



Annual Review

2017–2018

Contents

	<i>page</i>
Welcome from the chair	3
Who we are and why we are here	3
Making a difference	4
Extending our reach	8
Diversifying our income streams	9
Supporting other organisations	10
Expanding our influence	11
Looking ahead	12
Financial Review	13
Structure, governance and management	15
Thanks	16

Law for Life online:



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



twitter.com/LfL_Advicenow



www.facebook.com/advicenowfl

Welcome from the chair

This has been an exciting year for Law for Life: a year of consolidation as well as new developments. We were thrilled to win the LALY Access to Justice through IT Award for Advicenow, and to win a Plain English award for our guide to winning a PIP appeal. We know that our resources help so many people to get the support they need and their feedback is heartening and motivating.

A top priority has been engagement with Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCTS) through the Litigants in Person Engagement Group (LIPEG) to support the development of the Online Court, drawing on our long experience of helping litigants in person to develop knowledge, skills and confidence.

[Read more from our chair](#)



Amanda Finlay, chair

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 are likely to encounter in the course of their lives.

- We specialise in targeted and tailored public legal education that is user centred, empowering and preventative.
- We deliver award-winning access to justice assistance that brings together on and offline help.¹
- 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 (PLEI) in order to develop and share good practice.

1 Advicenow has received Plain English Campaign awards on three separate occasions and is the 2017 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year winner for Access to Justice through IT.

Making a difference



The Litigant in Person
Support Strategy

Making a difference to people going to court without a lawyer

Many, many people continue to find themselves facing going to court or tribunal without the help of a lawyer (Litigants in Person). We work hard to meet their needs through our [partnership](#) with RCJ Citizens Advice, the Personal Support Unit based in courts around the country, and LawWorks clinics.

80% of our survey respondents identified as actual or potential Litigants in Person, an increase of 48% since 2014–15

This year we expanded our own specialist content for this audience, producing twelve new information materials (including step-by-step guides to how to resolve a civil issue and how to determine whether it is worth taking the issue to court), a new interactive tool, and four short films aimed at helping students and other young renters deal with issues around the need for a guarantor. We also updated and improved twelve of our existing guides including all of our step-by-step guides to going to court about a family issue, How to win a PIP appeal, How to deal with an interview under caution, and our popular Help directory.

I have turned to this site many times during this really stressful time. I believe that, although nobody knows whether we will be successful, I have found the best way to represent my husband. I'm all he's got to help him and this website gives me a confidence boost.

Advicenow user and
Litigant in Person



I find the guides to representing yourself incredibly helpful and accessible. They cover very confusing, complicated legal processes and explain them in a way that makes them much easier to understand. It's not an exaggeration to say that the guides have felt like a 'god send'.

Advicenow user and Litigant in Person

57% of Advicenow users reported that we helped them to 'understand what action to take and how to do it', a 72% increase on last year

Many thanks to Advicenow for invaluable support in providing comprehensive guidance to those whom do not have access to legal advice. I refer clients to your site daily and have advised them as to the merits of the publications, such guidance can be an absolute life saver.

Camilla Choudhury –
Khawaja, Founder/Director,
The Women's Lawyer Ltd

Making a difference to benefit claimants

Our interactive tool that helps users to overturn unfair Personal Independence Payment decisions, launched last year, went from strength to strength, receiving 219,302 visits and producing 15,832 personalised letters over the year. Following this success, in November we launched a similar tool to help families of disabled children to overturn incorrect Disability Living Allowance decisions. Between its launch and the end of the year, this tool had been used to produce 717 personalised requests for a mandatory reconsideration.

I used your DLA reconsideration tool to compile my letter regarding my son's DLA claim. Today I was informed that they have changed their decision and re-awarded at the same rate as before. I could never have done this without your tool and website, I had no idea how to even start. You have no idea of the stress and worry I have been under. Thanks to you a weight has been lifted.

