



Law
Centres
Network

A Law Centre is an independent not-for-profit law practice. Law Centres want everyone to have equal access to justice. They target their services at the poorest and most disadvantaged people in their communities. For this reason, each Law Centre's core services are free of charge. Law Centres seek to tackle the root causes of poverty and disadvantage.

We are the Law Centres Network (LCN), the national membership body for Law Centres. We support existing Law Centres to develop their services, so they can help more people in more ways. We assist Law Centres to work together, with one another and with other agencies. We are also the collective national voice of Law Centres.

Together, we use the law and advocacy to bring about social change for our communities.

We strive for a just and equal society where everyone's rights are valued and protected.



Social Welfare Issues - UK
3 November 2018

“Poor people are not just like rich people without money”

“Poor people do not lead settled lives into which the law seldom intrudes; they are constantly involved with the law in its most intrusive forms”

“Poverty creates an abrasive interface with society; poor people are always bumping into sharp legal things.”

Stephen Wexler, *Practicing Law for Poor People*, Yale Law Journal 79, 1970

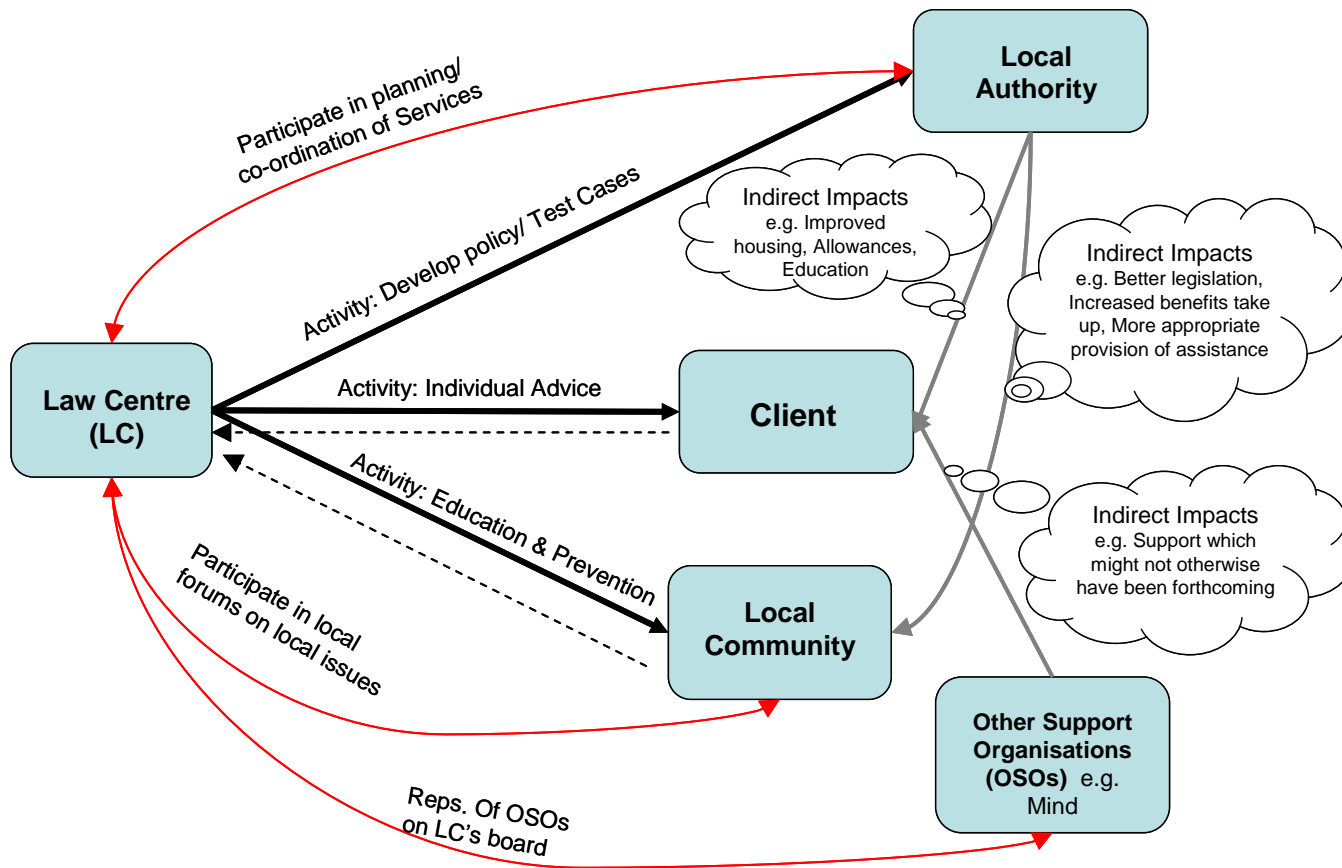
- First Law Centre commenced in 1970
- Law Centres Network in 1978
- Law Centres brought social welfare legal assistance to those who needed it, e.g. the first housing duty court service was established by 3 London Law Centres
- Most areas of social welfare law out of scope of civil legal aid – immigration, private housing, employment, most welfare benefits
- Law Centres use charitable funds to provide assistance in these areas
- Today assist around 250,000 people per year
- Turn away 2 out of every 3 people

