

Equality, Human Rights & Law Centres



LAW CENTRES FEDERATION

Annual Report 2003/04



“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places close to home... Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity, without discrimination.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

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Reita Clarke, LCF Chair

‘From its inception the Law Centre’s movement has believed that the most effective use of the law to fight poverty and social exclusion is through a combination of casework and strategic work...’

Introduction

by Reita Clarke MBE Chair of the Law Centres Federation

At our conference last year LCF celebrated 30 years as the national organisation for Law Centres. There have been many changes in British society over these years which are reflected in the work of Law Centres and the problems our clients and communities face. However the essential role of Law Centres has remained the same - to provide access to justice to impoverished people, or to use the contemporary term, “socially excluded communities”.

With thoughts of our thirtieth anniversary in mind it was very pleasing this year that Patrick Lefevre and Jamie Ritchie, two lawyers with over 60 years service to Brent Community Law Centre between them, won “Team of the Year Award” in the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards. It was fantastic also that Finola O’Neill of Wandsworth and Merton Law Centre won the “Social and Welfare Lawyer of the Year” category in the same awards. These awards were recognition not only of these individuals’ own contributions, but also reflect well on the Law Centre movement as a whole.

I am proud to say that my involvement with the Law Centres and LCF has

spanned 15 years. I cannot recall a time in those 15 years when LCF has been stronger than it is today. Significant increases in our grants from the Legal Services Commission (LSC) and Association of London Government over the last couple of years, combined with being awarded this year’s Community Fund Grant has considerably strengthened our ability to establish new Law Centres and support existing ones.

All of the Law Centres hold specialist level LSC Quality Marks and receive contract funding from the LSC. Our commitment to providing a quality service with legally qualified and experienced staff makes the network of Law Centres unique. It is a network that must be preserved and expanded so that all communities can benefit from the professional community-based service Law Centres provide.

While the resources from the LSC have undoubtedly expanded Law Centre’s capacity to undertake specialist casework, it has led to tensions, not least the ability of Law Centres to engage in strategic work. From its inception the Law Centre’s movement has believed that the most effective use of the law to fight poverty



and social exclusion is through a combination of casework and strategic work, such as campaigning on law reform and legal education.

LCF will therefore continue to argue at a national level for the resources to realise our vision of a national network of Law Centres to undertake such work.

In order to win the argument on funding the Executive Committee believes we must be more effective in telling the stories of our clients and how the law has an impact upon them. We have therefore prioritised the development of more effective communications between LCF and Law Centres and also seek to enhance Law Centres’ ability to publicise their work. Over the next year, with a general election likely, we must develop a higher media profile for Law Centres and their clients. The message we must publicise is that Law Centres – representing independent, professional, community-led legal services - are necessary to ensure access to justice in every community.

A: The Independent Lawyer and Legal Aid Practitioners Group Legal Aid Lawyers of the Year Awards. Patrick Lefevre and Jamie Ritchie being presented with their award for “Team of the Year” by Cherie Booth QC at the Award Ceremony on 23rd June 2004. Patrick and Jamie work at Brent Community Law Centre

B: Finola O’Neill received an award for “Social and Welfare Lawyer of the Year” at the Independent Lawyer and Legal Aid Practitioners Group Awards Ceremony on 23rd June 2004. Finola works at Wandsworth and Merton Law Centre

‘A vital part of the process to sustain and expand existing Law Centres is to help them with management and other support.’



Steve Hynes, LCF Director

Director's Report

In the summer the Department for Constitutional Affairs was able to confirm the refunding of the LawWorks project. This marked the last piece in LCF's current funding jigsaw.

In addition to the grant for the LawWorks project, crucial developments this year have been the securing of the National Lottery Community Fund grant for regional development and the creation by the Executive Committee of a new post in the Policy and Campaigning department. The Community Fund grant will be vital to ensure both the continuation of the expansion strategy and to provide support to existing Law Centres. The new post in the Policy and Campaigning Department, paid for with Law Centre subscriptions, will help boost the public profile of Law Centres and highlight the legal problems facing our clients.

The LCF head office functions and staff are now divided into four departments, the Directorate, the Policy and Campaigning Unit, the London Unit, and the English Regional Unit. Over the next year we will be looking to expand further our services to Law Centres as well as building on our policy and campaigning work. If we can be of assistance please do not hesitate to contact us at our head office on the numbers provided at the back of this report.

New Law Centres

As well as the head office staff, LCF employed staff in Surrey, Trafford, Stockport and Bury Law Centres. These Law Centres were established and directly managed by LCF before being transferred to local management committees in the course of the last year. Kirklees Law Centre will hopefully follow next year, as we are currently in the process of recruiting staff for this Law Centre.

Managing the development of the directly managed Law Centres has not been without its problems, but LCF has built-up valuable experience in establishing and running these new services. We believe that it will continue to prove a useful model for the continued expansion of the numbers of Law Centres.

Enfield Law Centre opened its doors to the public this year. This is a Law Centre which developed along traditional lines with a group of local people or "steering committee" leading the initiative assisted by Noeleen Adams, London Unit Manager. In the regional development section to this report Metin Kemal, Regional Development Manager, reports that it is hoped that at least two further Law Centres will be established over the next year in this way.

Support to existing Law Centres

Unfortunately, LCF's history has been punctuated by the closure of Law Centres. However in recent years LCF has been successful in assisting those Law Centres under threat of closure to remain open. This has involved LCF liaising with Regional Legal Service Commission offices and local government to argue the case to keep Law Centre services running.

The current situation with Leicester Law Centre demonstrates that there is no room for complacency as regards the threat to Law Centres. The nub of the problem in Leicester is that the local council has decided to make massive cuts to the voluntary advice sector, partly to make an overall budget saving, but also to shift resources into lower level advice services at the expense of specialist casework services. This exemplifies the worrying emerging trend to move to "advice only" services and also illustrates why a primary role of LCF is to continually make the case for the type of specialist services Law Centres provide.

A vital part of the process to sustain and expand existing Law Centres is to help them with management and other support. For example, during the year the London Unit has assisted a number of Law Centres with funding applications and planning days, as well as helped co-ordinate the exchange of good management practice. LCF hopes to be able to expand such services particularly around information technology, funding searches and other infrastructure support to Law Centres. Such support is crucial to ensure the effectiveness and long-term survival of Law Centres. It also links to our vision of the future development of Law Centres as a national service.

Equalities, Human Rights and Law Centres

Law Centres and the Big Picture

With the relative success of LCF in recent years in developing new Law Centres and retaining the existing ones there could be a danger of a degree of optimism breaking out in the movement. However, Law Centres are all too aware of frustrations largely caused by policy makers with their eyes on a bigger picture in which the overall expansion of publicly funded legal services does not figure.