Advicenow user

Activity 1. Preparing food.	∨
Activity 2. Taking nutrition.	∨
Activity 3. Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition.	∨
Activity 4. Washing and bathing.	∨
Activity 5. Managing toilet needs or incontinence.	∨
Activity 6. Dressing and undressing.	∨
Activity 7. Communicating verbally.	∨

16,549 personalised letters challenging PIP and DLA decisions were produced using our tools

Making a difference to BAME female foreign nationals returning to the community from prisons

Law for Life created and delivered an ambitious PLE programme for Hibiscus Initiatives' service users – black and ethnic minority female foreign nationals involved in the criminal justice system, including victims of trafficking. The aim was to build the confidence, skills, and knowledge of participants so as to improve access to justice. All of the individuals who attended have multiple vulnerabilities (including mental health issues, disability, low income, and long-term unemployment) and are at high risk of destitution, exploitation, and hardship. Most had little understanding of their legal rights and felt disempowered by the criminal justice system.

We delivered four PLE workshops which covered basic legal concepts such as the distinction between civil and criminal law, civil and criminal courts structure, and important skills needed to deal with law-related problems. We also addressed specific issues such as the role of immigration solicitors and barristers, what is covered by legal aid in immigration cases, and how to gather documents to build your own case.

100% of participants said that they felt more confident to recognize a reliable immigration adviser/lawyer and they understood their options if they did not get a good service as a result

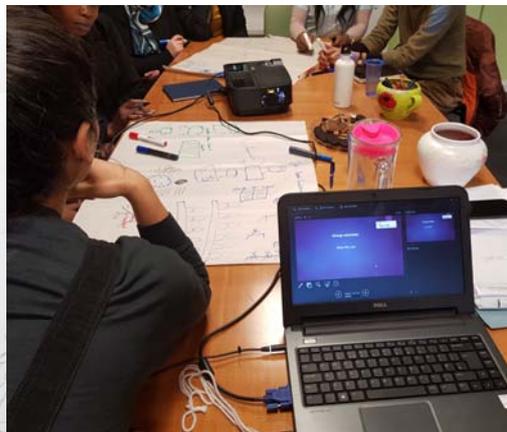
89% of participants said that the course helped them understand how to work better with their immigration adviser/lawyer

Recently I changed my solicitor and I made a complaint about my previous solicitor. The workshop helped me understand what a good solicitor is. I used this knowledge to make a good complaint.

Programme participant

I recently had to go for a Home Office interview. I knew how I should behave in the interview because of information you provided.

