



CLS London



Welcome to the autumn edition of *CLS London* and my first edition coming back from maternity leave. I would like to thank Peta Sweet for her hard work in my absence managing Planning and Partnership at London Region. In this issue we are pleased to be able to report back on our scheme to increase the capacity of the Community Legal Service in London and the organisations and solicitors who are helping us to meet the priorities set out in our regional delivery plan.

There is also the first, of what will be a regular feature, in which we profile the work of one of our suppliers.

Melanie Johnson
Planning & Partnership Manager

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Community Legal Service Strategy - Making Rights A Reality

On 14 September, the London Regional Office held an event to present the new Community Legal Service Strategy, *Making Rights A Reality*, to its suppliers and other stakeholders.

The Community Legal Service Strategy event, held at King's College London, was an opportunity for various regional stakeholders such as not-for-profit organisations, private practise solicitors and local authorities to hear about the strategy, explore ideas and pose questions to the Community Legal Service Director, Crispin Passmore. Also present as part of the question and answer panel was Martin Seel, London Region Director, Peta Sweet, Acting Planning and Partnership Manager and David Edmonds Chair of the Regional Legal Services Committee.

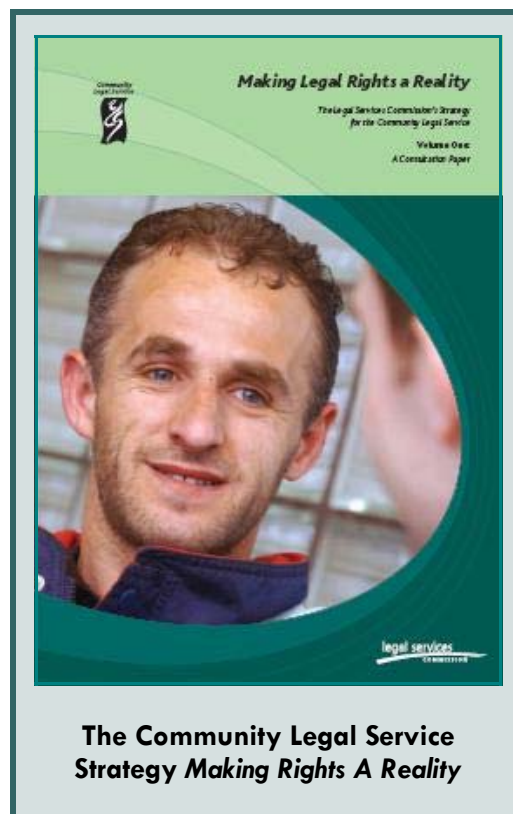
As highlighted in the July issue of *CLS London*, the strategy proposes legal and advice services that are more focussed on people in greatest need, more coordinated and cost-effective and better geared to tackle the common causes of legal problems.

Making Legal Rights a Reality is the Legal Services Commission's vision for developing the Community Legal Service over the next five years. The consultation on its proposals will last three months.

The consultation will be followed the publication of a series of policy papers. These will set out in more detail how each of the different elements of the strategy will be taken forward. These papers will contain detailed timescales and some pilots are expected to begin in 2005/06.

Copies of *Making Legal Rights a Reality* can be downloaded from:

www.legalservices.gov.uk/civil/docs_for_consultation/civil.asp



**The Community Legal Service
Strategy Making Rights A Reality**

Increasing Capacity in the Community Legal Service

The London Regional Office has made significant progress against its London Region Delivery Plan to increase capacity in the Community Legal Service and help more people get access to quality legal advice. Our London Region Delivery Plans, to commission New Matter Starts were published in May and July and focused on the following proposals:

- Funding the provision of caseworkers across the London Prisons Estate to provide Housing, Debt, Welfare Benefits and Employment advice
- Expanding the provision of Housing Possession Duty Court Schemes
- Provision of outreach Housing advice to outer London Boroughs with poor or no supply e.g Richmond Upon Thames
- Provision of outreach Debt advice to outer London Boroughs with poor or no supply e.g Bexley
- Provision of outreach Welfare Benefits advice to outer London Boroughs with poor or no supply e.g Enfield
- Expanding the provision of Debt, Welfare Benefits and Housing supply within East London
- Expanding the provision of Debt and Welfare Benefits supply within West London

We are pleased to announce that contracts were let in the following areas and all will start by 1 November.

Advice to prisoners

Social welfare law advice will be available in five London prisons. Advice sessions will cover housing, welfare benefits, debt and employment issues.

