

London Legal Support Trust
London Specialist Advice Forum meeting – Meeting notes

Wednesday 3 June 2026, 3-6pm

Chair: Noella Gooden, Workforce Development Co-Ordinator, Law Centres Network

This document contains notes from the June 2026 London Specialist Advice Forum meeting.

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1. Welcome and opening remarks

Noella Gooden (Law Centres Network) opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees, introducing herself and the Law Centres Network, and giving a brief overview of the agenda for the day.

The June session of the London Specialist Advice Forum brought together advice organisations to explore the growing impact of far-right activity on advice services, staff, and service users. The forum highlighted that the changing political and social climate is no longer a peripheral issue, but a core operational challenge for advice providers, requiring strategic, organisational, and sector-wide responses.

2. Understanding the context and risks: Ellie Cartwright, HOPE not Hate

The presentation from Ellie Cartwright, Community Outreach Officer from HOPE not hate, outlined a significant escalation in far-right activity. We are witnessing an increased mainstreaming of far-right narratives across politics and public discourse, and a significant growth in anti-migrant protests (251 recorded in 2025), as well as the emergence of vigilante-style groups. Key themes driving mobilisation include:

- Crime and safety narratives, including the weaponisation of violence against women and girls

- Cost-of-living pressures
- Identity-based narratives (e.g. Christianity, nationalism)
- Claims of “two-tier policing”

These developments are contributing to a more hostile and unpredictable operating environment for organisations working with migrants and racialised communities.

3. Panel Discussion: Frontline experiences

We were delighted to be joined for a panel discussion by Bruna Boscaini (IRMO), Enny Choudhury (JCWI) and Charlotte Buckley (BID UK), chaired by Kathleen Commons (LLST). Across organisations, there was a consistent message that fear and distrust are increasing, with some service users reluctant to approach statutory services for support. For example, we heard about cases of service users who had been attacked but chose not to report incidents to police, instead seeking help from advice organisations due to lack of confidence in authorities. This highlights a growing gap between need and access to justice, with advice agencies sometimes becoming the only trusted points of support.

Panellists also described how far-right activity and government hostility towards migrants and racialised people are affecting staff safety and wellbeing. Organisations are increasingly investing in wellbeing support such as clinical supervision, trauma-informed training, and solidarity practices. Additionally, organisations are facing targeted media and online attacks, including doxxing in far-right press. Social media amplification can rapidly escalate risks (e.g. staff being individually targeted), which has led to some organisations having had to temporarily close offices or adapt services in response to threats. There is a hard balance to strike between maintaining organisational values while navigating hostility.

Overall, organisations emphasised the emotional and strategic burden of operating in what is now seen as a “new normal.”

4. Small Group Discussions: what do we do next?

The following ideas and potential responses were raised during the presentation, panel and small-group discussions.

Risk Management and Safety Measures

- Conducting risk assessments covering both physical and psychological safety
- Strengthening digital and physical security (e.g. two-factor authentication, controlled office access, removing staff details online)
- Developing crisis communications plans
- Creating safe spaces for staff and service users

Staff Support and Resilience

- Offering targeted support for racialised staff
- Providing wellbeing interventions (clinical supervision, somatic practices)

- Encouraging peer solidarity (e.g. staff accompanying each other for safety)

Maintaining Mission and Values

- Continuing “business as usual” where safe, as a deliberate act of resistance
- Avoiding mission drift due to intimidation
- Reinforcing organisational identity and purpose

Building Networks and Solidarity

- Cross-sector collaboration and coalition-building
- Leveraging media relationships to counter negative narratives
- Recognising the importance of visible solidarity within the sector

Funding Priorities

- **Core, flexible funding** to support organisational stability
- Investment in infrastructure: security, communications, and resilience planning
- Rapid-response funding to address emerging risks
- Support for positive storytelling about migrants and communities

Strategic Sector-Wide Action

- Need to situate migration issues within broader civil society and political discussions
- Stronger collective advocacy and accountability for mainstream political narratives
- Greater collaboration with trade unions and wider coalitions

5. AOB & Closing remarks

The Forum made clear that the rise of the far right is reshaping the operating environment for advice services at every level—from frontline delivery to organisational strategy. While the challenges are significant, the discussion also highlighted strong examples of resilience, solidarity, and adaptive practice across the sector.

Moving forward, a coordinated response—combining organisational preparedness, sector collaboration, and supportive funding—will be essential to ensure advice services can continue to operate effectively and uphold their mission.

6. Useful links and resources

- **Advice UK** – [Advice Service Security Guidance](#)
- **HOPE not hate** – [Safety and Security Hub](#)
- **HOPE not hate** – Tension Monitoring Unit, sign up to the newsletter to receive updates and information about online network meetings [here](#)

- **A Million Acts of Hope** - a joint initiative to counter hate and division, involving many civil society organisations across the UK, including Together with Refugees, City of Sanctuary, IMIX, NACCOM and Refugee Week. Learn more: [A Million Acts of Hope](#)
- **IMIX** - Speaking Out, Staying Safe
Resources <https://imix.org.uk/resource/speaking-out-staying-safe/>
- **IMIX** - Crisis Communications Resources: <https://imix.org.uk/resources/crisis-communications/>
- **BatesWells and NEON guide** - '[Using the law to create change](#)' - A guide for charities and campaign groups', June 2025