As Lynn Evans, Policy Manager, highlights in her policy report (see page 7) LCF this year gave evidence to the Parliamentary Inquiry into legal aid. We focused on the lack of availability of expert housing law resources in Northumberland and Kent. We also emphasised that many communities have never been served by the legal aid system for social welfare law. The Inquiry concluded that there were gaps in provision.

The LSC's response to these gaps has been to provide more telephone services such as CLS Direct and to look to non-legal solutions to problems to avoid expensive litigation. LCF broadly supports such initiatives as we have always taken the view that we are in the business of solving problems for clients rather than chasing the most profitable option.

LCF though does have serious concerns about the spread and development of specialist services and their independence. No other area of work illustrates this better than immigration and asylum law. Law Centres play an important part in providing expert services in this area of law. However, caseworkers are particularly frustrated by the limitations on the number of hours they can work on a case before referring it

to the LSC. Work on asylum cases is limited to five hours after which an extension has to be applied for. The extension application is often rejected which leads to the caseworker being further involved in time-consuming correspondence with the LSC. Changes such as these combined with a problematic accreditation system, are leading to precisely what we predicted would happen; good firms and other suppliers leaving the system.

Law Centres - Human Rights Centres

Law Centres are the local champions of human rights and equalities. Robustly independent, Law Centres are primarily focused on serving the needs of their clients and communities. For example, Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre have been in the forefront of the challenge brought under the Human Rights Act against the controversial section 55 of the Asylum and Immigration Act. In May the Court of Appeal ruled against the Government, which has led to the Home Office issuing guidance to the effect that asylum seekers should not be denied state support, apart from a few cases in which long-term residents apply for asylum as a tactic to prevent deportation.

Law Centres - Towards A National Service?

The future of Law Centres is inextricably linked to creating a human rights culture in which access to independent legal services like Law Centres provide the cutting edge to bring about change. Today however, more than 30 years since the first Law Centres were founded, our coverage across the country remains patchy. To ensure that all of the UK population has access to a Law Centre, existing Law Centres need to expand and new Law Centres must be created. LCF argues that the way to achieve this is through a strategic use of existing resources to increase the network of Law Centres.

Over the next year LCF will be looking to Government to help achieve a significant growth in Law Centre services by developing Law Centres appropriate to the needs of specific geographical areas and communities. This needs both the Government's acknowledgement of the importance of maintaining a system of independent legal advice services in social welfare law, as well as making difficult choices regarding the use of existing resources. Without though, a significant growth in the type of expert legal services Law Centres provide, provision of legal services to the socially excluded communities we serve are in danger of collapse.



C: On 27 and 28 May, representatives of the Law Centres Federation, the Department of Constitutional Affairs, the Legal Services Commission and the Irish Law Centres Network visited Belfast and Derry to compare notes and examine the model of strategic advice adopted by Law Centre (NI) as part of the two-tier voluntary advice sector in place in Northern Ireland. The first day, as well as talks with staff of the Law Centre, included a visit to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and a presentation by the Equality

Commission Northern Ireland. On the second day, Steve Hynes, Law Centres Federation Director, traveled to the Western Area Office of the Law Centre while his colleagues concluded with a visit to the East Belfast Independent Advice Centre. Photo by Lesley Doyle: At the Law Centres Federation meeting in Belfast, Law Centre director Les Allamby, Robert Gill, Department of Constitutional Affairs, Mike Whittal, Legal Services Commission and Michael Beggs, Law Centre Publications Department.

“All are equal before the law
and are entitled without any
discrimination to equal
protection of the law”

Article 7, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)



‘A series of major reviews by Government and the professions this year have shared a common concern about the success of the Community Legal Service and the future of legal aid – one that the Law Centres Federation too shares.’

Legal Aid ~ a year of reviews

The year started with the Law Society's recommendations in, "Protecting Rights and Tackling Social Exclusion". The paper was published following a thorough investigation into the current state of legal aid. Next the Government's Legal Aid Inquiry was carried out by the Constitutional Affairs Select Committee in January which has stimulated a further fundamental review of legal aid. The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) also employed consultants, Matrix Research and Consultancy, to review the Community Legal Service and Frontier Economics to provide a market analysis of legally aided services.

All the reviews recognise that legal aid and legal services are in crisis. Fewer people are being assisted and less people are attracted to working in the sector. A key recommendation was the ring fencing of civil and criminal legal aid budgets, which the LCF had lobbied for during the passage of the Access to Justice Act (1999). The Law Society, the Bar Council in their paper, "Getting Justice for the People: The Law as a Public Service," published in September, the Select Committee and Matrix all saw this as a key factor in the precarious availability of funding for social welfare law.

The LCF submitted numerous responses to these developments during the year highlighting our particular concerns. One overarching problem is that there is an increasing lack of specialists in social welfare law and the limitations in scope deny people access to justice, especially those needing tribunal representation. Early in 2004, the LCF conducted research on specialist housing lawyers availability in Kent and presented the findings to the Inquiry.

The LCF reported that, "In North Kent there was a significant shortage of suppliers in housing law and clients are being referred to solicitors either in London or Essex. This would involve a journey of two to three hours costing at least £12."

The reduction of services was reflected in the Legal Services Commission's (LSC) own figures that show that the number of housing contracts has fallen from 841 in April 2000 to 595 in December 2003.

The Government Inquiry referred to several research projects that indicate that unrepresented claimants in tribunal hearings are at a substantial disadvantage.

The Select Committee stated in conclusion, "It is not acceptable that in employment cases employees can be forced to represent themselves in circumstances where private employers are able to employ lawyers to represent them. If proceedings are to be fair, there needs to be equality of arms. Legal aid should not automatically be excluded from such tribunal hearings."

This year the Government fulfilled its commitment to undertake an independent review of the CLS. The review evaluated whether the CLS was achieving its main aim of delivering legal services to disadvantaged individuals and groups. Preliminary findings were published in April and identified numerous problems, such as lack of clarity about the role of the CLS, its inability to attract additional funds and its increasing bureaucracy.

In response the LCF advocated a rethink about the Community Legal Service services, suggesting that Government look to other jurisdictions. In Canada, casework is very effectively combined with legal education and social policy work and providers are given contracts to carry out a range of activities best suited to local circumstances. The LCF supports salaried legal services suggesting that the Law Centre model could be piloted as an ideal centre for independent, specialist legal services.