Table: populations in disadvantage and their relative uptake of civil legal aid in 2017/18

Diversity Category	Number in poverty	Rate of legal need likelihood	Estimated number of people in legal need	Category rate among legal aid cases	Legal aid case volume	Gap between need and uptake
Children (under 18)	4.1m	32%	1,312,000	19.44%	46,070	1,265,930
Young adults (18-25)	3.118m	37%	1,153,643	13.68%	32,257	1,121,386
Aged 55-64	1.516m	31%	469,960	4.78%	11,113	458,847
Aged 65+	1.9m	14.5%	275,500	2.78%	6,437	269,063
Women	5.2m	32%	1,664,000	50.79%	120,194	1,543,806
People with disabilities	4.2m	33.5%	1,407,000	22.75%	53,810	1,353,190
BAME people	3.146m	38%	1,195,480	20.63%	48,311	1,147,169

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2 Collaboration Examples

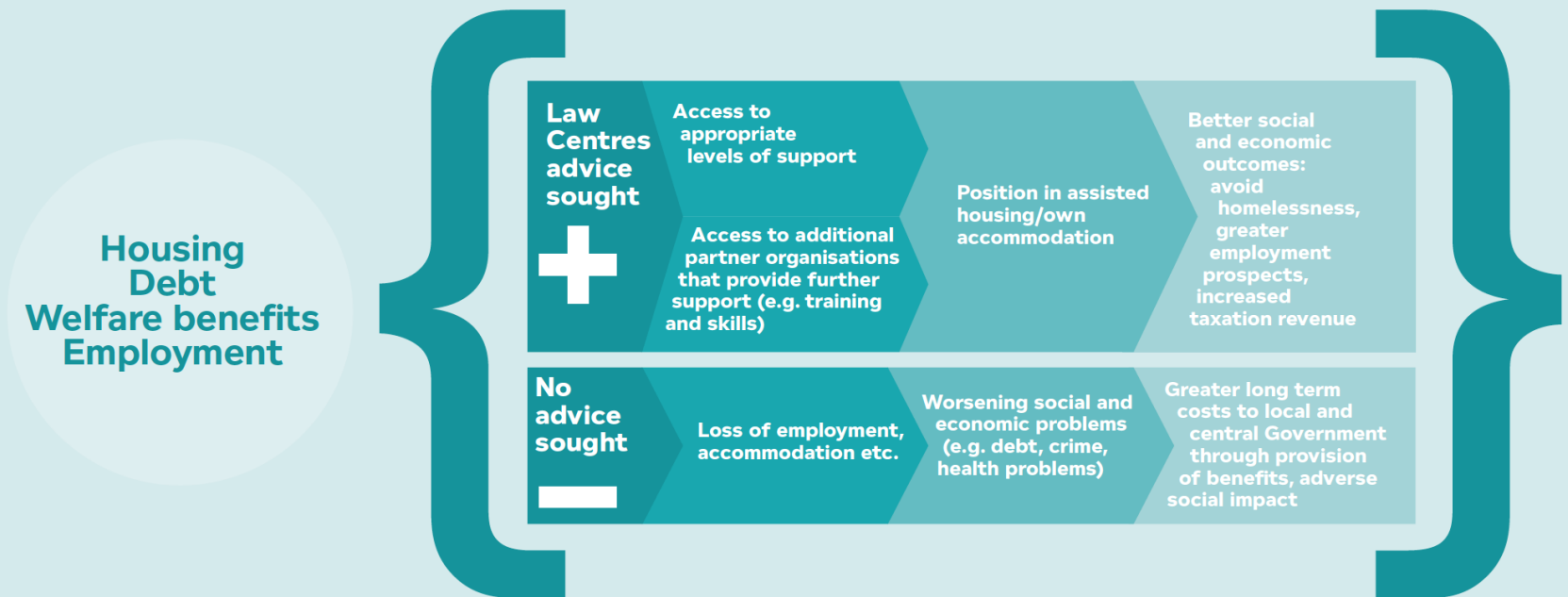
1. Shared Lives Plus

- Social Care program to assist adults with intellectual disability to live independently
- Law Centres provide social welfare legal support
- Education provided to support staff to identify potential legal problems and what to do
- Legal assistance for those problems that need it
- Service users succeed more often
- Support staff deal with fewer crisis situations

2. Brexit and Vulnerable EU Citizens

- 10 partner organisations
- Law Centres and local support organisations
- Education provided to local organisations, local authorities, community groups and individuals on the rights of EU citizens up to Brexit
- Individual legal assistance provided where required
- Strategic legal challenges to wrong practice e.g. the Deportation of EU citizen rough sleepers
- More people able to access services to which they are entitled

