

Networking...

The national voice of Law Centres

More Dead Pilots for a quick fix and a load of CLAC?

At the end of January the Legal Services Commission announced plans to drop funding for the specialist support services. LCF has joined the campaign to persuade the LSC to reconsider its decision as many Law Centres use the service.

Maureen Vincent, a solicitor at Brent Community Law Centre, says, *"I frequently use the Garden Court immigration law support service. I'm the only immigration specialist in the Law Centre and they provide invaluable support on cases. If this service goes it will be a big blow to specialist services such as ours as it will have a knock-on effect on the numbers of clients hard pressed practitioners like myself can deal with."*

The LSC's plans have also been condemned by the **Access to Justice Alliance**. Carol Storer is the chair of the Campaign; she is also the head of the legal team at Shelter which includes a specialist support project funded by the LSC. Storer is sceptical about the plans, *"Thousands of clients ultimately are the beneficiaries of this capacity building service. The Shelter service advises a wide spread of people from advice workers with little expert knowledge of housing law to specialists who need support with a complex matters."*



Steve Hynes, LCF Director

Shelter, along with other NfP agencies that currently provide specialist services, launched a judicial review of the decision. LCF has been joined to this action as an interested party. Over 150 MPs have signed an Early Day Motion condemning the decision and the LSC's acting Chief Executive, Brian Harvey, faced a grilling by the Constitutional Affairs Select Committee two weeks ago at which he defended the decision albeit admitting that the consultation process could have been better.

Increased Funding for CLS Direct a Quick Fix?

It seems pretty certain that if this cut goes ahead that the £2.3 million saved will go at least in part towards funding the expansion of CLS Direct, as the Commission believes that telephone advice can provide a quick fix to increasing services to clients to meet Treasury targets. LCF notes that the Commission has also advertised a tender for a telephone triage service.

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LAW CENTRES FEDERATION

Telephone advice can prove effective in giving initial diagnostic advice and is accessible, providing charges are not prohibitive. From a practical point of view it can filter clients within scope and eligibility or as is often the case with Law Centres the areas of work we specialise in. LCF's is concerned though that the transfer of resources to increased telephone advice should not be made at the expense of specialist casework services - reducing the very services needed to refer clients to as identified by telephone advisers.

Community Legal and Advice Centres

From informal discussions with the Commission it seems that they are putting much faith in the Community Legal and Advice Centres (CLACs) idea to provide integrated specialist casework services. CLACs were first muted in the consultation paper on the Community Legal Service published last year- 'Making Legal Rights a Reality'. While the final strategy is yet to be published this has not stopped the Commission pressing ahead with preparations to pilot CLACs.

Plans for what will probably be the first pilot CLAC seem to be at an advanced stage in Leicester. Perhaps not surprisingly, given Leicester Council's recent history of cuts to the NfP sector, the Council are not putting any extra money into the proposed CLAC. Instead at a Council cabinet meeting last year it was agreed to divert the £120,000 currently paid under a contract with Leicester Law Centre to provide a general help within the CLAC.

In a joint letter to private practice and NfP agencies in the Leicester area the Council and the Commission refer to wanting the CLAC to provide a 'holistic' service in specialising in family, social welfare law as well as providing generalist advice and information. LCF understands from the Commission that the intention is to ensure that services are provided by one organisation so that the multiple problems that clients often face can be tackled without the necessity for referral systems that they believe have largely failed in the past.

"A major concern for the Law Centre is that the Commission and Council are saying that they only want to contract with one supplier for the CLAC, but the Money Advice Centre, Shelter and the Law Centre currently all have contracts," says Leicester Law Centre Manager, **Glenda Terry**. Terry is concerned that if they want a merger of existing organisations "this will take much time and energy" for what in the case of a CLAC is only a three year pilot, with no guarantee of continuation in funding.

Pilots Killed Off

In January this year a senior source at the LSC was quoted as saying that the Commission was in danger of having "more pilots than British Airways". Perhaps it would have been more apt to say that if British Airways killed off as many pilots as the LSC does, they'd be arrested for mass murder. An example, close to home for the Law Centres movement being Surrey Law Centre which was funded as a second tier service under the Partnership Innovation Budget (PIB).

This was an innovative and successful service, but last year the PIB funding ended and the service was discontinued and staff left. The Law Centre after much time and effort from a committed management committee, effectively had to start again. It has now been re-launched with new staff working under legal help contracts. Perhaps Surrey can be likened to, at the risk of sounding snobbish, to a case of a murdered BA pilot being reincarnated as an Easyjet one?

Ultimately though the CLAC pilots might prove to be just a small part of a bigger picture in which the Commission attempts to consolidate the numbers of Legal Aid suppliers into larger units with a wider geographical spread, while CLS Direct provides national coverage to fill the gaps and contribute towards Treasury targets. If this is correct Law Centres are increasingly likely to be forced into difficult choices about what services they wish to provide and their future relationship with the Commission.

Steve Hynes
LCF Director

Law Centre News

New Funding for Gateshead

Last October, Gateshead Law Centre launched a new Financial Needs Partnership between the Northumberland Probation Service and the Law Centre as part of a three year plan to enhance and extend welfare benefits and money advice in all the main Probation Service offices in the region.

"This phase" said **Robin Winder**, Manager of Gateshead Law Centre "marks an extension to a service previously only offered to offices in the Tyneside areas and will cover 18 different offices up to three hours per week."

"By helping offenders address their financial difficulties, the partnership is contributing to the reduction of risk of re-offending and thus contributing to community safety" commented Sheila White of the National Probation Service, "Northumbria statistics relating to re-offending show that half of offenders in Northumbria have problems in their financial situation. A stable financial situation can significantly improve an offender's lifestyle and increase motivation to undertake work on offending behaviour, employment and addiction. In the past year the Law Centre's interventions resulted in an increase in offender income of over £60,000."

The service offers initial welfare benefit and money advice checks, emergency casework support and advice to both Probation Officers and clients alike on the backup advice and legal services available in each area. All the sessions are staffed by either a solicitor or experienced caseworker based at a particular office.

Gateshead Law Centre hopes that throughout the course of the contract, extra resources will be obtained to enhance the service offered.

Our thanks to Robin Winder, Manager of Gateshead Law Centre for this report.

South Manchester WASP Research Project

South Manchester is carrying out trans-national action research project on Women Asylum Seekers from Pakistan who seek refugee protection against domestic violence.

The project is now formally called the 'WASP research project'.

The project is a South Manchester Law Centre initiative, and is being conducted in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University. The Big Lottery Fund has awarded the Law Centre a research grant to carry out the study.

Two research workers have been seconded to the project from the Law Centre: Nadia Siddiqui and Sajida Ismail.

"Our aim is to generate knowledge and understanding that will contribute to the development of more effective support and legal services for Pakistani women in the UK and improved access to justice within the UK asylum system. Central to this will be the generation of a detailed picture of the processes, options and rights of women at each stage of a journey from fleeing Pakistan, seeking asylum in the UK and on forced return to Pakistan. We seek to convey the complexity and gender-specific nature of the factors that affect the persecution of these women. In instances where women have been successful in their claims we will consult with women as refugees on whether there are additional access issues to their inclusion as members of wider society.

"We aim to contribute to the body of evidence on the global extent of violence against women and the extent to which the Refugee Convention and the human rights convention offer real protection to women."

The project was formally and successfully launched on 8th November 2005 at an event held in Manchester. In spite of the wet and grey weather, the event was extremely well attended with broad representation from the legal, voluntary, statutory and education sectors and with women from across the country who themselves have sought asylum based on domestic violence. This fact in itself is indicative of the extent to which women seeking asylum on this issue are reliant on any form support. Dr. Aisha Gill from the University of Roehampton spoke about the relationship between gender, violence and citizenship with a particular focus on the vulnerabilities that women asylum seekers and refugees encounter. Two Pakistani women also spoke about their experiences of fleeing violent marriages in Pakistan, the factors that led them to seek asylum in the UK, their experiences of the asylum system and their continuing fears of persecution if they had to return.

The event itself generated much debate on a range of issues, from the difficulties of gathering evidence about the risks to a woman's safety in Pakistan, questions about why this particular group of nationals have been targeted by the project and the range of factors which influence decision making by the immigration and authorities in the UK.

The initial stage of the project is two fold :

"We have started an extensive national audit of existing legal, medical, welfare and other service provision for Pakistani women asylum seekers and refugees. This snapshot will enable us to identify key organisations for a programme of intensive consultation and will provide appropriate avenues for reaching groups of Pakistani women asylum seekers and refugees. The process itself has generated numerous networking opportunities and considerable interest in the project.

"We have also started establishing key links in Pakistan. One of the two research workers, Nadia Siddiqui, is now in Pakistan embarking on the first field trip to set up the project in four key 'regions': Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar, and will examine the feasibility of consulting with women in rural and tribal areas. Attempting to establish a project such as WASP in Pakistan carries with it numerous challenges and risks. This is particularly so at a time when there have been a number of high profile cases there on the issue of violence against women, which have exposed considerable and alarming shortfalls in the extent to which women have any appropriate remedies at all."

For further information about the project, please contact Sajida Ismail by email at sajida@smlc.org.uk or by telephone on 0161 248 1884.

You can Nadia Siddiqui at nadia@smlc.org.uk or by telephone on 0161 248 1879.

Our thanks to Sajida and Nadia for sending us this report.

