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PUBLIC LAW PROJECT

NORTH CONFERENCE

19 JULY
BPP LAW SCHOOL
MANCHESTER

2018

LEGAL AID AND SOCIETY



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As the Government reviews the implementation of LASPO PLP's annual North conference looks at access to legal aid and the impact of legal aid cuts on society.

MORNING SESSION

Morning chair: Yogi Amin, Irwin Mitchell

10:00 Introduction

Jo Hickman, Director, Public Law Project

10:05 Opening Address: A right to justice

Lord Willy Bach

10:25 Legal Aid and low income

Today the legal aid system only provides for people on the very lowest incomes and even those receiving out of work benefits are often excluded due the value of their homes being taken into account. Millions with low working incomes cannot afford to pay legal costs, whilst the numbers struggling to reach an acceptable standard of living has risen significantly. This talk looks at how austerity and legal aid cuts interact.

Prof Donald Hirsch, Loughborough University

11:00 Top legal aid and access to justice cases of recent years

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2012) has generated a significant number of cases challenging the legislation and its implementation on behalf of those affected. Alison will look at the impact of the cases and some themes running through them.

Alison Pickup, Public Law Project

11:45 Break

12:00 The experiences of self-representing litigants

This presentation concerns a three year project interviewing litigants in person (LIPS). Although Jess's work focuses on the family court, the presentation will consider common problems facing those appearing in court without representation.

Jess Mant, Cardiff University School of Law and Politics

12:20 Morning breakouts choose one of three:

1. Exceptional Case Funding

There are common misconceptions regarding what is out of scope of Exceptional Case Funding (ECF), particularly relating to immigration and housing. This session looks at how to apply for ECF, common problems and what we know about success rates.

Joseph Markus and James Stark,
Garden Court North

Katy Watts, Public Law Project

2. Legal aid and access to justice for modern slavery victims

This session will look at immigration legal aid for modern slavery victims and a recent judicial review of the Legal Aid Agency when legal aid was refused for a victim. It will also look at cases highlighting why legal aid is essential to build the case of leave to remain during the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process and to challenging unlawful decisions on leave.

Lucy Mair, Garden Court North

Carita Thomas, Anti-Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit (ATLEU)

3. Access to justice, the media and legal aid

This session looks at how access to justice issues are framed by the media and asks how stories picked up by mainstream media can help refocus public opinion and, hopefully, Government policy. Examples will include the recent Windrush scandal and the profile and perception of the 'hostile environment' policies, and the increasing public awareness around unrepresented litigants. The session will also look at FOIA requests and working with journalists.

Will Bordell, The Justice Gap

Mary-Rachel McCabe, Doughty Street Chambers

13:15 Lunch

AFTERNOON SESSION

14:15 What are appropriate advice models for social welfare law?

This discussion will concern what advice models are appropriate for areas of legal advice removed from the scope of legal aid, including benefits, early housing advice and non-asylum immigration.

Chair: **Jo Chimes**, Greater Manchester Welfare Rights Advisers Group (GMWRAG)

Panellists: **Diane Astin**, Deighton Pierce Glynn
Nimrod Ben Cnaan, Law Centres Network
Sam Karim QC, Head of Public Law at Kings Chambers and Director of the Public Law Pro Bono Scheme (Manchester)
Kayliegh Richardson, Northumbria Law School
Graham Tegg, Kent University Law Clinic

15:00 Afternoon breakouts choose one of two:

4. Preparing evidence for the LASPO review

This session will seek to help organisations or individuals preparing to feed into the Governments review of LASPO implementation. It will look at evidence gathering and presentation and how to show insight from your or your organisations perspective.

Jess Mant, Cardiff University School of Law and Politics
Emma Marshall, Public Law Project
Carol Storer, Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG)

5. Challenging procurement and grant funding decisions - what you need to know

Legal Aid Agency contracts, bids for grant funding and other public contracts, practice and procedure: the Public Contracts Regulations and judicial review.

Polly Brendon, Public Law Project
Jason Coppel QC, 11KBW

16:00 Break

16:15 Panel: What is the duty on the state to ensure access to justice?

Chair: **Carol Storer**, LAPG

Panellists:

Eric Allison, Prison correspondent, The Guardian
Jo Hickman, Public Law Project
Richard Miller, Justice Lead, The Law Society
James Stark, Garden Court North

17:00 Close

Delegate fees

Advisers: £72 (£60 + VAT) per delegate including caseworkers, advisers in CABs, Age UK, student advisers and lay advocates working in the voluntary sector.

Discounted fee: £90 (£75 + VAT) per delegate - charities, voluntary sector, academics, YLAL mailing list members

Standard fee: £144 (£120+VAT) per delegate - private practice and public bodies.

Student fee: £12 (£10 + VAT)

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