

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024



The

London
Legal

Support Trust

Who we are and what we do

We are an independent charity committed to increasing access to justice through funding and supporting free legal advice agencies across London and the South East.

We strive to provide public benefit by enabling communities, especially those who are vulnerable or marginalised, to receive the legal help they need.

By empowering our network of beneficiary agencies, we work to ensure that vital legal advice and representation remains available to those who need it most.

- Provide financial and other types of support to free legal advice agencies to continue providing life changing free legal advice to their local communities
- Promote the need for advice to increase funding for free legal advice provision
- Facilitate the advice sector to fundraise for itself
- Bring organisations together to share information, good practice and find solutions for emerging needs



INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR & CEO



Richard Dyton
Chair of Trustees

2024 was a landmark year for the London Legal Support Trust (LLST). Across London and the South East need for free legal advice continued to rise. The housing crisis worsened, legal aid cuts persisted, and growing pressures on the immigration and asylum system left many without vital support.

In response, **LLST delivered over £3.5 million in grants and partnership funding** to frontline legal advice centres, helping to prevent homelessness, support survivors of abuse, secure welfare entitlements, and protect vulnerable people across our communities.

The London Legal Walk marked its 20th year by surpassing £1 million for the first time. This milestone was made possible by the dedication of thousands of walkers, firms, chambers, and supporters.

Also, we advanced long-term sector resilience through initiatives like the Advice Workforce Development Fund and the Billing Coordinator Project.

This report highlights all we achieved together in 2024, the life-changing fundraising, the strength of our partnerships, and the collective effort behind every success.

To everyone who contributed, thank you. Your support is helping protect access to justice for those who need it most. We're proud to share this year's impact with you and excited for the work ahead!



Nezahat Cihan
Chief Executive Officer

Celebrating 20 Years of LLST



In 2024, we celebrated 20 years of the London Legal Support Trust. Since 2004, LLST has grown significantly from its humble beginnings. Over the years the Trust, has continually developed innovative ways to raise vital funds, share knowledge, and strengthen the advice sector, ensuring that access to justice is available for everyone, whenever and wherever it is needed.



The Need for Free Legal Advice



The need for free legal advice in London and the South East reached unprecedented levels in 2024, driven by rising housing insecurity, ongoing public service costs, and worsening economic pressures.

[Figure 1 London Councils](#)

over 183,000

Households in London were estimated to be homeless or in temporary accommodation

[Figure 2 Trust for London](#)

31 %

of families that included a disabled person were in poverty in London

Advice agencies across the region reported having to turn away clients daily due to overwhelming demand and under-resourcing. Many organisations working with waiting lists of several weeks or months, despite dealing with urgent legal issues that could have life-changing consequences.

[Figure 3 CoEx Annual Report 2024](#)

23% increase

In housing cases. There were substantial increases in Housing, Asylum and Crisis Navigation.

[Figure 4 CoEx Annual Report 2024](#)

9000 more

Enquiries handled by CoExs compared to 2023

Our Year in Numbers



£4.71 Million total income

£3.57 Million awarded in grants to the advice sector

£1.2 Million raised through fundraising events

£6.5 Million in financial gains secured for Londoners

12,500 + Clients supported through funding projects in Advising Londoners Partnership



London Legal Walk

London Legal Walk is the biggest fundraising event in the legal calendar, raising £1,042,610 in 2024. 18,000 legal professionals from over 1,100 teams participated in the 2024 London Legal Walk, representing every aspect of the legal profession, including judges, solicitors' firms and barristers' chambers, in-house lawyers, Law Centres, law schools, independent advice agencies and Citizens Advice.

LLST's flagship event, the London Legal Walk, has been held annually since 2005. Over the last two decades, the Walk has grown from just 330 walkers in 2005 to over 16,000 in recent years, raising over £11.5 million to support access to justice. The Walk brings together thousands of participants from across the legal sector to take on a 10km Walk through central London. Starting and ending with a street party behind the Royal Courts of Justice.

**Over £1 million
raised**

**Over 18,000 legal
professionals
participated**

Other Fundraising Events



WALK THE THAMES

£14,583 raised by over 100 walkers in a half or full marathon from London Bridge or Putney to Hampton Court.

REGIONAL WALKS

- Held in 11 locations: Guildford; Eastbourne; Tunbridge Wells; Hastings; Brighton; Chichester; Reading; Southampton; Oxford, Crawley and Hackney.
- Over 1,500 walkers
- £67,706 raised for local advice centres

OTHER FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- Big Half
- Ride London
- Brighton Marathon
- London Marathon
- Spartan
- Skydive
- Legal Walkies
- The Great Legal Quiz
- The Great Legal Bake



The number of people needing specialist legal help, especially with debt, housing and benefits continues to rise. The funds raised by London Legal Support Trust provide help for many thousands of those most in need. I extend my thanks to all those who have helped to raise those funds in the past year and encourage everyone to make their best efforts in the forthcoming year.

