

community
legal advice

Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre

Annual Report

April 08 to April 09

One year on...



Foreword

Leicester City Council and the Legal Services Commission are committed to improving access to legal advice, particularly for those in greatest need. We recognise the importance of good quality advice in making a real difference to people's lives. To this end, Leicester City Council and the Legal Services Commission decided to pool resources and expertise to commission a new and improved legal advice and representation service for Leicester residents – the Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre.

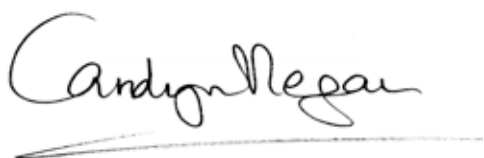
In particular we wanted to create a more accessible service capable of dealing with a range of legal issues from initial advice through to legal representation; that is client focused; that reaches out to the most vulnerable; that promotes legal rights and responsibilities and provides a credible influence on public policy and services.

In July 2007, following consultation with local stakeholders and community groups, Leicester City Council and Legal Services Commission launched a Best Value Tender for a Community Legal Advice Centre for Leicester to commence 1st April 2008. Following a successful tender, A4e and Howells, were chosen to deliver the new service based upon a competitive tender, a track record of delivery and a clear vision for the Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre:

"We will increase access to justice. We will deliver an integrated, end-to-end service which meets client need in Leicester. It will deliver hard, tangible results – more people accessing better quality legal advice"

Twelve months on we are pleased to see the significant progress made by the new service: more than 7,000 people receiving advice and assistance in the first year; extended opening hours and access via a range of community advice locations; very positive case outcomes across all categories of law; and most satisfying of all, that 94% of service users rating the new service as excellent or very good.

We commend A4e and Howells, and their staff, for their hard work over the past year and wish them success in the future.



Carolyn Regan
Chief Executive, Legal Services Commission



Councillor Ross Willmott
Leader of Leicester City Council



1. Executive Summary

Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre, formal opening, July 2008

“Leicester’s new Community Legal Advice centre will really make a difference for people who would normally have to seek advice from a number of different places. They can now access help on a range of legal problems, through the one centre... it will provide a blueprint for how legal aid can be provided in the future, by focusing on the practical needs of the public.”

Glyn Evans

Legal Services Regional Director

“One of the most exciting things about Leicester CLAC is that its services will also go out to the areas of the city where people are most in need of them.”

Councillor Ross Willmott

Leicester City Council

Following a robust and thorough tender process, A4e¹ and Howells Solicitors² were successfully selected to manage and deliver the Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC) in early December 2007, commencing delivery of the service on April 1st 2008.

A4e and Howells’ proposals offered Leicester City Council and the LSC a joined-up generalist and specialist advice service that could represent multiple advice needs of local residents across a wide range of categories of the law. In addition to this, was a proposed delivery model designed to focus on engaging hard to reach groups across the city, whose advice needs were previously going unmet.

A4e and Howells had already built and developed a strong working relationship in the 18 months before Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC) went live. This relationship is driven by a common sense of purpose based on increasing access to justice, particularly amongst those most vulnerable and those most likely to be excluded from mainstream advice services available to them. This underpinned our work together with Community Legal Advice from March 2007, a national telephone specialist service delivering advice on Debt, Welfare Benefits, Housing, Employment and Family.

Collectively, A4e and Howells offered the LSC and Leicester City Council substantial relevant experience and expertise - not only in the delivery of specialist advice, but in delivering high quality, accessible services in local communities. Between us, we broadly believe that our proposals were not just simply successful because we met the technical competencies and desired experience, but also because what you get from A4e and Howells is our culture, our passion and enthusiasm; our ability to make things work; to drive change in a meaningful way that brings people and partners with us; to make a step change in the way people access and use advice services; and ultimately, to delivery a fantastic service for our clients. We made it clear during the tender process that our ability to bring this to Leicester will be the true acid test of a successful service.

So, how are we doing thus far? The first year of the service has now been completed and the following review has been produced by the Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC) to examine how the service has fared in just 12 months delivery against not just the elements outlined in the service specification but also against our wider desirable objectives for the service.

This review will start by looking at the fundamental aims and objectives of the CLAC, how these have underpinned the core features of the holistic delivery model and how successful the service has been in practice against meeting the advice needs of Leicester.

Overall, despite a challenging timeframe for implementation and the obstacles that have to be overcome in setting up any new, people facing, city-wide service, Leicester CLAC in a short space of time has already made significant impact across the city. Meeting the advice needs of over 7000 people, A4e and Howells, with close support and direction from both the LSC and the council, have successfully engaged hard to reach groups across priority ward areas of the city, delivered substantive benefit outcomes for clients above the national benchmarks and ensured excellence in client care and experience, with 94% of our clients across the service rating the CLAC as either excellent or very good.

More importantly, early evidence also strongly suggests the CLAC is increasing access to advice across the whole city. Evidence from the recently published ‘Study of Legal Advice at Local Level’ by the Ministry of Justice shows that since the CLAC has been opened in Leicester, there has been an increase of over 61% in the number of legal cases started across social welfare categories.

¹ International provider of front line public services specialising in tackling poverty and barriers to social/financial inclusion

² Leading national provider of Legal Aid services across all social welfare categories, Family and Crime



2. What we want to achieve

A4e and Howells agreed upon a clear cut and unambiguous vision for Leicester Community Legal Centre:

“We will increase access to justice. We will deliver an integrated, end-to-end service – a service which meets client need in Leicester. It will deliver hard, tangible results – more people accessing better quality legal advice”

One year on and this vision remains intact, spearheading every decision we make in striving to deliver a continuously improving service. Leicester CLAC has been founded on the basic principle of ‘what do customers want and need?’ In order to deliver this, throughout the design and implementation phases of the service we listened extensively to potential client groups, developed strong networks and alliances with local partners and developed our understanding of specific needs of the city. This practical approach has enabled us to develop a delivery model based on the real needs of people, which reflects operational reality, set achievable targets and that will make a real difference to the people we help.

In practical terms, this can be broken down into a number of clear aims and objectives for the CLAC:

- To provide an holistic and seamless service to clients
- To provide professionalism and dedication in delivery throughout all elements of the service
- Bring together local stakeholders and intermediaries to maximise reach of service provision
- Provide quality assured legal advice services that offer value for money and expertise in all legal categories
- Meeting not just the essential criteria of the contract specification but building upon and expanding the desirable criteria to transform the client experience of advice services in the city
- Overall, to provide accessible, independent, quality assured legal advice

Our rationale behind this is to:

- Provide a solution to fragmented local services and a complex stakeholder environment
- Provide a ‘one stop shop’ to clients who may face a cluster of legal and social problems
- Capacity to develop and deliver a scaleable delivery model; ensuring that increases or decreases in seasonal demand will not impact upon contract delivery and the quality of service that every client receives

- Reach clients currently in advice gaps across the city and break down access barriers

Overall, the centre aims to embed a city wide, community based service which ensures a client focused journey.

3, How? The client journey

The client journey goes beyond simply trying to deliver an efficient process. Our aim is to improve the overall experience of receiving free, publicly funded, advice services which combines not just the effectiveness of the advice we give in trying to sort out clients’ legal problems, but also to improve the confidence of our clients, empowering people with accurate information and guidance which will help prevent the reoccurrence of similar legal problems developing in the future.

The key driver behind the design of the service has been the focus on the client. Without this,

Leicester CLAC will not achieve the above vision, aims and objectives over the life of the contract.