Funding will support the following:

- A full-time service in Wormwood Scrubs provided by Kensington & Chelsea Citizens Advice Bureau
- Outreach advice sessions in Feltham Young Offenders Institute provided by Law for All
- Outreach advice sessions in Holloway and Pentonville provided by Islington Law Centre
- Outreach advice sessions in Wandsworth provided by Wandsworth Citizens Advice Bureau.

Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes

Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes have been successfully established in Ilford and Barnet County Courts with progress being made on setting up schemes in West London, Bromley, Woolwich, Clerkenwell, Croydon, Kingston and Richmond County Courts.

West London Financial Inclusion Strategy

Mary Ward Legal Centre will be working with local Citizens Advice Bureaux and community advice providers to provide a range of new specialist outlets in Welfare Benefits across Hounslow, Hillingdon and Richmond. Law for All will be providing outreach in Debt, Welfare Benefits and Housing in Hounslow and Hillingdon.

East London Financial Inclusion Strategy

The East London Financial Inclusion Unit will be providing Debt advice in a range of locations such as Courts, Inland Revenue offices and Job Centre Plus in all seven East London boroughs, from Hackney to Havering.

Sternberg Reed Taylor and Gill, based in Barking and Dagenham, will be providing Specialist Housing advice across all three outer east boroughs. Barking and Havering Citizens Advice Bureau have successfully passed Specialist Quality Mark audits in Debt and Welfare Benefits respectively, and will be working collaboratively with Redbridge Citizens Advice Bureau to provide access to specialist services across all three boroughs.

Clients in Hackney will benefit from increases in Specialist Housing provision through Duncan Lewis and Co and SA Carr and Co. In Tower Hamlets, there will be additional provision through Ignatiou-Fakhouri and Co (Housing and Welfare Benefits) as well as through Island Advice Centre (Debt).

Specific gaps in outer-London Boroughs

Services will be provided in outer-London boroughs with Sutton Citizens Advice Bureau providing Debt and Welfare Benefits outreach advice on local estates. Springfield Advice and Law Centre will be delivering Debt services to clients with mental health needs across South-West London in addition to Williams and Co Solicitors expanding Specialist Debt services in Barnet.

Streetwise Community Law Centre will be providing new outreach services for young people in both Welfare Benefits and Housing across the boroughs of Bromley, Sutton and Croydon. Tyrer Roxburgh and Co will also be providing both Specialist Welfare Benefits and Housing in Enfield.

Increased Housing supply will also be provided through Shelter (in Bexley and Richmond), Brian McKenna and Co (Hounslow), Threshold Housing Advice (Merton), Hounslow Law Centre and Kingston and Richmond Law Centre.

Mary Ward Legal Centre will be providing innovative outreach in Welfare Benefits working with advice providers and community organisations in Bromley, Enfield and Barnet. Thamesmead Law Centre will be providing new Welfare Benefits services to clients in Greenwich and Bexley.

The Community Legal Service and Financial Inclusion Needs Assessments

The extensive needs assessment, provider mapping and demand/delivery reports in relation to West and South London are now complete.

Documentation was circulated to partners in South London during August and the West London information will be distributed by end of September. We would like to thank all those who contributed into developing and producing these reports.

Collating and analysing the various sources of data has better informed our planning and commissioning of specialist services this year. We hope the documents will be used by providers and partnerships to develop and support fundraising bids as well as by other funders and service commissioners to inform their strategies.

For more information on the Community Legal Service and Financial Inclusion agenda, please contact:

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Planning and Partnership Consultant
020 7759 1970
zarah.riches@legalservices.gov.uk

The Community Legal Service Debt Signposting Project

The London Regional Office and Community Legal Service Direct are working in partnership with Hyde Housing Association in South London on a pilot project to assess the impact of active signposting to Community Legal Service Direct.

Community Legal Service Direct awareness-raising sessions were delivered to front-line staff of the Lewisham office of Hyde Housing Association in September. It is anticipated that this training will generate a significant number of additional calls to Community Legal Service Direct and will potentially result in 120 additional clients being assisted through telephone casework. The number of calls generated by Lewisham Hyde Housing Association will be compared to those generated by Greenwich Hyde Housing Association where staff have not received training.

The project runs for four months and will be evaluated in December 2005/January 2006.