The Rt. Hon. Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill





Champions of Justice

In 2024, we organised a series of recruitment events for our Champions for Justice initiative, successfully securing new Champions across all levels of support. Our thanks go to Freshfields and Hogan Lovells for hosting our engagement dinners.

Champions commit to monthly donations, to support the work of the advice centres in a regular and predictable way to ensure we can plan for the grants we give. Firms often give a donation as part of their support through hosting a Champions' dinner. Champions for Justice come from across the legal sector, including law firms, chambers and supplier companies and their funds support the sustainability of the free legal advice agencies.

If you are interested in being a Champion for Justice, [please click here.](#)

Corporate Partnerships

One important way in which law firms and others support LLST is through in-kind donations, and they really are invaluable.

We are grateful to our corporate partners who donate regularly. Their funding plays a crucial role in our ability to provide unrestricted core funding to free legal advice agencies.

Projects and Partnerships Driving Impact



Advice Workforce Development Fund (AWDF)

AWDF was created as a Propel-funded programme following the 2020 “Addressing Skills Gap research”, which called for funders and advice organisations to work together to tackle sector-wide workforce challenges. Through cross-sector collaboration, AWDF aims to build a sustainable, effective, and diverse advice workforce that serves Londoners at the point of need.

Now in its second year, AWDF has provided funding for eight projects which aim to make the sector more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable. Through this:

- **386 participants** across London have benefited.
- **12 apprentice/trainee solicitors** with Legal Advice Centre (University House), many of whom would not have had the opportunity to train due to systemic barriers, have taken part alongside **238 people** (including staff and volunteers from local community organisations) trained on critical areas of social welfare law
- At the Disability Law Service, **2 trainee solicitors and 1 advice worker** within a community partner, all of whom were disabled people, provided social welfare legal advice that **benefited 631 individuals**.

Jamal's Journey from Care Coordinator to Aspiring Advisor

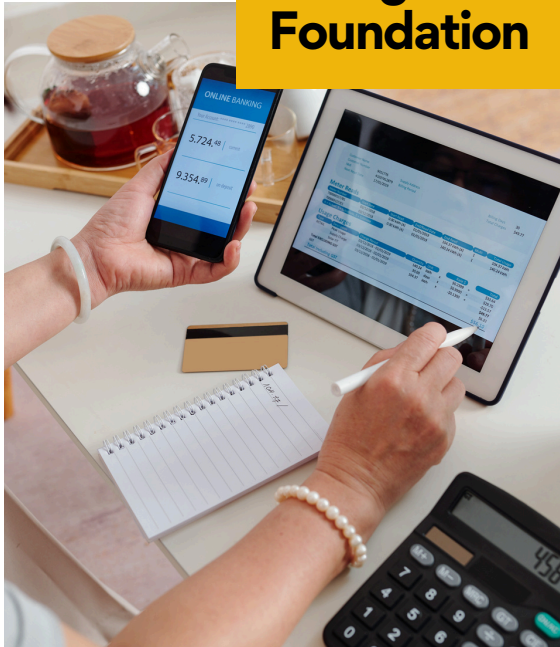


With support from Propel funding, Jamal was able to take an important step forward in his career, moving beyond his role as a care coordinator at Mushkil Asaan into training with Citizens Advice Wandsworth. Until this opportunity, advisory work had felt out of reach, as his organisation didn't provide structured training in this area. At first, the experience was overwhelming, but Jamal soon grew in confidence, developing his communication skills, learning how to navigate complex cases, and gaining valuable insight from colleagues and workshops. He particularly valued the chance to engage directly with clients and sees how these skills can transform the support people receive.

Inspired by what he has achieved, Jamal now hopes to qualify as an immigration advisor, a role he believes is critically needed in his community. He is determined to continue his journey in the advice sector.

[Click here if you would like to read more cases like Jamal's.](#)

Billing Coordinator Project with the Legal Education Foundation



The fourth Billing Coordinator Project, part funded by the Legal Education Foundation, launched in mid-2024. This cohort involves three London-based advice agencies. Two of the agencies have some national reach, and together they cover a wide range of social welfare law areas.

This cohort builds on the success of previous phases. The project is designed to strengthen the capacity of legal advice agencies by improving legal aid billing efficiency and clear backlogs in casework.

Advising Londoners Partnership (Cost of Living Advice Project)

The Advising Londoners Partnership (ALP) brings together the Greater London Authority (GLA), London Legal Support Trust (LLST), and the London Citizens Advice network to tackle the ongoing cost of living crisis and support Londoners facing mounting financial pressures. We do this by providing funding for advice through our delivery partners, which include law centres and other advice agencies across London.



In 2024, the project funded 21 delivery partners who provided vital advice and guidance to over 12,500 Londoners, helping them navigate complex financial and social challenges. Through this work, our partners secured over £6.5 million in income improvements, directly easing financial stress and making a real difference in people's lives across the capital.

How our work is having an impact?



At 67, *Robert was already navigating the daily challenges of life with disabilities when the rising cost of living turned his financial struggles into a crisis. Living on limited resources, he desperately needed support to access benefits that could provide a lifeline.