Under pressure to cut costs, the LSC has also researched the cost of contracting in the not for profit sector. Its consultation paper in July on legal aid, "A New Focus for Civil Legal Aid Cases" set out a series of proposed changes designed to make savings in the legal aid fund. Proposed changes include: individuals must pursue complaints via ombudsmen or independent complaints services before they can apply for legal aid; new conditional fee agreements; and restrictions on the Funding Code for public law cases. The LCF fears that increasing the barriers to legal aid will have a negative effect and discourage people from seeking help. At the same time, research carried out by the Legal Services Research Centre this spring, "Causes of Action: Civil Law and Social Justice" found that nearly 20% of people with a problem didn't seek help. The research also found that often problems such as employment triggered additional problems. Access to early advice is the ideal as this can save costs to the public and to clients. Placing obstacles in the way of accessing legal advice will be a false economy in the long run.

6 *This spring, the LCF submitted a paper to the Joint Committee on Human Rights on the setting up of a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights... The LCF highlighted how many vulnerable people are denied their fundamental rights because of the lack of funding for representation at tribunals.* 9

Review of Regulation of Legal Services

Sir David Clementi reviewed the regulatory framework this spring and identified Law Centres as “Legal Disciplinary Practices”. This is one of two alternative business structures suggested for future provision. One of the arguments put forward was that, *“with the increasing specialisation in the legal field, there are likely to be cost efficiencies for the customer in that a range of legal professionals suited to meeting a customer’s requirements would be under the same roof.”* The review reports that in many cases these (Law Centres) legal practices provide an excellent service to their communities.

Links to Social Exclusion

The LCF-DCA (formerly Lord Chancellor’s Department) joint paper on social exclusion, “Legal and Advice Services: A Pathway out of Social Exclusion” continues to influence the legal advice sector. The LCF was pleased to see advice included this year in the Social Exclusion Unit’s interim report, “Tackling Social Exclusion” which said, “Advice and information services play a fundamental role in tackling social exclusion”. The LCF hopes that this will be a step towards legal services integration into Government’s key policy objectives.

Equality and Human Rights

This spring, the LCF submitted a paper to the Joint Committee on Human Rights on the setting up of a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. The Commission will take over the role of the three existing Commissions and make provision for the three ‘new’ equality strands: religion and belief and sexual orientation which came into force in December 2003 and age discrimination which comes into force in 2006. The LCF highlighted how many vulnerable people are denied their fundamental rights because of the lack of funding for representation at tribunals. Further, there are circumstances where applicants cannot be expected to represent themselves, such as complex direct or indirect discrimination cases. Only 26.6% of people are in a union, 19% of whom are in the public sector. Therefore there is a clear case for funding to be made available to represent clients whose rights have been denied. The LCF also advocated that the new Commission must ensure that services are available at grassroots level with local communities involved in making the Government’s vision for a fairer society a reality.



Lord Falconer of Thoroton QC, Constitutional Affairs Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor speaking at the LCF’s fringe meeting, “Equality and Human Rights at a Crossroads” on 29th September 2004 at the Labour Party Conference



Human Rights Consortium

On 10 December, Human Rights Day, the Human Rights Consortium invited community and voluntary groups, newly elected MLAs and the media to join them in assembling a tree of hope outside Belfast City Hall to represent all those who would benefit from a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland. Member organisations were asked to add their images and logos to the tree. Photo by Michael Cooper: Publications Officer Catherine Couvert adds the Law Centre’s name to the tree.



Legal services meeting new challenges

In May, the DCA and the LCF launched a new publication, "Legal and Advice Services: A Pathway to Regeneration" in the House of Commons. DCA Minister, David Lammy MP said in the foreword, "...Effective legal services must be grounded in, and responsive to, the local communities they serve, articulating their needs and concerns, as well as promoting regeneration and development."

Dame Sally Powell, Deputy Chair of the Association of London Government and Vice-Chair of the Improvement and Development Agency, opened the launch. The paper has been distributed to local authorities and the LCF held a fringe meeting, "Law Centres and Local Authorities – Working in Partnership" at the Association of Local Government conference in Bournemouth in July.

"Legal and Advice Services: A Pathway to Regeneration" calls for policy initiatives at both central and local government to be "advice proofed" to ensure that people have the access to the advice and support they need.

Immigration and Asylum

It has been a turbulent and dispiriting year for asylum and immigration workers and their clients. The LCF joined a national protest against legal aid cuts but failed to stop the passage of the Immigration and Asylum (Treatment of Claimants Act). The

LCF Immigration Working Party made a submission to the Home Office last November on the new proposals for asylum reform. Law Centre

immigration workers joined the (eventually) successful lobby to maintain the right to appeal cases from the new Asylum and Immigration Tribunals. However, the organisation was less successful in the fight against the imposition of restricted hours for advice giving. One impact coming to light is the abandonment of asylum seekers by solicitors after the hours are over, leaving them with no recourse to public funds to take their case forward.

An array of smaller but significant changes to legislation has been introduced during the year to deter asylum seekers. In addition to keeping up with the myriad of changes, workers have had to apply for accreditation from the Law Society and LSC in order to continue to provide advice. It's been a tough year.

Housing

The Housing Bill is passing through Parliament and is likely to receive royal assent by the end of the year. The Bill gives new powers to local authorities and aims to protect the most vulnerable. The LCF has particularly welcomed the amendment made to protect tenancy deposits.

New legislation introduced last year is already having an impact on Law Centre work. The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 is creating a new challenge with young people approaching Law Centres for help.

Employment

Following on from the proposals set out in the Sir Andrew Leggatt report in 2001, this year saw the publication of a White Paper, "Transforming Public Services: Complaints, Redress and Tribunals" which sets out recommendations to reform the

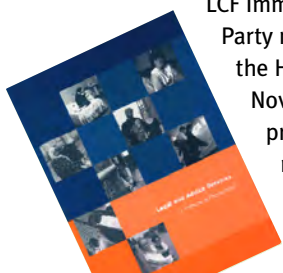
current system. The LCF was disappointed that the paper did not consider additional support for people facing a tribunal hearing. However the Law Centres may be taking part in the proposed enhanced advice project starting in the new year.

Other significant changes during the year include the new statutory disciplinary and grievance procedures that came into force on 1st October 2004. Failure by employers to follow the mandatory procedure will automatically render a dismissal unfair. New Employment Tribunal procedures and procedures for equal value tribunal cases also came in on the same date.

Discrimination

The LCF welcomes its closer working relationship with the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), which has enabled Law Centre workers to have direct contact with the DRC legal team. The new regulations that came into force in October 2004 requiring all businesses to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can use their services are likely to create considerable demand for advice.

The LCF was further pleased by the new Employment Equality Regulations that came into force in December last year as a result of an European Union directive prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and religion or belief.



Housing and Immigration Group

Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre workers are active members of this new group of lawyers, lay advisers and campaigners who work for immigrants in the fields of housing and other social assistance. They meet to exchange information, help formulate policy to promote the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers and identify potential legal test cases. This year they have worked on Section 55 cases and EU Accession cases. The co-operation of members resulted in a successful lead case in which the Home Office agreed to withdraw its decision to terminate support. This collective legal action successfully averted an imminent crisis of the 2,000 or more families being left homeless and destitute.

