

## 2008 Training Contract Grant Scheme Promotion at universities

As part of the Legal Services Commission's corporate social responsibility for 2009-2010, and to facilitate meeting our targets for community engagement, QED has focused on engaging with universities and the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector. The aim was to increase knowledge of and promote careers in legal aid to diverse individuals and increase awareness of the Legal Services Commission's annual training contract grant scheme.

### Aims for 2008:

- Gain entry to and attend 24 university careers events
- Promote publications on careers in legal aid
- Gather feedback from our attendees as to students understanding of careers in legal aid
- Target 12 universities with a high proportion of BME students

### Expected Outcomes:

By attending careers events in UK universities it is expected that undergraduate students will be made aware of careers in legal aid and that this will have an impact on the level of interest in careers in legal aid.

### Method:

Between June and December 2008 - in an effort to raise awareness of the 2008 Training Contract Grant Scheme - the Legal Services Commission's Quality, Efficiencies and Diversity Team, in conjunction with the Legal Aid Practitioners Group and LSC Regional Offices, created a programme to engage and communicate with potential solicitors. This programme included attendance at 27 law fairs and careers talks as well as an engagement with universities' careers departments. 27 careers events at universities throughout England Wales. Materials (a narrative of the scheme, promotional flyers and posters, and a list of all 150 successful grant recipients under the 2008 scheme) were also despatched to all LPC providers and university careers departments.

### Summary to Actions Delivered:

Action Delivered	Number
Total Number of Events	27
Law Fairs	17
Careers Fairs	1
Talks + Mini-Law Fairs	1
Careers Talks	8
Number of Students Engaged	8574+
LPC providers Sent Promotional Materials	35
University Careers Departments Sent Promotional Materials	92

### Attendance: Fairs/Events

The following table lists 27 events the Legal Services Commission attended to promote the 2008 Training Contract Grant Scheme between June and December 2008. The table also highlights the level of attendance at the event, as well as demonstrating who (Legal Services Commission, Legal Aid Practitioners Group [LAPG], The College of Law [CofL]) attended, and whether any trainees were present to assist with the stand/talk:

Date	Event Type	University	Attendance	LSC/LAPG/CofL	Trainees	
1	27/06/2008	Law Fair	The College of Law (Birmingham)	800	LAPG	
2	14/10/2008	Talk	BPP (Leeds)	80	LSC	
3	15/10/2008	Talk + Mini Fair	Brunel University	200	LSC	
4	15/10/2008	Law Fair	University of Kent	tbc	LAPG	
5	16/10/2008	Law Fair	University of Northumbria	750	LSC	
6	22/10/2008	Talk	BPP (Manchester)	30	LSC	
7	22/10/2008	Talk	University of Bradford	100	LSC	
8	30/10/2008	Law Fair	Queen Mary, University of London	500	LAPG	
9	03/11/2008	Law Fair	University of Leeds	1000+ (over 2 days)	LSC	
10	04/11/2008	Law Fair	Cardiff University	700	LAPG	yes
11	05/11/2008	Law Fair	City University	467	LSC	yes
12	05/11/2008	Law Fair	The College of Law (York)	280	LSC	
13	06/11/2008	Law Fair	Thames Valley University	382 (law students)	LSC	
14	11/11/2008	Law Fair	University of Leicester	tbc	CofL	
15	11/11/2008	Law Fair	University of Sussex	700	LAPG	
16	12/11/2008	Law Fair	University of Bristol	325	Both	yes
17	14/11/2008	Careers Fair	University of Middlesex	1500	LSC	
18	17/11/2008	Talk	The College of Law (Bloomsbury)	66	Both	yes
19	18/11/2008	Talk	De Montfort University	67	LSC	
20	18/11/2008	Law Fair	University of Warwick	900	Both	
21	20/11/2008	Law Fair	University of Manchester	1500	LAPG	
22	25/11/2008	Law Fair	London School of Economics	300	LSC	yes
23	25/11/2008	Talk	London Metropolitan University	73	Both	yes
24	26/11/2008	Law Fair	University of Sheffield	850	Both	
25	01/12/2008	Talk	University of Cambridge	23	LSC	
26	02/12/2008	Law Fair	King's College, University of London	783	Both	
27	03/12/2008	Talk	University of Bedfordshire	60	LSC	