For more information on the Community Legal Service Debt Signposting Project, please contact:

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The Community Legal Service Directory

The latest edition of the Community Legal Service Directory on CD-ROM is now available. This replaces the printed Community Legal Service Directory, produced in 2003. The CD-ROM is intended for use by suppliers who can not access the directory via the Community Legal Service Direct helpline or website. It is important to note that the helpline, 0845 345 4 345 and website, www.clsdirect.org.uk, offer the most up to date information as supplier information changes on a regular basis.

The CD-ROM can be used to signpost clients to local solicitors or advice agencies for help with a legal problem. It contains details of quality-marked suppliers across England and Wales. It allows you to search for suppliers by local

authority area or Community Legal Service area as well as by postcode, name of organisation or area of work.



The CD-ROM is available to all suppliers, not-for-profit organisations, public libraries and courts. It is free of charge to all quality-marked suppliers and is available on request.

If you would like a copy or more information on the Community Legal Service Directory CD-ROM please contact:

Beatrice Etemah
020 7759 2277
beatrice.etemah@legalservices.gov.uk

Legal Aid Students Need You!

The Legal Services Commission is once again investing in the next generation of legal aid lawyers.

As part of the Commission's target to create 400 newly qualified legal aid lawyers, we have been working closely with the College of Law and the Law Society to develop the *Public Legal Services Pathway* - an additional elective strand to the Legal Practice Certificate focusing on Legal Aid work - and the first students enrolled in September.

The idea behind the scheme is to provide students with a Legal Practice Certificate route that might lead towards a career in a practice that delivers in publicly funded work.

The course will give students an insight into the reality of working as a Legal Aid solicitor and provide them with the skills and knowledge to work within the framework from Legal Services Commission contracts and requirements.

Students will study the same compulsory subjects as all other Legal Practice Certificate students, but will then have to choose two out of three optional modules of Welfare and Immigration, Advanced Criminal Practice and Housing Law.

Alongside these electives, the Pathway scheme offers an additional strand of study which includes a programme of workshops and presentations during the Autumn/first Term.

The Legal Services Commission London Regional Office has worked closely with the College of Law to develop the content of these workshops and will be supplying appropriate guest speakers. The topics for this year's workshop series are as follows:

- General Introduction to Legal Aid
- Process of making a civil and criminal application for funding
- Requirement of the Specialist Quality Mark including file review and time recording
- Not For Profit Sector and Professional Duties and Conduct
- Costing and Billing Legal Aid work

Students on the course will also be guaranteed participation in the College's Pro Bono activities and will be required to undertake work shadowing in the Autumn term and work experience in the Spring term, with appropriate agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureaux, Law Centres, refugee Legal Centres and Youth Offender Support Agencies. At the end of the course, students are expected to produce a reflective portfolio of their experiences.

The London Regional Office would like to encourage firms to offer work-shadowing opportunities and student mentoring.

The scheme has already proved extremely popular with students. The College of Law reported that they had received double the expected applicants for this year's inaugural course – 500 in total. If even half these students go on to work in Legal Aid Practices, we'll be well on our way to filling the future gap in legal aid advisors.

The work of Legal Aid Lawyers, using their legal skills to help some of the most vulnerable people in society, is invaluable. The *Public Legal Services Pathway* project ensures that the next generation of Legal Aid Lawyers are fully prepared to take on the challenges and rewards of this worthwhile career.

For Further Information on the *Public Legal Service Pathway* project in London please contact:

The College of Law
14 Store Street
London
WC1E 7DE
Phone: 0800 289 997
Fax: 0207 291 1305
E-mail: info@lawcol.co.uk

Supplier Profile: White Ryland



**Staff at White Ryland;
A Legal Services Commission Preferred Supplier**

Katrina Forrester speaks to Elizabeth Ryland about her firm, being involved in the Preferred Supplier Pilot and the challenges of expanding their business.

Name of Firm

White Ryland

Location

54 Goldhawk Road, Shepherds Bush, London W12 8HA

Number of employees

45

What Categories do you advise in?

Family, Housing and Immigration

What current challenges are affecting advice delivery in these categories?

A legal aid practice faces many and varied challenges in service delivery particularly across a wide range of social welfare categories. We have found that different categories provide us with very different challenges.

A Family Advisor's clients vary from babies to grandparents. Even when we are representing babies we still visit them (often in hospital) and sourcing the appropriate experts to prepare reports for the hearings is also challenging. Our clients are going through a very difficult time in their lives and are often traumatised. We are also working against the clock and always have to manage our time carefully.