An unfair parking ticket, despite his blue badge, added to the strain, leaving him panicked, hopeless, and fearing bailiffs might even take his wheelchair.

When Robert was referred to a Law Centre, everything began to change. Ash, an experienced Money Advice caseworker, took the time to listen, explain his options clearly, and build a plan to sustain his situation. For the first time in months, Robert felt understood and reassured.

My first conversation with Ash significantly eased my anxiety. He was incredibly knowledgeable, and it was obvious that he knew what he was doing. Each question I asked had a clear, immediate answer.

With Ash's support, Robert successfully applied for benefits he hadn't realised he was entitled to, increasing his annual income by £16,000.

Robert continues rebuilding his sense of security and looking forward with renewed hope. His story shows the vital difference timely expert advice makes.

I felt more at ease and confident about my situation. Your support really took a load off my mind. I still have ongoing issues, but taking care of this one helped me to focus on the rest.

Sector Development and Collaboration



London Specialist Advice Forum

The London Specialist Advice Forum was created in 2020 in response to the sector's need for a space to share ideas, discuss issues, and offer peer support. LLST coordinates the Forum, and together with the Steering Group, identifies relevant topics and invites speakers, ensuring the Forum remains reflective of, and responsive to, the needs and priorities of the sector.

In 2024, approximately 180 people took part in the Forum's activities, including quarterly meetings, in-person sector socials and networking sessions, and smaller subgroup meetings. These subgroups bring together practitioners to focus on specific areas such as community care, SQE Apprentice peer support, and legal aid billing.

Speakers and attendees represented a diverse range of organisations, including independent advice agencies, Law Centres, Citizens Advice, Toynbee Hall, Access Social Care, Child Poverty Action Group, Public Interest Law Centre, the Law Centres Network, as well as funders such as Trust for London and the National Lottery Community Fund.

“Thank you so much for your ongoing financial support and for all that you do to support our organisation and the advice sector more widely. I very much enjoyed listening to your presentation about the LLST's work at November's Specialist Advice Forum and was hugely impressed by the range of initiatives that you are leading, particularly around addressing the sector's future workforce. It is wonderful to hear about such positive work in what has been a politically very grim year!

-forum member

Centres of Excellence (CoEx)

The Centres of Excellence (CoEx) programme, supported by City Bridge Foundation and National Lottery Community Fund, strengthens the free legal advice sector through unrestricted grants, consultancy, and training.

In 2024, the programme celebrated its 10th anniversary. Over the last decade, it has supported 43 organisations, many for over 7 years, distributing more than £3.6 million in grants. The programme has provided hundreds of hours of consultancy and trained staff in areas including resilience, GDPR, risk management, and equality and diversity.

In response to evolving sector needs, a comprehensive programme review was conducted last year, gathering feedback from delivery partners, funders, and stakeholders. Recommendations were shared in summer 2024, and work is now underway to redesign the programme. The refresh aims to better address current sector challenges while maintaining long-term support for existing partners and creating opportunities to welcome new organisations.

This evolution aims to ensure the programme remains responsive and effective in building capacity and sustainability across the free legal advice sector, helping us all meet the challenges that lie ahead, together.



Thanks for all your help over the past few months, I have really appreciated the support and knowing you and LLST are there ready to help. It has made what has been a very stressful few months feel a lot less isolating.

-Staff member of one of our CoExs



Money Saving Project and Training Initiatives

We continued to support the free legal advice organisations through providing money savings groups, information about discounts or exemptions available to charities, and managing in kind donations from law firms or chambers.

Specific arrangements with suppliers sourced from sector recommendations help to save money for charities in a variety of areas including stationery, photocopiers and printers, second hand legal texts, storage solutions, telephony and more.

Our Thanks



2024 was another year of growing demand, rising pressures, and real challenges, but it was also a year of incredible support and commitment.

To every walker, baker, runner, and skydiver, who took actions for justice, thank you. To our corporate and individual donors, who gave generously throughout the year, and to our grant-making partners, who continue to believe in our cause, we are deeply grateful.

We extend special thanks to the many law firms, chambers, and members of the judiciary who stand with us year after year.

A special thanks to the National Lottery Community Foundation, the City Bridge Foundation, Trust For London, Legal Education Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and Greater London Authority for their funding to support free legal advice and improve the advice workforce.

We are grateful to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and trustees, whose time, energy, and passion keep our work moving forward.

Your support powers access to justice for thousands of people, those facing eviction, exploitation, unsafe housing, or immigration uncertainty, who would otherwise be left without help.

We're proud of all we've achieved together in 2024. As we look ahead to 2025, we remain focused on supporting frontline advice agencies, responding to emerging needs, and helping shape a stronger, fairer legal advice sector.

Get Involved

You can help us continue our work:

- Joining us at the next London Legal Walk or one of our Regional Walks
- Participating in one of our fundraising events
- Becoming a Champion for Justice
- Partner with us through your firm or Foundation



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