### **Specifically targeted Universities for BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) students**

In order to reach as diverse a student population as possible a 14 universities with a high proportion of BME students were targeted. 11 of these Universities were visited and they are detailed in the table below (along with their proportion of BME students):

Institution	% of BME Students
University of Bedfordshire	30%
University of Bradford	50%
Brunel University	51%
City University	64%
De Montfort University	37%
King's College London	31%
University of Leicester	33%
London Metropolitan University	60%
London School of Economics	47%
University of Middlesex	47% (of home students)
Thames Valley University	44%

N.B. Buckinghamshire New University, London South Bank University and the University of East London were all approached about the possibility of taking part in a law fair/careers event however the proposed timescales of the events were not appropriate.

Feedback from representatives at the De Montfort, Middlesex and Thames Valley events indicates the talk/stand received considerable interest from BME students.

#### Communication with University Careers Departments:

Meetings were arranged between the Legal Services Commission and the Head of [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk), as well as with the heads of several university careers departments.

Information regarding careers in legal aid and the Training Contract Grant Scheme was circulated to all UK university careers departments via the Prospects newsletter, whilst information, flyers and posters publicising the 2008 Training Contract Grant Scheme were despatched directly all 35 LPC providers as well as the careers departments of all 92 universities that provide undergraduate law degrees in England and Wales (please refer to Appendices A & B).

All the universities visited distributed information to students regarding the Training Contract Grant Scheme and the Legal Services Commission through their brochures and mail outs (for examples please refer to Appendix C).

#### **Feedback from the events**

##### **i. Awareness of legal aid**

Feedback from representatives that attended law fairs indicates that awareness of legal aid (as well as awareness of the categories of law that are publicly funded) is low amongst students in general; feedback from the following events illustrated this:

- University of Bristol
- City University
- King's College London
- University of Leeds
- London School of Economics
- Thames Valley University
- University of Warwick

However, it ought to be noted that post-graduate students at City, Middlesex and Thames Valley Universities were generally aware of legal aid.

At the law talks (e.g. De Montfort University, The College of Law and London Metropolitan University), mini-fairs (e.g. Brunel University) and panel events (e.g. the Universities of Cambridge and Bradford) awareness of legal aid was much higher. Although it ought to be taken into account that these events were more specialised and organised by the LSC/universities to cater for students with an interest in legal aid or areas of law in which publicly funding can be obtained.

##### **ii. Awareness of the 2008 Training Contract Grant Scheme**

Feedback from all the fairs/events indicates that awareness of the Training Contract Grant Scheme as well as the relationship between the Legal Services Commission and law firms is minimal amongst students. It was important that the LSC attended these events to raise awareness this year.

##### **iii. Level of interest in stall/event**

The level of interest in the Legal Services Commission/legal aid stand at law fairs was mixed. Feedback indicates that the LSC reps estimate that they interacted directly with between 10-25% of all the students who attended the fairs.

The majority of students spoken to/who took flyers from the stall did not display a strong awareness of legal aid – although a large number of these students (particularly those in the

first or second year of an undergraduate law degree were undecided of the type of law (if any) that they eventually want to practice. Feedback from several fairs indicates suggests that interest from several students in the LSC/legal aid stand was triggered by the advance brochures produced by the universities. Several students our reps encountered at universities (e.g. City University, London School of Economics, University of Sheffield) stated that this was what attracted them the Legal Services Commission/legal aid stand. These students were not always aware of legal aid or the Training Contract Grant Scheme however once it was explained that legal aid covered areas of law such as civil liberties they became very enthusiastic and interested.

The level of interest in the careers talks appears much higher, as demonstrated by attendance figures at Brunel University, The College of Law (Bloomsbury), BPP (Leeds), De Montfort University and London Metropolitan University where attendances were high and comparable to careers talks by large commercial/corporate law fairs.

Whilst attendances were lower at events at the University of Cambridge and BPP (Manchester) it appears that those students who did attend possessed ambition to work in/a good knowledge of legal aid.

Several of the careers talks (e.g. The College of Law/University of Cambridge) were recorded, and feedback from Universities has indicated that they expect some demand from students to view/listen to these.

#### **iv. Feedback from University Staff**

Feedback from academic and careers staff at the universities was universally enthusiastic and positive, with attendance at several of the law fairs leading to institutions inviting the Legal Services Commission to host a careers event to speak to students specifically about careers in legal aid and the Training Contract Grant Scheme.