The Housing Department deals with Homelessness, Disrepair, and Possession Orders amongst other matters. The challenges are numerous. Unlike other categories we find that even though we are told that there is demand for housing advice, we do not have a queue of clients waiting for us at the front door of our office each morning. We therefore have to take a proactive approach and take time to link to advice agencies (often charities, or voluntary agencies) within the borough. We make personal visits to their agencies and bring our services to their attention. In

addition, clients with disrepair problems often do not realise that they can seek legal advice.

Our Immigration Department's biggest challenge is keeping up with developments in Immigration Law, which evolves on an almost daily basis. We also have to deal with public opinion and communicate effectively with clients that may have language difficulties.

How long has your firm been running?

12 years

How does the work that your firm undertakes impact the community?

The work that we do has a positive impact on the community. Access to advice empowers people to improve their lives enabling them to access or improve their housing, maintain their family unit or live safe from the danger of a violent partner.

What's involved in undertaking the Preferred Supplier Pilot?

Being involved in the pilot has really assisted us in the management of our practice rather than place more restrictions or reporting requirements on us. The benefits of being involved in the Preferred Supplier Pilot are that we have a Relationship Manager, Anne Campbell, who liaises with us frequently and there is less paperwork and a quicker turnaround. There are no Cost Compliance Audits and we have a greater feeling of trust and partnership between ourselves and the Legal Service Commission.

What are some of the most positive changes that the Legal Services Commission has introduced?

We would have to say the Preferred Supplier Pilot and the introduction of Legal Service Commission Online, which enables us to submit our claim forms online. This ensures they are received by the Legal Services Commission immediately and the payment process is speeded up.

What is your advice to firms that wish to expand their Legal Aid practice?

Location, location, location; where your firm is located can have a big impact on your business. Our office is directly opposite the tube station and Shepherd's Bush Market.

The best advice that we can give is to take on an additional fee-earner. Even if you feel that your current caseload does not quite warrant it. This will enable you to build up your work; if another client comes in and you are busy the client can always be seen by the new fee-earner. When a fee-earner does not have clients they can visit local agencies within the community (i.e. Refugee Groups and agencies that deal with domestic violence) and undertake positive public relations for the firm. If you and your fee-earners are busy just managing your current caseload your business will never expand.

If your organisation/firm would like to be profiled in our next edition of *CLS London*, please contact Katrina Forrester on 020 7759 1908 or email Katrina on katrina.forrester@legalservices.gov.uk

White Ryland: Case Study

As well as providing the supplier profile for this edition of *CLS London*, White Ryland has also provided us with a case study which highlights the valuable work of the suppliers that deliver the Community Legal Service.

Gender	Female
Age	37
Ethnicity	White Other
Disability	None

Ms X is a vulnerable 37 year old female with alcoholic problems. She had been accommodated by a Specialist Support Unit in February 2004 following a homeless application made to the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. She was served with a notice to quit on the basis that she had refused an offer of suitable alternative accommodation. The client said she wanted to appeal against the notice.

The client was advised that she had little security of tenure owing to the fact that she merely held a licence and not a tenancy. However, representations were made on her behalf about why she refused the offer of accommodation based in another borough.

The Council was advised that she had previously been a victim of an attack and had also been stalked by three different individuals in the designated area. Further, her support network including her doctor and her mental health worker were based in West London and that the cost of travelling would impede her recovery. The client had previously made an attempt to take her life, and had it not been for the proximity of her friends to stop her, she would not be here today and hence the need for her to be based in the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

In addition to her housing problems, Ms X also suffered domestic violence from her ex partner and a Non Molestation Order with a Power of Arrest was obtained against him by a solicitor in our Family Department. The Order was served upon the ex partner and a copy lodged with the local Police Station.

The client was moved to second stage accommodation in Fulham together with two other friends from the Support Unit. Ms X did not suffer from any further harassment from her ex partner. Ms X thanked both her solicitors for their help in improving her circumstances and felt a lot happier about her future.

If you have a case in particular which could be used to promote the positive story of legal aid in *CLS London* and more widely, please contact Katrina Forrester on 020 7759 1908 or email her on katrina.forrester@legalservices.gov.uk

The Association of London Government's Funding Review

London's voluntary and community sector will have a huge part to play in helping the Association of London Government take forward its new approach to how it resources the sector.

