problem or family law problem).

'Contact & Information'.

The accompanying screenshot of the online Small Area Model tool highlights key elements for using the site.

### Tool cannot be used in isolation

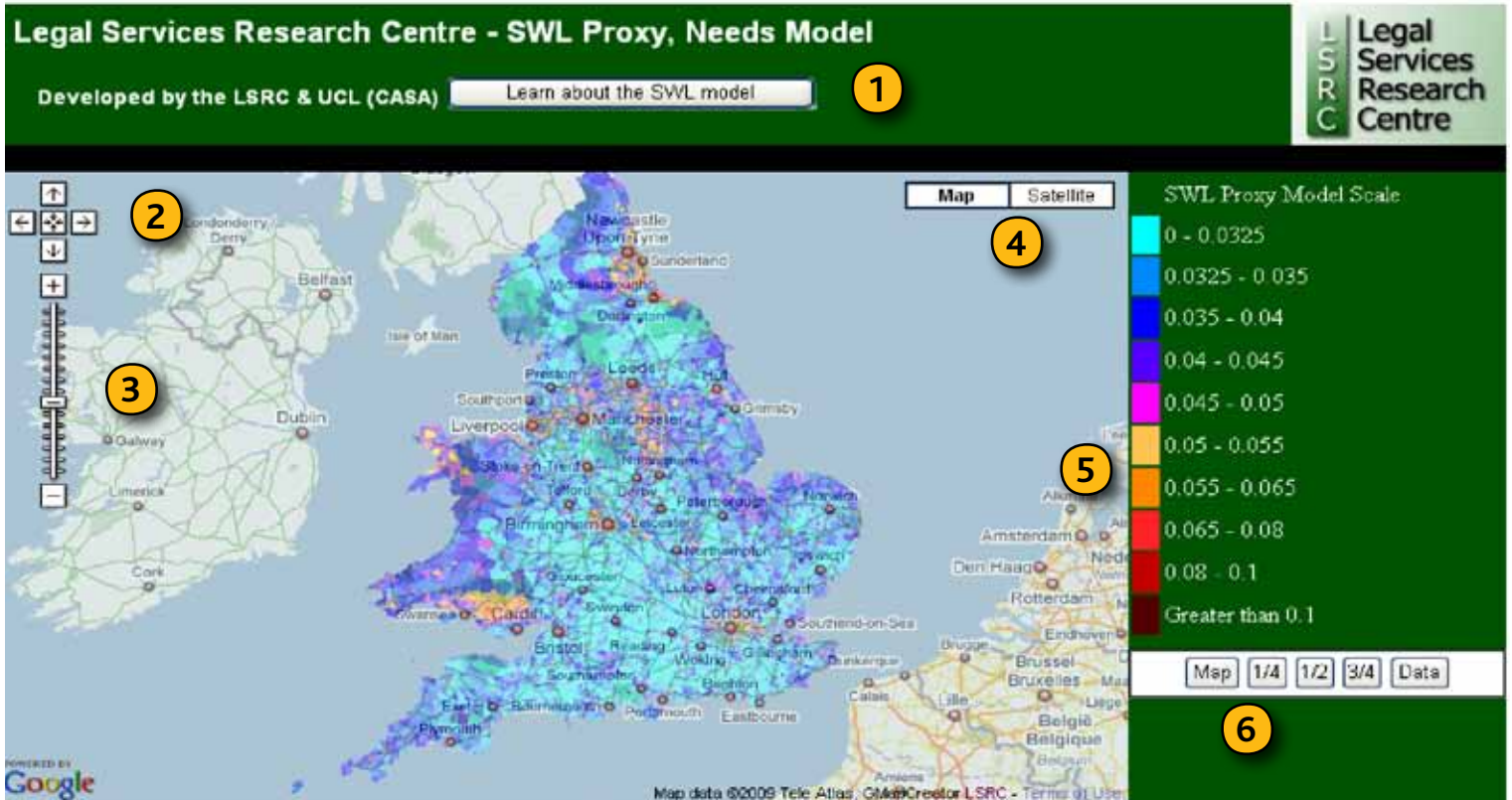
It is important not to rely on the online tool or the small area models to provide all the information necessary to understand the advice needs of an area.

Also, the model estimates cannot be relied on to show the actual level of need in all areas. They should not be used in isolation and should be checked against other relevant data and interpreted using local knowledge.

It should also be remembered that even if an area is shown as having a low level of predicted problems, it does not mean there are no problems in those areas.

### Contact & Information

- » [www.lsrc.org.uk](http://www.lsrc.org.uk)  
(to find out more about the LSRC)
- » [www.lsrc.org.uk/Beta/Interactive/gmap\\_LSRC\\_trial/lsrc\\_swl\\_model.html](http://www.lsrc.org.uk/Beta/Interactive/gmap_LSRC_trial/lsrc_swl_model.html)  
(to use the tool)



## Online tool - key to features

- 1 Technical details about the Small Area Models, the data used to make them and the methods applied can be viewed by pressing this button.
- 2 Navigating around the map can be done by using these arrow keys, or alternatively you can 'grab' the map itself using the cursor and drag the map to your desired position.
- 3 Use the scroll bar to zoom into and out of the map. Alternatively, hover the cursor over a location you are interested in and double click on the mouse.
- 4 Change the background image from a map to a satellite photograph by pressing the appropriate button here.
- 5 This scale highlights the proportion of people that are predicted to face a Social Welfare Problem within an area. The scale corresponds to the different areas on the map.
- 6 The opacity of the model can be adjusted using these buttons. The lower the opacity, the less visible the model becomes. Pressing 'Data' will show the model alone.

## Open resource tool

A basic web browser like Internet Explorer or Firefox is all that is needed to use the online tool. This means that it is free and universally accessible to the public.

It was developed by specialists from the LSC's in-house Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team.

They used dedicated GIS software, which

combined high performance mapping with the accuracy of Google Maps.

