

***“You eased my mind and reassured me that they would take all in hand. This made a great deal of difference to my world, which was full of worry!”***

Sound familiar? We know that you are committed to your Legal Aid clients. We are sure that you offer a great service. But what do you do if your client has a problem that you can't deal with?

Our research shows that a high proportion of clients seeking advice for a problem will also be facing other, often undiagnosed, problems. The high impact of 'referral fatigue' - can mean that if you don't directly help a client that approaches you they will give up on finding a resolution. This is the case even if you refer them somewhere else locally.

**Community Legal Advice** can help both you and your clients.

It is a free and confidential advice service paid for by legal aid.

Our helpline **0845 345 4 345** provides specialist advice in debt, education, benefits and tax credits, employment and housing, to eligible callers. Family advice will be available in Summer 09. Other callers will be directed to alternative sources of advice and information, including local legal aid practitioners.

In an average day we take over 2,500 calls, of which 80% are helped by us or our partners and at least 20% are referred to face-to-face practitioners.

Our website [www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk](http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk) supports people to deal with their problem themselves or to find the specialist help they need. You can download our range of information leaflets, search for national and local face-to-face advice services, use our online eligibility calculator or arrange a call back from the helpline.

You may find a lot of the information useful yourself – go to our 'do you help people get advice?' section to find out more.

### **What makes us different?**

- **We're fast:** Clients eligible for legal aid, in a category we cover, will be connected to a specialist adviser within minutes.
- **We're accessible:** We are open from 9.00AM to 6.30PM Monday to Friday and messages can be left outside these times (we call back within 24 hours). We also offer three way translation services in all languages plus Typetalk.
- **We bring together a range of services 'under one roof':** Our advisors can easily deal with a range of connected social welfare problems. We look at the client not the individual problem.
- **We're quality assured:** Our specialist advisors offer a full casework service carried out by phone and post. They have been reviewed by a panel to obtain a peer review rating of competence plus or excellence (the top two peer review ratings out of five)

- **If we can't help we know who can:** we will always seek to offer alternative information resources, helplines or refer to face-to-face advice. We are piloting making appointments for clients at local face-to-face services in the North-East, Wales and Cornwall.
- **We understand that clients may be worried about the cost of calls:** Calls cost no more than 4p per minute from a BT landline but calls from mobiles are usually more. Clients can ask an advisor to call them back or text 'legalaids' and their name to 80010 and we will call them back within 24 hours.
- **We make it easy to refer to us:** We have a range of CLA marketing materials that you can order free of charge. You can even request a call back for your clients by completing the 'Call me Back' form on our website. Simply fill in their details and we will call them back within 24 hours.

## **We can direct clients to your organisation**

Telephone advice is not for everyone.

To help ensure that we direct the right clients to you it is vital that we maintain accurate records of your organisation. You can help by checking that your organisations details are kept up to date. You can check them on our website. If you want to amend them please email your changes to [cls.clsdirectory@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:cls.clsdirectory@legalservices.gov.uk)

## **Together we can help your clients**

By working together we can ensure that your clients can access the full range of advice services that they need when they need them.

Over 20% of our callers already find out about our service from advice agencies or solicitors. You can help by:

- Raise awareness of CLA within your organisation. Encourage all staff, especially reception staff, to refer to CLA. They can fill in the online 'call me back' form on our website. We can then call your client back at a time and in a language that suits them.
- For staff without internet access, encourage them to hand out our business cards;
- Put up our posters or display our range of information leaflets, including our new call to action leaflets, in your waiting areas;
- Link your website to [www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk](http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk);
- Keep up-to-date with CLA developments by signing up for our bi-monthly newsletter at: <http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/en/adviserinformation/emailnewsletter.jsp>

To find out more about Community Legal Advice please take a look at our website [www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk](http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk), speak to your LSC contract manager or contact us directly at [cla.marketing@legalservices.gov.uk](mailto:cla.marketing@legalservices.gov.uk)