Programme participant



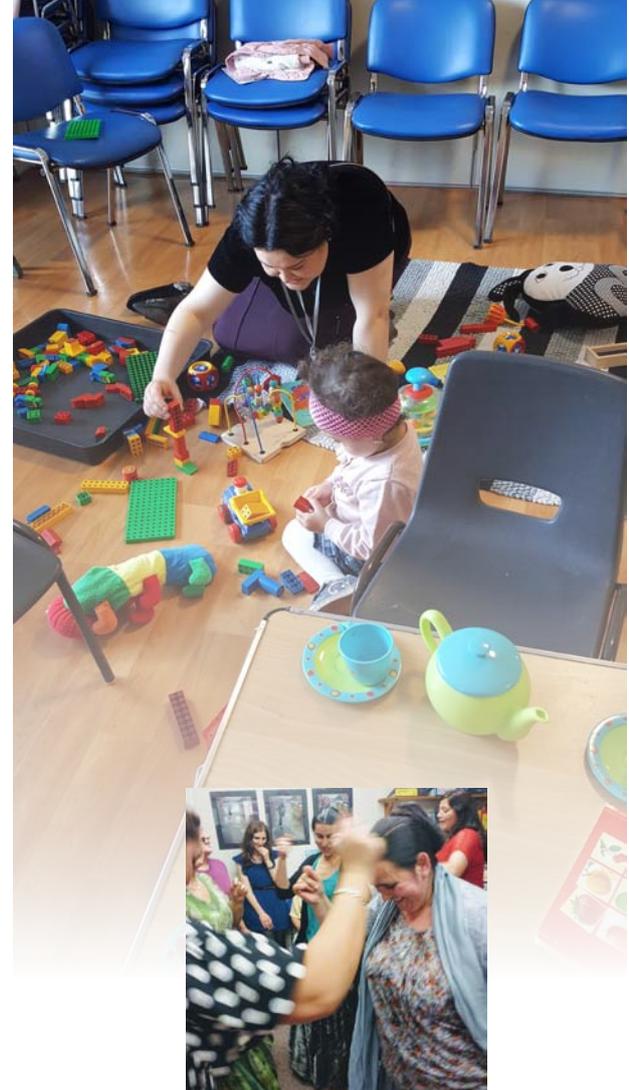
Making a difference for Roma parents

We devised a new project to develop a multimedia toolkit to increase understanding of the legal framework of child protection amongst Roma parents living in the UK. Our motivation to do this project stems from a substantial increase in the number of Roma children in the UK care system over the last five years. We set up a partnership with three Roma organisations – [Roma Support Group](#) (London), [Clifton Learning Partnership](#) (Rotherham) and [Roma Community Care](#) (Derby) to support this work.

The toolkit, to be published in November 2018, will include an information guide and short films illustrating key elements of the legal framework and, crucially, the skills needed to comply with the child protection process. The films will be narrated by Roma community members in Romanes. We will increase the reach of the toolkit with community education sessions in London, Rotherham, and Derby on the subject.

Making a difference long-term

We were delighted by the significant impact identified in the first evaluation of the long-term effect of our programme aimed at helping community workers (including support workers, volunteers, church leaders, and social workers) to be better able to support people to deal with common difficulties in private renting, like eviction and disrepair.



63% were more able to make referrals to specialist advice/legal representation

38% were better able to negotiate on behalf of others to avoid evictions or resolve disrepair problems

56% were better able to explain legal issues to others

The training on these subjects are of vital importance to everyone ... Law for Life is performing an invaluable service to local citizens, empowering us all.

Training participant

Extending our reach

Advicenow's users described themselves as:



Advicenow

Advicenow received 1,092,518 visits by 801,948 users

50.3% of Advicenow survey respondents identified as disabled

48.5% of Advicenow survey respondents have a household income of below £1,100 per month after tax

Community education

167 people representing 80 different organisations participated in our education programmes

97% of our participants rated our courses “good” or “excellent”

Diversifying our income streams

We are delighted that we are now able to provide an ethical retail service on Advicenow that strengthens our service by bringing in income from those who can afford to pay, and continues to get help to those who can't afford to pay for it.

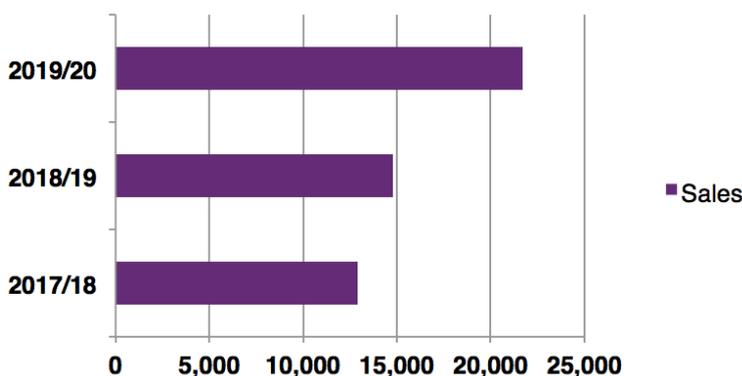
In June, we started to sell three extended digital guides, using the freemium model (most of the information is available on the website for free to everybody, but an extended version can be purchased). We have used an innovative three-tiered pricing policy – full price, a discounted price for those who receive any tax credits or state benefits (not including Child Benefit or the State Pension), or the option of requesting the guide for free if you are on a very low income and could not afford it. Both of these discounts work on an honesty system. Despite initial concerns from other quarters, this policy works well and has been warmly received. Indeed, we have been shortlisted for a prestigious BIMA award under the 'Product and Service Design: Conscience' category for it.