**PwC Social Impact Study logic chain:
How timely legal advice saves money
and local resources**



£212m
per year
net direct
cost savings

e.g. preventing
the need to
spend on
temporary
accommodation
or benefits

£214m
per year
net indirect
cost savings

e.g. by
preventing
the costs of
debt, ill health
or lost
employment

£47m
per year
net benefits

e.g. by helping
people stay
functional so
they can earn,
spend and
pay tax

**Law Centres
provide great
value for their
public funding**

PwC Social Impact Study:
The social and economic value
of Law Centres

We have not been able to repeat the calculation for 2018 because of the lack of updated figures for some of the unit price indicators used at the time. However, the trend for those that have been updated is clear, and suggests a much higher levels of cost savings per intervention:

Category	Cost in 2013	Cost in 2018	Change
Cost per debt problem	£1,000	£2,862	+186%
Cost per homeless person	£26,000	£24,000-£30,000	+13%
Cost of LA temporary accommodation/shelter	£5,640	£10,974	+94%
Average annual lost employment costs	£11,432	£17,458	+34%
Average NEET person life-time unemployment cost	£56,300	£65,116	+13%
Average cost of unemployment benefits per case	£8,140	£13,694	+40%
Average annual cost of ill health (mental health)	£1,508	£2,029	+25%
Cost of stress and anxiety per person	£6,900	£8,963	+23%
Cost of young person visiting GP/hospital per case	£650	£876	+26%
Cost of reconviction of ex-prisoners over 3 years	£116,094	£158,310	+26%
Employment - potential tax generated per person	£7,703	£10,870	+29%

“Access to legal assistance is the **single right** that makes **every other right viable.**”

Prof. Hazel Genn, University College London, 2018