Overall, the client journey through the service is best described through a five-stage process:

Stage 1, accessibility

One of the core objectives of the CLAC is to improve accessibility for the people of Leicester and increase take up of provision, this is not just achieved by the delivery specification (i.e. extended hours of service, community based delivery, city centre location) but also through creating a welcoming and warm environment, delivering a service that is on the side of the clients. The key elements of this are:

- Hub & Spoke delivery through city-centre based premises and community based outreach venues
- Consistent and continuous community awareness campaigns
- Understanding the needs of specific demographic groups, including BME needs, NEETs, the elderly, the unemployed, people with disabilities
- 6 days a week service, with out of hours delivery
- Secure, safe and welcoming environment, changing the look and feel of accessing advice services in the City



Stage 2, early diagnostic of client issues (Tier 1)

Upon accessing the service, our aim is to diagnose the full range of advice needs each individual client has, this is achieved through:

- Immediate access to a trained and dedicated generalist adviser
- Fact find and identify the full extent of the clients' needs
- Looking beyond the clients' presenting problem, for example looking at potential clusters of associated problems
- Asking open ended questions
- Attentive listening
- Encouraging and supporting clients
- Utilising support mechanisms, for example interpreter services
- Identifying emergency cases and taking relevant action, such as tribunal deadlines
- Providing one-off advice where appropriate and providing supportive self-help information packs

Stage 3, provision of a full general help service (Tier 2)

Through our general help service, our fully trained and dedicated generalist advisers will then assist clients with their immediate advice needs, looking to act quickly to minimise the escalation of issues into severe legal problems. This involves:

- Provision of relevant information
- Provision of options available to the client
- One-off advice to resolve client issues where casework and representation is not required
- Identifying eligible benefits and maximising clients' income
- Liaison with third parties to identify non-contentious ways of resolving disputes
- Establishment of eligibility for legal aid where further specialist advice is needed
- Arrangements for referrals where the centre is unable to deliver the necessary advice

Stage 4, provision of specialist legal advice (Tier 3)

The specialist legal advice service is delivered by a highly skilled and experienced team of solicitors and caseworkers. They provide advice and legal help on complex matters in specific areas of law and carry out the full range of legal services including:

- Action on behalf of the clients to move the case on
- Negotiating on behalf of the client to third parties
- Delivering specialist advice across all categories and conducting casework on the clients' behalf
- Representation and advocacy for the clients, including at court and tribunals
- A seamless link with the generalist team

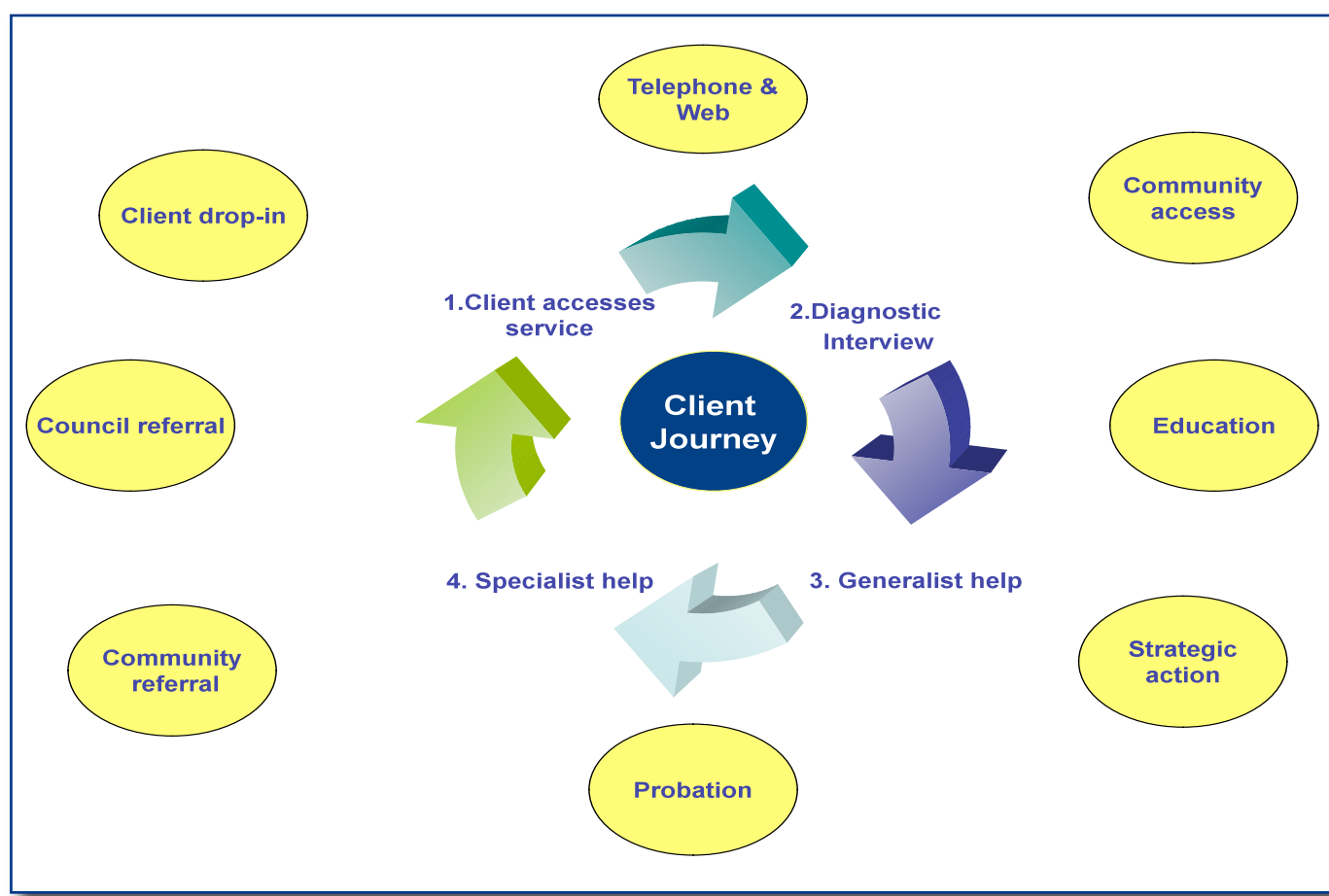
Stage 5, client exits the service

Overall, once a client's advice needs have been met, it is critical that we manage their exit from the service successfully to ensure that the individual will be in a stronger position moving forward and to also help the centre improve its services in the future, the key elements of this are:

- Feedback on their experience e.g. how easy to access, quality of service
- Feedback on how we can improve the service
- Client provided with direct contact details of their adviser(s) in case they have any follow up queries/concerns
- Future appointments if required
- Self-help support pack to help guide the client with their future decision-making to help prevent future legal issues arising
- Made aware of other centre services such as community based delivery and telephone support



The below diagram captures these core elements of the Leicester CLAC delivery model:



In summary, throughout this first year, the client journey through Leicester CLAC has resulted in a service that delivers wider integration across the city and provides the people of Leicester with greater 'customer choice'. As a one stop service, our advisers are trained to support clients across the full spectrum of social welfare law, helping people with issues around welfare benefits & tax credits, debt, family, employment issues, housing and community care. Across these categories of the law, the advice we give ranges from providing correct and accurate impartial information and guidance, specialist legal advice and casework on our clients' behalf and, where required, court and tribunal representation. All services of the centre are also delivered through extended opening hours. The centre is open for appointments between the hours of 9am – 6pm daily except for Thursdays when

opening hours are extended to 9am – 9pm. Leicester CLAC also operates on Saturday mornings between 9am and 12 noon. Our experience over the year has shown that 'out-of-hours' provision offers a more flexible solution for our clients who often have hectic and busy life-styles.

In addition to the breadth and depth of the services provided, through our hub and spoke delivery model, Leicester CLAC is able to 'reach' out to priority target areas across the city through a robust schedule of community based delivery. In addition to our centre in the heart of the city, CLAC services are also delivered in New Parks, Saffron, Braunstone, Netherhall & Northfields, Eyres Monsell, Charnwood and within Leicester City Council's Housing Options centre.



4. How have we performed during our first year?

In its first year, Leicester CLAC has provided advice and representation to over 7000 local residents, received strong customer satisfaction ratings with over 90% rating the service as either excellent or good. The CLAC has also contributed significantly to the overall increase in the number of specialist case starts within the city (up by over 61%). However, below these headlines, how has the service really done against the vision, aims and objectives set by A4e and Howells? The following section provides an holistic review of performance against all aspects of setting up and delivering a brand new advice service, including how we have managed the inputs into the service (such as project implementation) through to the key outcomes we have delivered on our clients' behalf.

“The Inputs....”

Project implementation

A4e and Howells were selected as preferred bidder in late December 2007. Implementation activity for the new service commenced in January 08, gearing towards a contract start date of April 1st 08. Experienced in setting up and embedding new services in communities, A4e and Howells put in place a dedicated project management team and resources, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, in order to ensure the service was ready for go-live.

There were a number of key work streams managed by the implementation team which made up the key elements of the critical path, not only was time a key factor, but also cost and quality. These work streams included:

- Setting up an accessible, centrally based delivery centre
- Managing a full TUPE process with staff from 3 different organisations based in the city
- Recruiting new staff into the service to fill the posts not taken up through TUPE
- Executing a stakeholder and intermediary engagement plan
- Design of brand and execution of marketing plans
- Installation and testing of IT & telephony infrastructure
- Implementation of operating procedures and quality systems

Overall, despite a short implementation timeframe, robust and thorough planning, combined with the professionalism and expertise of the project implementation team, ensured that the service was successfully implemented from day one of the contract.

Continuous Improvement

In establishing a brand new service delivered under a new model for Advice, both A4e and Howells realised that we would constantly have to review and refine the service as we strive to meet the needs of our clients. Through a monthly review structure (internal) and through a quarterly funding board (co-chaired by the LSC and Council), we have been able to quickly identify areas in need of improvement, both in terms of making the model more efficient and in delivering a greater customer focused service. In particular, we have:

- Developed a bespoke Case Management System to help our advisers manage their cases more effectively and to provide robust Management Information
- Refined our generalist triage service to improve customer experience and reduce waiting times
- Improved our quality procedures and supervision arrangements in line with recommendations from the Legal Services Commission
- Linked up with the LSC's Community Legal Advice service (a national telephone based service) to support our service during times of extremely high demand
- Built and maintained strong, local relationships with key intermediaries, the council and stakeholders across the city

Intermediary Engagement

Building strong, local relationships with key intermediaries have been absolutely critical to our performance in year 1. In particular, we work closely with intermediaries to promote awareness of the work of the CLAC, to support other organisations with their own service provision in the community and to establish positive referral processes. We also have a responsibility back to the city to help improve public services across the front line.



The three examples below highlight this responsibility.

i) Multi Agency Forum:

Leicester CLAC was invited to, and now regularly attends, the Multi-Agency Forum (MAF). Leicester has had a long and proud reputation as a welcoming city for new communities, however, changes in the scale and nature of immigration has resulted in a rapidly changing map of diversity and brought with it new challenges, in particular for public services. The aim of this group is to implement a strategy that provides a framework for organisations and individuals that come into contact with new arrivals to contribute to the success of integration in Leicester.

This forum is attended by a large number of diverse organisations throughout the city and has provided an ideal platform to raise awareness of the services offered at the centre and to engage with other groups such as RASAP, Refugee Action and Local Authority Departments. This allows a two way process of sharing information which is beneficial to all and not only encourages referrals, also promotes partnership working.

ii) Leicestershire Partnership – Multi Access Centres:

Multi Agency Access Centres and the delivery of services form part of the agenda to improve skills and the local economy. Leicester and Leicestershire Learning Partnership have been commissioned to lead the development of approximately 6 city capital proposals for access centres in the areas of highest deprivation.

Work is progressing well and Access Centres are proposed in the following areas of the City:

- Braunstone
- New Parks
- St Matthews
- Beaumont Leys / Stocking Farm
- Saffron/ Eyres Monsell
- North East Leicester

Venues for hub and spoke models are currently being looked at within these areas and a range of local services and organisations are in consultation to provide advice and cross referrals through a centrally maintained administration function for each area.

As the CLAC currently provides community based services through a hub & spoke model in many of the areas identified by the partnership, we are able to work closely with MAACs and provide essential background information into likely take-up of services, demographics of areas, current gaps in service provision and the suitability of premises we already use.

As we are well established in these areas through our community based delivery, we hope to provide a key role when centres are up and running.

iii) Leicester Housing Association

LHA are currently targeting two areas of Leicester where they hold a large number of properties, to raise awareness of the advice available to local residents due to an increasing number of tenants with debt problems and rent arrears.

Representatives from LHA will be door knocking to all properties within the Coleman and Saffron areas of Leicester during a three week period in June and July 09, speaking to tenants to promote the need to sort out legal issues, handing out leaflets and advising people how to get help.

CLAC will be included in the LHA leaflet but specific CLAC leaflets will also be handed out to residents and we will attend tenant's association meetings to raise our profile further – a referral form will be completed at the time of door knocking where appropriate to allow a seamless link to the CLAC.

Full details of our services have been discussed with LHA and promotional material distributed (posters, leaflets, outreach) for display in all central and local LHA offices.

This project will be rolled out across the City and the CLAC will be actively involved in this.



Working with the Local Authority

Leicester CLAC is not only part funded by the City Council, but in order for the centre to meet its aims and objectives in year 1, building strong working relations with Council front line services have been critical and continue to be so into year 2.

One example of this close working in practice has been with the council's Housing Options services.

Initially, the link was formed to assist the authority in processing the Mortgage Rescue Scheme, a £200m package of measures designed to prevent some of the most vulnerable families losing their homes and experiencing the trauma of repossession. CLAC will provide advice and support to households in financial difficulty as applicants to this scheme must have sought advice, agree to debt re-scheduling and discussed alternative options before admission.

This 'working partnership' has progressed further as, after initial discussions with the management team at Housing Options, it became apparent that it would be beneficial to clients for the CLAC to provide a presence 'on-site' for immediate relevant referrals.

As a result, two surgeries are currently running at the Housing Options Centre, a specialist housing advice surgery on Wednesdays and a generalist advice surgery on Thursdays. Regular review meetings are held every two months to discuss progress and implement changes where necessary.

This is a service that both the CLAC and Housing Options are keen to expand on and to explore future opportunities for joint working.

The CLAC is also part of the Housing Benefit Liaison Board and are looking to become Verification Framework Compliant, to allow staff to undertake full completion of forms and verification of eligibility. The Housing Benefits department are currently providing training for this to our teams. This will streamline a currently disjointed process and ensure greater efficiency and speed of service for the client.

The CLAC also has a very good working relationship with the Customer Service Centres, providing outreach surgeries in New Parks and Charnwood. Throughout the year we have been building on our relationships with front line council staff and working closer together enables both the CLAC and the council to deliver more effective services for the people of Leicester.

We have also recently formed links with Social Care & Health, initially regarding policies and procedures for lone working and contentious customers but this has now

developed and we are currently included in their induction programmes for reception staff which has proved very beneficial.

Overall, although Leicester CLAC is an independent service, for us to improve delivery of advice services within the city and to reach those currently not accessing advice, building and maintaining strong relationships with the council is critical. Where we can 'cross-over' with complementary council run services and embed our delivery alongside, this has to be ultimately beneficial for the people of Leicester.

"The Outcomes...."

The most important measures to assess when judging a service's performance are the outcomes achieved for its clients. Ultimately, these measures allow Leicester City Council and the LSC to performance manage the service effectively and to monitor value for money for the taxpayer. The following sections provide detailed analysis into the outcomes achieved by the CLAC in year 1.

Generalist Service

The table below shows the number of general help matters dealt with each month during year 1.

	Generalist
April	228
May	303
June	449
July	534
August	408
September	538
October	555
November	453
December	333
January	472
February	544
March	584
Total	5401



The following table gives a breakdown of the generalist enquiries between July 2008 – March 2009³

Debt	667
Housing	326
Employment	267
Community Care	40
Family	199
Welfare Benefits	1018
Tolerance	2
Civil other/general	1902

Specialist Service

The table below shows the number of clients dealt with in each category of law during year 1 by our team of trained solicitors and case workers.

	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar	Total
Debt	40	22	78	117	47	59	64	62	38	50	55	72	704
Housing	32	26	17	68	25	50	40	39	18	21	35	42	413
Employment	8	13	16	31	6	1	19	3	1	4	28	24	154
Community Care	0	0	2	14	7	2	8	11	2	10	15	7	78
Family	0	3	6	36	17	16	11	29	8	26	27	20	199
Welfare Benefits	29	53	18	54	18	37	47	40	19	8	29	24	376
Tolerance	0	0	0	1	3	5	15	5	2	1	0	0	32
HPCDS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	109	117	137	321	123	170	204	189	88	120	189	189	1956

³ Recording of specific legal categories for generalist advice commenced from July 1st 08



Substantive Benefit outcomes

Substantive Benefit Outcomes measure the success of specialist legal cases and whether or not a successful outcome has been achieved for the client. In other words, through the advice given, have we made a positive difference legally for the client?

The National KPI for standard contracts commissioned by the Legal Services Commission is set at 40%. However, for Leicester CLAC, both the LSC and the council have looked to raise the overall standard and quality of advice in the sector by raising the target to 60% for all specialist cases.

From a standing start, the CLAC has largely exceeded this key indicator of success, operating above the national standards in all categories and exceeding the 60% target in all but one category.

October to December 2008, analysis of closed cases

Category	Number of cases	% Substantive Benefit Outcomes
Consumer	6	66%
Community Care	1	100%
Debt	89	69%
Employment	16	75%
Family	15	53%
Housing	64	92%
Welfare Benefits	45	87%

Supporting people through the recession

3 categories in particular have faced even greater demand and pressure through the year due to the effects of the recession, namely Debt, Housing and Employment. Despite this increased pressure on the service, the teams responded fantastically well to maintain not just quality standards in the delivery of advice (the inputs) but also to remain outcome focused for the clients.

In Housing for example, the substantive benefit outcome for the period October to December was 92% of all cases completed. To put this into context, this meant ensuring people were not evicted from their homes and prevention of homelessness. Likewise, in Debt, our specialist team ensured

that despite spiralling levels of personal debt, we were able to ensure our clients were able to prioritise their debts and negotiate on their behalf affordable re-payment plans.

Overall, the recession has had a clear impact on the nature of issues facing our clients, with three themes in particular highlighting this:

1. Mortgage Arrears

Legal Aid services traditionally do not have too high a footfall coming through the doors with mortgage problems with most clients living in social and rented accommodation. However this has been noticeably on the rise across the city.

The above trends clearly demonstrate that the demographic of the client group accessing advice is widening due to rising unemployment (increasing number of those now eligible for legal aid).

Key challenges in the current climate are that the court has to balance the interests of all parties and fully assess the feasibility of whether or not it is realistic for the clients to stay in their homes.

The earlier we can help clients the better outcomes we are able to achieve, for example if a client comes to us and they have been issued with a court order for repossession and no previous representations have been made it makes it harder to achieve positive outcomes for the client. However, if the client comes to us the first or second time they have slipped behind in their payments the greater the impact we can have.

That is why accessibility is at the forefront of our delivery model.

2. Multiple Debt issues

The above strongly links to multiple debt issues. It is very rare that an individual's only debt problem is falling behind on their mortgage repayments.

The most common debt we deal with in terms of our traditional client group is unsecured personal loans. This is largely driven by the fact that often this is the only source of credit for our clients (door step lending).

However, as with the above trends, we are seeing increasing problems with credit card debt, loans taken out with Banks/ Building societies, utilities not being paid and increasing pressure on priority debt payments such as rent and council tax.



3. Pressures on the Benefits System

One key function for the services we provide in Leicester is to make sure people are getting the support from the state they are entitled to. In proactive terms, this is about helping people who have experienced life changing events realise what support is available.

For example, for clients that have recently been made unemployed and failed to find new employment in time and as a result have fallen behind in their mortgage payments, the immediate reason for accessing our service will be because of the pressing short term legal issue. However, we will review their eligibility for benefits to ensure we maximise their short term income needs. This is the strength of a joined-up, integrated delivery model.

We are also able to use this in the client's favour when negotiating positive outcomes that are in the client's best interest.

One of the challenges we face around benefits is around benefit appeals which are also on the increase due to rising applications for support.

Maximising client income

Our support to clients on Welfare Benefits not only involves conducting welfare benefit assessment checks, but also to guide and assist clients through the application process for different Welfare Benefits.

Our Specialist teams also act on our clients' behalf through benefit appeals and claims for back dated benefit payments. Overall, the CLAC service complements the Welfare Benefits system and ensures people get the right benefits that have been designed for their individual eligibility. However, because the benefits system can be hard to navigate, often people are not accessing all levels of financial support available.

The below statistics show the total levels of secured maximised income for our clients from the period August 08 to Mar 09.

Financial gains	Aug 08 – Mar 09
Increased income	£75,403.41
Lump sums	£242,403.01
Total	£317,806.42

Targeting Priority groups

The centre recognises that legal advice services are often not accessed by hard to reach/seldom heard groups. Fundamentally, in focusing on accessibility, our aim in the first year was to buck this trend.

We have worked very closely with Leicester City Council and produced a working document (Equality Impact Assessment) to understand the equality and diversity issues specific to the City. In particular, the service has worked hard to ensure the following groups are well represented:

- The unemployed and people on low incomes
- People with long term illness or disability (including mental health)
- Young people (including those leaving care)
- Older people (over 65 years)
- Lone parents
- Asylum seekers
- BME and faith communities
- People with problems relating to accommodation (including those in temporary accommodation)
- Victims of violence, including domestic violence
- Geographically isolated people

Leicester has a large and diverse population and based on census information 40% have an ethnic minority background. There was an increase of 7% in ethnic minority residents between the 1991 and 2001 census and it is likely that Leicester will become the first city to have a majority of people with an ethnic minority background. This can be further evidenced by 2009 statistics on pupils aged 5-16 which show that currently 53% have an ethnic minority background, 40% are white and 7% are unknown.



The table below shows the comparison between the ethnic diversity of Leicester and the percentage of clients seen at the main office by ethnicity.

	White	Asian	Black	Chinese	Other
Ethnic Composition of Leicester based on 2007 estimate (LCC Figures)	60%	31%	8%	0.5%	0.5%
CLAC Clients for generalist advice	38%	31%	14%	1%	16%
CLAC Clients – specialist closed cases	54%	28%	15%	0%	3%

Targeting priority areas

Need analysis commissioned by the LSC and the council clearly identifies that there are key Ward areas within the city that have particular elevated needs for advice services or difficulties in accessing services. Based on this needs analysis, we initially implemented community based advice surgeries in Braunstone (2 venues), Beaumont Leys, Saffron, New Parks and Highfields (2 venues).

In the early months of delivery footfall varied greatly and it became apparent that venues being used should be reviewed in order to establish a more viable timetable, allowing the service to continue in a more structured way to enable the CLAC to deliver legal advice services to all local communities.

Following successful stakeholder days, (during which over 40 organisations attended with representation from voluntary groups, local communities and disability services) the need for community based surgeries in other parts of the City was identified. As a result, the existing surgeries were streamlined and additional surgeries set up.

The revised venues are:

- Braunstone – 1 venue
- Saffron
- New Parks
- Spinney Hills/Charnwood
- Eyres Monsell
- Netherhall & Northfields
- Probation Service
- Leicester City Council’s Housing Options

We continue to closely monitor footfall at community based venues. The variance can be significant from venue to venue. In areas where footfall is below expected volumes, sometimes quick fixes can be applied, such as training for staff of other services within venues to ensure greater referrals through to simple solutions like changing the day of delivery. If footfall continues to be below expectations over a period of time, we do apply pragmatism and transfer resources to where demand pressures outweigh supply.

Our most popular community based venues are Braunstone, New Parks and Saffron averaging 5 clients per adviser per day.

Our centre on Charles Street is also easily reached by bus routes coming into the City. Postcode data of our client group demonstrates that we are successfully reaching clients from priority areas (predominately LE2, LE3 and LE4) with 82% of clients accessing generalist advice coming from these areas, 78% for specialist advice.



Generalist enquiries by postcode

Area	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
LE1	22	38	42	35	32	46	38	38	25	31	33	42
LE2	36	55	109	124	101	138	152	98	80	111	144	136
LE3	44	48	71	114	88	116	135	99	80	120	131	122
LE4	43	83	106	133	88	130	117	115	88	107	119	148
LE5	52	54	77	112	86	95	99	99	60	103	117	136
LE6	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
LE7	1	2	0	4	1	5	2	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	29	22	44	12	12	7	11	4	0	0	0	0
Totals	228	303	449	534	408	538	555	453	333	472	544	584

Specialist enquiries by postcode

AREA	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
LE1	12	16	3	11	5	7	11
LE2	34	29	7	31	37	22	13
LE3	31	36	10	37	23	31	34
LE4	27	22	16	29	24	25	30
LE5	10	14	5	20	25	21	16
LE6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LE7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Totals	114	117	41	128	116	106	104



Overcoming language barriers

Alongside English, there are around 70 languages spoken in the city, 8 of which are commonly spoken:

- 16% Gujarati
- 3% Punjabi
- 3% Somali
- 2% Urdu
- Smaller groups are Hindi, Arabic, Bengali and Polish.

In order to address this need, the CLAC has employed a number of staff who can speak the main Asian languages, Gujarati, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu, and are readily on hand to give immediate assistance to the remaining advisers in all categories of the law. This has significantly reduced our reliance on the council's own interpreter services.

However, when faced with demand pressures, direct support from the Community Languages section of Leicester City Council has enabled us to maintain levels of service to our clients.

Access for disabled clients and young adults

Almost 19% of the population have a limiting long term illness and 9% of the working age population claim incapacity benefit or severe disability allowance, this is almost twice the national average.

Our main centre is accessible for people with disabilities with ramps and lift access into our reception area. Access to all services are available via the main centre, outreach surgeries, home visits, telephone advice, awareness raising events within the community, self help packs and direct referrals.

17% of all clients attending drop-in sessions at the main centre or at local outreach surgeries consider themselves to have some form of disability and 22% of all specialist clients fall into these categories.

We also recognise that there are significant advice needs for 18 to 24 year olds. However, traditionally engagement with advice services from this group does not match up to their advice needs. As Youth Access research showed through an article in the Independent Lawyer Magazine, using the example of housing advice, under 25 year olds account for a third of all housing and homeless issues. But based on national figures, this age group only accounts for

10% of housing clients⁴. Leicester CLAC is trying the reverse these trends through engagement with key intermediaries supporting these groups, for example we have put in place strong referral mechanisms with Foundation Housing, whose hostels provide accommodation to 18 – 25 year olds.

Community Legal Education

A full Community Legal Education programme has been undertaken in year 1 as part of the centre requirements. Given the pressures of the recession and increasing pressures on people's finances, the CLAC chose financial capability as the core theme for the programme. Our core aim was to provide the people of Leicester with training and support to help them manage their personal finances better and make stronger financial choices (prevention rather than cure). In addition, we also used the programme to raise the awareness of the CLAC and to engage with (and deliver through) charities and local third sector organisations.

We also extended our programme into schools and colleges, targeting local children and students, helping the schools with their curriculum requirements to educate on personal finances.

The programme specifically focuses on budgeting skills, managing bank accounts, understanding the dangers of credit, jargon busting and prioritising expenditure.

Overall, the following evaluation shows the success of the community legal education programme:

- 98% attending found the workshops very informative
- 80% felt that had gained some benefit from attending and were now more financially aware
- The remaining 20% stated they were already fairly 'financially aware' but felt it was nice to know that help was available should it be needed.
- 70% are more confident when dealing with monetary issues

⁴James Kenrick. Independent Lawyer Magazine, May 07



5. Improving customer experience

As detailed in the delivery model, Leicester CLAC places huge emphasis on client evaluation and feedback to ensure we continuously develop the customer experience through every aspect of the service. We also believe that alongside substantive benefit outcomes and delivering advice within the LSC's Specialist Quality Mark framework, client satisfaction is a key element of service quality.

Detailed client feedback surveys are undertaken both during generalist drop-in sessions and sent to clients upon completion of cases.

Overall, client response rates to our satisfaction surveys are excellent, with an 80% completion rate, an indicator in itself that people are experiencing a good service.

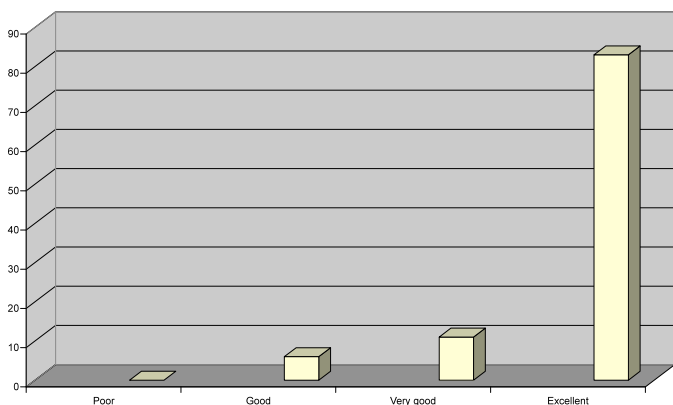
Our surveys focus on a number of key aspects of service delivery:

Level of service

Feedback has indicated that 94% of clients surveyed feel that the service they have received from Leicester CLAC was either very good or excellent with the remaining 6% rating the service as good. Various positive comments include:

- The service could not be bettered
- Everything was done for us
- Staff are very friendly, non judgemental and knowledgeable

Client feedback- service rating



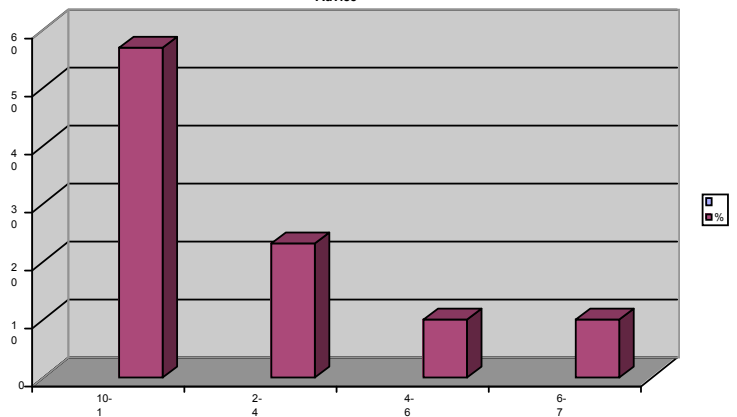
Opening hours

The majority of clients surveyed indicated that current drop-in services, together with the option of appointments on Saturday morning, met their requirements fully.

Some would prefer the late night to be on a Wednesday (2%).

Whilst 10% of clients indicated that it would be beneficial to them for the service to be available between the hours of 4pm -7pm, take up has actually been low for these out of hours appointments, despite information being available throughout the reception area and as part of our city-wide marketing and engagement strategies.

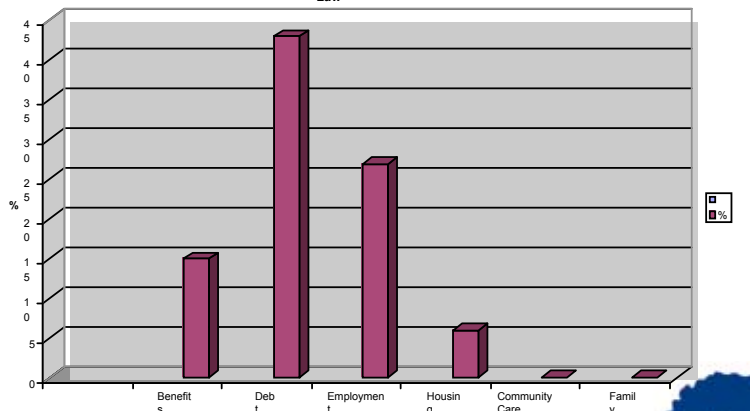
Preferred time of day for Advice



Range of services

Clients surveyed had sought advice across the full spectrum of services offered, with debt problems accounting for the majority of enquiries. At present, this mix approximately represents the contractual mix for case splits between different categories.

Category of Law



Community endorsement

One very pleasing indicator is that over 50% of clients stated that the CLAC had been recommended to them by family or friends, a very positive indication that the CLAC is providing an extremely important and worthwhile service to the community.

Overall, whilst our client satisfaction survey is a continuous process, analysis takes place every two months to ensure we spot trends quickly and put in place any necessary corrective action to maintain our quality standards.

Our Staff

By far, the most important element of the service is the front line staff working within the centre. Without their dedication, expertise and passion we would not have achieved the above outcomes and customer satisfaction. From the receptions through to our most senior solicitors, all our staff share a passion for helping people and their job satisfaction comes from making a real difference to people's lives. Without our staff, the model for Leicester CLAC would not be achieving the outcomes detailed in this report. This has been clearly recognised by our clients and the specific feedback we receive makes the hard work and dedication worth while. The following quotes have been taken from formal written feedback clients of the CLAC have chosen to leave:

"I was very happy with your service, I suffer with mental health problems and found you to be extremely patient, kind and gentle which was a great help to me with my anxiety problems – well done"

"All staff are really friendly and approachable and everyone listens very carefully, understands and sympathises with every person that walks in – I think you all do a wonderful job"

"I was put at ease when feeling very unsure and vulnerable. I felt I was being listened to and some-one was there to help"

"All round good service, made me feel confident that someone else was going to speak for you, puts you at ease from the word go – thank goodness you were there"

From day one, we have been mindful of the need to balance contractual performance targets with delivering a service truly 'on the side' of the clients. So far, receiving such positive customer satisfaction and feedback, coupled with delivering strong outcomes across all categories of the law, indicates that Leicester CLAC is achieving this balance.

6. Bringing the service to life

So far, this report has examined the nature of the work we deliver, the outcomes this produces and the levels of satisfaction the clients have from accessing Leicester CLAC. However, in order to really bring the service to life and to give an insight into what our advisers deal with daily, the following section provides an overview of specific cases that have been dealt with over the first year. These varied examples highlight the diverse nature of the work we do and also the complexities of the issues we deal with on our clients' behalf. Identity and personal details have been changed to protect anonymity.

Delivering in the heart of the community

Jane's husband had recently past away and all her bills had been set up in his name, which meant she had no previous experience of dealing with them. Since her husband's death her confidence had been knocked, she very rarely left the house and would not dare travel to the city centre on her own. New Parks Customer Service Centre is just around the corner from her home and is somewhere she has been familiar with for a number of years. Here she met with one of our generalist advisers, Gavin.

Gavin reassured her that he would be able to help her. He then put together a list of possible bills and documents they would need to change the name on. Jane had brought the majority of bills in with her which allowed Gavin to contact companies on her behalf, as she did not feel up to it.

Gavin also explained to Jane that she could be entitled to extra benefits. He helped her fill in Housing benefits and Council tax benefits forms and he called the Pension Service to have a pension credit form sent out to her.

Gavin asked her to return to the customer service centre once the form had arrived. He also explained the areas of law in which he and the specialist teams could offer advice and asked her to have a think if there was anything else the CLAC could help her with.



Tackling discrimination in the workplace

One of our clients started working as a bar maid in April 08. She discovered that she was pregnant in May and informed her employer. After she told her employer she was pregnant she felt her employer started picking on her. For example she was sent home at 9pm for having a slight cold. She was told that she could not work with food while she had a cold. The pub however stopped serving food at 6pm. She was then told to provide a sick note for this absence when she returned the following day.

She was then sent to the chemist and then the local post office to get a self certified sick note for the next day. She was then told that they would make a note of her having had a day off despite her employer sending her off to obtain a self certified sick note when it was not required.

During the early months of her pregnancy the client underwent a number of blood tests causing bruising to her arms. Her employer insisted that she wear a cardigan to cover the bruises during very hot weather. Her employer sent her home to get a cardigan, when she returned she was warned for not wearing the correct colour and was then sent to the shop to buy a cardigan of the right colour. Other bar maids were not required to wear cardigans and further there was no requirement to wear a specific colour.

The client asked if she could wear plasters over the bruises as opposed to a cardigan due to the hot weather, at which point she was given a verbal warning and told to go home.

We raised a grievance on the client's behalf alleging direct sex discrimination in that the real reason for her dismissal was her pregnancy. We also claimed unlawful deduction of wages and accrued but not taken holiday pay.

We submitted a claim to the Employment Tribunal (ET) for the above claims.

The respondent failed to respond to the ET1. The ET set a remedy hearing where we represented our client and she was awarded a total of £13,965.67.

Maximising income

Marlon had a £2508.42 overpayment for Housing Benefit which accrued due to a failure by the client to notify the authorities of a material change of circumstances following an increase in salary.

After assessing the case it appeared the client did not have any merits in pursuing this overpayment decision.

He continued to receive Housing Benefit, however he was only awarded £19.90 per week. The client was advised he should make payments of £9.15 per week to reduce the overpayment (this is the minimum amount payable). He would therefore be eligible to £10.75 per week Housing Benefit.

Our adviser completed a full benefit check which established he would be eligible to a 3 bedroom rate under the new Local Housing Allowance. In simple terms, if he switched to this rate he would be eligible for more housing benefit.

Marlon took this advice and made an application under the local housing allowance and at present the client receives £60.98 per week after the £9.15 deductions.

That is an increase of £50.23 per week.

Battling against eviction and homelessness

Our Client successfully avoided being evicted from her home with the help of Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre.

Kathy had fallen into mortgage arrears after been made redundant and her mortgage lender had started possession proceedings. She first consulted our solicitor at the Leicester centre in June 2008.

She was advised that it would be some time before the Department for Work and Pensions would increase her jobseeker's allowance payments to assist her with the payment of her monthly mortgage instalments. So, if she wanted to retain her home, she really had no alternative but to find a new job.

Happily, she succeeded shortly before proceedings began at Leicester County Court. Her solicitor was able to persuade the District Judge to make a suspended possession order.

That allowed her to keep her home as long as she paid the usual monthly mortgage instalments plus an extra £25 a month for mortgage arrears.

Unfortunately, she was not able to make the required payments and her mortgage lender obtained a possession warrant and she was due to be evicted from her home on 12 December. Four days before the hearing she returned to the Community Legal Advice Centre for more help.



Her solicitor assisted her to apply to the county court for an order suspending the possession warrant. He represented her at the hearing and successfully persuaded the District Judge to suspend the possession warrant on the same terms as previously.

It was agreed there should be a further hearing in three months to see if she had been able to keep up with her payments. In her favour was the fact that her hours of work had gone up from 22 to 39 hours. This increase in wages would allow her to apply for working tax credit.

Managing debt effectively

Amit was referred for Money Advice by his Social Worker. He was suffering from severe depression for approximately 12 months and had been unable to return to work. He had fallen behind with payments to his mortgage, utilities and unsecured creditors. Although he was receiving Payment Protection Insurance for his mortgage, the payments were insufficient to cover the whole payment and he felt too overwhelmed to deal with creditors.

We assisted him to negotiate to temporarily convert his mortgage to interest only payments whilst he considered his long term housing options and advised him regarding his entitlement to claim help towards his housings costs from the Department for Work and Pensions. We also assisted him to set up regular small payments to his utilities and negotiate temporary reduced payments to unsecured creditors.

Overall, the above case studies highlight not just the varied nature of the advice we provide but also the real difference our advisers make to sensitive, personal legal issues. Without our intervention and support, the consequences can be dire. Our aim is to deliver positive outcomes for our clients and to help better their situation so that similar legal issues do not re-occur in the future.

7. Priorities for year 2 (building on our lessons learnt)

The first year of Leicester CLAC has put in place the strong foundations necessary to achieve our full aims and objectives for the service for the life of the contract and beyond. In particular, the CLAC has successfully delivered an holistic and integrated service which focuses on tackling all legal and advice needs that our clients often have. A key feature of this

success has been to focus on those areas of the city where advice needs are greatest and in engaging clients that have previously never engaged before with advice services to help resolve any legal issues they have.

Another key achievement for the service has been to change the 'look and feel' of advice and to concentrate delivery on the client experience. This has been complemented with delivering excellent outcomes for our clients in legal terms, supported by the substantive benefit outcomes secured.

However, both A4e and Howells are also very open in their assessment that we do still not have the fully polished service we are striving for. As the demand for advice services increases through uncertain economic times (both nationally and locally), we constantly have to shape and tweak improvements in our service. The core specifications of the service contract as shaped by the LSC and Leicester City Council represent innovative reform in the delivery of advice services and it is important to stress that this service is only into one year's delivery. As contract holders, A4e and Howells are committed to driving improvements that will ensure all our aims and objectives for the life and the contract are achieved and hopefully exceeded.

The below summarises our core areas of service development for year 2:

Scale up capacity to meet increasing demands

Following increasing pressure on our services towards the end of 2008 due to the impact of the recession, Leicester CLAC put in a proposal to both the LSC and the council for additional case starts to help build our capacity to meet these expanding advice needs. As a result, the service was awarded funding for an additional 250 case starts in Debt, 270 case starts in Housing and 250 in employment. This extra capacity for specialist level work has also been supplemented by capacity building of the generalist service which will allow us to see an additional 1,500 clients through our generalist advice service.

This extra capacity into the service has led to an increase in the number of advisers in the CLAC (local job creation) and to ensure greater efficiency in seeing clients, working towards being seen by an adviser within 30 minutes of dropping into the centre and ensuring all appointments for specialist advice occurs within 10 working days.



Recruitment, Training & Induction

One of our key priorities for year 2 is to improve the overall recruitment, training and induction into the centre. Across the advice sector there are significant shortages of experienced and qualified staff. We want Leicester CLAC to not only attract experienced advisers but also to encourage new people to enter this space. This is critical for the long term growth of the service.

Once new staff have been recruited, we want to ensure retention. A new induction and training programme has been implemented and our aim is to get new staff 'job-ready' as efficiently as possible but without jeopardising quality of provision. Pivotal to this is the role qualified supervisors in the centre play as well as ensuring clear, fit-for-purpose people management processes are in place and actively bought into by all staff.

Overall, the CLAC's aim is to build on the culture that grew throughout the first year and embed shared accountability for delivery across all staff, regardless of their position and function within the service.

Strategic Action

The CLAC has a key responsibility to help prevent future legal problems for the people of Leicester developing as well as trying to resolve and manage existing legal actions. Whilst our community legal education programmes look to empower people to make better informed choices in the first place, we also have a duty to spot recurring legal themes and look to use any associated evidence in influencing policy makers and key stakeholders that could influence change.

In year 2, the CLAC is committed to evaluating their case data more closely in order to be able to spot recurring trends more effectively and look to coordinate strategic action with more structure and focus on local issues as well as national occurring themes in advice services.

Closely aligning Generalist and Specialist provision

One of the core strengths of the model as evidenced in this report has been the integration between generalist and specialist advice. We want to build on this even further in year 2 by providing further specialist training and supervision for our generalist team to help build their own skill sets. Each generalist adviser will be aligned to a specialist team.

This will have two clear benefits for the service, firstly, we believe that this will improve even further the ability of our

generalist team to identify specialist advice needs that are not easily identified on the surface of client engagement. Secondly, we want to capacity build the knowledge and skills of our staff in order to give them the opportunity to build a career not just within the CLAC but also in the advice sector. This in turn will aid the growth of our capacity in specialist provision in line with increasing demand.

Final Summary

Throughout the advice sector across England and Wales, the principles of a CLAC model have been at the centre of debate for the last two years. As a general model, CLACs are relatively new, with Leicester being only the fourth CLAC to be commissioned. This report has deliberately steered away from the national debate around reform of advice services, choosing to focus on actual, 'on the ground' delivery within the city of Leicester. A4e and Howells recognise that 'one size does not fit all' and that in order to deliver a successful service, you need to balance the broad principles of the CLAC model with the specific local needs of the city. This report has attempted to review how we have delivered against these local advice needs in just one year of setting up a brand new service. Overall, as the above priority areas for year 2 show, Leicester CLAC cannot claim at this moment in time to have fully met the vision, aims and objectives for the service. However, we strongly believe that we have transformed advice delivery in the city, delivering great outcomes for the people of Leicester. This is matched with a positive customer experience which we hope will help change behaviours and future decision making to actually prevent future legal issues arising again in the future for our clients. One year on and Leicester CLAC has established a service that is fit for purpose for the city and heading in the right direction to exceed the expectations that were clearly agreed upon with both the Legal Services Commission and Leicester City Council from the outset of the contract.

Finally, Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre first and foremost exists for the people of Leicester. It is not about promoting the organisations delivering the service, nor is it fundamentally about the Legal Services Commission or Leicester City Council. We have set high standards, it is now about exceeding these standards year-on-year. Fundamentally, to achieve this, we must continue to understand the needs of the people of Leicester and work extremely hard to mould our service to these needs. This is the common theme behind our priorities for year 2.



Annex 1, Centre information

Location and Contact details

Leicester Community Legal Advice
3rd Floor
60 Charles St
Leicester
LE1 1FB

Alternatively, clients can contact the centre on
0845 456 0074, email advice@leicesterclac.co.uk,

or contact us through the web -
www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/leicester

Opening hours

The centre is open for appointments between the hours
of 9am – 6pm daily except for Thursday when hours are
extended to 9am – 9pm and on Saturdays between
9am – 12 noon.

A drop-in service operates daily between the hours of
9-30am – 4-00pm, except on Wednesdays when the Centre
closes at 1pm to allow for staff training.

Drop-in services also operates every Saturday between
9am – 12 noon.

Services Offered

Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre provides people
with impartial information, guidance and specialist legal
advice and representation.

Specifically, our advisers are trained to support clients with
issues around:

- Welfare Benefits and tax credits
- Debt
- Family
- Employment issues
- Housing
- Community care

These services are offered at both our centre and at
community based outreach venues which are currently
situated in the following locations:

- New Parks
- Saffron
- Braunstone
- Netherhall & Northfields
- Eyres Monsell
- Charnwood
- Leicester City Council Housing Options



Annex 2, Community Based Venues & Delivery Schedule

MONDAY – Morning

Leicester Probation Service
2 Cobden Street,
Leicester LE1 2LB

Tel: 0116 2620400

10am – 1-00pm Appointments only

TUESDAY – Morning

Braunstone Working,
Gallards Hill, Leicester, LE3 1QR

Tel: (0116) 225 2484

Drop-in Advice Only 10.00am – 12.00pm

TUESDAY – Afternoon

New Parks Customer Service Centre,
321 Aikman Avenue,
Leicester, LE3 9PW

Tel: (0116) 252 7000

1.00pm – 5.00pm Appointments only

WEDNESDAY – Morning

Eyres Monsell Children's Centre,
Hillsborough Road LE2 9PT

Tel: 0116 2426720

10am – 1pm appointments only

WEDNESDAY – Morning (as from 3/6/09)

Charnwood Customer Service Centre
The Merlyn Vaz Health & Social Care Centre
Humberstone Road, Leicester

Tel: 0116 2426720

9-30am – 1.00pm Appointments only.

WEDNESDAY – Morning

Leicester City Council – Housing Options
New Walk Centre

Tel: 0116 2527000

10am – 1pm Appointments and immediate referrals
(Specialist Housing Matters)

THURSDAY – Morning

Saffron Resource Centre, 432 Saffron Lane,
Leicester, LE2 6SB

Tel: (0116) 283 7212

9.15am – 1.15pm Appointments Only

THURSDAY – Afternoon

Leicester City Council – Housing Options
New Walk Centre

Tel: 0116 2527000

2pm – 4pm Appointments and immediate referrals
(General Advice)

FRIDAY – Morning

Netherhall Children's Centre,
New Romney Crescent, Leicester, LE5 1NH

Fortnightly from 6/2/09 Tel: 0116 2413444

10-00am – 1-00pm Appointments only

Northfields Children's Centre,
Gypsy Lane, Leicester, LE4 9DD

Fortnightly from 20/02/09 Tel: 2924580

10-00am -1-00pm Appointments only



Annex 3, Service implementation, work stream summary

Work stream	Summary
Premises	A new centre was required. Overall, the criteria for selection was based on location (city centre, communications and transport links), size (minimum of 4,000 sq ft), DDA compliance and look & feel. Within tight timescales, once a property was identified, the implementation team had to negotiate lease terms, commission refurbishments, embed fixtures and fittings and conduct full H&S audits.
TUPE	Staff from 3 local advice agencies were eligible for TUPE into the CLAC. In order to ensure a successful TUPE transfer, both A4e and Howells were committed to engagement, communication and transparency at the earliest opportunity 3 months before the transfer date. Specific tasks included confirming which staff were eligible; obtaining all ELI information; communicating direct to staff on the service; implement a robust consultation and selection process where appropriate.
Additional recruitment	Conduct full recruitment process to fill gaps in delivery structure not filled by staff that joined the CLAC through TUPE. Through this exercise, a new generalist advice team was recruited and trained from the local community. Staff joining the service not only brought essential skills but added value desirable skills such as second and third languages.
Stakeholder & Intermediary engagement	Critical to the successful launch of any new service was to ensure buy in from key local intermediaries and stakeholders. Overall, our project implementation team were tasked with engaging key intermediaries before the service went live, to ensure the key groups representing the community were aware of the CLAC's aims and objectives and how clients could access the service from April 1st 08.
Marketing	Launching a new service requires a dedicated brand and suite of supporting marketing materials. Overall, an independent brand, representative of Leicester, was created. The key theme is Leicester Community Legal Advice Centre and not the organisations that deliver or fund the service. The service was formally launched at the centre 3 months after go-live by Glyn Evans, Director at the Legal Services Commission, and Councillor Ross Willmott, Leader of Leicester City Council.
IT & Telephony	Installation of IT (hardware and software), the case management system (bespoke to CLAC delivery) and telephony systems. Use of technology and IT critical to delivering an efficient and quality driven service for our clients.
Operating procedures and quality systems	Design of bespoke procedures and quality systems specifically tailored to the Leicester CLAC delivery model. Forms an integral part of staff training and induction and administered through a fit-for-purpose office manual which focuses on the end-to-end journey of the client accessing Advice.



Annex 4, background into A4e and Howells

A4e

A4e is a leading provider of global public service reform with a focus of improving people's lives. We work with government, the private and third sectors to design, develop and deliver frontline public services that benefit individuals, organisations and communities. Operating from over 200 locations, A4e now operates in the EU, Middle East, Africa and Australasia.

Our core service areas currently focus on reducing unemployment; up-skilling workforces, encouraging financial inclusion; providing free and quality assured information, advice and guidance (including Legal Aid); reducing re-offending and supporting social and economic regeneration.

Howells

Howells was formed in 1979 to provide legal services to low income families and individuals and has substantial experience of delivering LSC services in all categories of law. Howells currently employs over 150 solicitors / Caseworkers and over 95% of Howells' current caseload work is undertaken with legal aid clients. Howells is the largest supplier of publicly funded legal services in Yorkshire and Humber and one of the largest providers in the UK with Specialist Quality Marks Across a full spectrum of social welfare areas.

The lawyers, caseworkers and advisers at Howells have committed themselves to providing the highest quality advice and representation in the areas of the law that affect people as individuals. That is why they are known as "the Citizen's Solicitor".



community
legal advice

www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/leicester

This report is also available in large print.
Please contact marketing@a4e.co.uk

