



Annual Review

2021–2022

Information

Reach



1,052,998 sessions
by **828,402 users**
from across England and Wales



174,418,900
pageviews



28%
are helping
someone else



51% have a
household income
of below £1,100
per month after tax



34%
identified
as disabled



54%
of our users
are female



75%
of our
users are
not working



20%
are BAME



22% said their problem was caused
by or made worse by Covid-19

Education

Reach



Over 40
workshops
held



Our training
videos have
been watched
9255 times



Estimated organisations indirect
reach of **25,000** people
across all courses



240 different
participants
from over
120 different
organisations



62% increase
in confidence in
helping people
with housing
law problems

Impact



5515
personalised mandatory
reconsideration letters produced



Our information films
have been viewed
33,825 times



14 family law solicitors
provide advice
on our Affordable
Advice panel



97% of respondents
said the course
changed their view on
how they can advocate
for the people they help
using the tools provided

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Law for Life online:



www.advicenow.org.uk
www.lawforlife.org.uk



twitter.com/LfL_Advicenow



www.facebook.com/advicenowlfl

Welcome from the Chair and CEO

Welcome from our Chair – Amanda Finlay CBE

As the pandemic and Brexit continued to impact so many people's lives, we worked with our users and others – lawyers, advisors, academics and volunteers – who share our passion for social justice. This report reflects the achievements of our wonderful team and their collaboration across a huge range of issues, sharing learning and insights.

We responded swiftly to changes in the justice system, developing new guidance on no fault divorce, backed up by our Affordable Advice Service on family law. We also plugged the serious gap in information on implications of the Single Justice Procedure Notice for minor crimes which enabled people to properly understand their options.

Our housing rights courses demonstrated the vital role of trusted intermediaries in reaching the most vulnerable in the community. Participants were empowered and enthused, using their new found knowledge and skills to recognise and tackle the complexities of housing problems. They appreciated the remote delivery and videos, and our excellent guides: making the most of their precious time.

As advice and law centres faced a tsunami of need, we enabled them to concentrate on the most vulnerable: referring clients capable of self-help to our tried and tested guides on civil and family law and our benefit guides and tools. We know that many professionals and volunteers use these guides too.

This has been a year of challenge and collaboration, reinforcing the place of Law for Life as a vital component in the access to justice ecosystem.



Amanda Finlay, Chair

A Message from our CEO – Lisa Wintersteiger

This year saw the end of lock-down restrictions lifted in February 2022, but the long shadow of the pandemic remained all to present. Department for Work and Pensions data shows that around one in six people in the UK were in relative poverty and 8.9 million people were in absolute poverty¹.

Inflationary pressures by over 9% in the 12 months to June 2022 driven up by the price of essentials like energy and food, meant that low-income households, who spend a bigger than average proportion on essentials, are most affected.² Household composition also changed, with people forming bubbles or moving back with parents, and many more couples divorced.³ Claims for disability benefits continued to rise and Social Security and Child Support appeals increased by 74%.

All of these factors are drivers of the volume and complexity of legal needs and the demand for our services; support for benefits claims and appeals, support for families facing separations and the underlying strains of making ends meet. Against this backdrop, Law for Life has increased its grant profile substantially in this year. Income from grants rose by 25% and contract income tripled. We have grown our expert staff team across education and information teams and grown our research and campaigns staff to tackle the growing demand and to find better solutions to systemic problems. All of these pillars are the central focus of the Charity as we look to the challenges that lie ahead.



Lisa Wintersteiger, CEO

Who we are and why we are here

Law for Life strives for social justice by legally empowering individuals and communities. We believe everyone should be equipped with the knowledge, confidence and skills needed to deal with the law-related issues they encounter in their lives.

- We specialise in targeted and tailored public legal education and information that is user-centred, empowering, and effective.
- We deliver innovative access to justice initiatives that bring together on and offline help.
- We collaborate with communities and organisations to identify and achieve structural change.
- We combine research and practice to achieve excellence in public legal education and information. We promote the importance of high quality public legal education and information in order to develop and share good practice.





Making a Difference

Making a difference to disability benefit claimants

In March 2022, we launched another [mandatory reconsideration letter generation tool](#) – this time to help people challenge unfair work capability decisions. Our Mandatory Reconsideration letter generation tools are a type of document assembly tool that support users to challenge unfair benefit decisions. This piece of law-tech first supports the user to feel confident that they should challenge the decision, and then generates a personalised letter requesting a mandatory reconsideration and setting out why the user is entitled to the benefit, point-by-point. We know they are popular with claimants themselves and are used to train advisers.

In total 5,317 people downloaded letters to send to the DWP to ask them to look again at their decision for PIP, DLA or Employment and Support Allowance or the limited capability for work element of a Universal Credit claim. Our guides to the next stage - asking for an appeal and representing yourself at the hearing - received 146,369 pageviews in total.