At the same time, we began to offer users the opportunity to buy high-quality printed copies of six guides.

We have also continued to provide digital copies of these guides to advice agencies, community groups, and those undertaking pro bono work with Litigants in Person for free.

After the first 9 full months of retail we are forecasting our retail income for the coming years.

Sales



88.5% of survey respondents said our pricing policy was ok, fair or very fair

Very kind considerate company.

Survey respondent

The online process was user friendly and the levels of service throughout were of a high standard. The product is very well written, informative and value for money.

Purchaser

Supporting other organisations

Through our consultancy services, we have supported three other organisations to improve the effectiveness of their information.

Supporting the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) Better informed consent project

Law for Life began a new project with the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS), based at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. GIDS is an NHS specialist service for children and adolescents experiencing difficulties in their gender identity development.

The aim of the project is to better understand the legal framework underpinning informed consent amongst children and young people; to identify barriers to reaching informed consent amongst those experiencing gender dysphoria; and to understand the information needs of children and young people with gender dysphoria referred to GIDS.

At the end of this first phase of the project, Law for Life will make recommendations to GIDS for improved information which aims to improve the capacity of the children and young people who are referred to the GIDS service to consent to medical treatment.

Supporting Central England Law Centre to produce factsheets about social care issues

Law for Life worked with Central England Law Centre to produce 'legacy materials' from their 'Rights in Practice' PLE project which helped people to understand that they can challenge public authorities' decisions about social care, and how to access the right kind of legal advice to do so, within the time limits.

We worked with Central England Law Centre to produce three factsheets for a wider audience, building on the learning from the project:

- Problems with day centre placements,
- Taking part in social care consultations, and
- Getting advice to challenge social care decisions.

Supporting the Bar Standards Board to meet the needs of immigrant and asylum seeker users

We carried out a usability review of a draft of the Bar Standard Board's publication 'Need help with your immigration and asylum issues? What you need to know'. We looked at how well the guidance met the needs of its audience of vulnerable clients, made suggestions for improvements and edited the document to implement these recommendations.

We also assisted with the 'Vulnerability Good Practice Guide (Immigration Clients)' – a user guide for barristers working with vulnerable adult immigration clients to help them identify, assess and manage client vulnerabilities in line with good practice.



Expanding our influence

Law for Life’s Advicenow site had a year of accolades, winning both the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year (LALY) Access to Justice through IT award, and a Plain English award for our popular guide How to win a PIP appeal.

Law for Life was delighted to be the winner of the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year (LALY) award for Access to Justice through IT for its Advicenow website. The LALYs are run by the Legal Aid Practitioners Group and celebrate the work of the legal profession in improving Access to Justice.



We continued to support the work of the Litigant in Person Engagement Group convened by the Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty’s Court Service to inform the development of the Online Court reform programme. The group contributes to an understanding of Litigants in Person and advice/pro bono sector perspectives when considering the new service models, and provides feedback on the design, usability and delivery of products created within projects and linked programmes (such as the Common Platform Programme) for the tribunal/civil/family/criminal justice systems.

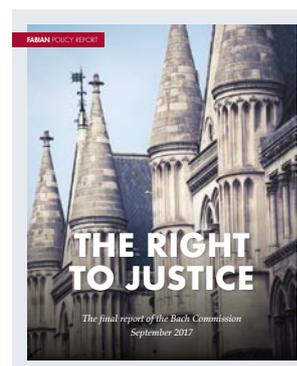
We began contributing to the Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP’s public legal education panel, launched in July. The new Panel will help drive forward Public Legal Education so more people can reap the benefits.