‘In March 2004, the London Unit was absolutely delighted to launch Enfield Law Centre, the first new Law Centre to be opened in London for 20 years.’



Work with London Law Centres

Over the past year the London Unit has worked with and provided services to every Law Centre in London. The London Unit has advised and assisted with funding, encouraged new developments and member Law Centres to work in partnership with each other. Some Law Centres have faced severe funding difficulties due to pressure being placed upon them to improve performance and meet stringent targets. Many Law Centres are continuing to struggle both with operating under contract and an increasingly competitive funding environment.

The London Unit has responded to London Law Centres' requests for help and assistance as much as possible by facilitating Planning Days, arranging bespoke training and advising on internal staffing issues.

Earlier in the year the London Unit undertook market research with London Law Centres in an effort to consult with them on how the London Unit can best serve their needs. Allen & Overy undertook the research on LCF's behalf and the results are available on request from the LCF office. The research was fairly inconclusive with no real primary outstanding need being identified. The feedback was fairly evenly spread across all the service areas.

The London Unit also undertook a review of organisational development and training needs within London Law Centres. The report resulting from the review has now been distributed and the London Unit is in the process of planning a structured training programme for both Law Centre staff and Management Committees.

Representing London Law Centres

During the year the London Unit represented London Law Centres in a variety of different forums. This included working with Law Centres and the Legal Services Commission in a range of areas such as the conversion of the five London Law Centres in transition from grant to contract. The London Unit has also represented Law Centres on the London Advice Forum, at the London Regional Legal Services Committee, the Cost of Contracting exercise and the National Occupational Standards with the Legal Services Commission, the Greater London Authority on the Housing Advice Strategy and the Board of London Advice Services Alliance of which Noeleen Adams is

Treasurer. The London Unit also represented London Law Centres on the Quality Development Initiative (QDI) panel (see partnerships below). The London Unit continues to work with and to represent Law Centres along with other networks and partners in the best interests of Law Centres.

Over the year the London Unit has attended 231 meetings, 11 Law Centre AGMs and responded to approximately 4,000 emails. We submitted responses to the Association of London Government (ALG) consultation on funding, the Greater London Authority Draft Housing Advice Strategy and the Big Lottery Fund consultation submitted by Advice Services Alliance on behalf of all the advice networks.

We undertook our own research with London Law Centres into their experiences of working under contract to inform the Legal Aid Negotiation Team. Currently the London Unit is in the process of harnessing the views of Immigration Advisers on their experiences of working to the new immigration contract rules and their ability to help refugees and asylum seekers.

Projects

Project development continues to be a major part of our work. In March 2004, the London Unit was absolutely delighted to launch Enfield Law Centre, the first new Law Centre to be opened in London for 20 years. The Law Centre was officially launched on 22nd March and Cherie Booth QC was keynote speaker. Other speakers on the evening were Lord Ted Graham, Councillor Bambos Charalambous, and Martin Jones, Director of Grants at City Parochial Foundation. Mainly funded by the Community Fund and the Legal Services Commission, the Law Centre offers legal advice and representation in housing, employment and welfare benefits. The Law Centre also has *streetlegal*, a legal advice project for children and young people funded by Enfield Neighbourhood Renewal fund.

At a policy level the London Unit is committed to developing more Law Centres in London and is working to persuade decision makers of the merits of having Law Centres in every borough in London. The London Unit also supports the South West London Law Centre initiative, spearheaded by Wandsworth and Merton Law Centre, to develop Law Centres in six boroughs in South West London.

The London Unit also houses the LawWorks Project and warmly welcomes Julian Lewis as Project Manager. Julian took up his position on the 27th September and is busy settling in to his new role. Please see our report on LawWorks on page 14.



Partnerships

The London Unit is currently working in partnership to develop Law Centre input into joint projects. We have an ongoing partnership with Youth Access to improve legal advice and representation to young people called YALCs (Youth Access Law Centres). The three YALC projects currently operating in London are Streetwise Community Law Centre in Bromley, *streetlegal* in Enfield and Young, Free and Legal in Hackney. There is a pan-London group of both Law Centres and Youth Access members to develop this work at a policy and service level.

The London Unit has also been involved with a group of interested agencies in exploring the availability of legal advice for deaf people. The Law Centres Federation – London Unit has partnered with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID), the Royal Association of

Deaf people (RAD), the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), Disability Law Service and interested individuals to commission research to establish the needs in the deaf community for legal advice in areas of law outside of employment and goods and services.

The London Unit is also participating in the Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP) in partnership with Hammersmith & Fulham Law Centre, AdviceUK, Asylum Aid, the Refugee Council and the Evelyn Oldfield Unit to improve advice and representation to asylum seekers on appeal against adverse National Asylum Support Service (NASS) decisions. Although there is no funding for this work, Hammersmith & Fulham Law Centre are organising a pro bono rota each Thursday at the Asylum Support Appeals tribunals in Croydon. The project has received funding from the Helen Tetlow Memorial Fund to enable pro bono advisors to use “Language Line” and offer assistance in a range of languages. This cutting edge project is much needed, as appellants are often destitute, homeless and penniless. The project has also submitted an application to the Community Fund to run a dedicated project based in Croydon. If it is successful the project has premises lined up to house a Project Co-ordinator and two advisers.

Finally, the London Unit participated in the QDI, a cross-advice network project to develop quality in advice agencies with the assistance of bursaries of up to £5,000. The project ended in June 2004 with eight Law Centres receiving £35,000 between them over the life of the project. The bursaries concentrated on developing agencies in Outer London Boroughs and ranged from Information Technology to engaging consultants for specific work.

Noeleen Adams, Manager
Minaxi Panchal, Training & Organisational Development
Julian Lewis, LawWorks Project Manager

D: Cherie Booth QC opening the new Law Centre in Enfield March 2004. Accompanying her on the platform were Lord Ted Graham and Councillor Bambos Charalambous.

E: James Kenrick, Policy and Development Manager at Youth Access, speaking at Streetwise Community Law Centre Impact event. Streetwise is a Law Centre providing legal advice and representation to young people in South London.



‘For the first time in this country we will be looking at a truly inclusive agenda of fairness and opportunity for all. And that is what we need. A society that doesn’t make full use of the talents of all its members, as we know, is a failing society. Equality matters to us all.’

David Lammy MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Constitutional Affairs speech on Equality and Human Rights, Queen Mary and Westfield College Seminar, Royal Overseas League, St James’ Street, London 4th February 2004



A celebratory dinner was held on our final night and awards were given to four people who had dedicated 30 years to the Law Centres movement. Reita Clarke, LCF chair presented awards to Peter Kandler of North Kensington Law Centre, and Patrick Lefevre, Jamie Ritchie and Melvin Coleman from Brent Community Law Centre. Our thanks go to all our supporters, our speakers and workshop leaders and a special thanks to Lenny who provided us with an excellent presentation of how legal centres work in Canada as well as an uplifting and amusing after dinner speech.

Our History, Our Future

Our annual conference last year welcomed David Lammy MP, Minister at the Department for Constitutional Affairs. The Minister spoke about the fundamental role that Law Centres play in the Community Legal Service, highlighting our ability to reach deprived and isolated people. He spoke about the growing awareness in other Government Departments of the value of legal and advice services in tackling social exclusion and how we help regenerate deprived neighbourhoods. The conference looked back on our unique history, looking at our key values and how the movement has grown over the years. We welcomed Russell Campbell, John Fitzpatrick, Reita Clarke and Lenny Abramowicz, Director of the Association of Community Legal Clinics to give their own perspectives. We also looked at what the future might hold – both optimistically and pessimistically! We welcomed Patrick Lefevre, Nony Ardill, Richard Miller, Sheona York and Roger Hamilton to lead the debate.



Visit to Legal Aid Clinics in Canada

Steve Hynes was invited by the Legal Aid Board Ontario, Canada to speak at the Ontario Legal Aid Clinic’s annual conference in Toronto in June. His visit included visiting the Downsview Clinic near Toronto to meet staff and to discuss the work of the Clinic.

Lenny Abramowicz, Executive Director of the Association of Community Legal Clinics, Ontario, spoke at LCF’s conference last year on the work of the clinics.

The Legal Aid Clinics in Ontario are very similar to the UK Law Centres with locally elected management committees employing lawyers and other expert staff including community workers. The clinics undertake individual casework in social welfare law, as well as social policy, legal education and law reform work. With 79 clinics serving a population of 11.5 million they are much more extensive network than UK Law Centres and as such, provide a possible model for the future provision of civil legal aid services in the UK.

F: David Lammy MP giving keynote speech LCF Conference 2003 **G:** LCF Chair with LCF Conference delegates **H:** Nony Ardill, LAG **I:** Lenny and Angela Longo CEO Legal Aid Ontario **J:** Downsview clinic and staff

‘For the first time for many years we were in a position to establish a Law Centre which would not only be able to carry out work under LSC contracts but would also be in a position to engage in the sort of activities that distinguish a Law Centre from private practice such as work with ineligible clients, tribunal representation, legal education, community and social policy work.’

Our original funding to expand our network of Law Centres in the regions ended in 2002 and highlighted the need for further fundraising in order to engage in regional development work in any meaningful way.

The good news that the Community Fund agreed to provide a substantial grant to fund two posts reached LCF soon after our last AGM. One of the posts is specifically geared towards establishing new Law Centres while the second post will focus primarily on the support needs of existing Law Centres. Stella Russell, the Co-ordinator of Avon and Bristol Law Centre for many years, will be undertaking the specialised task of supporting our existing Law Centres while I shall be concentrating on new Law Centre developments. The Regional Development Unit is currently researching the training and support needs of our Law Centres, and hope to follow up the research by establishing regionally based and affordable training courses that are tailor-made for Law Centres' needs.



Regional Developments

Two additional achievements for regional development in the past year were the securing of funding for two new Law Centres in the Yorkshire region and the appointment of a Development Worker for the Norfolk Law Centre Steering Committee.

Kirklees Metropolitan Council put a consultancy contract out to tender last summer to re-establish a Law Centre for the local community. The Law Centres Federation's bid was successful and a local Steering Committee has been established to oversee the setting up of the Law Centre. Our joy in securing the consultancy contract turned to jubilation when we reached agreement with the Council for local authority revenue funding of £100,000 per year. Further, the Legal Services Commission offered us two contracts worth a further £100,000. For the first time for many years we were in a position to establish a Law Centre which would not only be able to carry out work under LSC contracts but would also be in a position to engage in the sort of activities that distinguish a Law Centre from private practice such as work with ineligible clients, tribunal representation, legal education, community and social policy work. Recruitment of staff has been difficult. Nevertheless, the Law Centre should be operational by January

2005 and will be on sound financial foundations thanks to the generous and progressive thinking of the local authority.

Rotherham Law Centre Steering Committee was established some years ago through the work of Solveig Rawlings, one of LCF's Manchester based Development Workers. One of their first key achievements was the securing of funding for a Development Worker and the appointment of Jane Waring for that post. The work of the Management Committee, supported by Jane, has produced some very good results with the Community Fund agreeing to fund 2.5 posts at the Law Centre. The Regional Development Unit is currently helping with staff recruitment and trying to secure further funding from the Legal Services Commission and the local authority.

A similar mode of development has been adopted by Norfolk Law Centre Steering Committee who have recently identified funds for the employment of a Development Worker. Ros Brown has taken up the development post and is focusing on a feasibility study and fundraising as well as building relationships with various stakeholders.

Metin Kemal
Regional Development Manager

‘LawWorks was established in June 2000 as a partnership between the Law Centres Federation and the Solicitors Pro Bono Group. Phase One of the project was completed this year and we are delighted to report that our application for funding from the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) was successful. This has enabled us to continue with Phase Two of the project over the next three years.’

LawWorks

LawWorks was established in June 2000 as a partnership between the Law Centres Federation and the Solicitors Pro Bono Group. Phase I of the project was completed this year and we are delighted to report that our application for funding from the Department for Constitutional Affairs was successful. This has enabled us to continue with Phase II of the project for a further three years.

Constitutional Affairs Minister, David Lammy speaking during National Pro Bono week in Manchester in June said that the Department and the Legal Services Commission (LSC) were committed to

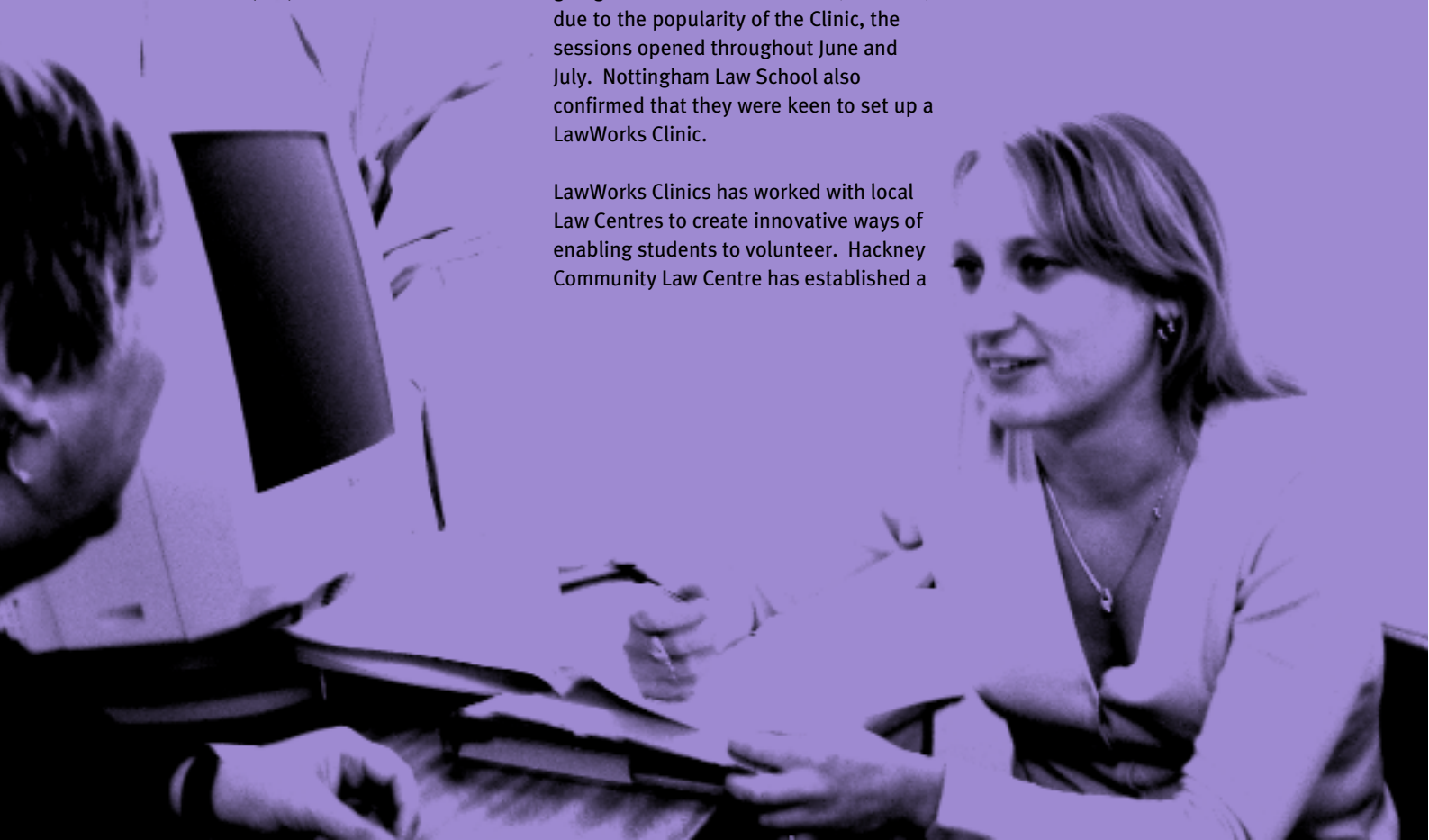
promoting pro bono services such as those provided by LawWorks. He announced the new funding for the project saying, “This is further illustrated in their manifesto to provide support the project’s business plan over the next three years which forecasts a capacity to provide help and advice to 45,000 people per year by 2007”.

Law Schools

One of the initiatives during the year was work with law schools, and a pilot took place at the BPP Law School in London during the year. Originally the Clinic was going to close over the summer, however, due to the popularity of the Clinic, the sessions opened throughout June and July. Nottingham Law School also confirmed that they were keen to set up a LawWorks Clinic.

LawWorks Clinics has worked with local Law Centres to create innovative ways of enabling students to volunteer. Hackney Community Law Centre has established a

new clinic offering advice on contract, consumer, debt and employment. Under supervision, BPP students interview clients. After the session, and within arranged times, they research the advice to be given and write it up. A volunteer solicitor clears the advice which is then sent out by the law centre to the clinic user. Faegre Benson Hobson Audley LLP is partner in this scheme, though other individual volunteers also contribute their time. A volunteer handbook has been completed setting out procedures specifically designed to be used for this type of clinic.



A very successful pro bono service has been running in Enfield and greatly assisted in the establishment of the new Law Centre this year. Using money from the Community Chest it was able to run an evening advice session, staffed by 12 pro bono local solicitors to test the market and demonstrate the desperate need for a Law Centre. Twenty four voluntary solicitors are now involved in the drop-in centre. Savita Narain, the Law Centre's development worker explained that, "the evening session is initial advice, We don't take on cases or do casework. People come in and they are told they can get up to half-an-hour free legal advice. But if they need casework, we refer them elsewhere".

Lewisham Law Centre

The official launch of the Clinic took place on 26th April. The evening was a great success and training and support has been provided to volunteer lawyers over the summer.

South West London Law Centre

Pro bono services at the Law Centre have gone from strength to strength. Law Centre Director, Bob Nightingale said that during 2003/4, volunteer lawyers helped more than 5,000 people. Clinics at Wandsworth are supported by Clifford Chance, Allen & Overy, Simmmons & Simmons, Eversheds, Nicholson Graham and Jones and Radcliffes. The service was boosted during the year by an additional surgery staffed by lawyers from Norton Rose.

Cathy Jones, Community Affairs Manager at Clifford Chance said:

"We are delighted that we can help those most in need through our partnership with the Law Centre. Our lawyers find the pro bono work in Tooting extremely rewarding and the success of the in-house casework that has been taken on has proved particularly satisfying. We know from the Law Centre that we are helping disadvantaged people who would otherwise be denied access to legal help and this is a key element of our commitment to corporate social responsibility".

Links with London City Firms

An express aim of the LawWorks Clinics project was to provide easier opportunities for city lawyers to volunteer. This includes assistance with training in social welfare areas of law and face to face advice skills in which they may not be confident.

In addition to providing pro bono assistance to Law Centre clinics, city firms provide significant funding and in kind assistance to support the core daytime work of London Law Centre's staff solicitors. The firms also may undertake direct work for Law Centres with which they have special links. This year, Clifford Chance have advised on a lease and Allen & Overy have undertaken all the constitutional and transfer work involved in extending one Law Centre's services across six SW London Boroughs.

It is important that city firms are encouraged in these ways. It is not always easy to access the pro bono opportunities that exist. But these firms are a powerful voice within the profession and many individuals within them are keen on pro bono work. The greater their exposure, corporately and as individual solicitors, to other aspects of the legal needs that exist in our community, the more rounded the culture of their firms becomes.

LawWorks Goes National

By September 2004 23 new clinics had been established. Phase One of the project did explicitly focus on Greater London. Nevertheless only 5 of these new clinics were outside the M25. One of the express aims of Phase Two therefore is to offer assistance across England and Wales in a more co-ordinated fashion. Staff now have lead responsibilities for certain regions to ensure this happens.

As part of the LawWorks Clinics project, a web-enabled advice scheme has been developed and is administered by colleagues at the Solicitors Pro Bono Group. Law Centres and other advice agencies can sign up to access this facility whether or not they have the current capacity to set up new clinics.

Cardiff Law Centre

CLC has seen the LawWorks Clinics project as a way of assisting them to expand services. Planning work has been done this year to develop an Employment Clinic, which will start in January 2005. The clinic will provide advice in an area which CLC does not have daytime provision. Once bedded down successfully it is hoped that it can be used to develop new links in Cardiff's legal community. This may replicate the extra provision is also hoped to provide evidence of "value added" services to assist future funding applications.

Surrey Law Centre

SLC has developed a new clinic in partnership with Clyde & Co, Charles Russell and Barristers from Guildford Chambers. LawWorks Clinics has helped with procedures/policies and training volunteers. The emphasis has been on guiding clients towards achieving a solution to the problem themselves, such as drafting their own letters. Feedback from volunteer lawyers has been really positive. Many went along with some trepidation the first few times, but have developed their confidence and skills. They have been able to help many people with significant legal problems who in many cases had nowhere else to look to for help.

Staff Changes

We were very sorry to say goodbye to Clare Kelly our Project Manager in March who left to continue her career in private practice. Clare was dedicated to the project and we will miss her. Our warmest welcome is given to Julian Lewis who is taking the project forward into its second phase. Julian has many years' experience of capacity-building in higher education and community settings (including the typical range of network development, training, volunteering, policy work etc), and a good knowledge of the legal world via his law degree and post graduate studies.



‘ This year saw a significant drop in the organisation’s turnover to just under £900,000 (see table). Surrey, Trafford, Bury and Stockport Law Centres caused the drop in turnover by leaving LCF’s direct control, as planned, to become independent Law Centres. ’

Our main funders continue to be the Legal Services Commission, Association of London Government and subscriptions from Law Centres. A significant income stream of unrestricted funds also comes from donations from commercial firms. We are extremely grateful to all our funders and donors for their continuing support. I would also like to thank the firms who given LCF pro-bono assistance with legal work. All our corporate supporters are credited on the back of this report.

This is the first year for some time that we have not received funds from the National Lottery, but we were pleased to hear in the course of the year that the Big Lottery Fund will grant aid LCF in 2004-05. This is most important for the future development of Law Centres outside London, as the grant will fund this work.

The Executive Committee are concerned that to date we have yet to finalise agreement with the landlords of Duchess House, where LCF’s main offices are based, over our contribution to the charges for the refurbishment of the building. For this reason the Executive Committee decided to delay any further refurbishment of our offices pending finalisation of this matter.

Patrick Marples LCF Treasurer
TRUSTEE’S STATEMENT

Treasurer’s Report

These summarised financial statements contain information from both the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st March 2004, but are not the full statutory report and accounts. The full financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 4th October 2004 and subsequently submitted to the Charity Commission and to the Companies House. They received an unqualified audit report and copies may be obtained from the charity’s head office.

Patrick Marples LCF Treasurer
4th October 2004

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS’ STATEMENT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LAW CENTRES FEDERATION

We have examined the summarised financial statements of the Law Centres Federation

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND AUDITORS

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with the recommendations of the charities SORP. Our responsibility is

to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statement with the full financial statements and Trustees’ Annual Report. We also read the other information contained in the annual report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

BASIS OF OPINION

We conducted our work on accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 “the auditors’ statement on the summary financial statement” issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom.

OPINION

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the Trustees’ Annual Report of the Law Centres Federation for the year ended 31st March 2004.

Sayer Vincent Registered Auditors

“I have seen from my own experience at the Paddington Law Centre, on the Greater London Council and as an MP how decent housing can offer a way out of poverty- material poverty and the poverty of aspiration.”

24 September 2004, Speech by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury Paul Boateng at the National Housing Federation



‘ We took one step at a time and solved problems that I didn’t think could be solved – especially so quickly. One example was finding me somewhere to live... ’

Work in the community

Kerry

Kerry (who prefers not to use her own name) tells how the timely intervention of her local Law Centre helped her escape a violent relationship and begin a new life

“Gateshead Law Centre helped save me from the hands of a violent partner. I felt as though my voice was being heard at last and was helped through a really trying part of my life. I had no family support whatsoever, but after visiting Gateshead Law Centre and speaking to a caseworker I felt as though I was in safe hands.”

“We took one step at a time and solved problems that I didn’t think could be solved – especially so quickly. One example was finding me somewhere to live. The caseworker contacted the local housing association and got me an interview with a representative from Nomad Housing on the Friday. On the following Monday I was offered accommodation in exactly the area that I had requested, which is where I had grown up.”

“I am now a volunteer at the Law Centre, working on reception learning lots of new skills and meeting different people everyday. It has given me the confidence I needed. I feel that I can now make something of myself and improve my life. The office experience I am gaining will improve my chances of finding work in the future.”

Islington Schools Advice Project

Islington Law Centre delivers housing and welfare rights advice to parents and carers at Islington schools. The project has links with 19 schools, with a waiting list of schools wanting to be involved. The project, funded by the LSC Partnership Initiative Budget was reported in the Department for Work and Pensions Annual Report for 2004 “Opportunity for All”. The Report stated, “this initiative has been particularly successful in targeting those groups or individuals who have not used advice agencies before. Indications are that 63% of users fall into this category, with 93% of users not having English as a first language.”

An example of case taken up the Project:

Mr H had a court summons served on him for rent arrears. The debt had been caused by Housing Benefit. Mr H was worried about his family being evicted. He worked as a waiter and the stress and worry of the situation was carrying over into his work. His hands were shaking so much that he was afraid that he might lose his job as well. He is absolutely convinced that if his case had not been taken up by the Project he would have lost his home.

Our Lives, Our Choices Project

In April 2004, Chesterfield Law Centre received a grant from the Big Lottery Fund to help the Law Centre develop a new advice and specialist casework service in Community Care law. The project aims to advise and support disabled people, older people and carers. The Community Care Unit has two community care advice workers, a project co-ordinator and two contact workers as well as a finance co-ordinator and administrator.

Project workers take on a wide range of cases such as the lack of, reduction or withdrawal of services, equipment and/or adaptations. They also cover community care assessments, charges, care plans and the use of direct payments, home care fees and discharge packages.

Law Centres Federation speaks out...



“Equality, human rights and Law Centres”
by Steve Hynes in *Legal Action*
October 2004

‘...Without a meaningful system of redress for ordinary people, which should include access to expert representation in all discrimination cases, these rights will fail to become embedded in the popular consciousness...LCF would like to see Lord Falconer commit to extending legal aid to tribunals, as this is where most discrimination and human rights cases are brought.’



Above: The LCF launches campaign to highlight 'the effects of legal aid cuts on immigration and asylum caseworkers

“With Great Respect”
Independent Lawyer
October/November 2004

‘The LSC’s directly employed immigration advice service may lack independence, says Steve Hynes, director of Law Centres Federation. Not so, replies Crispin Passmore, LSC Community Legal Service director. It will give the LSE an insight into the pressures of asylum work.’



“Desert storm”
in *Roof* March/April 2004

“Losing your home in Northumberland is simply not being challenged because there is no one there to do the work,” says Deborah Still, housing solicitor at Newcastle Law Centre in reference to the problem of a lack of access to specialist legal advice services in many parts of the country.

‘Many lawyers undertake charitable work of many different kinds. However, the purpose of this protocol is to concentrate specifically on the provision by lawyers of their legal skills in the form of Pro Bono Legal Work.’

Joint Protocol for Pro Bono Legal Work

At all stages throughout their career many lawyers regard Pro Bono Legal Work as an integral part of being a member of the legal profession, in providing access to justice and meeting unmet legal need. This Protocol has been agreed to set out the core values of such work and to assist both those who undertake it and their clients. Many lawyers undertake charitable work of many different kinds. However, the purpose of this protocol is to concentrate specifically on the provision by lawyers of their legal skills in the form of Pro Bono Legal Work.

1 What is Pro Bono Legal Work?

1.1 When we refer to Pro Bono Legal Work we mean legal advice or representation provided by lawyers to individuals and community groups who cannot afford to pay for that advice or representation and where public funding is not available.

1.2 Legal work is Pro Bono Legal Work only if it is free to the client, without payment to the lawyer or law firm (regardless of the outcome) and provided voluntarily either by the lawyer or his or her firm.

1.3 Pro Bono Legal Work is always only an adjunct to, and not a substitute for, a proper system of publicly funded legal services.

2 How should Pro Bono Legal Work be done?

2.1 Pro Bono Legal Work should always be done to a high standard. That means in particular that:

2.2 The availability of appropriate publicly funded legal advice or representation should always be considered before a lawyer undertakes Pro Bono Legal Work.

2.3 When a lawyer is requested to agree to undertake a piece of Pro Bono Legal Work the lawyer should give his/her decision within a reasonable time.

2.4 The terms on which the Pro Bono Legal Work is undertaken including the circumstances in which the relationship may be terminated should be made clear at the outset.

2.5 The Pro Bono Legal Work should only be undertaken by a lawyer who is adequately trained, has appropriate skills and experience and, where necessary, is adequately supervised for the work in question.

2.6 The lawyer undertaking a piece of Pro Bono Legal Work (and where appropriate his or her supervisor) should have no less than the minimum level of legal expertise and experience as would be required if the particular work in question was paid work.

2.7 In no case should the client be misled as to the lawyer's skill or ability to undertake the Pro Bono Legal Work.

2.8 Once a lawyer has agreed to undertake a piece of Pro Bono Legal Work the lawyer (and if appropriate his or her firm) must give that work the same priority, attention and care as would apply to paid work.

2.9 Pro Bono Legal Work must not be undertaken without appropriate insurance.

2.10 A lawyer in doubt or difficulty in relation to a piece of Pro Bono Legal Work should seek advice from a Pro Bono organisation or from the Bar Council, the Law Society or the Institute of Legal Executives.



LCF Executive & Staff

LCF Executive Committee

Reita Clarke MBE	Chair	Luton Law Centre (Management Committee)
Gerry Martin	Vice Chair	Gateshead Law Centre (Staff)
Gillie Sharp	Vice Chair	Luton Law Centre (Staff)
Patrick Marples	Treasurer	Lambeth Law Centre (Staff)
Nick Woolf	Secretary	Saltley and Nechells Law Centre (Management Committee)

Management Committee Representatives

Alan Davis	Southwark Law Centre
John Fitzpatrick	Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre
Paul Mathurin	Gloucester Law Centre
John Oke	Camden Community Law Centre
Cameron Philpot	Chesterfield Law Centre

Staff Representatives

Ann Holdsworth	Devon Law Centre
Victoria McNally	Brent Community Law Centre
Helen Jackson	Oldham Law Centre (Joined April Observer Member)
Andrew Jones	Isle of Wight Law Centre (Joined April Observer member)
Mohammed Mahruf	Derby Law Centre (Joined April Observer member)

Co-options

Hugh Lansdowne	Greenwich Community Law Centre (Management Committee) - Nominated by the Disability Rights Group
Richard Palmer	Southwark Law Centre (Management Committee) - Nominated by the Black Workers and Managers Group

LCF Staff

Noeleen Adams	London Unit Manager
Victor Adetiba	Finance Worker
Jen Corlew	Communication and Campaigns (Joined 13th September 2004)
Helen Courtney	Locum Administrator (December 2003 to June 2004)
Lynn Evans	Policy Manager
Steve Hynes	Director
Clare Kelly	LawWorks Project Manager (Left 31st March 2004)
Metin Kemal	Regional Development Manager
Julian Lewis	LawWorks Project Manager (Joined 28th September 2004)
Minaxi Panchal	London Training and Organisational Development (Joined 6th January 2004)
Nicola Reid	Administrator (Left 30th November 2003)
Stella Russell	Regional Development (Joined 16th July 2004)
Emma Tye	Administrator (Joined 12th July 2004)

LCF new staff members Emma Tye, Minaxi Pinchal, and Jen Corlew. (Not pictured: Julian Lewis and Stella Russell)

Contact us

LCF RECEPTION 020 7255 9591

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Directorate		
Steve Hynes	Director	Ext. 202
Victor Adetiba	Finance	Ext. 204
Emma Tye	Administration	Ext. 210
Policy and Campaigns		
Lynn Evans	Manager	Ext. 206
Jen Corlew	Communications	Ext. 212
Regional Development		
Metin Kemal	Manager	Ext. 205
Stella Russell*	Development	0117 952 3367
London Unit		
Noleen Adams	Manager	Ext. 203
Minaxi Panchal	Development	Ext. 207
Julian Lewis	LawWorks	Ext. 211

* Stella Russell is based in Bristol

Email

LCF staff can also be contacted by email using their first name followed by @lawcentres.org.uk, e.g. Steve@lawcentres.org.uk

Grants and Donations

Supported by



CLYDE & CO

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Linklaters

Department for Constitutional Affairs
Community Fund (from September 2004)

Supporters

We are also indebted to the following supporters of the LCF Conferences 2003 and 2004

Matrix Chambers



Legal Action Group



irwinmitchell (IM)



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