During this year we were also approached by University House to work with them to develop our first tribunal submission tool – also to help challenge unfair Work Capability Assessment decisions. Our [Work Capability Assessment Tribunal Submission tool](#) was launched in September 2022.

Help with PIP



122,835

pageviews for
How to win a PIP appeal



64,934

pageviews for the
PIP Mandatory
Reconsideration letter tool



4819

personalised Mandatory
Reconsideration request
letters were generated
for PIP claimants



11,404

pageviews for Filling in
a pip form video guide

Disability Living Allowance tool



17,759

pageviews for
How to win a DLA appeal



10,244

pageviews for
DLA Mandatory
Reconsideration letter tool



498

personalised Mandatory
Reconsideration request
letters were generated
for DLA claimants

“I have used the PIP mandatory tool, I would like to say thank you much for making my MR letter so easy and helpful. I have just found out my claim has been successful and I must say I was really stressed out but this website has been very beneficial for me. Thank you soo much”

Advicenow service user

Work capability assessments



28,969

pageviews for
How to win a work capability
assessment appeal



5707

pageviews for Work
capability assessment
mandatory
reconsideration tool



198

personalised Mandatory
Reconsideration request
letters were generated
for UC or ESA claimants

Making a difference to people dealing with family issues

Divorcing couples

This year saw the biggest change to divorce laws in England and Wales in nearly 50 years. Whilst there was an overhaul of the substantive law, there were also changes to the procedures involved, with Litigants in Person being encouraged to use the new online court service.

Commonly held beliefs about what happens when you get a divorce were rendered obsolete overnight by the shift in the law away from 'fault' based divorce applications. For people taking their first steps to apply for a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership from April 2022, there was a dearth of comprehensive, supportive, reliable and up-to-date legal information.

To meet this legal information need, we researched the changes to the law and consulted practising family law solicitors and barristers before rewriting our existing resources on divorce. In order to provide useful information on the new online court process in time for the law change, we worked with HMCTS and We Are Digital to gain access to demos of the digital service in advance.

Thanks to funding from the Legal Support for Litigants in Person grant we were able to publish [A survival guide to divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership](#) and [How to get a divorce or end a civil partnership](#) when the law changed.

At the time of writing the new resources, it was not possible to pilot them with a group of end users as the materials needed to be ready for when the law changed, at which point no one had any experience of the new laws and processes. A survey of our users is scheduled so that people are able to contribute to the improvement of these guides at the point of review and updating.

"Very kind of you to provide the guide on filling in the financial order for free. Thank you for considering my financial situation."

Advicenow service user

Support for separating families

Our Affordable Advice service pilot ended and the full service launched successfully in August 2021. The service has continued to help litigants in person who need a bit of expert advice to sort out their child arrangements or finances after a divorce. The service dovetails our step-by-step guides with fixed fee, low-cost unbundled legal advice from Resolution family lawyers at just the most crucial points in the process.

When the service was evaluated in summer 2022:

98%

said they would recommend this service to others

82%

said they would approach that solicitor for help with future family law problems

90%

said the advice helped them to feel more confident

50%

said they would not have sought advice without this service



“It [the Advicenow guide] was like my textbook, if I’m honest with you, I put post-its all over it...I used it as a go-to and actually I referenced it in court proceedings. And I asked directly to the judges and things. I said, ‘Well, I’ve read that I can do this.’”

AA Interviewee



189,743

pageviews for
Affordable Advice guides



143

low-cost appointments
held with lawyers



The majority of service users
were from low-income,
working households.

Almost 60%
of users were women



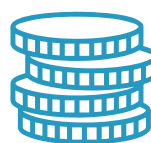
83%

of people said they would
not have sought advice or
were unsure whether they
would have sought advice
without the service



98%

of users said they would
recommend the service
to others



75%

of service users
considered the service
to be either good or
very good value



Benefits and living together

103,176
pageviews



Making a difference to Litigants in Person with civil claims

This year we added to our suite of guides for people taking or responding to a claim about compensation, personal injury, unpaid debts, broken contracts, or consumer problems to the small claims court or the county court without the help of a solicitor.

We now have resources that show our readers how to work out whether taking someone to court will be worth it, and how to resolve the dispute before or instead of going to court. We also show our readers how to navigate the pre-court protocols in the civil court, how to complete the correct forms and use the new online civil court systems. We show readers how to make their case well, prepare for court hearings and how to deal with things like witness statements and court bundles.

These guides attracted over 78,792 pageviews.

We also produced a guide to the new rules for people making a small claim about injuries caused in a car accident that wasn't their fault, and joined the Official Injury Claim Engagement Group to use our expertise to ensure the service worked for Litigants in Person.

“Extremely helpful. Thank you so much for this website! It is really helpful and well explained!”

Advicenow service user

“Really grateful for this help. The bits on how to value your claim are so useful. Realise I won't get much money out of it so now thinking about is it really worth it.”