This involved overlaying the 'Small Area Models' on to Google Maps using open source mapping technology. This was devised by the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA, based at University College London).



*The Legal Services Research Centre (LSRC) is the independent research division of the LSC. LSRC researchers are writing regular columns for Focus magazine highlighting key findings from their research projects.*

# Legal advice in sign language now available over the web

*Deaf users can now make use of new sign language services via the Community Legal Advice (CLA) website and YouTube...*

## New section for sign language users

British Sign Language (BSL) users can now watch signed video version of CLA's rent problems, domestic abuse and discrimination at work leaflets.

These are available on the BSL page of the Community Legal Advice website – see link below. Six further titles are being filmed and are available from the beginning of April 2009. These include:

- Your rights at work
- Dealing with debt
- Losing your home
- Claiming benefits
- Problems with school
- Care proceedings

leading provider of rights based advice and legal representation to the deaf community. They are also carrying out work to increase accessibility for clients who do not have a webcam or the internet.

Caseworkers are also experienced in using international sign language and code-switching for advice provision to BME clients, immigrants and asylum seekers who may use other forms of sign language.

Advice covers welfare benefits, employment and housing, and debt. Clients can log on to [www.radlegalservices.org.uk](http://www.radlegalservices.org.uk) and leave a video message or email, asking for an adviser to contact them.



**“We need as much feedback as possible from clients to ensure we are providing the best possible service for deaf users”**

The videos contain a voiceover and subtitles so that the advice can be understood by as wide an audience as possible.

Deaf BSL users needing further help can also:

- search for a legal adviser near them that provides BSL translation
- request a call from our telephone helpline using textphone services
- obtain specialist advice from a BSL adviser via a webcam (see below).

## Advice available online for deaf clients

The CLA is working with the Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD) to pilot a service that provides a full specialist casework service via the internet.

Caseworkers who are fluent in BSL will help eligible deaf clients with a service that mirrors the CLA telephone service.

RAD Legal Services are recognised as the

## Showing on YouTube

The advice videos are also available on YouTube, the UK's most popular social networking site.

An estimated 10.8 million people in the UK use YouTube each month. CLA has launched its own YouTube channel to raise awareness and provide an additional way of making available our public information.

You can help spread our advice by visiting <http://uk.youtube.com/user/communitylegaladvice> and:

- clicking 'subscribe', or adding us as your friend if you have a YouTube account
- using the 'share' button on each video page to forward to people who may be interested
- asking whoever manages your website to link to or embed our videos on it.

We have also produced a small number of DVDs containing the BSL advice videos.

## Why provide signed advice?

According to the Department of Work & Pensions there are about 50-70,000 deaf people who use BSL in the UK.

The CLA website is already very accessible to people with disabilities. However, text is often not the first language for deaf people. Without BSL, navigating and finding the right information can be tedious and slow, especially for the proportion of deaf people that also have learning difficulties.

## Feedback

Feedback is being encouraged from the deaf community. Please ask clients to comment via the website or the email address below.

Development manager Paul Drinkwater said: 'We need as much feedback as possible from clients to ensure we are providing the best possible service for deaf users.'

## Contact & Information

- » [www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/sign](http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/sign)
- » [www.youtube.com/user/communitylegaladvice](http://www.youtube.com/user/communitylegaladvice)
- » [www.radlegalservices.org.uk/](http://www.radlegalservices.org.uk/) (for online advice service)
- » [webadmin@communitylegaladvice.org.uk](mailto:webadmin@communitylegaladvice.org.uk)

# ■ Shaping the future of criminal defence services

*A second consultation on detailed plans for the tendering of criminal defence work in police stations and magistrates' courts has just been published...*

A series of events are being lined up across England and Wales about 'best value tendering' (BVT) for criminal defence work in police stations and magistrates' courts.

The events will form part of a second consultation on the plans. Details have just been published on the consultation page of the LSC website. A video presentation about the proposals is also available online (see below).

Under the proposals two criminal justice system areas – Greater Manchester and Avon & Somerset – will pilot the scheme from July 2010. In non-pilot areas, a new criminal contract will be brought in at the same time.

## Crucial role for practitioners

Legal aid minister Willy Bach said: 'Practitioners play a crucial role in ensuring there is an effective justice system that the public can trust. We want to give them and those they defend, certainty and stability.'

'Solicitors will be able to offer their services at a price, which they know is sustainable for them and that reflects the costs of provision in their local area.'

'It also offers firms of all sizes the opportunity to secure levels of work that they can handle and allows them to expand should they wish to do so. These proposals will help to ensure that criminal legal aid continues to support those in need.'

## Competitive market

The proposals set out how the present system of administratively set fees would move to a competitive market while maintaining the required high quality. They aim to offer value for taxpayers' money and secure an effective and efficient supplier base in all areas.

In addition the objective is to enable:

- long-term sustainability of defence services

- firms to bid for the right amount of work for them
- prices to better reflect costs in each area
- firms to restructure in ways that optimise their businesses

The pilot contracts will start in July 2010. In non-pilot areas, a new criminal contract will be brought in at the same time.

## Right way forward

A review of the pilots will take place before any decision to extend BVT to other areas of England and Wales.

LSC Executive Director of Commissioning Hugh Barrett, said: 'We believe that moving from a system of administratively set fees to a competitive market while maintaining quality is the right way forward for many of our publicly funded legal services.'

'We have listened to providers' views and concerns and they are reflected in the proposals. We believe we are proposing a tender system that is practical, will deliver sustainable results and will work.'

'In police station and magistrates' court work it will enable an effective and efficient supplier base to maintain its important work for those accused of crime. It offers greater value for taxpayers' money, stability for the profession and long-term sustainability.'

The consultation is set to last 12 weeks, ending 19 June.

### Contact & Information

- » LSC website > About us > Consultations (see consultation calendar via 'links' box on top right of web page for details of events)

# ■ Partnership approach to Delivery Transformation

*We've been listening to your views on Delivery Transformation at recent workshops. Find out more about our 'collaborative working strategy'...*

## Collaborative working

Feedback from provider workshops in different regions highlights the fact that providers want to work more closely with us on Delivery Transformation (DT).

That is good news because working collaboratively with providers will help us to successfully deliver the new systems we are designing.

We are now busy gathering input from providers to develop a collaborative working strategy.

Different issues and needs are cropping up across the regions. So we are also seeking the views of our employees across the LSC to agree the best way forward.

Areas for improvement include making sure that initial employee training includes working effectively with providers. Our findings will form the basis of workshops, to which we will invite providers to help us develop the strategy.

## How to get involved

Use the contacts below if you would like more information, or to get involved in the development of DT, or express your views.

### Contact & Information

- » Karen.Watson@legalservices.gov.uk (to help with future development)
- » delivery.transformation@legalservices.gov.uk (for general enquiries)
- » LSC website > about us > consultations



## Next steps for Very High Cost Cases

*Work on agreeing a new payment scheme for Very High Cost (Crime) Cases (VHCCs) is to continue following a consultation with litigators and advocates...*

To enable further work to be carried out on agreeing a sustainable way forward the LSC will be extending the current interim scheme for a further 12 months.

LSC Chief Executive Carolyn Regan said: 'Having reviewed the responses to the consultation and sought the views of the Working Group, the LSC has decided not to implement either of the VHCC payment mechanisms suggested.'

### Replacement scheme

'Along with the other members of the Working Group we will continue to work towards an acceptable replacement scheme.'

'However, it seems that this work may not be completed in time to be brought into force immediately before the scheduled end date of the existing VHCC Panel Contracts on 13 July 2009. To ensure continuity, we are extending the current interim scheme for a further 12 months.'

The responses to the consultation show that while some key aspects of the new scheme were welcomed, overall, the proposals put forward by the LSC for the new VHCC scheme were not accepted by a large majority of practitioners.

### Close cooperation

The decision to extend the current interim scheme follows close cooperation from the Working Group. This was set up by the Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, and includes representatives from the Bar Council, the Law Society, MoJ and the LSC.

All members of the Working Group remain committed to the principle of developing a scheme whose operation is acceptable to both litigators and advocates.

No final decisions on the future payment mechanism for VHCCs will be taken until additional work has been completed and until we receive responses to a further consultation.

It is clear that the Working Group should have in place a fully worked up scheme ready for consultation so that, subject to the outcome of that consultation, a new scheme may be implemented no later than July 2010.

### Contact & Information

- » [matthew.shelley@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.shelley@legalservices.gov.uk)
- » LSC website: [LSC > CDS > Very high cost criminal cases > Policy](#)

## JP sentences herself to electronic tagging

*Magistrate Yvonne Powell MBE had a taste of her own medicine when she wore an electronic tag for a week...*

The magistrate volunteered to wear the tag to get a better understanding of the punishment for a new training DVD. It was all part of the London Criminal Justice Board's (CJB's) Tag-a-mag initiative.

Yvonne said: 'I have used tagging as a sentencing option and condition of bail on many occasions where appropriate and always thought quite highly of it.'

### A real punishment

'I will now be able to use tagging with more confidence, however, as I know at first-hand that it can be a real punishment and that violations are monitored and dealt with effectively and efficiently.'

The curfew ran from 7pm to 6am every day and stopped Yvonne from leaving the house or even entering her own garden.

### Normal routine impossible

Yvonne said: 'On a practical level, the tag on my ankle made things such as bathing and getting dressed a challenge. I wore trousers every day so people would be less likely to see it.'

'There were also many parts of my normal routine which proved impossible. For example, I couldn't pick up my daughters or groceries outside of curfew hours.'

The Tag-a-mag DVD was funded by the London Probation Service Impact Project and developed by the London CJB.

### Contact & Information

- » [lcjb.cjsonline.gov.uk/London/2551.html](http://lcjb.cjsonline.gov.uk/London/2551.html) (to see the Tag-a-mag DVD)



**Happy 1st Birthday**

The centre in Portsmouth has been operating for a year and is one of a handful to have been established. The others are in Gateshead, Leicester, Derby and Hull.



■ **Top minister praises Community Legal Advice Centres**



*Community Legal Advice Centres are playing a pivotal role says Secretary of State Jack Straw...*

Justice Secretary Jack Straw praised the leading role being played by Community Legal Advice Centres when he was in Portsmouth recently. The minister said: 'I want to see Community

clients and to see the service working in practice. 'The Government knows how important it is that people facing problems can get real help. 'Not only can the advisers at the centre offer

- Secretary:
- met with a client who had already been helped by the centre
  - sat in on an advice session with a new client
  - spoke to clients awaiting appointments
  - met with paid staff and volunteers working at the centre.

**"The Government knows how important it is that people facing problems can get real help."**

Legal Advice services like Portsmouth's serving many more people around the country.' The minister was in Southampton for a government cabinet meeting and decided to take the opportunity to visit the centre. The Justice Secretary said: 'It was good to have the opportunity to speak to so many

free advice, support and even representation in court, they'll work with people to try to sort out all their legal difficulties. 'Community Legal Advice Centres are leading the way for advice services in England and Wales.' During his hour-long visit the Justice

The minister saw himself how effectively the centre works as a one-stop shop when a client came in with a debt problem. The advice session uncovered a number of related problems on debt, welfare benefits, housing and domestic abuse. The centre was able to help the client on all these issues without the need for referrals.

## Internet service for asylum clients

*Legal advice for asylum clients and providers is now just a click of the mouse away in the trial area of Cardiff...*

A pilot area has been launched to test an internet booking service to ensure asylum applicants have legal advice as quickly as possible.

The aim is to make sure applicants have legal advice before their substantive interview with the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA).

A similar appointment system has already been trialled by Community Legal Advice (CLA) in various areas of social welfare law.

The new pilot is a development of that work – designed to reflect the specific needs of asylum clients and providers.

### Vulnerable client group

The pilot also builds on discussions that have taken place with asylum stakeholders. These have looked at the importance of ensuring access to legal advice at the earliest opportunity for this particularly vulnerable client group.

The trial region is Wales/south west where the Welsh Refugee Council started operating the service on 1 April 2009. A second pilot is being considered for the north west. This will involve a partnership approach with the UKBA's Asylum Screening Unit in Liverpool.

Clients are being offered a selection of appointments with providers to choose from. All providers in Wales/south west have been invited to take part. This will run for at least three months and we will consider running additional trials in other regions.

The pilot will initially replace a paper-based rota. The success of the system can then be evaluated.

### Contact & Information

» 020 7783 7540

» john.facey@legalservices.gov.uk



## How the online booking system operates

Providers are given the freedom to manage the level of appointments they make available on the system.

Operators can search for advisers with available appointments within a given timeframe. They will also look at how close the adviser is to the client's address.

Clients can then choose which appointment to accept.

## Taking a bow at the Legal IT Show

*The Legal IT Show provided an ideal opportunity for a workshop by the provider readiness and support (PRS) team on new ways of working...*

Law firm IT directors and practising lawyers attend the show to learn and exchange information about using the latest technology to meet today's business challenges.

The workshop for providers was on the relaunch of LSC Online and proposals for future electronic working through our Delivery Transformation Programme.

Both providers and legal software vendors were enthusiastic about the workshop, which was held at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London during February 2009.

Feedback showed that

- LSC Online relaunch training was viewed as 'very positive'

- the training CD was 'very useful'
- more electronic ways of working are 'welcomed'.

At the show, we demonstrated a pilot version of an LSC Online testing system. This allowed software vendors to test their systems against LSC Online.

Feedback at the event was very positive – the system allowed vendors not only to test the systems, but also increase customer service to providers. The test site is currently being updated and will be fully launched in April 2009.

Attendance at the show and the launch of the test site builds on the reforming work of a

'software vendor working group'.

The working group meet to:

- review proposed LSC changes that may affect case management systems
- provide guidance on the time required to update case management systems.

### Contact & Information

» 029 2064 7293

» james.o'reilly@legalservices.gov.uk

» www.icbi-events.com/legalitshow

# Unlocking quality legal aid for prisoners

*A consultation on prison law funding continues throughout April.*

*The aim is to establish a quality system offering value for money that meets prisoner needs...*

We're now midway through our 12-week consultation on prison law services to help us arrive at a sustainable system that reins in rising costs.

Prison law issues include everything from prisoners' treatment and discipline to parole matters and factors affecting a prisoner's

Please get in touch with the LSC Crime Policy Team (details at the end of this article) should you wish to book a place.

Longer term, the LSC envisages prison law funding to change in terms of methods of delivery of service. This will form phase two of the proposals.

**"The proposals being looked at aim to introduce specific quality standards to make sure that prisoners can get the advice they need."**

progression through the prison system.

Our consultation continues until 5 May 2009. The proposals being looked at aim to introduce specific quality standards to make sure that prisoners can get the advice they need.

## Phase one proposals being considered include:

- changes to the way the fee scheme is structured – moving from hourly rates to a standardised scheme for payments
- introducing controls on the volume of cases handled by providers.

Details can be found in the consultation paper on the LSC website (see link below).

## Consulting with providers

We are holding a number of provider events around the country over the next few weeks to discuss the phase one proposals.

The 1 April event in Leeds has already been held but a few places are still available at the remaining events at the time of publication.

Dates and locations are:

3 April	Bristol
8 April	Birmingham
14 April	London
15 April	Manchester

## Phase two proposals include:

1. Introducing a dedicated telephone helpline. Where possible, cases would be resolved over the phone but where necessary advisers could follow up calls with face-to-face meetings.
2. Introducing a duty solicitor scheme so a dedicated adviser would provide assistance across a number of prisons.
3. Increasing the use of video conferencing facilities in prisons to make meetings between solicitors and their clients quicker and less costly.
4. Changing the way firms are allocated prison work. One way of doing this would be 'block contracting' where firms bid to provide services for all work at a specific prison for a given period at a set price.

## Contact & Information

Please have your say on the prison law funding proposals by securing a place at one of the consultation events or completing the e-consultation form on the LSC website at the address below.

- » LSC website: [lsc > cds > consultations > prison law funding](#)
- » [david.mcintosh@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:david.mcintosh@legalservices.gov.uk)



## LSC online relaunch

*The relaunch of LSC Online is now complete. Providers should ensure their submissions are now made via LSC Online.*

Monthly civil and crime submissions must now be submitted electronically through LSC Online - Standard Terms Clause 15.2 of the Unified (Civil and Crime).

The contingency process, where submissions were previously emailed or sent via the secure file transfer system, is no longer available.

The LSC Online Support Team provide telephone and email support to users making their submission. If you are new to the service we advise you make your submission early in the month. This allows the team enough time to support you and resolve any questions you may have about your submission by the 20th of the month deadline.

See LSC Online Top Tips on page 28.

## Contact & Information

- » [online-support@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:online-support@legalservices.gov.uk) (LSC Online Support Team)
- » 020 7718 8359 (Mon - Fri from 9am to 5.30pm)
- » LSC website > LSC Online > Using LSC Online

# ■ 2010 Unified Contracts for Crime

*In February we announced our intention to extend the current Unified Contract (Crime). It is now planned that the contracts in all areas of the country will end on 30 June 2010...*

We will send the appropriate formal notice in due course.

Our consultations on the 2010 Crime Contracts and BVT have now been published on the LSC website (see below)

These set out the contracting arrangements that we propose to put in place nationally at the expiry of the current contract. It will also detail the proposals for a pilot scheme for Best Value Tendering.

## Online application process (e-Tendering)

The application process for the 2010 Contracts should comprise a straightforward electronic registration process.

This will be similar in content to that followed for the July contract, although we are working to implement an online application system to replace the previous hard copy forms.

This system will be hosted by a procurement software specialist company widely used for government procurement and will bring several benefits for firms:

- generic system in use across all LSC contracts
- elements of the applicants' information can be saved and held online for future applications
- instant validation of data entered reduces scope for errors in submissions
- instant submission without need for posting or emailing
- automatic acknowledgement of applications
- full audit trail and application history for future reference.

We intend to run a number of training events and offer a help-desk facility to assist firms in accessing and submitting their applications in this new format.

It is also our intention to advertise these events widely in the relevant press and on our website nearer the time. We would encourage all firms to attend.

## Notification of the tender

As with previous application rounds, the LSC

intends to publish a Notification of Tender on our website at [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk), and place an advert in relevant publications.

All current holders of the Unified Contract (Crime) July 2008 should note that we will not be sending hard copy notifications or application packs as part of the 2010 Contract tender process. Instead we plan to use the e-tendering facility outlined above.

## LSC e-alert updates and notices

The advert placed in the relevant publications will form the official Notification of Tender. However, we will also use the LSC Update e-alerts and notices on our website to ensure providers are advised well in advance of key dates. So we would encourage you to make sure you are registered for LSC Updates.

The e-Tendering system will also have the capacity for us to send notifications and updates to applicants through the online portal.

In a necessary addition to the previous process, we intend to introduce a short pre-qualification stage. This will ensure that all firms with whom we contract are legitimate, technically competent and honest.

This new stage will fulfil our duty as a responsible public body to ensure that we only enter into contracts with suitable firms. We fully expect that the vast majority of our current providers will pass this stage.

The questions will, wherever possible, be simple self-declaration 'Yes/No' questions and, where appropriate, will be automatically scored on the system.

More details on this addition to the application process will be published in the forthcoming consultation document.

## The Unified Contract crime specification

In response to views expressed by providers, we aim to keep any amendments to the crime specification to a minimum. There will, however, be a small number of changes including but not limited to:

- incorporating crime specific requirements moved to the specification from the

current Contract Standard Terms so that any amendments to the Crime Contract Standard Terms do not affect the Standard Terms of the Civil Contract and vice versa.

- incorporating the Duty Solicitor Arrangements into the contract to remove the tension between the two documents and to move the responsibility for compliance from the individual to the firm
- clarifying issues such as definition of an office, rules concerning office moves etc so that firms can make informed decisions when seeking to relocate
- correcting minor drafting errors from the current contract
- mapping of the Duty Solicitor Scheme boundaries using postcode sectors to bring objectivity to the qualification process and to remove the uncertainty and delay caused by appeals against decisions based on travel times.

We will be consulting with the representative bodies on the content during the summer. As always, we will also publish that consultation on our website. All stakeholders will be welcome to comment. We will publish the exact dates of the consultation nearer the time.

A consultation on proposed revisions to the Contract Standard Terms for all contracts, Crime, Civil and VHCC is currently ongoing. Again, stakeholders can access the documents via our website and are welcome to submit their comments accordingly.

### Contact & Information

- » [LSC website > About Us > Consultations](#)
- » [LSC website > About Us > Our Publications > LSC Update Email \(to register for LSC updates\)](#)
- » [cds.contracts@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:cds.contracts@legalservices.gov.uk) (LSC Policy – Crime Lower Team)
- » 0207 783 7000

## New leaflets to help clients

*Debt, divorce, deportation and domestic abuse are among the topics covered by new 'call to action' leaflets published by Community Legal Advice (CLA)...*

### Availability and how to order

Fifteen "call to action" leaflets are in stock and available to order, with the final three leaflets to be published in May 2009.

- C1 Dealing with rent problems**
- C2 Domestic abuse**
- C3 Fair treatment at work: your rights if you are disabled**
- C4 Your rights at work**
- C5 Dealing with debt**
- C6 Losing your home**
- C7 Claiming benefits**
- C8 Problems with school**
- C9 Mental health laws**
- C10 Community care**
- C11 Divorce and separation**
- C12 Living together**
- C13 Medical accidents**
- C14 Dealing with the police**
- C15 Care proceedings**
- C16 Claiming asylum**  
– out May 2009
- C17 Deportation and removal**  
– out May 2009.
- C18 Wills and probate**  
– out May 2009.

The leaflets are free and can be ordered by telephone or email using the contact details below. Alternatively, they will soon be available for download from the web (address also below).

#### Contact & Information

- » 0845 3000 343
- » lscleaflets@ecgroup.co.uk
- » www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk



A new series of 'call to action' leaflets are available to help clients needing advice on everything from mental health laws to claiming benefits.

The CLA leaflets are aimed at those people who are not aware that they have rights, or who don't have the motivation to seek help.

They are designed to help the most vulnerable members of society find a way into the advice process. The leaflets complement the existing range of more detailed leaflets, which are now only available on the CLA website (see below).

### Request for 'personal injury' specialist help

Community Legal Advice (CLA) is looking for specialists to work on a 'personal injury' call to action leaflet.

Authors and verifiers are also needed for more detailed legal information leaflets in such areas as:

1. no win, no fee
2. dealing with the police
3. human rights
4. racial discrimination
5. equal opportunities
6. education
7. veterans

Work on the new leaflets was prompted by a wide-ranging review of existing leaflets. Each new leaflet has been consumer tested.

Interviews were also held with leaflet users as well as professionals who work with clients. These indicate that the new design is clear, accessible and genuinely useful for clients in crisis.

Available in Welsh, Braille and audio, the leaflets are distributed to a wide variety of agencies. These include advice organisations, solicitors, councils, libraries, prisons, schools and colleges, as well as to the general public.

8. neighbourhood disputes
9. changing your name
10. consumer law

If you think you could be interested in this type of work and require further information, please contact Gordon Isaacs.

#### Contact & Information

- » 020 7718 8048
- » gordon.isaacs@legalservices.gov.uk

# Financial eligibility changes (CLS & CDS)

*Important changes are being made to financial eligibility limits for legal aid funding. But these only affect the Community Legal Service. Criminal means testing limits will remain as they are.*

## ■ CLS details

Details include:

- Uprating of income limits – outlined in Keycard 45 on the LSC website.
- Non-means tested Legal Representation for deprivation of liberty cases under Paragraph 2, Schedule 1A to Mental Health Act 2005.

### Uprating of eligibility limits from 6 April 2009

The new gross and disposable income limits apply to new applications and further assessments made on or after 6 April 2009. A full breakdown is given in Keycard 45 on the LSC website. The new limits represent a 5% increase on 2008 rates and apply to all levels of service.

Keycard 45 sets out the new eligibility limits, including increased allowances for the client's partner and child dependants who are living in the same household (in line with the increase in welfare benefits), and revised contribution bands.

### Means exemption for deprivation of liberty cases from 1 April 2009

'Deprivation of Liberty applications', for these purposes, means applications to the Court of Protection for orders under section 21A of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA).

This relates to a standard or urgent authorisation under Schedule A1 of that Act to deprive a person of his or her liberty; or proceedings (e.g. relating to costs or appeals) connected with or consequent upon such applications. This came into force on 1 April.

'Means free' legal representation is available only for those cases that fall under paragraph 2 of Schedule A1 to the MCA, in proceedings in the Court of Protection under section 21A of that Act (i.e. applications to the court for orders under section 21A of the MCA).

In such cases, authorisations will have already been issued to deprive someone of their liberty and legal aid is now available to bring a case to challenge the lawfulness of the authorisation.

Applications should be made on the standard

form, but there is no need to submit a means assessment form for such cases.

### Forms and guidance updates

Updated Keycard 45 provides a step-by-step guide to assessment and is available on the LSC website to be used for applications made on or after 6 April 2009.

The suppliers' calculator and accompanying guidance (LSC Manual volume 2, part F) also on the LSC website will be updated accordingly.

### Transitional provisions

The new eligibility limits will apply to all further assessments under Regulation 15 of the Community Legal Service (Financial) Regulations 2000 that are made on or after 6 April 2009.

#### Contact & Information

» LSC website > CLS > Civil Legal Aid eligibility

## ■ CDS details

Eligibility thresholds in criminal means testing are to stay as they are.

The current eligibility limits are as follows:

- maximum income threshold – £22,235
- minimum income threshold: £12,475

A defendant who has an income above the higher threshold is ineligible, while those with an income below the lower threshold are eligible.

### Full means test

When an applicant's income falls between the two thresholds, they have a full means test. This looks at certain outgoings including income tax and national insurance, mortgage or rent, council tax and childcare and maintenance payments. Income is adjusted to take account of any partner and dependants (if applicable).

If the resultant disposable income is less than £3,398, the applicant is eligible for funding. If the disposable income is greater than £3,398 it

is considered that the applicant can afford to pay privately for his defence costs, which on average are expected to be approximately £1,500.

Applicants who feel this is unaffordable can use the hardship review to appeal the decision.

This takes into account outgoings, which have not already been allowed for in the initial means test. Examples include loans, hire purchase arrangements and medical costs associated with caring for relatives. The review will also consider reductions in income, such as reduced working week, statutory sick pay and maternity pay.

The hardship review is in place to provide a safety net for defendants who are close to the threshold limits or who believe they are genuinely unable to pay for their defence costs.

The eligibility thresholds have been set at a level the Government believes to be sensitive to a defendant's real disposable income and ability to pay their legal costs.

### Safety net for defendants

The criminal means test is designed to weight an

applicant's gross annual income to reflect their family and household circumstances. The further hardship test provides an additional safety net for defendants close to the threshold limits or who believe they are genuinely unable to pay.

So in this time of financial uncertainty it would be considered inappropriate to increase the income thresholds.

As there will be no increases in criminal public funding this means that advice and assistance income threshold and advocacy assistance income threshold remain the same at £95 and £201 respectively.

A Recovery of Defence Cost Order cannot be made against an individual whose gross annual income is less than £22,235. This is the same rate as the upper threshold as the means test in the magistrates' court.

#### Contact & Information

» LSC website > CDS > Criminal Legal Aid eligibility

# £100k pilot to train new family mediators

*Grants worth £100,000 are set to increase the number of family mediators working in legal aid...*

Awards are being made to 14 mediation services in England and Wales through the 'Family mediation training contract grants scheme' pilot.

The package will allow us to commit to supporting a trainee mediator and the organisation they work for.

It is all being done through the 'Family Mediation Foundation Training Programme' and the 'Competence Assessment Portfolio'. This will allow the trainee to qualify to become a publicly-funded family mediator.

The number of publicly funded mediations has increased from 400 in 1997/98 to 14,000 a year in the last couple of years. This demonstrates the growing demand for family mediation services.

In 2007/8, LSC funding allowed around 17,250 clients to reach agreement over a family dispute through mediation.

Increasing the number of clients who attend mediation is a key aim for the LSC. The mediation services that have been awarded a

grant are recognised as ones in areas where:

- there is greatest need
- improved access to mediation is a priority
- there is the best ability to support traineeships
- there are strong working relationships with local members of the family justice system, high levels of quality through supervision and positive outcomes for clients.

## Contact & Information

» LSC website > About us > What's new

» LSC website > CLS > Pay rates and schemes > Family Mediation Fee Scheme

» [www.adrgroup.co.uk/training/FamilyFoundationProgramme.htm](http://www.adrgroup.co.uk/training/FamilyFoundationProgramme.htm)

» [terry.davies@legalservices.co.uk](mailto:terry.davies@legalservices.co.uk)

» [eleanor.druker@legalservices.co.uk](mailto:eleanor.druker@legalservices.co.uk)

## Services receiving awards

Family mediation training grants have been awarded in the pilot to the following:

1. Oxfordshire Family Mediation
2. Family Mediation Worcestershire
3. Mediation Herefordshire
4. Surrey Family Mediation Service
5. Focus Family Mediation Ltd
6. West Yorkshire Family Mediation Service
7. South Essex Family Mediation Service
8. Coventry and Warwickshire Family Mediation
9. Laceys Mediation
10. Family Mediation Cardiff
11. Fosters Mediation
12. Birmingham District Family Mediation
13. North East London Family Mediation Service
14. West Wales Mediation Service

# New consultation starts on fixed fees

*Phase 1 Civil Fee Schemes Review – Proposed Amendments From 2010: A Consultation*

A six-week consultation has been launched to look into proposals for two minor amendments to Phase 1 Civil Fee Schemes.

The consultation runs from 1 April to 13 May 2009. The amendments are:

1. Introduction of a tolerance fee for personal injury work.
2. Separate preparation fee for in-house advocates working on family public law care and supervision cases.

## Use online response system

Anyone who wants to respond to the consultation should use the online response system on the Civil Consultations page.

The proposed amendments follow a review of the Phase 1 Civil Fee Schemes carried out in partnership with the Civil Contracts Consultative Group.

Representative bodies have argued the family

scheme does not distinguish between general case preparation and preparation for a hearing.

We have not uncovered any evidence so far to show there is a need to make any changes in this area. However, we are currently consulting on a new remuneration scheme for advocates called 'Family Legal Aid Funding from 2010'.

One of the issues in that consultation is how preparation for advocacy carried out by an in-house advocate is paid.

## All options remain open

That consultation closes on 3 April and all responses will be reviewed before decisions are made on the options. For now all options remain open. A new advocacy scheme may apply to all cases, public law cases only or private law cases only.

If the decision is made not to proceed with the public law advocacy scheme then the issue

of how to pay for preparation for solicitor advocacy will need to be addressed.

## Further investigation

As a result of this and because we have considered further the various ways in which this could be dealt with, we believe that this issue should be further considered as part of the Phase 1 Fee Schemes Review.

Key findings from the review report:

- increase in New Matter Starts by 1.84%
- diversity of client and providers has remained relatively static
- disbursement costs remain similar to pre-fixed fees introduction.

The review found no major changes were needed to the current civil fee schemes other than those shown above.

# ■ Crown Court rollout for QAA pilot

*Quality assurance for publicly funded criminal defence advocates is being tested in a pilot at courts in Birmingham, Cardiff, Inner London and Winchester. Interested in taking part? There's still time for solicitors and barristers to register...*

## Trial assessments are under way

Solicitors, solicitor advocates, pupils and barristers are already showing a lot of interest in the pilot to develop a Quality Assurance Scheme

increased access are coming our way because of changes to the legal landscape. They are the inevitable consequence of the Legal Services Act 2007 following the Clementi recommendations

is inclusive of in-house advocates now participating within the pilot.

In doing so, we can evaluate their future proposal to develop a national system for advocacy assessment used to quality assure and monitor their advocates and evaluate how this would feature in a final scheme that covers both prosecution and defence advocates.

Director of Public Prosecutions Keir Stammer QC recently delivered a speech "A prosecution service for the 21st Century". In this he set out his own personal vision for publicly assured common standards, which apply to all advocates, whether in-house or external.

**"In an increasingly competitive market QAA is essential to achieving best value for money without compromising quality"**

for Advocates (QAA).

This began at the end of February and the first batch of assessments are fully booked. It is open to solicitors and barristers who carry out publicly funded criminal defence advocacy and prosecution work, including in-house CPS advocates.

There are still places available if you are interested in helping to shape proposals for a final scheme. We need a broad range of advocates, covering all levels of complexity of criminal cases. Between them they also need to demonstrate all of the existing accreditations and qualifications.

## Women and BME advocates needed

We are also keen to make sure women and BME advocates are well represented. This is because we recognise that these advocates are the most likely to be 'impacted' by any final scheme.

The pilot will help us to evaluate this and make the necessary adjustments in any final proposals.

## The need for quality assurance

In an increasingly competitive market QAA is essential to achieving best value for money without compromising quality. From an LSC perspective, we have to be assured that quality for the client is at the centre of our purchasing decisions on advocacy services.

The promotion of competition, more innovative ways of delivering legal services and

and Lord Carter's Review about the provision of legal services.

With such an increase in choice, common standards and quality assurance mechanisms need to be recognisable and compatible across all the legal professions.

## Multi-organisation initiative

QAA is a multi-organisation initiative involving the Law Society, Bar Council, Solicitors Regulation Authority, Bar Standards Board, judiciary and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). It has been developed to dovetail with regulators' internal plans for the promotion of quality within the advocacy profession.

This collaborative approach to the development of QAA has allowed the profession to lead the detail of much of the work, such as competencies and levels of complexity. This should allow us to develop a scheme that both meets LSC requirements and can be owned by its own profession.

Potentially, that means it will cover all of the work that an advocate delivers – not just publicly funded cases – and offers a transferable accreditation for employed, self-employed, prosecution and defence advocates.

## Common standards for all publicly funded advocates

The team has been working with the CPS to discuss the need for common standards to assure the quality of all advocates. This

## Assessing an advocate's performance

The Professional Development Unit at Cardiff Law School (CLS) is responsible for the research, design, operation and evaluation of the assessment process for the QAA pilot.

The group fulfilling the contract is highly regarded as a founder assessment organisation for the Police Station Representatives' and Duty Solicitors' Accreditation schemes.

An advisory group made up of representatives from key stakeholders review the progress of and detail from CLS at specific stages. A number of different assessment methods will be tested in the pilot. These will include:

- multiple choice tests
- portfolio examination
- simulated advocacy
- judicial evaluation

Those taking part in the pilot may be tested using some or all of the possible methods depending on level. This will enable CLS to evaluate which assessments – and which combinations of assessments – are the most efficient at testing advocacy competence. The aim for any final scheme is to provide reliable conclusions while keeping assessment to a minimum.