Teaching people about their legal rights and responsibilities, together with helping them gain the confidence and skills to get access to justice can really make a difference to people’s lives – as well as our legal system.

The Solicitor General

We contributed evidence to the Bach Commission report ‘The Right to Justice’, launched in September 2017.

The report concluded: “The state must ensure the provision of sufficient public legal education and legal information, both during formal education and throughout later life, such that people have a solid understanding of their basic rights and how to enforce them. There is already some provision in the school curriculum, but various reports have estimated that millions fail to effectively enforce their rights every year because people do not understand the legal system or know how to use it for their benefit.”



Media coverage

We received coverage in *Legal Futures*, *The Justice Gap*, and *The Solicitor's Journal* about PLE's role in access to justice initiatives and Law for Life's evidence to the Bach Commission, and a further piece in *The Solicitor's Journal* about the use of technology to improve access to justice. We also received coverage in *The Negotiator* for our work around supporting young people to better deal with issues around the need for a guarantor, and coverage on Roger Smith's *Law, Technology and Access to Justice* blog.

We also worked with popular divorce and parenting blogs *The Divorce Club*, *Motherhood: the real deal*, *Talented Ladies Club*, and *Believe and Live Again*, to gain coverage of our resources for families dealing with divorce and child arrangements.

The logo for legal futures, featuring a stylized orange leaf icon to the left of the text "legal futures" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.The logo for The Justice Gap, with "The" in a smaller font above "Justice Gap" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font.The logo for SOLICITORS JOURNAL, with "SOLICITORS" in a bold, white, uppercase font above "JOURNAL" in a smaller, white, uppercase font, both on a blue rectangular background.The logo for The Negotiator, with "The" in a smaller font above "Negotiator" in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font, followed by a red RSS icon.The logo for DIVORCE CLUB, with "DIVORCE CLUB" in a bold, black, uppercase font inside a white speech bubble shape, which is set against a dark grey background.

Looking ahead

We have devised our new a five year strategic plan. We have identified four strategic priorities. These have been identified by analysing the strengths, challenges and risks that we face. In the next five years we will:

- Deliver innovative public legal education that builds legal capability
- Enable others to use public legal education and information
- Understand and demonstrate the need for and value of PLE
- Strengthen organisational sustainability to drive our mission and values.

In the coming year we will expand our ethical retail offering, and expand our range of information tools. We will produce new materials to help Litigants in Person, those experiencing benefit sanctions, and those challenging DWP decisions. We will deliver our multimedia toolkit to support Roma parents going through the child protection process, and explore ways of creating easier pathways to further support and advice for users of our materials looking at divorce, child arrangements and financial orders.

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 31st March 2018.

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.

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, China Works, Unit 404, Black Prince Road, London SE1 7SJ.

Signed on behalf of the Directors by Amanda Finlay, Chair.

Law for Life: The Foundation for Public Legal Education

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31 March 2018

	Unrestricted funds 2018 £	Restricted funds 2018 £	Total funds 2018 £	Total funds 2017 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM				
Donations and legacies	1,881	–	1,881	4,224
Charitable activities	206,590	71,000	277,590	273,877
Investment income	2	–	2	3
Total	208,473	71,000	279,473	278,104
EXPENDITURE ON				
Charitable activities	221,609	57,533	279,142	274,532
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(13,136)	13,467	331	3,572
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	19,517	–	19,517	15,945
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	£ 6,381	£ 13,467	£ 19,848	£ 19,517

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2018

	2018 £	2017 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	–	308
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	21,372	4,141
Cash at bank	40,769	62,307
	62,141	66,448
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	(42,239)	(47,239)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	19,848	19,209
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	19,848	19,517
NET ASSETS	£ 19,848	£ 19,517
FUNDS		
Unrestricted funds	6,381	19,517
Restricted funds	13,467	–
TOTAL FUNDS	£ 19,848	£ 19,517