Advicenow service user

“Impressed with the detail. I am just starting a small claims case and this information has been very useful, the step by step instructions and the details given. A great help, thank you :-)”

Advicenow service user

Making a difference to people who receive a single justice procedure notice

Whilst working with We Are Digital ([see page 20](#)) we identified that there was no quality information available for people who have received a single justice procedure notice (SJPN) because they had been accused of a minor crime. This might be watching TV without a TV licence, cycling on a footpath, or travelling without a valid ticket. We found this deeply concerning as almost everyone responding to a SJPN would be a Litigant in Person as free or low-cost advice on minor criminal matters is largely impossible to find.

Neither the notice itself nor the online Single Justice Service by which people are supposed to submit a plea explained what a guilty or innocent plea meant, or what a 'viable defence' is. No advice was provided on what you should explain to the magistrate if you have very difficult circumstances, or that it was possible to contact the prosecuting authority and ask them to drop the charges. As a result, we produced [a guide to help people faced with a Single Justice Procedure Notice decide how to respond](#).

"Clear and helped me to see wood from the trees"

Advicenow service user

"I didn't know what to do until I found this guide. Had no idea I could ask them to drop charges."

Advicenow service user



Making a difference to those struggling with housing and homelessness

Last year we continued our work on housing and homelessness issues, delivering education and training to trusted intermediaries, with a focus on community and grassroots organisations including refugee and migrant groups, women's groups and Black and Minority Ethnic groups. We extended our housing work to include working directly with vulnerable people with lived experience as well as trusted intermediaries.

Our housing rights courses focused on the following groups:

- Refugees and migrants
- Vulnerable women
- Black and minority ethnic groups

"I feel that there are a host of legal protections that I can cite, particularly in cases of damp and mould. I have felt before like I was flailing about in the dark with this - not so now."

Housing rights for BAME groups course participant

Reach

- Our courses reached 71 participants from 63 organisations via 20 workshops
- Our strategic housing forums reached a further 59 participants from 54 organisations
- Our education initiatives indirectly reached 1,537 people each month
- Our information resources on housing and homelessness received 92,147 pageviews (What to do if you can't get a Guarantor 49,443 How to deal with a s21 eviction 42,703)

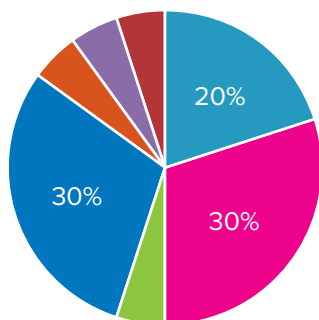
Impact

- 62% increase in confidence in helping people with housing law problems
- 12% increase in knowledge about housing rights
- 92% of participants were able to identify relevant sources of legal advice and develop an appropriate course of action for dealing with key housing issues as a result of our course
- 97% of respondents said the course provided them with the next steps they might take to help a person with their housing, disrepair or homelessness issues
- 97% of respondents said the course changed their view on how they can advocate for the people they help using the tools provided

Demographic breakdowns

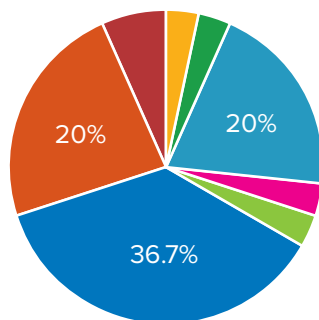
Ethnicity data across our courses

Refugees course



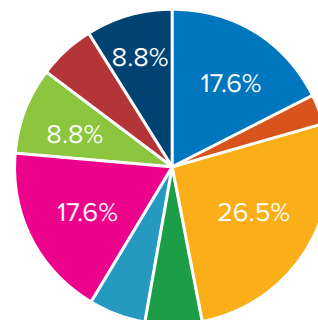
- White – British
- White – any other White background
- Asian or Asian British
- Asian – any other Asian background
- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller
- Black or Black British
- Black – any other Black background
- Mixed – any other Mixed background
- Do not wish to disclose
- Other group
- Arabic

Women's course



- White – British
- White – any other White background
- Asian or Asian British
- Asian – any other Asian background
- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller
- Black or Black British
- Black – any other Black background
- Mixed – any other Mixed background
- Do not wish to disclose
- Other group
- British White/Latin

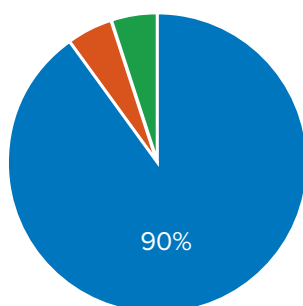
BAME course



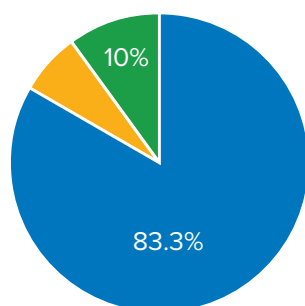
- Asian or Asian British
- Asian – any other Asian background
- Black or Black British
- Black – any other Black background
- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller
- Mixed – any other Mixed background
- White – British
- White – any other White background
- Other group
- Do not wish to disclose

Gender data across our courses

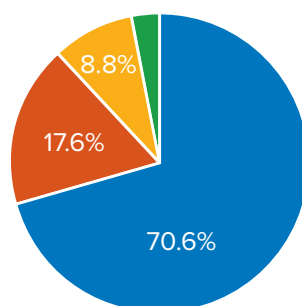
Refugees course



Women's course



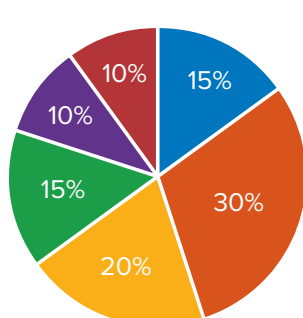
BAME course



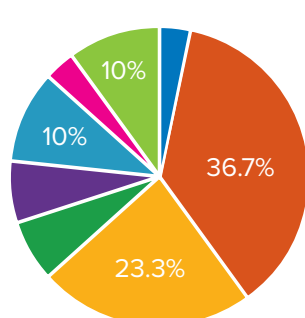
- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Do not wish to disclose

Occupation data across our courses

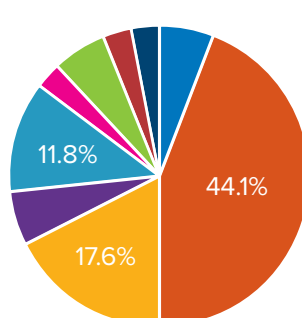
Refugees course



Women's course



BAME course



- In education
- Full time employed
- Part time employed
- Unemployed
- Looking after home or family
- Out of work due to sickness/disability
- Retired
- Carer
- Other (please specify)
- Do not wish to disclose

New housing resources:

We produced a new [video series](#) on Housing Rights for Black, Asian, and ethnic minority communities, providing educational content and legal updates on various housing issues in the wake of covid-19 and Brexit. This has replaced our previous housing education videos.

We created a new guide on [how to support homeless people and those threatened with homelessness](#), which provides information on what types of help homelessness people should receive and how to deal with local authority housing departments when making homeless applications. It also includes specific information on vulnerability assessments.

We created a new guide on [Starting a tenancy and right to rent checks](#). This guide was a result of our survey findings on the difficulty people have when starting a tenancy, especially when faced with discrimination. This guide also fed into a new video and strategic forum on Right to Rent, which launched in November 2022.

“The course helped me with gathering information to then refer on to specialist advice. I have a bit more confidence to liaise with the different organisations on a tenant’s behalf. And having more confidence to be a “go between” for the tenant and the council.”

Housing rights for Refugee groups course participant

Making a difference for Roma families

Last year we continued with legal empowerment work for Roma communities and other groups that may face multiple challenges when going through the child protection process or care proceedings through our education and training as well as producing new film and information resources.

We successfully adapted our training about child protection for digital delivery by developing a short [video](#) about child protection for Roma families. As well as featuring in our training courses, the film is now a stand-alone resource accessible to anyone. Our training materials also worked well in a digital context, and we received positive feedback from our participants regarding the content and format of the delivery. We began work with the Traveller Movement to adapt our training materials for the needs of Gypsy and Traveller advocates, and in May we delivered training for 25 Gypsy and Traveller advocates.

We also delivered a pilot training session for Roma parents in Sheffield as part of the Roma Women's Gathering, organised by the [RTransform](#) project. Approximately 45 Roma people attended.

In February 2022, we were delighted to be commissioned by the Yorkshire and Humber regional development and training team to deliver an awareness raising workshop, in partnership with Roma Support Group, about Roma culture and challenges that they may face when working with social workers. This training was attended by approximately 100 social workers in the Yorkshire & Humber region.

"I have never been to training where the process of child protection was put over so well, I knew a lot of the information in parts, but I found it really helpful to see the overview. Thank you."

Gypsy and Traveller course participant

"Really good to take part in this child protection training for Roma advocates today. Good to get a better understanding of the processes to be able to better support families."

Roma course participant



Reach



52

Roma advocates



25

Gypsy and Traveller advocates



45

Roma people



100

social workers



YouTube film was watched **359** times.

Impact



50%

increase in confidence through our courses for Roma, Gypsy and Traveller advocates



30%

increase in knowledge

Insight and Change

Law for Life works to improve our understanding of emerging legal needs and the impact of our services to ensure they are helping our beneficiaries. We also use the insights we gather from our data and our many community partners to identify when and where systemic barriers are the cause of repeated problems and difficulties. We work on campaigns with our partners to influence change through our policy, strategic litigation and media work.

Understanding local legal need and supporting early intervention through public legal education

We wanted to understand what was happening in communities in the wake of Covid-19 and how we might tackle some of the growing problems experienced by hard pressed groups as early as possible. We commenced a qualitative legal needs study based in Coventry, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, conducted in partnership with University of Warwick Law School and Central England Law Centre. This research will be completed in February 2024. The study develops co-produced research with trusted intermediaries on the experiences of marginalised groups in dealing with law-related issues, particularly during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and as the cost-of-living emergency continues. It focuses on emerging issues, barriers to access to justice, and how these interact with legal and digital capability. Seven trusted intermediaries are participating in the study. They work with people accessing foodbanks and reduced cost food; youth at risk of homelessness and/or living in supported accommodation; migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; people experiencing mental health issues; vulnerable women and women specifically at risk of or subject to sexual exploitation.

Our emerging findings this year showed:

- The most prevalent legal needs in the aftermath of the pandemic relate to welfare benefits, housing and homeless, immigration, employment and social care.
- People from marginalised groups face significant barriers to dealing with law-related issues and accessing justice including low levels of knowledge of rights and legal processes and sources of legal help. Emotional and confidence barriers, including stress compound difficulties in securing access to services.
- Overall reductions in services, entitlements and lack of capacity create systemic barriers to accessing health and legal support, and systems penalise people who are already struggling due to multiple disadvantages.
- Digitisation creates specific barriers for people including difficulties with accessing online systems, navigation and evidence submission. Lack of internet access, wider digital poverty and low levels of digital skills are reported. Digitisation can make it more difficult to access help and support, and it can compound feelings of alienation.
- Trusted intermediaries are an integral part of access to justice for marginalised groups. They are a lifeline for those they support in the context of law-related issues. They actively participate in finding solutions and resolving issues at the earliest stage, including signposting, referrals, practical support, form filling, interpreting, and advocacy.

Intermediaries described problems that reflect the centrality of these areas in everyday life, and the challenges that complex systems for accessing rights and entitlements create for people who are marginalised. Our study aims to support early intervention and asks whether these issues could be identified and addressed earlier or prevented entirely.

The full Research Briefing can be found [here](#).

Understanding the impact of our services

The final year of our research for the Legal Support for Litigants in Person (LSLIP) project, funded by the Ministry of Justice via the Access to Justice Foundation, focused on qualitative research into two of our projects: the Affordable Advice service for Litigants in Person dealing with family issues and the personalised legal support tools that support our users to challenge unfair Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) decisions.

Our Affordable Advice service

This service is aimed at people who are managing their finances on divorce or child arrangements difficulties with little or no advice. The service offers a blend of step-by-step guidance with fixed fee, unbundled legal advice from Resolution family lawyers. The service was developed to meet the needs of Litigants in Person (LiPs) who do not seek the advice they need from family law solicitors because of fear and confusion about prices, the high cost of advice, and lack of confidence about how to find a good solicitor, and how to be sure it will work for them as a Litigant in Person.

Our research found:

1. The new service enabled service users to get unbundled advice for a substantially reduced fixed fee.
2. The service reached a new market of people who could not afford to instruct a solicitor to act for them and those nervous about accessing legal advice because of the uncertainty of the final cost. **83%** of people said they would not have sought advice or were unsure whether they would have sought advice without the service.
3. Most service users were from low-income, working households. Almost **60%** of users were women. **49%** were on low incomes (**37%** didn't disclose their income).

4. Most service users sought help with financial arrangements (**64%**) rather than child arrangements (**28%**).
5. Satisfaction with the service was high. **98%** of users said they would recommend the service to others. **75%** of users considered the service to be very good value. However, **75%** said they could not afford to pay more.
6. The service made a difference to users by helping them understand their legal issues and the processes associated with their situation. It enabled them to weigh options, make informed choices, improved confidence to act, and helped them make their case better.
7. Service users reported increased trust in legal services and **82%** said the service had reduced their stress. Users reported that the guides and the solicitor appointment helped them cope better with the process and mitigated the emotions generated by their case. Some users reported substantially improved outcomes in their matter.

You can read more in our [Affordable Advice Research Briefing](#) on our website.

Our disability benefit review and appeals tools

These tools are a type of document assembly tool that support users to challenge disability benefit decisions. They support the user to feel confident when they should challenge the decision by calculating what level they ought to be entitled to. The tools then generate a personalised letter requesting a mandatory reconsideration. The letter sets out why the user is entitled to the benefit point-by-point.

Our research found:

- Most service users were aged **25-44 years old**. **60%** of users applying for PIP and **70%** applying for DLA (on behalf of a child under 16) were women.

- The service made a difference to users by helping them understand their legal rights and the processes of appealing their benefit decisions and how to navigate them. **47%** thought they would not have asked for a mandatory reconsideration or appeal without our tool or guide. Of the **53%** that did think they would have applied without the guide/tool, **60%** thought this helped them to put their case better and **60%** felt more confident after using the tool/guide.
- The service made a significant difference to the financial outcomes of users: **11** users said they'd had their award changed at the mandatory reconsideration stage and **8** at appeal; **2** reported they hadn't had any change. Of the **18** that reported on their outcomes, **44%** had their Mobility award changed for the better; **67%** had their Care award increased. One person reported a backdated award of over £2000.
- Most highlighted the stress caused by having to request a mandatory reconsideration and provide additional evidence. Service users reported that using the guides and tools helped them mitigate the stress they experienced as a result of appealing their PIP or DLA decision.
- Satisfaction with the service was high: many interviewees said they'd recommended the letter tool to friends, family, or members of their self-help group, because they appreciated how much it had helped them.

Employment law problems – Feasibility research

The Bar Standards Board generously provided for us to research prevalent employment-related legal problems in the light of the pandemic, Brexit and the cost of living crisis to develop a public legal education employment law strategy. Through desktop research, feedback from our users, multiple surveys, and consultation with advice agencies we identified what employment issues people are facing, and which groups are particularly affected

Our research found:

- The most common problems they experienced were around perceived unfair dismissal and health and safety issues, reduced and unpaid wages and zero hour contract problems.
- **41%** said they had experienced discrimination.
- **14%** said they had experienced issues around reasonable adjustments.
- **58%** said that they had complained or raised a grievance with their employer.

We identified emerging need in the form of a changing workforce profile as older people and those with long term health conditions leave the workforce; poor practice in sectors where there are labour shortages, often filled by migrant workers, for example, distribution and care; and risk of exploitation in sectors where the government has introduced short term visa schemes such as agriculture. The government's reform programme to digitise employment tribunal processes will add a layer of complexity and exclusion for some. Our gaps analysis identified the need for:

- awareness raising and early intervention information, particularly for some audiences, such as some groups of migrant workers who have little knowledge of how the law underpins their problems with work,
- information which supports people by being relatable, 'on their side',
- information that acknowledges emotions and addresses how these impact on people's ability to take in information and maintain a detachment,
- information that explains how to deal with a problem, in reality, rather than how the process is supposed to work.



Defending rights, defending communities

At a time of unprecedented incursions on civil and social rights and entitlements in the realm of welfare, housing, protection from discrimination and the right to protest, Law for Life is redoubling its efforts to work with frontline communities and activists to protect and defend access to justice and democratic accountability. Public legal education is a foundational element of democratic governance and is essential for any society that values freedom, equality, and justice. This programme of work builds on our successful track record of bringing about systemic change. This year we focused on:

- **Defending democracy and the right to protest**

Working in partnership with Disabled People Against the Cuts we have brought together a national coalition of groups to defend the right to protest and the rights of nomadic communities threatened by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Bill. We have created a [resource and support hub for those participating in](#) protests in response to the new Policing Act. We are currently developing a national campaign to provide clear and accessible information about protestors' rights and to identify the implications of these laws for disabled protestors and those subject to immigration control. This programme of work is funded by Necessity and supported by Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust.

- **Tackling rogue landlords and homelessness vulnerability assessments**

We have worked with housing groups and collectives to gather evidence on outsourcing of homelessness vulnerability assessments that create unfair decision place vulnerable people at grater risk. We also gather information on rogue landlords' practices and work in partnership with housing agencies and legal practitioners to formulate strategic challenges.

- **Challenging Department of Work and Pension cold-calling disabled claimants**

In July 2021, working with Public Law Project, we played a major role in a [judicial review case](#) against the Department for Work and Pensions over their practice of phoning claimants who had lodged an appeal, and 'offering' a higher rate of benefit in return for dropping their appeal. The DWP settled the case and promised to change its guidance and practices to ensure it was explained to the claimant that they could accept the new award and still appeal the decision. Throughout this year we continued to monitor the practice and collect data from our users. To date, 51 claimants and their family members have received these calls since the guidance was amended. We are working with Public Law Project to support another strategic challenge.

Consultancy and capacity building

We worked with [We Are Digital](#) (who have the HMCTS contract to provide digital support to people who need help to access online court services) on a consultancy basis, to enable their staff and project partners to provide more effective help to those who need digital support. We provided training packs and sessions to We Are Digital call handlers and partners in community organisations providing face-to-face digital support about how to use the:

- Submit an appeal service (for benefit appeals)
 - Make a money claim (for people starting or responding to a small claim about money)
 - Help with fees service (for people on a low income applying to pay reduced court fees)
 - Single Justice Service (for people who are accused of a minor criminal offence and need to respond to a single justice procedure notice)
- Consultancy and capacity building

- Apply for a divorce service
- Apply for probate (for people who need to sort out the estate of someone who has died)

The training not only provided participants with knowledge about what detail to put where on each of the online forms, but also guidance on how to support the person receiving assistance to properly explain their case. This is important as those with low digital capability very often also have low legal capability, and the way the service was tendered precluded the digital support being provided by advice agencies. We also worked with We Are Digital on their referral data and helped them to understand which groups need their service but are unable to access it (and why) and where in the process they are losing more high-need service users.





Working with volunteers

We regularly use volunteers to support all areas of our education and training work. All our guides and tools are peer reviewed by expert volunteers and our community training is often delivered with the help of solicitors or barristers working pro bono.

Warwick University paid intern placement

We were fortunate to benefit from an intern arrangement with the University of Warwick whereby a high calibre student was shortlisted and offered a paid role at Law for Life as a part-time legal information, research and evaluation assistant for a 12 week placement.

“I secured a 12-week internship at Law for Life, funded by the University of Warwick. I gained key insight into the Access to Justice sector, public legal education and information, the experiences of litigants-in-person (LiPs), non-traditional legal roles, as well as the importance of funding in this sector. I had the opportunity to work with both the research team and the information team.

I undertook an employment feasibility project where I collated data and research to find out the employment law issues people were facing after the pandemic and how Law for Life might address these needs. I also had a chance to work on some social media content. One of my tasks was to research the effect of Covid-19 on the Access to Justice sector by looking at pre- and post-pandemic website traffic figures for different organisations and charities, with the aim to identify variations in website use and how to address them.

I had a fantastic time working with everyone on the Law for Life team over the summer, I learnt so much and would love the opportunity to work with them again in the future.”

Ayo Salami, undergraduate law student,
University of Warwick

We facilitated a student placement for law students at Warwick University who are taking a PLE module as part of their degree. We worked with two students this year.

They researched how different Black and minority ethnic groups have been impacted by the housing crisis and the pandemic. The students then produced a short report with key findings which helped us understand which ethnic groups we should focus on when delivering our Housing Rights programme for Black and minority ethnic groups.

The students also researched relevant BAME organisations in areas of London that have been most impacted by the pandemic. We invited those groups to attend our training programme.

“I volunteered at Law for Life during the student placement portion of the Public Legal Education module. We were given the task of researching the disproportionate impact of the housing crisis on BAME communities in London. Doing this research was a great opportunity to learn more about an area of law and policy which has not been covered in our studies. As this research was used to update and adapt an upcoming housing course, we were able to contribute to Law for Life’s vital work in helping people understand and confront the complex and important housing issues they face.”

Amber Shah, undergraduate law student,
University of Warwick

“Volunteering with Law for Life was a great experience. The placement allowed me to see how the law is embedded in peoples lives and, after studying PLE in theory, provided a real insight into PLE in practice. It helped me understand how those who are already going through hardship can be further disadvantaged when they lack the legal knowledge and legal capability to secure the few rights they do have. It was encouraging to be able to contribute, even a little, to the work being done by Law for Life through our research for the housing course, which is targeted towards specific issues experienced by different groups in the BAME community. This experience has boosted my confidence, as throughout the placement we were embraced as part of the team and our opinions and views were validated and held of equal value. Going forward I feel empowered and encouraged to really think about how I can contribute to PLE in the future.”

Esther Alogba, undergraduate law student,
University of Warwick

Looking forward

Key achievements

We grew our portfolio of grants and we have continued to diversify our income streams to allow us help more beneficiaries and to gain far deeper understanding of the need for and impact of our services

We created an Insight and Change Team that enables us to grow our understanding of emerging needs, the impact of our existing services and how to gather evidence on systemic barriers and how to tackle them

Our strategic priorities

As we enter the final year of our 5 year strategic plan and into the final year of our rapid review following COVID 19 we have identified the following priorities to achieve in this next year:

Deliver innovative public legal education that builds legal capability

Understand and demonstrate the need for and value of PLE

Enable others to use public legal education and information

Strengthen organisational sustainability to drive our mission and values

Critical success factors identified during the review include building our profile through enhanced communications and promotion work, and continuing to diversify and expand our trading potential.

Structure, governance and management

Law for Life: the Foundation for Public Legal Education is a company limited by guarantee governed by its memorandum and articles of association and registered under the number 07695486.

The company was incorporated and commenced trading on 6 July 2011.

It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission under number 1143589.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for setting strategies and policies for the charity and for ensuring that these are implemented. The members of the Board of Trustees perform the role of directors in company law and trustees in charity law.

Those who served during the year were:

Amanda Finlay CBE:	27.03.2012	– Present
Dr Vanessa Davies:	11.05.2017	– Present
Raymond Sheehy:	11.05.2017	– Present
Jonathan Spain:	22.02.2018	– Present
Joseph Broadway:	22.02.2018	– Present
Dr Simon Davey:	25.03.2020	– Present
Abiodun Olatokun:	25.03.2020	– Present



Our staff

Rebecca Asaolu
Danika Brereton
Wendy Eades
Dada Felja
Theresa Harris
Beth Kirkland

Mary Marvel
Rowan Milligan
Tin Myint
Tofunmi Odugbemi
Mihaela Rosca
Dr Lisa Wintersteiger

Patrons

The charity is very grateful for the support it receives from its patrons listed below:

The Rt Hon. Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury
Dame Professor Hazel Genn DBE QC
Lord Briggs of Westbourne

Financial Review

The Board of Trustees is pleased to present their Annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30th June 2022.

The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and the Statement

of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities issued in March 2005. The Board of Trustees has complied with the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when reviewing the charity's aims and its objectives and in planning our future activities.

Law for Life: The Foundation for Public Legal Education

Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 30 June 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2021 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:					
Donations and legacies	2	644	-	644	1,132
Charitable activities	4	330,896	101,623	432,519	321,742
Investments	3	1	-	1	-
Total		331,541	101,623	433,164	322,874
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Charitable activities		278,660	71,335	349,995	343,649
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	5	278,660	71,335	349,995	343,649
Net income/(expenditure) before gains and losses on investments		52,881	30,288	83,169	(20,775)
Net income/(expenditure)		52,881	30,288	83,169	(20,775)
Transfer between funds	14	-	-	-	-
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other recognised gains and losses		52,881	30,288	83,169	(20,775)
NET MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS		52,881	30,288	83,169	(20,775)
TOTAL FUNDS AT 1 JULY 2021		20,371	4,558	24,929	45,704
TOTAL FUNDS AT 30 JUNE 2022		73,252	34,846	108,098	24,929

Balance Sheet
At 30 June 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	11	-	-
		-	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	12	64,021	8,542
Cash at bank and in hand		65,244	60,428
		129,265	68,970
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	13	(21,167)	(44,041)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		108,098	24,929
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		108,098	24,929
NET ASSETS		108,098	24,929
FUNDS			
Unrestricted funds:			
General fund	14	73,252	20,371
Restricted funds	14	34,846	4,558
		108,098	24,929

CONTINUING OPERATIONS

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

Statement by the directors of Law for Life

These accounts are a summary of information extracted from the annual accounts and certain information relating to both the statement of financial activities and the balance sheet. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity.

The independent examiner has issued an unmodified report on the full financial statements. For further information, the full annual accounts and the directors' annual report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from Law for Life, 4th Floor, 18 St. Cross Street, London, EC1N 8UN. Signed on behalf of the Directors by Amanda Finlay, Chair.

Thanks

We would like to thank everybody who supported the work of Law for Life during the year through grants and the donation of their valuable time and skills.

Pro Bono supporters and volunteers

David Thomas	Chris Kidd (Romani and Traveller Social Work Community Group)
Lucy Grey (Allen & Overy)	Cris McCurley (Ben Hoare Bell LLP)
Frances Beddow (Allen & Overy)	Pascoe Pleasence (UCL)
Amber Shah (Warwick University law student)	Sharon Collard (Bristol Uni)
Esther Alogba (Warwick University law student)	Anne Barlow (Exeter Uni)
Charlotte Green	Grainne McKeever (Ulster Uni)
Kate Williams	Ash Patel (Nuffield Foundation)
Rosamaria Kostic Cisneros (Coventry University)	Katrina Deering (Student)
Amanda Sawyer (Simpson Millar Solicitors)	Sonja Dale (Keele Uni School of law)
Natalia Schiffrin (Magistrate)	Ashley Fredericks (Nottingham Law School)
Joanna Kostka (Lancaster University)	Brett Dixon (APIL)
Jess Mant (Cardiff University)	Melanie Bataillard-Samuel (Expatriate Law)
Pratichi Chatterjee	Philippa Johnson (TurnerJohnson Mediation)
Paul Sayers (Luton Roma Trust staff member)	Chris Field
Amanda Sawyer (Simpson Millar)	Polly Morgan (UEA - Associate Professor of law)
Gabriela Smolinska-Poffley (Roma Support Group)	Rhys Taylor (Barrister)
Allison Hulmes (Romani and Traveller Social Work Community Group)	

Funders



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Endnotes

- ¹ Brigid Francis-Devine. [Poverty in the UK: Statistics](#), The House of Commons Library, April 2023
- ² Emily Hopson. [CPIH-consistent inflation rate estimates for UK household groups: November to December 2022](#) ONS website, Office of National Statistics (ONS), February 2023
- ³ Amanda Sharfman and Pamela Cobb. [Divorces in England and Wales: 2021](#), ONS website Office for National Statistics (ONS), November 2022



Law for Life: the Foundation for Public Legal Education is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales no. 07695486. Registered office: Law for Life, 4th Floor, 18 St. Cross Street, London, EC1N 8UN. VAT Reg. No. 235823701. Charity no. 1143589.