Govan Law Centre

Judges for the annual Cuthbert Scottish Legal Awards shortlisted Govan Law Centre in Glasgow for the Specialist Team of the Year award, for the work done by its Prevention of Homelessness Team. Cuthbert's director, Nick Davies said, *'They put in a mega-submission that was superb. I hope to see them again next year.'*

Rotherham Law Centre

Congratulations also to Jane Waring from Rotherham Law Centre who has been selected as one of the finalist to win an ATHENA Award this month. Jane is one of eight finalists who will be honoured for their 'contribution towards opening leadership doors for local women and make a real difference to their area in South Yorkshire.'

Law Centre on the move ...

Vauxhall Law and Information Centre has now moved to Vauxhall Training and Enterprise Centre, Silvester Street, Liverpool L5 8SE. Their telephone number is 0151 482 2001.

And Thamesmead Law Centre has a new website: www.tmlc.org.uk.

LCF Website

The LCF has secured some funding from Lloyds TSB Foundation to update our website and make it more accessible to people with disabilities. As part of the website update we will be revamping the member's section of the website and would really like your feedback about what should be in it, seeing as you'll be the ones using it!

A questionnaire has been sent by email to all Law Centres. We understand that you're all really busy, but it would be helpful if people with different areas of work or responsibility could fill in the questionnaire so that we can make sure we cater for everyone.

We look forward to receiving your feedback. All ideas gratefully received, but obviously it will depend on cost whether we are able to implement them!

Completed questionnaires can be posted to Emma at the LCF or emailed to her at emma@lawcentres.org.uk by **7th March**.

Legal Services

Special Support

The LSC announced this month that they plan to withdraw funding from all the specialist support providers and that services will cease on 19th July. The LSC have said that they intend to reprioritise their funding and with the savings made increase face-to-face and CLS Direct services.

Acting chief executive of the LSC, Brian Harvey and Crispin Passmore, director of CLS were called to give evidence to the Constitutional Affairs Committee on 14th February to explain why the decision was taken. The LCF has joined others in making protests and 151 MPs have signed Early Day Motion 1542 which calls on the Government to *'restore funding for specialist support and strengthen the provision of legal advice for those in greatest need.'*

Carter Review

Lord Carter's Review of Legal Aid Procurement for Criminal Defence Services was published in February. This interim report recommends that reforms are introduced over a three-year period. The three phases are :

- * fixed pricing for all criminal legal aid work;
- * a managed market, awarding contracts to efficient and good quality supplier that can take on more cases, either individual firms or collection of firms formed to deliver the benefits of scale;
- * managed price competition between efficient, good quality suppliers with safeguards to protect standards of quality, coverage in rural areas and diversity.

The report on civil legal aid is expected in the spring, possibly in May.

The report can be found at:
legalaidprocurementreview.gov.uk.

Tribunals for Diverse Users

New research by Professor Hazel Genn, Ben Lever, Lauren Gray and Nigel Balmer was published by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in January. The study provides a comprehensive examination of access, expectations, experiences and outcomes of tribunals from the perspective of tribunal users and potential users. It focused on the Appeals Service, Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel, and Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunals and was designed specifically to compare the experiences of White, Black and Minority Ethnic users.

About half the users interviewed at hearings were attending without representation, generally because it had not occurred to them to seek representation, or because they had tried and been unable to obtain representation. Unrepresented Minority Ethnic users attending hearings were more likely than White users to have tried and failed to obtain representation.

Tribunal judiciary generally felt that representation was of value to all users and particularly so for Minority Ethnic users. The study also found that there was a need to provide good quality information about how to appeal, improving access to pre-hearing advice, providing information about the tribunal in community languages, and better access to representation and high quality interpreters.

The Qualitative Research Unit at the National Centre for Social Research carried out the qualitative research on access to tribunal justice. The study can be found on the DCA's website: dca.gov.uk.

Access to Justice

The Access to Justice Campaign launched a national campaign on legal aid at Portcullis House on 12th December. Sadiq Khan MP chair of the meeting welcomed speakers, Bridget Prentice MP, Oliver Heald MP, David Heath MP, Roy Morgan and Carol Storer from Shelter. A campaign pack was distributed at the launch. Law Centres have been mailed copies and more are available from the LCF.

At the meeting, DCA Minister Bridget Prentice said that although the drain on civil legal aid needed to be recognised, it should not be isolated from the crime fund. She said 'Ring-fencing doesn't address the fact that the total cost of legal aid is increasing.'

Advicenow

Advicenow, the independent not-for-profit website run by Advice Services Alliance (ASA), is inviting Law Centre workers to sign up to their new email update service. The email newsletters will inform you about the latest developments on the Advicenow website, tell you about new leaflets and topical guides, and let you have your say on current and future projects.

Advicenow's objectives are:

- " To deliver a managed web search of information on rights and the law in England and Wales. This means that they do the searching for you; handpicking the best available information to make sure that it is readable, relevant and accurate. No more trawling through lists of irrelevant search engine results!
- " To provide and commission information on rights and legal issues to improve the range and quality of information available to the public. A good example of this is the successful Living Together campaign which aims to counter the myth of common law marriage and to help cohabiting couples safeguard their interests. Advicenow produced information on the various aspects of living together - wills, housing, pensions and benefits etc, promoting each issue in the media as it was launched on the website.
- " To coordinate and promote the provision of information and educational materials as part of advice and legal services. Advicenow ran a campaign with Citizenship Foundation and Legal Action Group to highlight the need for Public Legal Education as an integral part of legal and advice services. They are now

taking part in the independent Task Force, together with the Law Centres Federation, set up to look at these issues.

If you would like to know more about how Advicenow could help you or your clients, visit the website at: advicenow.org.uk or sign up to new update service at: update@advicenow.org.uk

Advicenow is being threatened with the withdrawal of funding from the LSC. We will keep you posted on the latest news.

Public Legal Education

The Department for Constitutional Affairs has set up a new Task Force (see above) to identify strategies to increase citizens' awareness and understanding of their legal rights and develop the knowledge and skills needed to deal with effectively with problems. The Task Force is chaired by Professor Hazel Genn. The LCF has been invited to join the Task Force. For details contact Lynn at lynn@lawcentres.org.uk.

Law Society

The Law Society is inviting solicitors to fill in a questionnaire about its future. Visit : lawsociety.org.uk to respond. The closing date is 21st April.

From 1st January 2006, the Law Society has been able to order a solicitor to make a payment up to £15,000, three times the previous limit. Clients seeking redress above this ceiling will have to take their case to court.

LAGLA

LAGLA is the Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association. They have issued their spring programme which includes a Spring Party of 10th March. This is open to those who are not members and are interested in joining.

The Association can be contacted c/o Alternative Family Law, 70 Borough Street, London SE1 1XF. Telephone: 020 7407 4007. Their website is at : lagla.org.uk

Japanese Legalese

The Legal Services Commission appears to be adopting Japanese manufacturing techniques to assist the sector in preparing for change. Some of the new jargon you may hear if you are doing an MBA or attending an LSC seminar. Some examples are :

Kaizen - Taken from the Japanese words kai and zen where the kai means change and zen means good. The popular meaning is continual improvement of all areas of a company, not just quality.

Just In Time - producing the required parts, at the required time, in the required amount, at each step in the production process, in the most economical manner.

Poka-Yoke (Mistake Proofing) - Ensuring that a machine or operator does not make a bad part. Poka-Yoke is pronounced "poh-kah yoh-kay". The principle is to detect problems early and so give alarms or force the stopping of the procedure.

More news on the latest jargon welcomed !

Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year

Independent Lawyer magazine and the Legal Aid Practitioners Group are calling for nominations for the fourth Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year (LALY) Awards, which celebrate the work of solicitors and barristers who have dedicated their careers to the service of some of the most vulnerable members of society.

Nominations are being sought in nine categories including:

Immigration and Asylum

Sponsored by the Law Society

Social and Welfare

Sponsored by S A Partners

Mental Health

Sponsored by Matrix

Team of the Year

Sponsored by Allen and Overy

Young solicitor

Sponsored by the LCF

Barrister of the Year

Sponsored by the Bar Council

Young Barrister

Sponsored by NatWest Legal Centre

The panel of judges, chaired once again by Cherie Booth QC, will also be making an award for Outstanding Achievement, which is sponsored by D.G Legal.

The deadline for nominations is **13th April 2006**. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in London on 22nd June 2006.

Condition Fees !

Are you for them or against them ?

An important debate is to take place at the next LCF General Meeting at 2.00 on **22nd May 2006**. Please let Steve Hynes, LCF director know your views. A paper will be circulated prior to the meeting.

The meeting is to take place at the London Voluntary Services Council in Holloway Road, London. If published by then, the agenda will also cover Lord Carter's proposed reforms of civil legal aid.

Advance Notice !

Law Centres Federation

Annual Conference 2006

and AGM

10th and 11th November 2006

**Copthorne Hotel Manchester
Clippers Quay, Alford Quays
Manchester M50**



Clinics

50th Clinic Celebration

The LawWorks Clinics project has established or assisted its 50th clinic. The Law Centres Federation has been working in partnership with the Solicitors Pro Bono Group (now operating as LawWorks - see related article) for the last 4 years on this important project setting up new clinics, helping existing services where requested and setting up a range of associated pieces of work (free LexisNexis for clinic use, web based advice, training for volunteer lawyers, public legal education projects). Certificates recognising the hard work put in to maintaining these services have been produced and will be distributed to Law Centres and other agencies hosting clinics, and to law firms partnering these agencies. Our thanks of course are also extended to all those lawyers who volunteer in an individual capacity who we are unable to contact directly.