CONTINUING OPERATIONS

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

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:

Margie Butler	08.10.2013 – 11.05.2017
John Ellis	26.02.2015 – 22.02.2018
Amanda Finlay CBE	27.03.2012 – Present
Sir Robin Knowles CBE QC	27.03.2012 – Present
John Seargeant	06.07.2011 – Present
Dr. Neil Stott	10.09.2015 – Present
Dr. Vanessa Davies	11.05.2017 – Present
Dawn Oliver	11.05.2017 – Present
Raymond Sheehy	11.05.2017 – Present
Jonathan Spain	22.02.2018 – Present
Joseph Broadway	22.02.2018 – Present

Our staff

Clare Shirtcliff
Dada Felja
Lisa Wintersteiger
Mary Marvel
Mihaela Rosca
Rebecca Munro
Rob Campbell
Theresa Harris

Founding 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



A Tribute to Sir Henry Brooke

It was with deep sadness and a personal sense of loss that we record the death of one of our founding patrons, the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Brooke, on 30 January 2018.

Sir Henry was a passionate and tireless champion of the importance of improving public understanding of the law as both a vital aspect of access to justice and as a cornerstone of the democratic rule of law.

His vision was neither narrow nor inattentive to the everyday injustices that people suffer. In his view, public legal education is not only important to a healthy justice system, it is also intrinsic to a more socially just society. Sir Henry recognised “the importance of helping people to make sense of the law if we are to reduce the poor outcomes suffered by so many because they lack legal capability. Investment in public legal education means investment in the health and wellbeing of society as a whole, and not simply in the wellbeing of the justice system.”

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

Lucy Grey (Allen & Overy)
Paul Tracey and Charmaine Henry (law students, Birkbeck University)
David Thomas
Rachael Evans (Bar Standards Board)
Anta Brachou (Hibiscus Initiatives)
Noel Arnold (Coram Children's Legal Centre)
Vince Beckworth, Sam Totty (A&N Care Solicitors)
Sally Halls, Andrea Hopkins (Family Rights Group)
Helen Robbins (Helen Robbins Solicitors)
Donna Brooks, Marek Potocki (Derby City Council)
Helen Littlewood, Sophie Wright, Martina Stipakova (Clifton Learning Partnership)
Ruth Richardson, Margita Cechova, Michal Daniel (Roma Community Care)
Gabriela Smolinska-Poffley, Mihai Calin Bica, Mania Malik (Roma Support Group)
Brian Foster (Brian Foster Education)
Margaret Greenfields (Buckinghamshire New University)
Yvonne MacNamara (Traveller Movement)
Andrew Whittaker (Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, University of Portsmouth)
Sangeeta Enright (Cycstic Fibrosis Trust)
Jim McKenny
Chris Parsons (Tower Hamlet Law Centre)
James Liptrot (Watford CAB)
Mark Tomlinson (Age UK)
Kavitha Ramasamy (Herts Council)
Scott McNally (Durham Council)
Jane Owen-Pam (Parkinsons UK)
Lucy Ashman
Kath Moulds
Helen Dibblin
Lucy Lloyd Scott
Roseanne Hughes
Ben Furmer
Margaret Doyle
Ariane Kim Gonzalez
Judith Emmett

Funding sources

The Baring Foundation
The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Erasmus+
Trust for London
Ministry of Justice
The Legal Education Foundation
Family Justice Council
TDS Charitable Foundation
John Ellerman Foundation
The Tudor Trust
Matrix Causes Fund
Access to Justice Foundation
National Lottery Awards for All
Allen & Overy Foundation
Bar Standards Board
Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust





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, China Works, Unit 404, Black Prince Road, London, SE1 7SJ. VAT Reg. No. 235823701. Charity no. 1143589.