The Association of London Government's Leaders' Committee has agreed on how it should make the best use of the resources that the Association of London Government invests in the voluntary and community sector for the benefit of Londoners. The Leaders' Committee took into account issues raised during an extensive consultation period on the recommendations of an independently chaired Grants Review Board.

The changes to the grants programme are designed to ensure that key services are accessible to all Londoners who need them, wherever they live in the capital, and that the Voluntary and Community Sector is enabled to deliver quality, value for money services that meet priority needs of London.

One major change is to introduce commissioning as the main approach in identifying groups to deliver priority services across London. The Association of London Government has already involved the voluntary and community sector as a sounding board on commissioning and will continue to work closely with the sector on developing and implementing the commissioning approach. The Association of London Government hopes to issue a consultation paper on commissioning at the beginning of October. The views of London's voluntary and community sector will be important to ensuring that the process put into place is fair and transparent and best enables the needs of Londoners to be addressed. The Association of London Government hope to have agreed their approach by March 2006.

For more information on the changes being made to the Association of London Government's funding arrangements, please visit their website at www.alg.gov.uk

Funding Opportunities

Friends Provident Foundation (UK)

The Friends Provident Foundation makes grants of up to £200,000 to not-for profit organisations for projects that address financial exclusion within disadvantaged communities. The funding is distributed through two grant making programmes. These are the New Ideas programme, which supports research into financial exclusion as well as seed corn funding for new projects and the Market Models programme which provides funding so that successful projects can be expanded. The next deadline for applications is 11 November 2005 for the New Ideas programme and 18 November 2005 for the Market Models programme.

www.friendsprovident.com/common/layouts/subSectionLayout.jhtml?pageld=fpcouk/SitePageSimple%3Afriends_provident_foundation_landing+_page#

Government Announces Funding to Boost Debt Advice (England & Wales)

As part of the Financial Inclusion Fund, the Government has announced that it is inviting organisations to bid for a share of £45million to fund free, face-to-face debt advice. The aim of the fund will be to help recruit and train hundreds of new debt advisers. The money will be particularly targeted at areas and social groups in England and Wales with high levels of financial exclusion, with priority given to organisations with experience of providing debt advice services. The funding will be split over a two year period, with £15m allocated in 2006/7 and £30m in 2007/8. It is anticipated that the fund will open for bids in autumn 2005.

www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/topics1/debtadvice.htm

Funding to Tackle Homelessness Amongst Ethnic Minorities (England)

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has announced that it will launch a £3 million fund to help tackle homelessness amongst ethnic minority groups. The Ethnic Minorities Innovation Fund (EMIF) is a strand of the Homelessness Innovation Fund which was launched in June 2005. The Fund will provide financial support to voluntary and community groups working in partnership with local authorities, to help deliver innovative projects that will reduce levels of homelessness amongst ethnic minority groups. The EMIF will provide grants in 2006/07 and 2007/08. Details of how to submit Expression of Interest for the EMIF will be made available in the near future.

www.odpm.gov.uk/pns/displaypn.cgi?pn_id=2005_0194

UIA Charitable Foundation (UK)

The UIA Charitable Foundation is a small grant making trust, established to provide financial support to organisations that help people in need. Grants of up to £1,000 are available for projects that help children, and support activities such as debt counseling, disability, drug and alcohol addiction, elderly, homelessness, human rights, humanitarian aid, overseas development and poverty relief. The deadlines for applications are the end of January, April, July or October each year.

www.uia.co.uk/charitable.asp

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Fax: 020 7759 1956

Email: FirstName.LastName@legalservices.gov.uk

Diary Dates

October

26 - Lambeth Community Legal Services Partnership Steering Group Meeting

November

03 - Greenwich Advice Network Meeting

December

06 - CLS Officers Group at Offices of the Association of London Government

07 - Lambeth Community Legal Services Partnership Steering Group Meeting

09 - Tower Hamlets Community Legal Services Partnership Steering Group Meeting

Contact Details

In order to improve communication between the London Planning and Partnership Team and our partners, it is essential that we have accurate and up-to-date contact details for you and your organisation.

Therefore, should there ever be a change to your contact details, please cut out and send/fax back this form to the address below or email CLSLondon@legalservices.gov.uk so that we can keep our records and database up-to-date.

Please make sure we have your email address for the next edition, send this to: CLSLondon@legalservices.gov.uk

Name:

Telephone:

Position:

Fax:

Organisation:

Mobile:

Address:

Email:

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Postcode:

