

# Annual Review

2015



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### Law for Life online:



[www.advicenow.org.uk](http://www.advicenow.org.uk)  
[www.lawforlife.org.uk](http://www.lawforlife.org.uk)



[twitter.com/LfL\\_Advicenow](https://twitter.com/LfL_Advicenow)

## Welcome from the chair



In our fourth year of operation, we are pleased to have seen a surge of visits by our online beneficiaries, as well as a growth in our reach into communities through our education and training provision.

We have been able to secure important new partnerships, not least in the National Litigant in Person Support Strategy, to provide much needed access to assistance for people who have to go through the court system without a lawyer. Last year we began to offer more of our expertise internationally, notably with the EU–China Access to Justice Programme. We are very pleased to share our expertise and adapt to and learn from the experiences of other jurisdictions in explaining how PLE can secure access to justice for some of society’s most vulnerable people.

This year we said goodbye to our co-founder, Chief Executive and longstanding champion of public legal education, Martin Jones. We wish him every success in his future endeavours. In turn, we welcomed our new CEO, Lisa Wintersteiger, to take up the task of leading Law for Life through the next phase of our growth and change. At Board level we thank our outgoing Treasurer Kathleen Walsh for her services to the Charity, and welcome John Ellis to the Board as our new Treasurer.

It has been no small endeavour to ensure our Advicenow service is fit for the future, with a major remodel and technical changes that enable better access to legal information for more people, wherever they are. We are indebted to the continued support of our funders, partners and clients.

**Michael Smyth**

# Introduction

## Who we are and why we are here

Law for Life: the Foundation for Public Legal Education is an education and information charity that aims to increase access to justice by providing everyone with an awareness of their legal rights together with the confidence and skills to assert them.

Law for Life provides education and training in the field of public legal education. We support organisations by developing both research and practice so that we can share knowledge about how and why public legal education promotes empowerment.

Law for life runs Advicenow, an independent, not-for-profit website providing accurate, helpful information on rights and legal issues for the general public.

## Extending our reach

In 2014–15 Law for Life reached 1,204,372 beneficiaries via our information service, and our education and training provision, a 90% increase from the year 2013–14.

## What we believe

### Our vision

More legally capable and empowered individuals and communities.

### Our mission

To become an internationally recognised centre for public legal education we will take a lead in promoting public legal education as a tool for empowering people in their lives. We will work together with others to identify and promote excellence in its research, design and delivery.

### Our strategic aims

- 1 Strengthen individuals and communities through public legal education and information
- 2 Demonstrate what PLE is, what it has to offer and its value
- 3 Develop excellence in PLE
- 4 Become an internationally recognised centre for PLE

# Our projects and services

## Our research, consultancy and policy work

### Information consultancy

The Advicenow team provided consultancy services for the Ministry of Justice and Civil Justice Council on the provision of written materials for litigants in person. As a result, an in-depth guide and a gaps analysis were commissioned.

The disability charity Scope commissioned the Advicenow team to update the guide we wrote for them on social care, to take into account changes to the Social Care Act 2014. The guide was promoted by Scope through social media.

We were also commissioned by the Bar Standards Board. We assisted them in making their information on complaints about barristers easier to use for a non-legal audience.

We carried out an information audit of one of their leaflets which identified the ways in which it could be improved. We produced an information design guide which showed how to ensure future information is much more user-friendly, and a gaps analysis which identified where further information was needed. These were very warmly received by the Project Group and have led to further work.

### Influence and policy

We published 'Meeting the Information Needs of Litigants in Person', and presented it at the Civil Justice Council Third National Forum on Access to Justice for Litigants in Person. The report aimed to assist providers of public

legal information, including government agencies, to put the needs of litigants in person first, by outlining the information needs of litigants in person and setting out tried and tested methods of approach for meeting those needs. To view 'Meeting the Information Needs of Litigants in Person' report, visit: [www.lawforlife.org.uk/blog/meeting-the-information-needs-of-litigants-in-person](http://www.lawforlife.org.uk/blog/meeting-the-information-needs-of-litigants-in-person).

### Our international work

Our international consultancy grew substantially in 2014–15. Through the China–EU Access to Justice programme we supported the British Council in assessing policies and improving the performance of legal aid provision for people in remote and inaccessible areas, and especially those from disadvantaged groups.

Working with provincial legal aid centres, legal aid workers and senior experts and officials in the Chinese Ministry of Justice, we delivered training and capacity building in XianXi and Beijing in July and November 2014.





## Our education and training work

### Our training programmes

#### Advice champions

We delivered four Advice Champion training programmes. Two with Community Links in Newham and two with Trust for London. In total we worked with 80 individuals and 45 different organisations.



We developed and delivered a ‘train the trainers’ programme for a group of 11 people from diverse backgrounds, eight of whom have joined our team of associate trainers.

#### PLE in University

This year we designed and piloted a clinical module for LLB and LLM students at Birkbeck College, featuring international and specialist guest lectures, clinical visits to community organisations and specialist information work with the Advicenow team. Students gained a new perspective on the legal profession and valuable skills to help advance their careers in law.

## Trainer’s resource packs for community workers and intermediaries

With funding from the London Legal Support Trust, we produced and published a free training resource focusing on the development of legal capability, designed particularly for those working in community organisations with little or no prior legal training. The resource consists of 3 training modules containing teaching guidance and handouts. Three different legal topics have been paired with particular skills to form each module.

- **Module 1: Finding out about the law:** where to get information and help.
- **Module 2: Housing disrepair:** assessing courses of action and developing communication skills.
- **Module 3: Employment and discrimination:** developing confidence and getting organised.

The modules are designed to be taught consecutively but they can easily be adapted to be taught independently. Each module has specific learning aims as well as detailed guidance notes for each activity.

We hope you use them and encourage others to use them. Any questions about the modules can be directed to [info@lawforlife.org.uk](mailto:info@lawforlife.org.uk).



## Our e-learning materials

We created our first e-learning module – ‘How to find out about the law’. This built on material used and refined in our training programmes but made it available to a wider audience.

The module has been tested by 33 people, including a local Age UK group and 27 independent learners.

We also began work on our second module about benefit sanctions – what they are, how to avoid them and tips about what to do if you get one. The modules have been designed for use with support from a community worker or intermediary.



### How to find out about the law - e-learning course

This fun interactive course helps you improve your skills for finding reliable online information that you can use in many everyday situations. It also help you to recognise common situations where it is useful to have a little bit of knowledge about the law.

# Our information and guidance work

## Advicenow ‘Top picks’ service

We continue to provide and maintain the Advicenow ‘Top picks’ information service. 1600 pieces of public legal information, classified under 345 legal topics, were reviewed against our inclusion criteria.

Figure 1

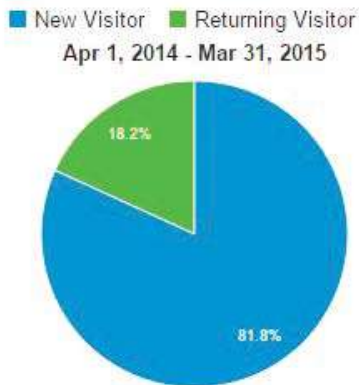
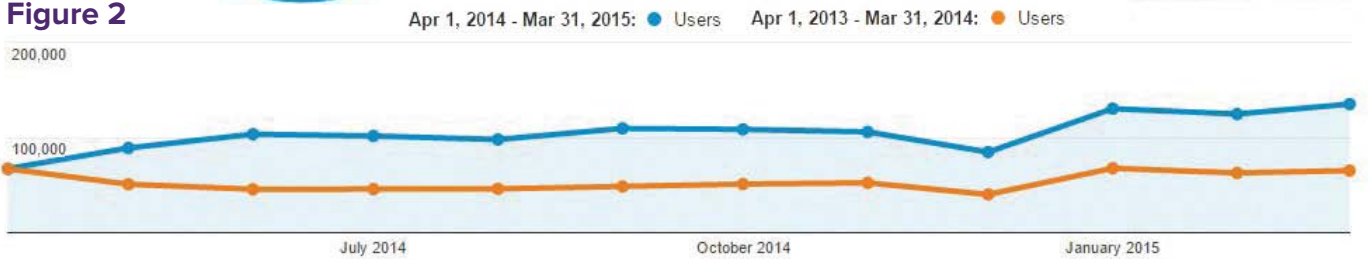


Figure 2

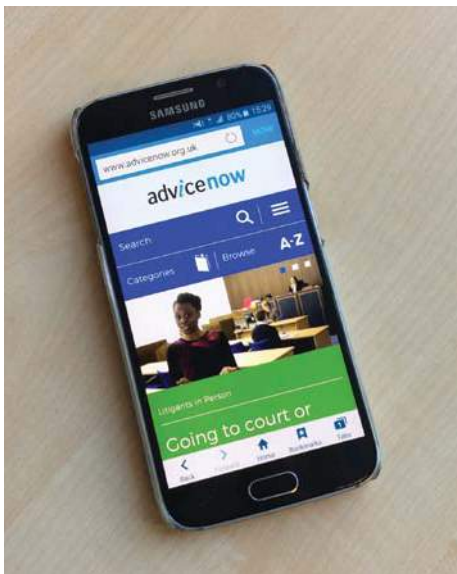


## The Advicenow website in numbers ...

### In 2014 –2015 ...

- **18.2%** of our users were returning visitors, compared with 16.7 the previous year (see Fig. 1)
- there were **1,455,953** sessions on Advicenow, compared with 733,817 the previous year
- Advicenow reached **1,203,293** users, compared with 620,297 the previous year (see Fig. 2)

## Advicenow website remodel



We secured funding from the Legal Education Foundation to remodel the Advicenow website in order to present our services more clearly and make Advicenow easier to navigate, more accessible and mobile friendly. Relaunch is imminent.

“Thank you so much for the advice and information, I have gained from your website. When going through a separation, particularly in difficult circumstances, there seems to be a lack of advice available, except if you pay for it, and when going through a break up money is often tight. I only came across your site by sheer luck, and I’m glad I did.”

Advicenow user

## Advicenow guides

We continue to update our guides and create new ones. In 2014–15, we created two new guides: **How to get a divorce or end a civil partnership without the help of a lawyer** and **How to fill in your financial statement (Form E) without the help of a lawyer**.

Later in the year we updated both those guides as well as our guides to:

- **Applying for a court order about the arrangements for your children without the help of a lawyer**
- **Applying for a financial order without the help of a lawyer**
- **Surviving divorce or the dissolution of a civil partnership**
- **Sorting out arrangements for your children**
- **Using Family Mediation after a break up**

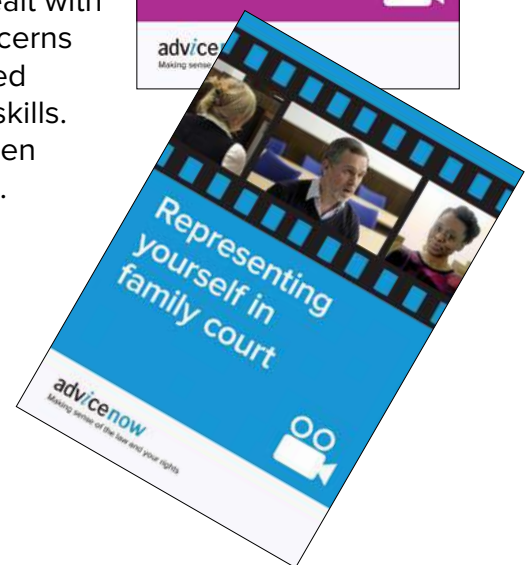
“I think they are outstanding; written in simple language for almost anyone to read, and best of all, the step-by-step approach. For many of our clients, English is not their first language, and this guide, plus including the web sites placed when they need the many forms to complete, is the most helpful I have read.”

**Advicenow user**

## Short films



We created our first two films, both aimed at Litigants in Person, in order to begin to explore the medium’s potential for offering further help with skills. We produced one that showed viewers how to complete a particularly complicated form, Form E. And another, **Representing yourself in family court**, that dealt with common concerns and introduced some useful skills. Both have been well received.



“This is an amazing video, I can’t possibly thank you enough. You have really really set my mind at rest.”

**Advicenow user**



# Financial review

The Law for Life Board of Trustees are pleased to present their Annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2015.

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.

## 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  
Amanda Finlay CBE  
Robin Knowles CBE QC  
John Sergeant  
Michael Smyth CBE QC (Hon) (Chairman)  
Kathleen Walsh, Treasurer (1.06.2015)  
John Ellis (appointed 26.02.2015)

## Our people

### Staff

Mary Marvel  
Lisa Wintersteiger  
Theresa Harris  
Clare Shirtcliff  
Tara Mulqueen  
Janette McCulloch  
(Consultant)  
Martin Jones  
Rob Campbell

### Associates

Jim Fearnley  
Karen Kirkwood  
Myles Kunzli  
Tony Thorpe  
David Thomas  
Anna-Delia Papenberg  
Tony Thorpe  
Davina Adamson  
Kojo Koram

In December 2014 Martin Jones stepped down as Chief Executive and in January 2015 Lisa Wintersteiger took over the role.

## Our purposes and activities

Law for Life works to ensure that citizens are 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.

## Our aims are to achieve:

- **legal capability for all**
- **recognition of the value of public legal education**
- **excellence in the delivery of PLE**
- **to become an international centre for PLE**

The charity seeks to achieve excellence in public legal education through information and guidance, research, policy and consultancy; and through education and training.

Law for Life works to build the capacity of other organisations to enable them to deliver effective public legal education.

We aim to ensure that public legal education is embedded in the work of many professionals, including educators, lawyers, advisers, and youth and community workers.

# Law for Life

## Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 March 2015

|  | Unrestricted<br>funds<br>£ | Restricted<br>funds<br>£ | 2015<br>Total<br>funds<br>£ | 2014<br>Total<br>funds<br>£ |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Incoming resources</b>                            |                            |                          |                             |                             |
| <b>Incoming resources from generated funds</b>       |                            |                          |                             |                             |
| Voluntary income                                     | 4,259                      | –                        | 4,259                       | 37                          |
| Investment income                                    | 32                         | –                        | 32                          | 29                          |
| <b>Incoming resources from charitable activities</b> |                            |                          |                             |                             |
| Advancement of public legal education                | 149,985                    | 125,532                  | 275,517                     | 154,926                     |
| <b>Total incoming resources</b>                      | <b>154,276</b>             | <b>125,532</b>           | <b>279,808</b>              | <b>154,992</b>              |
| <b>Resources expended</b>                            |                            |                          |                             |                             |
| <b>Charitable activities</b>                         |                            |                          |                             |                             |
| Advancement of public legal education                | 152,165                    | 123,129                  | 275,294                     | 173,086                     |
| <b>Governance costs</b>                              | <b>2,020</b>               | <b>–</b>                 | <b>2,020</b>                | <b>1,320</b>                |
| <b>Total resources expended</b>                      | <b>154,185</b>             | <b>123,129</b>           | <b>277,314</b>              | <b>174,406</b>              |
| <b>Total incoming/(outgoing) resources</b>           | <b>91</b>                  | <b>2,403</b>             | <b>2,494</b>                | <b>(19,414)</b>             |
| <b>Total funds brought forward</b>                   | <b>3,660</b>               | <b>370</b>               | <b>4,030</b>                | <b>23,444</b>               |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b>                   | <b>£3,751</b>              | <b>£2,773</b>            | <b>£6,524</b>               | <b>£4,030</b>               |

## Balance Sheet

As at 31 March 2015

|                                 | £               | 2015<br>£     | £               | 2014<br>£     |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Fixed assets</b>             |                 | <b>1,929</b>  |                 | <b>3,418</b>  |
| <b>Current assets</b>           |                 |               |                 |               |
| Debtors                         | 26,526          |               | 5,800           |               |
| Cash at bank                    | 25,088          |               | 38,283          |               |
|                                 | 51,614          |               | 44,083          |               |
| <b>Less current liabilities</b> | <b>(47,019)</b> |               | <b>(43,471)</b> |               |
| <b>Net current assets</b>       |                 | <b>4,595</b>  |                 | <b>612</b>    |
| <b>Net assets</b>               |                 | <b>£6,524</b> |                 | <b>£4,030</b> |
| <b>Funds</b>                    |                 |               |                 |               |
| Unrestricted                    |                 | 3,751         |                 | 3,660         |
| Restricted                      |                 | 2,773         |                 | 370           |
|                                 |                 | <b>£6,524</b> |                 | <b>£4,030</b> |

## Statement by the directors of Law for Life

These summarised 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, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NJ.

Signed on behalf of the Directors by John Ellis, Treasurer

# Thanks to ...

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who supported the work of Law for Life during 2014–2015 through grants and the donation of their valuable time.

## Founding Patrons

The Rt Hon. Sir Henry Brooke  
Professor Dame Hazel Genn DBE QC  
The Rt Hon. Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury

## Trustees

Michael Smyth CBE QC (Hon)  
(Chairman)  
Margie Butler  
Amanda Finlay CBE  
The Hon. Mr Justice Knowles CBE  
John Seargeant  
Kathleen Walsh, Treasurer (1.06.2015)  
John Ellis (appointed 26.02.2015)

## Pro Bono supporters

Ursula Rice  
Gwyn Evans  
Ruth Burn  
Clifford Chance LLP

## Funding sources

The Baring Foundation  
Trust for London  
Ministry of Justice  
The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation  
The Legal Education Foundation  
London Legal Support Trust  
British Council  
Community Links  
Birkbeck University  
Scope  
Bar Standards Board  
Family Justice Council  
Royal Courts of Justice Citizens Advice Bureau



Law for Life: the Foundation for Public Legal Education is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales no. 07695486. Registered office: Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NJ. Charity no. 1143589. Tel: 020 7401 7566.