Over the past year alone clinics associated with the project have provided free legal help to more than 27,000 people, some of whom have been able to access further advice and representation from other projects run by LawWorks. If you want to set up a new clinic, are looking for assistance with one you already run or are interested in the other services offered through LawWorks Clinics, please contact Julian Lewis at the LCF offices (julian@lawcentres.org.uk or 020 7387 8574 direct).



New Name, New Look, Same Purpose

New Year is a symbolic time for resolutions and change. LawWorks is now the operating name for the Solicitors Pro Bono Group (LCF's partner on the LawWorks Clinics project). Over recent years SPBG's projects have enabled the delivery of free legal services to clients and promoted the pro bono concept as integral to the solicitor profession. All have adopted the LawWorks name that was first used when the clinics project started in 2001. Hence LawWorks for Community Groups, LawWorks Mediation etc. While the funding streams for these projects are separate from LawWorks Clinics, they are all presaged as potential developments in the preamble to the initial LawWorks Clinics bid document.

Robert Gill, Acting Chief Executive explained, "*LawWorks is a dynamic and positive brand that will help us speak to a broader range of audiences than before. Our mission and commitment remain the same - to promoting and support pro bono work.*"

The LawWorks website, www.lawworks.org.uk has been redesigned with new content and facilities, including a clinic vacancy search for lawyers. If your Law Centre runs a clinic please submit details for inclusion to Julian Lewis at the LCF offices (julian@lawcentres.org.uk or 020 7387 8574 direct). When you need more pro bono lawyers this can be flagged and the system will respond appropriately to lawyers searching for pro bono opportunities in your area. If your clinic is already not associated with the LawWorks Clinics project, but you are assisted in this way you will then be invited to join. This only requires a quarterly return of numbers of clients seen and is not concerned with branding or imposing a structure (beyond the requirements of good practice).

Equality News

Equality Act

The Equality Bill received its final reading in January and received Royal Assent on 16th February.

Meg Munn, Deputy Minister for Women and Equality said that the purpose of the Equality Act was to:

- * establish the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and to define its purpose and functions;
- * make unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities, services, premises, education and the exercise of public functions;
- * create a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between men and women (the gender duty) and to prohibit sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions;
- * provide powers to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, etc.

The duties and powers of the CEHR include:

- * a new duty to consult with stakeholders to ensure all groups have an opportunity to participate and engage in its work;
- * a new duty to monitor progress on equality, human rights and good relations between communities, through publishing a regular 'state of the nation' report;
- * a new duty to promote good relations between and within communities, across all sections of society;
- * an explicit role to combat prejudice and work to reduce crime affecting particular communities, including new powers to monitor hate crimes; and
- * a regional presence in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Commission for Racial Equality has welcomed the setting up of the Commission and will merge with the CEHR in 2009. This will follow the other equality commissions who are joining in 2007 when the Commission is set up in October.

CRE has highlighted concern about the promoting of good community relations and tackling extremism, terrorism and racial hatred on the ground and believe that the CEHR will not be able to meet all the challenges.

The CRE therefore are proposing a *new non-governmental public body* to guide, advise and mediate on community relations, civic engagements and citizenship. The new body would take up CRE's current grassroots race relations work, train and validate race relations practitioners. Amongst its other objectives is the provision of a secure and dedicated funding stream to grassroots organisations and small grants for anti-racism initiatives and projects encouraging good relations within communities.

CRE welcome comments and suggestions on their proposals.

The people to contact are David Bates or Bernard Aryeetey on 020 7939 0129 or you can email: newbody@cre.gov.uk.

Gender Equality

The Equal Opportunities Commission has launched an on-line consultation on the new Code of Practice for the Gender Equality Duty coming into force from April 2007. From this date all public bodies will be legally bound to eliminate sex discrimination and promote gender equality.

The on-line consultation is being administered by Dialogue by Design on behalf of the EOC and can be located at: <http://eoc.dialoguebydesign.net/open>.

The EOC are organising a series of regional events in March to explain the detail and implications of the new legislation. Further information can be obtained from the EOC on 020 7618 9100 or you can visit: eoc.org.uk/genderduty.

Human rights cases

It was reported in January that there is likely to be a wider application of the Human Rights Act despite the number of cases utilizing the legislation falling last year. Human rights experts have said that the decline is not down to fewer cases, but rather an integration of the Act into other laws. They anticipate the legislation will crop up in more areas over the coming year. Roger Smith of Justice said:

'As time goes by, practitioners are probably becoming a little more selective in its usage. There still remains enormous potential for the Act to improve the delivery of public services to those who receive them.'

Disability News

Liberating Disabled People

By Teresa Waldron, Chesterfield Law Centre

On the whole, life is more restrictive for disabled people on many levels. In this climate, social care services are continually being cutback, re-prioritised and privatised, making it more and more difficult for disabled people to access social care services. I predict that it will become even more difficult if and when Social Services is transferred under the auspices of Health. Services that Social Services provide is the passport for full inclusion in society.

Many disabled people and carers are reluctant to contact Social Services as they hear horror stories such as support having been withdrawn unlawfully and being advised by social workers to move into residential care homes.

This is an oppressive regime for millions of disabled people, having to daily cope with both external and internal pressures. They are expected to conform and overcome the social barriers themselves at no extra cost to the authorities. We, Law Centres, should be challenging society for imposing these barriers onto disabled people. This oppression is exacerbated by the fact that the majority of them do not know they have rights within community care law.

I assume that all Law Centres have policies such as providing a Disability Equality Service and reaching and educating disabled people of their rights in many aspects of their daily living. If this is not the case, then the Disability Rights Working Party can work in conjunction with the Law Centres Federation and the Public Law Solicitors to support them by providing guidelines on how to do this and to provide them with consultancy advice and support on this new area of law.

If disabled people are informed of their rights, the demand for this specialist advice, information and representation service in community care law and other disability related areas of law will increase.

It is timely that Law Centres (and other legal firms) in the UK consider liberating disabled people from being confined to the four walls of their homes by accessing the services they should be receiving. It is no good just focusing on recruiting caseworker(s), there also has to be an outreach worker within the firm to reach and educate housebound individuals, disabled individuals and groups of disabled people and carers which will generate cases for the caseworkers. This approach would also ensure that Law Centres meet its casework targets.

Community care law will complement Law Centres' existing specialisms as it is often entwined in housing, education, employment, welfare benefits and mental health law. Law Centres also need to seriously consider pressurising their regional Legal Services Commission to treat community care law as a higher priority to stop this abuse of human rights and let disabled people live carefree and independent lives.

Specialising in community care law

In order to encourage Law Centres to specialise in community care law, Public Law Solicitors (an advice agency that provides legal firms specialist consultancy advice and support in community care law) and Chesterfield Law Centre ran a workshop in November 2005 at Law Centres Federation AGM which focussed on ways of working towards specialising in community care law. Below is a loose guide.

What is community care law ?

Community care covers the social and health care services that are provided by local authorities (e.g. Social Services) and health authorities (e.g. hospitals). It involves advising and, where appropriate, representing disabled people and their carers on accessing health and social care services to help them to live independently in their own homes as long as they are able, or in other settings in the community such as residential homes.

How can Law Centres show LSC that there is a need for them to specialise in community care law ?

Many Law Centres are already in a position to show the need for them to specialise in community care law.

- * Those who take on housing cases, at least a quarter of those cases will have community care elements involved. This can involve in disabled tenants;
 - Needing support to pay their rent on time;
 - Needing support from social services in making their homes free from risks and hazards;
 - Finding themselves at risk from being evicted for reasons relating to their disability including lack of support;
 - Being homeless in their own homes as they cannot use or access facilities.
- * Law Centres who specialise in mental health law will often come across clients who have not received a community care package upon their discharge from being sectioned under the Mental Health Act which can put them at risk of being sectioned again under the Mental Health Act.
- * Those that do Welfare Benefits work could show that there is a need by completing sample questionnaires with their clients.

- * There are national and local organisations of and for disabled people, older people and carers that would give their expertise and support for their local Law Centre to specialise in community care law.

In addition, Law Centres can map legal providers by finding out if there are any in their area that specialise in community care law. See below a list of firms that specialise in community care law in regions (that was accurate at 31.1.2006). This needs to be checked out with your regional LSC to ensure it is up to date. It is advisable not rely on the CLS Directory to be accurate. Law Centres can also show the number of disabled people, older people and carers living in their area and statistics on the number of older people, disabled people and carers who use their services.

Getting resources and funding

Many Law Centres can do community care work under the tolerance to fund their eligible cases. Non-eligible and development/education work (a very important aspect of casework as it generates cases and helps to meet targets) can be funded by project funding. The funding could be used to recruit a caseworker and a project/development worker.

How can caseworkers be supported on complex community care cases

Public Law Solicitors is one of three national firms that provides specialist community care advice and support for caseworkers working in the area of community care law. They provide a helpline service two afternoons a week - Tuesdays and Thursdays. Disability Law Service and Christian Khan are the other two firms that also provide this service.

Working towards obtaining SQM in community care law

Many agencies have obtained a SQM in community care law in a variety of ways. Some agencies have been awarded SQM on the proviso for e.g. that the Public Law Solicitors continue to externally supervise and file review their community care cases for a period of time. Some agencies have been awarded SQM on the basis of having had their cases reviewed and supervised by Public Law Solicitors for the past two to three years.

Working towards becoming an Area of Law Supervisor in community care law

An experienced Housing ALS could apply to become an ALS in community care law as long they can show the breadth of the different type of cases within community care law. A non-ALS advice worker can draw up a plan to show how they become an ALS in community care law in a year's time and how they can take on a wide range of different types of community care cases.

What are the benefits for Law Centres to specialise in community care law?

Generating disabled people and carers' awareness of their rights will increase the number of cases in community care law which also can lead to a generation of Part II and III Disability Discrimination cases, welfare rights cases, mental health and education cases. Providing you have project funding to employ a development worker to generate awareness this will make it easier for the Law Centre to meet targets.

Working in community care can enable Law Centres to:

Social policy opportunities

- Spot social and health care gaps which need addressing;
- Influence the Government to meet those gaps;
- Lobby Legal Services Commission and Community Legal Services for more Law Centres to specialise in community care law.

Funding opportunities

- Increase Law Centres' chances to meeting funders' priorities. Such as DWP, Home Office, DoH, SHA, Comic Relief, the Big Lottery Fund, etc.;

Development work opportunities

- Enable disabled people, older people and carers to volunteer at the Law Centres and Voluntary and Community sector organisations;
- Develop advocacy projects;
- Develop joint projects such as advising disabled immigrants;

- Join up and meet needs within the Voluntary and Community sector;
- Advise disabled employers;
- Recruit and employ disabled workers and carers;
- Organise regional and national conferences.

Casework opportunities

- Fund non-eligible casework;
- Bring in some core funding;
- Increase in a range of cases linked by disability and care;
- A new area of law - e.g. Education and SENDA work;
- Contribute to meeting legal help targets;
- Being able to apply for New Matter Starts.

Our thanks to Teresa from Chesterfield Law Centre and member of the LCF Executive Committee.

Disability Debate

The Disability Rights Commission has started a debate called, '*Changing Britain for Good: Putting disability at the heart of public policy.*' Ten priorities for action have been identified. DRC plan to carryout a consultation in order to develop a detailed and practical public policy agenda. Details about the Disability Debate can be found at: disabilitydebate.org where you can join the discussions on line.

Sign Language

The LSC has agreed that clients should not be denied access to language support and will pay for such support when it is reasonable in amount and appropriately employed. As well as the cost of English/British Sign Language interpretation they will pay the reasonable cost of other LSPs, (language support professionals) such as speech to text reporters, lip speakers and DeafBlind manual communicators. The LSC says that it is '*imperative that suppliers ensure they keep a separate breakdown of such costs and the associated increased attendance times on the client.*'

Information was in the last edition (Issue 49) of the LSC's Focus magazine. Queries should be directed to Ruth Symonds, Corporate Legal Team at the LSC: 020 7759 0000 or ruth.symonds@legalservices.gov.uk.

Post-16 Education

September 2006 will bring a radical overhaul of Post-16 provisions with the introduction of direct discrimination, the removal of the justification defence for failure to make reasonable adjustments, the introduction of a new definition of harassment and a reversal of the burden of proof. The changes are coming about as a result of Article 13 of the EU Employment Directive (2000/78/EC) which covers vocational training. The DRC is drafting a new Post-16 Code of Practice and a consultation draft which will be available this March.

Mental Health Inequalities

CRE, the Commission for Racial Equality is to launch an investigation into inequalities in the mental health system. In December, the Healthcare Commission census found that Black African and Caribbean people were three times more likely to be sectioned than the rest of the population. The Director of policy and public sector, Nick Johnson, warned that the CRE would take formal legal action if the investigation revealed any public authority acting in breach of the law although he said it would prefer not have to resort to such measures. Johnson said the three-month investigation would be the most "detailed and thorough" piece of work the Commission had undertaken in the public sector outside of its formal legal casework

Disabled Facilities Grants

The Government has increased the amount of money available for the grants which are designed to help people live independently in their homes. The Housing Minister, Baroness Andrews said, *'The increase will help fund the abolition of means testing for disabled children, which came into force on 31st December 2005. This decision makes it easier for families with disabled children to apply for a DFG of up to £25,000 for disability improvements to their home, such as, access ramps, stair-lifts, level access showers and home extensions.'*

Employment News

Work and Families

In February, the DTI published new draft regulations on family-friendly proposals which we outlined in our last newsletter. The Government's intention is that maternity and adoption regulations will apply to the parents of children expected to be born, or placed for adoption, on or after 1 April 2007; and the flexible working regulations will apply from April 2007. The purpose of publishing the regulations is to invite comments on their drafting, and seek views on some remaining areas of detail, before the final regulations are prepared and provided to Parliament later in 2006. The consultation process closes on **18th April** and can be found on the DTI website: dti.gov.uk/consultations.

TUPE

New guidance has been published by the DTI on the 2006 TUPE regulations for employees, employers and representatives. The new regulations come into force on 6th April 2006. Among the new provisions it introduces:

- * a widening of the scope of the regulations to cover cases where services are outsourced;
- * a new duty on the old transferor employer to supply information;
- * special provisions a making it easier for insolvent businesses to be transferred to new employers.

DTI website: dti.gov.uk/er/regs

ACAS funding reduced

Acas is having to take action to reduce costs, and restructure. This means that there will be fewer conciliators. Acas say that this will have an affect on their levels of service. From 1st March, Acas has been concentrating on *"those cases where successful conciliation could be expected to have the greatest positive impact."* They will be focusing on lengthier tribunal cases which have the highest potential costs. The 2004 Regulations identified three types of case: open period (cases concerning discrimination or equal pay issues, etc.); standard period (for

example, complaints of unfair dismissal); and short period (for example, claims about redundancy). More resources are to be given to open cases; standard cases will be dealt with in a similar way, with the aim of resolving within the 13 week conciliation period. Acas will try to resolve short period cases more quickly (presently the regulations stipulate 7 weeks).

During 2006, Acas will be introducing an electronic case management system, which they will share with the Employment Tribunal Service. Further changes are likely to be announced. Acas's website address: acas.org.uk

Acas has recently published a new nine-minute video clip about conciliation. The interview is taken from the 'Essential Guide to Employment Tribunals' DVD, produced by Capital Law and Channel TV, in association with Acas. It can be viewed on the Acas site: acas.org.uk.

Statutory Grievance Letters

Following the case of *Thorpe & Soleil Investments v Poat & Lake*, employers may need to treat any written complaint or any resignation letter that sets out a complaint as a step 1 statutory grievance letter. As such it must trigger the statutory grievance procedure. On 18th October last year, the employment Appeal Tribunal said that a seven-page letter from two employees, listing a number of complaints about health and safety and claiming the employer had breached the contract of employment, constituted a grievance letter. The EAT said:

'The employee's intention is irrelevant. It does not matter whether the employee intended or did not intend to raise a grievance within the letter.

'A letter can be a statutory grievance letter even if it does not comply with the employer's contractual grievance procedure.

'For the modified (two step) grievance procedure to apply, the letter must include an outline of the grievance as well as the reasons for the grievance. A letter for the standard (three step) procedure only has to include an outline of the grievance. '

The decision is at www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKCAT/2005/0503_05_1810.html.

New limits for Awards

New limits on payments and awards rose on 1st February.

They have risen in line with the Retail Price Index between September 2004 and September 2005 - an annual increase of 2.7%. They include statutory redundancy payments, awards for unfair dismissal.

The Employment Rights (Increase of Limits) Order 2005 (SI 2005 No.3352)

Immigration News

Regulation of Immigration Advice in Law Centres

LCF has been advised by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner that they have now completed the design of the application pack for Law Centres. Non-legally qualified caseworkers undertaking immigration advice, even if they are directly supervised by a solicitor, will have to apply to the OISC for an exemption certificate by **30th April 2006**.

OISC will be sending out application packs directly to Law Centres any day now. These have to be completed for each non-legally qualified immigration advisor. OISC have requested that solicitors also include their names on the form in "order to minimise the prospect of confusion as to whether individuals are authorised to give advice or not." It should be stressed that this is not compulsory and solicitors do not have to complete the competence assessment forms which will be included in the application pack.

Registration with OISC has been a controversial issue for many Law Centres. The Law Society's revised interpretation of the rules regulating immigration advice under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 has meant that non-legally qualified immigration workers have no choice but to register by 30th April.

New Asylum Model

The Government plan to introduce the new asylum model next September. This will lead to a third of all asylum seekers being placed in detention centres for the 'fast track' processing of their claims for refugee status. This is part of another large-scale overhaul of the system and could see the creation of a category of 'late and opportunistic asylum claims' with cases being decided within two weeks.

The model envisages that at the initial screening interview, an immigration officer will assign the case to one of nine asylum routes, known as segments. This decision will determine how quickly the claim is dealt with, the right to legal advice, and whether the applicant must stay at a detention centre, a supervised block, a flat close to the reporting centre or remote accommodation. It is said that access to legal aid will be improved.

European Directive

Last December the controversial EU directive on asylum procedures was adopted with no discussion by the 25 member states and may lead to a serious downgrading of asylum standards. The directive sets minimum norms for adjudicating asylum claims. The UNHCR has voiced their concerns about the rules allowing states to designate 'safe third countries' outside of the EU, to which asylum seekers can be turned back without even having had their claims heard in an EU member state. The directive also fails to spell out clearly that asylum seekers cannot be sent back to their countries of origin while waiting for the outcome of their appeals.

Enhanced Returns Scheme

The Government announced in January that people who agree to leave the UK between 1st January and 30th June 2006 will be entitled to £3,000 to return to their country of origin. The Home Office's six-month pilot with this enhanced package is available under the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme run by the International Organisation for Migration. The package is only available to people who have applied for asylum before 31st December 2005 and have applied in time to

meet the **31st May** deadline. Offers are conditional on agreeing to withdraw an asylum claim, or if appealing, withdrawing the appeal. Further information from IOM on 0800 783 2332 or visit: iomlondon.org/pilot.

Family Amnesty Exercise

The Home Secretary announced the programme in October 2003 which allows some asylum-seeking families who have been in the UK for four or more years to stay. Asylum statistics published at the end of February report that 3,300 families benefited from this in the last quarter of 2005. Just over a third of applicants have been successful.

There were 25,720 asylum applications in 2005. This was down by almost a quarter (24%) from last year.

Age Assessments

A joint working protocol has been agreed between the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of the Home Office and the Association of Directors of Social Services. The protocol sets out arrangements for age assessment and contains specific procedures for information sharing between the two agencies.

The protocol can be found on the ADSS website: adss.org.uk under publications.

Section 9

Sue Willman, ex Law Centre solicitor took the first High Court challenge to government policy on 31st January. Sue William argued that the policy breached the UN Convention on the rights of the child and the Human Rights Act. The judges however ruled that the client was able to stop her human rights from being breached by returning to her country of origin. An appeal is being lodged against the ruling.

In January the Refugee Council and Refugee Action published **Inhumane and Ineffective - Section 9 in Practice**. The report is based on the casework experience of Refugee Council and Refugee Action. Through their offices in the three pilot areas, they have had contact with many of the families affected by the pilot. The report concludes with a call on the government to abandon the policy on the grounds that it is

inhumane and ineffective and explore alternatives that support families at the end of the asylum process.

The section 9 pilot project is currently being evaluated by the Home Office.

Sun Voting

Thanks to everyone who took part in the survey carried out by the Sun newspaper on whether failed asylum seekers should lose their benefits. At the beginning of the poll 73% of voters said that they should. At the end of the poll this was reduced to just 36% ! This meant that nearly two thirds of those who voted said that failed asylum seekers should receive benefits.

Freedom of Information

We have included in this mailing correspondence between the Immigration Policy Team at the LSC and Mahmud Quayum from Camden Community Law Centre about staffing and expenditure.

Housing News

Proportionate Dispute Resolution

In April 2004, the Law Commission will be publishing a paper on Proportionate Dispute Resolution, *"a project looking at how a more holistic and proportionate approach for the resolution of housing problems and disputes can be developed."*

The LCF are hoping to fix date for the Commission to speak to Law Centre housing workers about the proposals, perhaps jointly with Shelter and HLPAs in May or June.

The Law Commission's Final Report on Renting Homes will also be published shortly.

Possession Prevention Project

The Possession Prevention Project (PPP) is an innovative Southwark-based initiative that aims to reduce the number of evictions caused by rent arrears via training, awareness raising and policy and research work. The PPP, which is funded by the Legal Services Commission's Partnership Initiative Budget until March 2007, is a joint venture delivered by Southwark Law Centre and Blackfriars Advice Centre.

Project achievements

Since the project was launched in April 2004, it has achieved a number of notable successes. These include:

- * Delivery of two programmes of housing advice training to local community advice organisations, which has increased the capacity of the local voluntary sector to act as 'early notifiers', to provide crisis intervention on issues related to rent arrears, and to refer to local specialists and/or the Lambeth County Court Duty Advice Scheme;
- * Publication of a housing law manual for use by advice agencies;
- * Creation of positive and durable relationships with relevant council departments to facilitate policy discussions (see below);
- * Consolidation of links with related local initiatives such as the Southwark Housing Lawyers' Group, an email policy and referral forum.

Influencing local authority policy - a good practice model

The project is engaged in ongoing policy discussions with Southwark Council on issues that affect tenants in rent arrears, and has been fully engaged in contributing to the Council's thoroughgoing review of its rent arrears management policy in the following ways:

- * Production and distribution of a comprehensive report detailing good practice recommendations based both on national (ODPM and Civil Justice Council) initiatives and on suggestions provided by local social welfare advice practitioners;
- * Presentation to Southwark Council rent income managers on the report's findings and methods of incorporating them into future guidance;
- * Facilitation of a consistency forum with rent income officers to embed good practice in rent collection.

The PPP Conference

The PPP is holding a conference on **May 17th 2006** at South Bank University. This will provide an opportunity to share good practice and situate the project's achievements within a wider policy context. Keynote speakers include:

- * **Adam Sampson**, director of Shelter, discussing Shelter's role in combating homelessness;
- * **David Watkinson**, Civil Justice Council, examining the forthcoming pre-action protocol dealing with residential tenants of social landlords facing court action due to rent arrears;
- * **Simon Cribbens**, Greater London Authority, talking about possession prevention in the context of the GLA's housing advice strategy for London;
- * **Kylie Kilgour**, Legal Services Commission CLS policy manager, explaining the role of the Community Legal Service in developing a range of approaches to tackling advice need, including preventative strategies such as that represented by the PPP;

If you would like to either discuss the project or book a place at the conference, please contact Southwark Law Centre on 020 7732 2008 or at general@southwarklawcentre.org.uk

Rent Arrears

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued good practice guidance on the management of rent arrears. Research conducted by Glasgow University found that possession actions by social landlords had more than doubled in the decade to 2003. The vast majority were triggered by rent arrears. Vulnerable clients are thought particularly liable to accumulate arrears. The research also confirmed the view that the increased complexity of the Housing Benefit system contributed to the increase in the incidence of rent arrears.

The guidance aims to improve the management of rent arrears. It takes the view that possession action and evictions by social landlords should only be used as a last resort.

Romano & Samari Cases

Much use has been made of the Romano & Samari cases in defending clients in possession proceedings where rent arrears - the ground on which possession was being sought - have been at least in part attributable to the effects of a disability.

Those cases said that where the tenancy breach is attributable to the effects of a disability then any detrimental action from the landlord, from the serving of a notice to a summons for possession is an act of discrimination and unlawful.

A Law Centre has reported that it has not had to take any case to full trial as in almost every case the disability in question has been long term depression. The difficulty has been in obtaining authoritative medical evidence that the arrears were entirely attributable to the depression rather than that disability being merely a factor - the tenant's sympathetic G.P.'s opinion not being considered authoritative enough. That difficulty has meant that lawyers have been willing to accept a compromise solution rather than seek the withdrawal of the application for possession and it has happily meant (so far) that the landlord has been reluctantly willing to do so for fear that word might get around the estates that being depressed gives carte blanche to not paying rent.

As a rule this tactic has been used as a last resort where the tenant enjoys no security such as 'temporary' and Introductory tenants as there is usually a compromise available for secure or for assured tenants where 'reasonableness' is available as an argument.

Housing Disrepair

The Select Committee on Constitutional Affairs reported on small claims limits for personal injury and housing disrepair at the end of last year. The Committee considered the usefulness of representation. While there was a great deal of support for clients being properly informed and advised before they came to court, there was less support for representation. The Minister had said in oral evidence:

'Our concern is to make sure that the quality of advice that people get at the beginning, not only

through the courts, a lot of people go to Citizen Advice Bureaux, to Law Centres, to other methods support, is as good as it can be.'

The Committee concluded that the Small Claims limits for personal injury and housing disrepair cases were in need of reconsideration. They considered '*Claims for personal injuries which are worth less than £2,500 could be considered under the small claims system without unduly disadvantaging claimants. In order to ensure consistency of approach, it would be sensible if the limit for housing disrepair was raised by the same amount. When considering the housing disrepair limit, however, it will be essential to ensure that vulnerable tenants are not unduly disadvantaged by any change. Any such disadvantage in both types of case could be ameliorated by better provision of advice and support before the parties attended court.*'

Welfare Rights News

Redefining the Welfare State

On 26th January, the Department for Work and Pensions published their long awaited Green Paper, 'A new deal for welfare: empowering people to work'. When launching the paper, the Minister, John Hutton said that the government plans to redefine the role of the welfare state, '*The future emphasis will be on what people can do, not what they cannot.*' Taken from the DWP press release changes include:

Incapacity Benefit

- * introducing a new gateway to benefits for people with illness and disabilities;
- * changing rules for JSA and increase contact with lone parents to address the flow of people from other benefits to incapacity benefits;
- * revising the medical assessment (Personal Capability Assessment) focusing upon ability and support needs rather than incapacity, completed within 12 weeks in the majority of cases;
- * introducing mandatory work focused interviews supported by a mandatory action plan of return to work activity for new and existing claimants;

- * introducing a new Employment and Support Allowance paid to eligible claimants, with an enhanced employment support component for the majority of claimants who will be undertaking mandatory Work Focused Interviews and later activity and an enhanced support component for those individuals who are unable to engage in any activity because of the severity of their condition;
- * providing in work support to ensure people continue working - with a return to Work Credit to ensure people really are better off in work;
- * simplifying Statutory Sick Pay to enable employers to better manage sickness and to address the flow of people from SSP to incapacity benefits;
- * taking steps to increase their awareness of the opportunities we offer, for example through providing information at medical examination centres when claimants attend a review.

Lone Parents

- * piloting a new Work Related Activity Premium for Lone Parents on IS whose youngest child is aged at least 11 (and consulting on a younger age);
- * increasing the frequency of Work Focused Interviews from once a year (now) to quarterly for those with a youngest child aged at least 11 to support work related activity;
- * increasing the frequency of Work Focused Interviews for all lone parents who have been on benefit for at least a year (and who are not already required to have them more frequently) to every 6 months from annually now;
- * piloting additional Work Focused Interviews in the first year of a claim to Income Support;
- * working with employers to develop work taster programmes for lone parents; exploring new ways of increasing the support that Jobcentre Plus can give to lone parents who are moving into, or who are already in work.

Older People

- * aligning employment support for those long-term unemployed aged 50-59 with those in their 30s and 40s;
- * improving back to work support for jobseekers over 50 and their partners;
- * piloting providing information to help people to make decisions about work, training and retirement;
- * working with employers to extend flexible working arrangements.

Housing Benefit

- * rolling out an adjusted version of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to the deregulated private rented sector.

Some of the many concerns about the proposals have been expressed by the Child Poverty Action Group. They say,

"CPAG is extremely concerned that those who are unable to comply will find themselves on reduced benefits, at levels which put their children at an even greater risk of poverty. Cuts in benefits are not the right way forward for already disadvantaged families.

"For those who can work the roll-out of Pathways to Work must be adequately funded. We are pleased that the Government recognises the need to invest substantially to support people back to work. However, based on the cost of the pilots, CPAG estimates that the government will have to find at least £500 million to make their reforms work. The Secretary of State has so far promised £360 million, but we do not yet know where this is coming from.

"Increasing employment should help to fulfill the Government's pledge to end child poverty, but Ministers must remember that work is not a guaranteed route out of poverty. Disabled people still face discrimination in the labour market and without the right training and support they will simply end up in poor quality, low paid jobs."

Tax Credits

Giving evidence to a Commons Treasury Committee Inquiry this month, Dawn Primarola MP announced extra help for families who have been suffering from falls in income as a result of inland revenue claiming back overpayments.

From **13th February 2006** there has been an extension of the offer of additional payments to people facing hardship where their reduction in payments is a result of an income rise of over £2,500. From April, additional payments will be more generous in line with the new limits that will take effect from November 2006. HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) will be publishing a new code of practice on overpayments in April and a 'major software release to enable the issuing of new award notices' is also planned for April. HMCR is looking at whether an Adjudicator could provide fast-track independent reviews of decisions made to recover overpayments in disputed cases.

Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit

Regulations were laid before Parliament in February to improve support for 16 to 19 year olds. The regulations enable Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit to be paid to families of 16-19 year olds on unwaged work-based training programmes. They will also be payable beyond a young person's 19th birthday until they either finish their education or training or they reach the age of 20.

Child Support Agency

John Hutton, Minister at the Department for Work and Pension announced a radical redesign of child support. This will be undertaken by Sir David Henshaw, the out-going chief executive of Liverpool City Council who will publish an Operational Improvement Plan by the summer.

£120m is to be invested in the CSA to clear the backlog of cases, and enforce payments from defaulting parents. Credit reference agencies are to be used and there will be greater use of orders to deduct maintenance payments from wages. The CSA says that the work of the (privately run) debt collectors will be monitored to ensure that contractual obligations are met and that safeguards will be put in place to protect client confidentiality. It is said that plans

for sanctions such as electronic tagging and community service orders to penalise parents who refuse to comply have been put on hold.

It is well known that the CSA has experienced massive problems with their computer system. It has recently reported that the system will not work fully for another two years. The chief executive of the CSA, Stephen Geraghty told the Work and Pensions Committee that it was not realistic to pull out of their contract with EDS before the end of the contract in 2010. At the moment there are 200 defects with the current computer system.

Funding News

Lottery Funding

Great news for the five Law Centres who received in total over £800,000 in the last funding round.

Based on a pilot, **Chesterfield Law Centre** received funds for a project aiming to support BME families suffering racial harassment in Chesterfield, Bolsover and N.E. Derbyshire. It will establish both a formal monitoring network and support network in partnership with eight BME organisations. **Enfield Law Centre** was awarded funds for a project to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Law Centre and develop its immigration work. The Centre's primary activities include a weekly evening advice service, legal representation in the courts and specialist casework services. In conjunction with other agencies it also undertakes substance mis-use outreach work, debt advice and legal training for local voluntary organisations.

Lambeth Law Centre based in and serving Lambeth, received funding for training in London. The project has two elements: The appointment of a Law Centre Director, responsible for developing the organisation's capacity to deliver increased frontline services to clients and will also oversee the move to new premises to provide a more suitable base to deliver client services; and the appointment of the two new posts within the London Discrimination Unit to provide training in Discrimination Law for other Law Centres across

London, based on experience gained from a previous grant. **Paddington Law Centre** received funds to improve the advice and assistance available to refugees as they gain 'settled' status. The project also aims to promote knowledge and understanding of immigration issues among BME community groups. Finally, **Sheffield Law Centre** now has additional funds to extend the opening hours of their telephone advice line and reception area operated by volunteers. New publicity leaflets and briefing materials are also to be produced and new links with community groups will be established.

CRE Getting Results

The Commission for Racial Equality has awarded grants totally over £300,000 to seven Law Centres under their 2006/07 funding round. Congratulations to **Avon & Bristol Law Centre, Bradford Law Centre, Coventry Law Centre, Lambeth Law Centre, Liverpool 8 Law Centre, Newcastle Law Centre** and **North Kensington Law Centre**.

Lloyds TSB Foundation

Three Law Centres have also been successful in being awarded funds from Lloyds TSB's in their recent round. These were **Isle of Wight Law Centre** who received funds for the cost of running an advocate court desk, **Oldham Law Centre** who received funds for the salary of a trainee solicitor and **Vauxhall Law and Information Centre** who were awarded funds to help with general running costs as well as a contribution to the administrator's salary. If you visit the Lloyds TSB website you will find a list of all the successful bids, which might inspire !

Congratulations to all Law Centres

Lloyds TSB have a new grant making plan for 2006 which aims to challenge disadvantage and discrimination and enable people to play a fuller role in the communities. Their funding priorities are :

- * To support charities working with people from black and minority ethnic communities to enable them to play a fuller role in their communities. Lloyds will fund work that enables people to have better access to information and services, including health, housing and employment.

- * To support charities working with refugees and asylum seekers to enable them to play a fuller role in their communities. Lloyds will fund work that tackles isolation and enables people to have better access to information and services including health, housing, employment, community services and legal advice.
- * To support charities working with older people.

Lloyds TSB give grants for one, two or very exceptionally three years. They support includes direct service provision, infrastructure support and collaborative projects.

For advice about local and regional funding, contact the appropriate regional office. Details of their offices and the application process are on their website: lloydtsbfoundation.org.uk or you can call their Central Office on 0870 411 1223.

Local Area Agreements

From April 2006 those areas with a Local Government Agreement will receive a single stream of funding to allocate according to local priorities. The money will come from various Home Office and ODPM area based funding streams and will be structured around children and young people, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities and older people and economic development and enterprise. Local Strategic Partnerships will lay down in a Local Area Agreement how the funding is to be spent in the community. These agreements will be rolled out across England by 2007.

From April 2006 more local authorities will be introducing Local Area Agreements in the third round of the scheme. Around a quarter of local authorities who fund Law Centres are involved. *Best to find out if your Authority is one of them.* It is going to be increasingly important to get your services on to LSP agendas.

Cabinet Minister, David Miliband speaking at the NCVO conference this month outlined the latest government thinking on sharing power. He said:

- * When authorities develop their vision for their area through their Sustainable Community Strategies, they need to be open to the views and perspective of third sector organisation.
- * When local authorities campaign for three year funding allocations to support strategic thinking, local government must similarly offer *longer term contracts* to voluntary sector providers.
- * When local government commissions services, it should develop contracts that set out the outcomes to be delivered, rather than the detailed outputs.

Shorts

ASBOs

Asbo Concern are asking for cases which show how asbos have been abused or used inappropriately so that they can be included in their new campaign dossier.

The Government has now agreed to change the rules so that asbos on young people (currently running at around 43%) can be reviewed after one year. More information on their website: asboconcern.org.uk

A new duty under the Disability Discrimination Act could help prevent young people with disabilities and mental health problems being inappropriately given Asbos. At a community care conference this month, Sue Christoforou, policy officer at MIND, said that the new requirement for public bodies to take account of people's disabilities in the way they operated would have a significant impact on how asbos were used.

The Government's Together We Can initiative in it's spring edition of 'We Can!' spoke about Community Justice, 'part of the Government's agenda to tackle anti-social behaviour and the crime associated with it. Community justice aims to bring the justice system and the community together - not only to reduce crime but also to build confidence.' There are two Community Justice Centres based in North Liverpool and Salford.

Respect

The Government launched its 'Respect' Action Plan in January. The Prime Minister said the proposals will 'deter bad behaviour and invest in good behaviour'. £28 million of new funding is to be spent on establishing a National Parenting Agency, as well as tougher penalties to deal with 'problem families' and more activities for young people. New powers being considered are the ability to cut housing benefit to households who are evicted for anti-social behaviour and refuse help, 'Face the People' community meetings and a 'Respect Standard' for housing management to ensure all social landlords tackle 'bad behaviour and promote good behaviour.' By September 2007, the government hopes to roll out nationally Secondary Schools Behaviour and Truancy Partnerships to 'improve behaviour' and tackle persistent truancy.

The implementation of the plan is being led by a Respect Taskforce in the Home Office and overseen by a cross departmental steering group. It is headed by Louise Casey as the Government Co-ordinator of Respect. It can be accessed via: homeoffice.gov.uk/respect.

Child Poverty

An independent commission has been launched by the Association of London Government to identify ways to reduce child poverty in London. Around the country 28% of children live in poverty. In Inner London the rate is 51% and in Outer London, 34%.

CPAG published figures in February showing that benefit levels leave many families below the poverty line. From April 2006, for a couple with two children, benefit levels are 33% per week less than the poverty line.

Race and Religious Hatred Bill

MPs voted against the Government last month. MPs voted by 288 to 278 in favour of keeping a Lords amendment to restrict the office of inciting religious hatred to threatening words and behaviour and by 283 to 282 voted to ensure that discussion, criticism, insult, abuse and ridicule, belief or religious practice would not be an offence. The Home Secretary said that he would accept the Bill as it stands.

Inquests

The Department for Constitutional Affairs has announced that there will be new laws to strengthen the role of coroners and give families a legal standing in the system, DCA Minister, Harriet Harman QC said that the Government will '*give families a right to ask the coroner for a "second opinion" on a death certificate and the right to challenge coroners' rulings.*' A new complaints system will also be established.

A draft Coroner Reform Bill will be published in April.

National Occupational Standards

The final suite of National Occupation Standards for the Legal Advice Sector are nearing completion and drafts have now been sent to the UK Coordinating Group. The LCF has supported the submission and will keep Law Centres up to date with progress. Visit: NOS4Advice.org.uk for more information about NOS.

New Standards for trustees and management committees have also been approved by UKCG and can be found at : voluntarysectorskills.org.uk.

Four Units are the website and support materials are currently being written and will be available on the website shortly. Training to help trustees and organisations implement the NOS - contact for details is Pat Jones at the Governance Hub: pjgovernancehub@trustnetworks.org.uk.

If you would like to know more about Hubs, a conference is being held in Birmingham on 28th March. The six national hubs of expertise for the voluntary sector are meeting nationally to inform and advise people about their work. Information from NCVO: ncvo-vol.org.uk.

SORP

Charities with income or expenditure over £100,000, have to comply with SORP. The revised Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and reporting for charities (SORP 2005) was issued on 4 March 2005 and is in effect for financial periods beginning on or after 1 April 2005.

The main change is an increased emphasis on the charity's objectives and activities. The trustees' Annual Report has to report on activities and performance against the charity's objectives, and the statement of financial activities (SoFA) must give greater emphasis to the charity's activities, services, programmes and projects. The SORP contains new accounting guidance on matters such as new financial reporting standards on issues such as accounting for retirement benefits (FRS17), dealing with recalculations of gift aid from trading subsidiaries after the end of the financial year (FRS21), and consolidated group accounts (FRS2).

The new SORP includes tables and pro formas to help prepare the accounts, and includes new terminology and definitions--including "governance costs" instead of management and administration costs, and "donated services and facilities" instead of intangible assets.

The **SoFA** (statement of financial activities) involves an analysis of resources expended based on three areas of activity: charitable, generating funds and governance. Incoming resources are analysed as funds from charitable activity or generated funds. Support costs will no longer be shown as a separate category, but will be allocated to the activity that they support. Information about volunteers should be shown in the annual report, rather than in the SoFA.

Annual Reports must include new disclosures, including the name of the chief executive or senior staff, induction and training provided for new trustees and principal funding sources. SORP recommends that the Report is in seven sections: reference and administrative details; structure, governance and management; objectives and activities; achievements and performance; financial review; and plans for future periods.

Kingston Smith accountants have produced what they call a **tool kit** for reporting achievements and performance. This is basically a strategic planning and reporting guide and demystifies this aspect of SORP reporting.

Visit: kingstonsmith.co.uk.

Although the SORP is a statement of recommended practice, it is given force of law by the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2005 which are at : opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20050572.htm.

The SORP and related guidance are at : charitycommission.gov.uk/investigations/sorp

Mediation Services

NCVO - the National Council for Voluntary Organisations - together with the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution has launched a new mediation scheme for voluntary organisations experiencing disputes with staff or suppliers. A free video to accompany the scheme is available at ncvo-vol.org.uk or cedr.co.uk.

Conferences

Human Rights: Transforming Services ? Conference being held on 27th March at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London.

The Conference has been organised by the British Institute of Human Rights, the Disability Rights Commission, Doughty Street Chambers, Leigh Day and Co. and the Social Care Institute for Excellence. Speakers include The Honourable Mr Justice Munby, Jane Cambell, Francesca Klug and David Brindle from the Guardian. £190 plus VAT. Information on line at probriefings.co.uk/hrts2006 or telephone 01920 487 672 or text phone 020 7089 6893.

Working with change, meeting the challenge: an asylum policy and legislation update Conference organised by the Refugee Council with the support of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association.

It takes place on 9th March in London and on the 23rd March in Birmingham. Speakers include the Minister, Tony McNulty MP and Mark Henderson from Doughty Street Chambers. The supported rate is £100 for voluntary organisations. The programme for both conferences can be downloaded from the Refugee Council's website: refugeecouncil.org.uk or call 020 7346 6739.

Workplace Conference Stonewall has organised a conference on 16th March at the QEII Centre in London. The theme this year is, 'Setting the standard: reaping the rewards of a gay-friendly workplace'.

Information on 020 7881 9465 or by email@workplace@stonewall.org.uk.

Lectures

Imran Khan is speaking at lunchtime lecture on Human Rights and Islamophobia on 9th March. It starts at 1.00 and is free and takes place at the Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House on the Strand in London. Information from the British Institute of Human Rights at: bihr.org.

A further lecture takes place on 27th March on Human rights: Transforming services? This takes place at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre.

Training

CLS Support National Training Programme 2006 Seven courses have been organised by CLS Support this year starting in March and taking place in Birmingham, London, Manchester, Newcastle and York.

Each course is accredited by the Law Society and attracts 4.5 CPD points.

- Course 1: Casework Under Contract: the Essentials
- Course 2: The Foundations of Supervision: an Introduction to File Review, Supervision and Appraisal
- Course 3: The Effective Supervisor
- Course 4: Making Every Minute Count: Claiming Time for Contract Work
- Course 5: Sufficient Benefit Test: Principles and Practice
- Course 6: Eligibility: Principles and Practice
- Course 7: The Not-for-Profit Audit Process: Preparation and Response.

Booking forms are on the ASA (Advice Services Alliance) website: asauk.org.uk.

Supervision Skills in Civil Cases One of Legal Action Group's training courses taking place on 7th June.

If you book before the 31st March, you get a 15% reduction making it £157.25 for the day. A new course this spring is Mental Health Review Tribunals Law and Advocacy. Information on their website : lag.org.uk. Telephone: 020 7833 2931.

Project Risk Management New course provided by The Centre for Strategy and Communication on 14th March. One of many courses on management provided by the-centre this spring. £185 plus VAT. Visit their website for more information: the-centre.org.uk. Telephone: 020 7490 3030.

Media Coverage The Law Society's press office is running a series of seminars to help solicitors use the media. The next takes place on 6th April in Manchester. Information from the Law Society site: lawsociety.org.uk/newsandevents

Introduction to Training One of three new courses on training provided by the Directory of Social Change. Courses take place in London and Manchester and cost £190 for two days if your turnover is less than £500,000.

Other new courses include, Managing Conflict to Maximise Performance and two on presentation skills. Telephone: 08450 77 77 07 or visit their website: dsc.org.uk.

Writing better fundraising applications One day course taking place on 17th March, 27th April and 9th June. It costs £78 if you have more than 6 workers. This is one of a range of management, staff and organisation development training courses provided by London Voluntary Service Council. Information on 020 7700 8113.

Implementing SORP 2005 Training provided by Sayer Vincent. It takes place on 26th April and lasts half a day. This provides an overview of the changes to both the trustees' annual report and the financial statements. For more information contact Paul Stirrat on 020 7841 6360 or email on svinfo@sayervincent.co.uk. For other courses visit their website: sayervincent.co.uk. See *Shorts*

London Discrimination Unit Training The Unit based at Lambeth Law Centres offers free legal representation to anyone who lives or works in the Greater London region.

Books

Guides to Local Trusts Six new guides published by the Directory of Social Change. They include Greater London, the Midlands, North of England, South of England and Wales. Cost: £29.95.

DSC's new publications leaflet also includes an updated Directory of NCVO Approved Consultants published by CAF and costing £15.00. More news on their website: dsc.org.uk.

Paying for Care Handbook 5th edition published by the Child Poverty Action Group. This is a guide to services, charges and welfare benefits for adults in need of care in the community or in care homes. £18.50 plus £3.99 p&p. Visit cpag.org.uk for further information and about this and CPAG's other publications.

Child Support Handbook 13th edition published by CPAG for £21.50 plus £3.99 p&p. Books can be ordered direct by calling 020 7837 7979 or email queries to: bookorders@cpag.org.uk.

Employment Law Handbook Law Society publication published in January. This 3rd edition costs £49.95 and has been written by Daniel Barnett and Henry Scrope. This new edition includes for the first time a dedicated website providing updated links to web-based resources. Visit: employmentlawhandbook.co.uk for further information.

Just About Managing ? Effective management for voluntary organisations and community groups. The 4th edition of Sandy Adirondack's guide was published in January. New chapters include managing risk and managing partnerships. £25 plus 10% p&p.

You can order by going to her website: sandy-a.co.uk/bookserv

Leaflets

Your Rights a Work A new leaflet from the Greater Manchester Pay and Employment Rights Advice Service (previously known as Greater Manchester Low Pay Unit). The leaflet provides a useful check list of the length of service needed for employees to qualify for their statutory rights.

Visit: gmemploymentrights.org.uk.

Do I need a lawyer ? What Advice and Legal Services can do for you Leaflet published by Advicenow recently. It provides useful basic information about solicitors and advice agencies and paying for legal help. It can be downloaded from : advicenow.org.uk/gethelp.

How to recognise a Scam A leaflet published by the Office of Fair Trading. It advises that if people have been a victim of a scam, they should report it to Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06. People can also visit: consumerdirect.gov.uk.

New laws for resolving disputes - It's as simple as 123 The DTI has published a revised leaflet on resolving disputes. Information at: dti.gov.uk/resolvingdisputes.

Religious Discrimination at Work The DTI and the Muslim Council of Britain have published this new leaflet. The Muslim Council of Britain have also produced a range of resources form employers and employees including a Good Practice Guide, Training DVD and an Imam's Pack. Copies can be obtained by calling them on 020 8432 0585/6. Their website is at: mcb.org.uk.

Websites

Money Claim Online is one of the Courts Service's website for claimants and defendants. It provides forms and guidance and is designed for use by solicitors as well. The site can be found at : moneyclaim.gov.uk. The service is supported by a Customer Help Desk.

The **Equal Opportunities Commission** has a separate website for legal advisers and representatives who are conducting claims on behalf of applicants in sex discrimination and equal pay cases. The site is regularly updated and includes summaries of major cases,

suggestions for standard letters, information on compensation as well as links and codes of practice.

The EOC welcome feed back on their new site that you can visit at: eoc-law.org.uk.

National Refugee Integration Forum has a website: nrif.org.uk established by the Home Office. This new website provides information for people working with refugee children. The Home Office hopes to expand the website during 2006 to cover a range of issues including accommodation, community safety, employment and health.

Worksmart is a website for migrant workers working in the UK. It includes information about how to register to work, information on National Insurance and income tax, rights at work and minimum pay.

A leaflet, 'Working in the UK: Your Rights' can be downloaded from their website: worksmart.org.uk. The TUC Migrant Workers project can be contacted at: ctp@tuc.org.uk.

Planning Advisory Service The new website by PAS includes examples of good practice and provides information on the PAS range of tools and services. Their address is: pas.gov.uk.

ADRnow has three new features: a site search box, a FAQ page and ADR Research. Visit: adrnow.org.uk for more details. The latest briefing from Advicenow came out in January.

Reports

Advice Agencies, Advisors and their Clients: Perceptions of Quality Research carried out by Jenny Johnstone and James Marson from the University Sheffield. The research was published in December 2005 by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

An exploration of factors affecting the successful dispersal of asylum seekers Report 50/05 published by the Home Office. This report found that there was widespread agreement that information to asylum seekers, before and after dispersal, was insufficient.

Immigration, social cohesion and social capital - What are the links? Don Flynn, Tauhid Pasha and Rhian Beynon from JCWI are some of the authors of this study carried out for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Improving Opportunities, Strengthening Society - The Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion The report and other related publications can be found on the Home Office website: homeoffice.gov.uk.

A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending Inequalities for Older People The latest report from the Social Exclusion Unit published on 26th January. The report says that the DWP will pilot the Sure Start for older people approach, 'Link-Age Plus' programme, starting this spring.

The paper is available on their website: socialexclusion.gov.uk.

Local Authorities and Gypsies and Travellers: Guide to Responsibilities and Powers published by the Gypsy and Travellers Unit at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The ODPM website: odpm.gov.uk/gypsysites includes a Guide to effective use of Enforcement Powers Part 1 and Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments: Draft Practice Guides. All were published on 2nd February 2006.

The Future of Mental Health: A Vision for 2015 was published jointly by the Association of Directors of Social Services, the Local Government Association, the NHS Confederation and the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health. It is available on the new SCMC website: scmh.org.uk.

Consultations

Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their Future Consultation paper from the office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Available on odpm.gov.uk. Closing date: 3rd March.

Mental Capacity Act The Act received Royal Assent last April and the DCA is working with the Department of Health to implement the Act in April 2007.

The DCA are now consulting on the forms and guidance for the new Lasting Powers of Attorney. The closing date for comments is 14th April and the papers can be found under consultations on the DOH website : dh.gov.uk/Consultations.

White Paper published by the Department of Health '**Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services** published in January. No mention it seems of the value of people getting advice, but the role of advice in preventing ill health is likely to be an issue this year.

Jobs

North Kensington Law Centre

Housing Caseworker (Locum)

Salary £30,483 (point 33 inclusive of LW and 8% pension)

To provide advice, assistance and representation for tenants in all areas of housing law including cover at housing duty schemes. You should have at least have at least two years recent full-time equivalent casework experience in all aspects of housing law and hold LSC supervisor status.

This is intended to be a six month locum post. It is intended that the period will run from 3 April-30 September 2006.

Candidates should note the posts are largely self-servicing and they should have excellent typing and word processing skills.

For an application pack for any of the above posts please telephone 0208 969 7473 or write to our address below or alternatively you can download the application pack from our website at www.nklc.co.uk

Closing Date: Monday 20th March 2006 12 noon

Completed applications should be returned to:

Sean Canning
North Kensington Law Centre
74 Golborne Road
London W10 5PS
Email: info@nklc.co.uk

Hillingdon Law Centre

Employment Advisor

(6 months fixed term contract) 4 days - 28 hours per week. £22,571 including OLW.

You will be an experienced employment solicitor/advisor, able to provide specialist Employment advice, on all aspects of employment law, including representation at court tribunals and hearings. Applicants must meet the standards for a casework supervisor in the category of Employment Law as set out in the Legal Services Commission Quality Mark.

Closing Date: 17th March 2006

Hillingdon Law Centre, 12 Harold Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 4QW.

E-mail: jlepoittevin@hillingdonlawcentre.co.uk

Tel: 020 8561 9400 or 020 8606 6722

Gloucester Law Centre

Locum Solicitor/Advice Worker

35 hours per week. Actual salary negotiable depending upon experience

We require a Locum Solicitor/Advice Worker in one or more of the following areas of law : Housing, Employment, Immigration and Nationality. The successful applicant will be required to meet the Community Legal Service's self-supervising standards and be able to demonstrate a minimum of 1 year's casework experience. Further details from Adrian Yelland on 01452 835384 or Bill Booth on 01452 835385 or e-mail admin@gloucesterlawcentre.co.uk.

Gloucester Law Centre, 75-81 Eastgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1PN. Tel: 01452 835384

E-mail: admin@gloucesterlawcentre.co.uk

North Manchester Law Centre

Immigration caseworker/ Solicitor

At least 2 years immigration and asylum casework experience required. LSC level 2 preferred, (level 1 considered).

Application deadline: Friday 10th March 2006

Salary: £25,437/£26,157 p.a. (depending on qualifications and experience)

35 hour week, flexi-time scheme in operation.

Final salary pension scheme and 30 days holiday. Job Sharers welcome.

North Manchester Law Centre on 0161 205 903.

Email: info@nmlc.org.uk.

SORBAEE Project Launch

Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief & Age Employment Equality

This project aims to increase the capacity of Law Centres to advise and raise awareness of Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief & Age Employment Equality legislation.

Two project launches are being planned - one in London and one in Manchester.

The launches will:

- introduce the SORBAEE project
- introduce the plans for the new Commission of Equality and Human Rights
- include speakers from Law Centres who have already undertaken SORB work
- give information about other free employment legal training that may soon be available to Law Centres
 - give Law Centres a chance to meet and network
 - establish the Steering Group for the SORBAEE project

The London launch is planned for Wednesday 29 March, 12pm - 2.30pm and the Manchester launch is planned for Friday 31 March, 12pm - 2.30pm

Please note the date of the launch you would like to attend in your diary. An invitation with full details will be sent to all Law Centres shortly.

For information about the project in the meantime please contact:

Savita Narain, SORB Project Manager,

Law Centres Federation

18-19 Warren Street, London W1T 5LR

Tel: 020 7121 3320

Email: Savita@lawcentres.org.uk

Fax: 020 7387 8368

LCF Staff

Noeleen Adams, London Unit Manager, **Victor Adetiba**, Finance Worker (P/T), **Lynn Evans**, Policy Manager, **Steve Hynes**, Director, **Metin Kemal**, Regional Development Manager, **Julian Lewis**, LawWorks Project Manager, **Savita Narain**, SORB Project Manager, **Minaxi Panchal**, London Training and Organisational Development, **Stella Russell**, Regional Development, **Emma Reimer**, Administrator. Members of staff can be contacted by email by using their first name followed by @lawcentres.org.uk

Please let us know if you have news about your Law Centre:

Staff Changes • New Initiatives • New Funding • Case Successes • Meetings and AGMs

The Law Centres Federation is funded by the Association of London Government, Big Lottery Fund and the Legal Services Commission. We are also very grateful to all our supporters: AON Insurance, Allen & Overy, Independent Lawyer, LexisNexis Butterworths, Legal Action Group, Matrix Chambers and Mayer Brown Rowe & Maw.