**“It is important that there is representation from both solicitors and barristers to ensure any final scheme is fair for both sides of the profession”**

#### Credit for previous achievement

An important part of the work for CLS is looking at the credit that it may be possible to give, in any final QAA scheme, for an advocate's previous experience, accreditation and qualifications. For example, can a solicitor with Higher Rights of Audience, or a graded CPS advocate be 'passported' without further assessment into a final scheme at a particular level?

Avtar Bhatia, a past Chair of the Solicitors Association of Higher Court Advocates said: 'The QAA pilot will test the assessment options for any final quality assurance scheme. It is important that there is representation from both solicitors and barristers to ensure any final scheme is fair for both sides of the profession. The pilot is not run by any vested interest but by an independent body: Cardiff Law School.'

#### Helping to shape the scheme

Please contact Sinead Reynolds on the number below if you would like to receive further information about the pilot. You should also contact Sinead if you would like to take part in this pilot or future work in civil and family.

#### Contact & Information

- » 020 7783 7421  
(Sinead Reynolds)
- » qaa@legalservices.gov.uk
- » www.legalaidprocurementreview.gov.uk  
(for Lord Carter's report, 'Legal Aid: A market-based approach to reform')



## Virtual courts - next steps

*Invitations have sent out to firms to join the virtual court duty solicitor schemes in London...*

Firms that have already expressed an interest in joining the schemes were contacted. We have also written to a number of other firms in relevant areas who did not respond last time – just in case they want to reconsider.

Virtual courts work by establishing video links between police stations and a single magistrates' court. This allows first hearings, and in some cases sentencing, to be handled without the need to produce a prisoner physically in the court building.

Rotas will be created before the scheme goes live on 12 May. The Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) has advised that the first site will be Charing Cross Police Station linked to Camberwell Green magistrates' court.

LSC lead on virtual court's Tim Collieu said: 'The London implementation team are running virtual court awareness sessions where we can explain the fees to solicitors and how they should claim.'

The guidance is also available on the LSC's website (see below).

Tim added: 'The events are chaired by a district judge and include representatives from the police, Crown Prosecution Service and Her Majesty's Court Service explaining how the court and process will work.'

#### Contact & Information

- » LSC website > cds > consultations > virtual court
- » tim.collieu@legalservices.gov.uk

## LSC Online – Top Tips

*All providers should now be using LSC Online to make their claims to the LSC (Unified Contract Standard Terms Clause 15.2). The email and file transfer system is no longer available as the relaunch of LSC Online is now complete...*

Our Online Support team will continue to take your calls and emails. Below we've compiled a list of the most commonly raised questions:

### 1. Forgot your password?

Or locked your account and cannot log into LSC Online? To reset your password, go to the LSC Online login screen and click the 'forgotten password' link at the bottom of the page.

**Useful link:** LSC website > LSC Online > Using LSC Online > Quick guides: 'Logging in and resetting your password' (under document)s

### 2. Part-way bulk loading your submission?

If you are part way through the submission process and have to stop, save the outcome you are completing, or if bulkloading, make sure you have clicked 'yes' to load your outcomes. To return just log back in, go to the submission list to select the part completed submission and then continue as before. Please do not attempt to bulkload your submission again because this would generate a message notifying you of duplications.

**Useful link:** LSC website > LSC Online > Using LSC Online > Complete user guides: 'User Guide 3: Bulkload submissions' (under documents).

### 3. Need to add new users?

Contact your 'system administrator', who is able to create new users, change user details and add/remove new responsibilities to existing users.

**Useful link:** LSC website > LSC Online > Using LSC Online: 'User roles explained' (under documents).

### 4. Looking for your account or schedule number?

Users with the role 'activity reporter' and 'activity reporter manager' can find the schedule and account numbers in the submission list. You will need these numbers for your bulkload spreadsheet or case management system file.

### 5. Have you completed your submission?

To fully complete the submission process, you must click the 'submit' button on the submission summary screen, which can be found at the top and bottom of the screen. You must then click 'yes' to confirm you wish to submit. If you do not do this, your submission will not be processed.

**Useful link:** LSC website > LSC Online > Using LSC Online > Complete user guides: 'Bulkload submissions' (under documents)

**Useful link:** LSC website > LSC Online >

Using LSC Online > Quick guides: 'Civil line by line submissions' and 'Crime line by line submissions' (under documents).

### 6. Has your submission been successful?

You can check if your submission has been successful by viewing 'notifications' in the activity management section. If your submission is rejected the reason will be given here. Please note that the notifications are removed from the system after 30 days. Another tip is to go to 'previous submissions' and view all of your successfully processed submissions.

**Useful link:** LSC website > LSC Online > Using LSC Online > Complete user guides: 'Bulkload submissions' (under documents)

**Useful link:** LSC website > LSC Online > Using LSC Online > Quick guides: 'Viewing previous submissions' (under documents).

#### Contact & Information

» [online-support@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:online-support@legalservices.gov.uk)

» 020 7718 8359

LSC Online Support Team –  
Mon - Fri from 9am to 5.30pm.

## Payment dates April and May 2009

In the table to the right are proposed payment dates up to May 09.

The payment date is the day it goes into bank accounts (day 3 of BACS).

For regularly updated information about payment dates please see the LSC website:

Contract Payments & 1 <sup>st</sup> settlement of the month	2 <sup>nd</sup> settlement of the month	3 <sup>rd</sup> settlement of the month	4 <sup>th</sup> settlement of the month
9 April 09	16 April 09	23 April 09	30 April 09
7 May 09	14 May 09	21 May 09	28 May 09

■ LSC > Criminal Defence Service (CDS) Pay rates and schemes > Payment dates

■ LSC > Community Legal Service (CLS) Pay rates and schemes > Payment dates