#### Summary of Feedback

General feedback from the law fairs has suggested:

- The prospect of LPC funding and 2 years PQE are key “selling points”
- Generally more interest came from third year undergraduate and post-graduate students
- Where trainees were able to visit fairs alongside Legal Services Commission this generated more interest from students and was something both students and representatives found valuable
- Students unclear of relationship between Legal Services Commission and solicitors
- Feedback from 2 fairs visited by both LAPG and Legal Services Commission representative has suggested the LAPG stand does not immediately indicate a link to the Legal Services Commission or the Training Contract Grant Scheme and should be accompanied by an LSC stand.
- Many institutions expressed an interest in the LSC attending careers events
- Some institutions expressed an interest in incorporating legal aid into their syllabus

#### Recommendations

1. Use legal aid trainees where possible at events
2. Use Legal Services Commission stands in addition to LAPG stands
3. Increase awareness of legal aid in general amongst law students
4. Provide materials on legal aid for use within LPC course
5. Place well worded advertisements/information in student publications advertising the events
6. Visit 2 universities to pilot legal aid elements in syllabus

**Appendix:**

**A.**

**LPC Providers Sent Promotional Materials:**

<b>Institution</b>
Aberystwyth University
Anglia Ruskin University
Birmingham City University
Bournemouth University
BPP London
BPP's Law School Leeds
BPP's Law School Manchester
Cardiff Law School
The College of Law (Birmingham)
The College of Law (Chester)
The College of Law (Guildford)
The College of Law (London Bloomsbury)
The College of Law (London Moorgate)
The College of Law (York)
De Montfort University
University of Glamorgan
University of Hertfordshire
University of Huddersfield
Inns Court School of Law
University of Central Lancashire
Leeds Metropolitan University
Liverpool John Moores University
London Metropolitan University
Manchester Metropolitan University
Northumbria University
Kaplan Law School
Nottingham Law School
Oxford Institute of Legal Practice
University of Plymouth
University of Sheffield
Swansea University
Thames Valley University
University of the West of England, Bristol
University of Westminster
University of Wolverhampton

**B.**

**University Careers Departments Sent Promotional Materials:**

Institution
Aberystwyth University
Anglia Ruskin University
University of Bedfordshire
Birmingham City University
University of Birmingham
Bolton University
Bournemouth University
University of Bradford
Bradford College
University of Brighton
University of Bristol
University of West England, Bristol
Brunel University
University of Buckingham
University of Cambridge
Canterbury Christ Church University
Cardiff University
University of Central Lancashire
University of Chester
City University
Coventry University
Croydon College
University of Cumbria
De Montfort University
University of Derby
Durham University
University of East Anglia
East End Computing & Business College
East Lancashire Institute of Higher Education at Blackburn College
University of East London
Edge Hill University
The University of Edinburgh
The University of Essex
The University of Exeter
University of Glamorgan, Cardiff, and Pontypridd
The University of Gloucestershire
University of Greenwich
Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education
University of Hertfordshire
Holborn College
The University of Huddersfield
The University of Hull
Keele University
The University of Kent
King's College London
Kingston University

Lancaster University  
University of Leeds  
Leeds Metropolitan University  
University of Leicester  
University of Lincoln  
The University of Liverpool  
Liverpool John Moore University  
London Metropolitan University  
London School of Economics  
London South Bank University  
The University of Manchester  
The Manchester Metropolitan University  
Middlesex University  
Napier University  
Newcastle University  
University of Northampton  
Northumbria University  
The University of Nottingham  
Nottingham Trent University  
Oxford University  
Oxford Brookes University  
University of Plymouth  
University of Portsmouth  
Queen Mary, University of London  
The University of Reading  
The Robert Gordon University  
The University of Salford  
School of Oriental and African Studies  
The University of Sheffield  
Sheffield Hallam University  
University of Southampton  
Southampton Solent University  
Staffordshire University  
University of Sunderland  
University of Surrey  
University of Sussex  
Swansea University  
University of Teeside  
Thames Valley University  
University College of London  
The University of Warwick  
University of Westminster  
University of Wolverhampton  
University of Winchester  
Worcester College of Technology  
The University of York

**C.**

The Following is examples of 2 emails The College of Law (Bloomsbury) released the to students regarding the 2008 Training Contract Grant scheme and careers talk by the Legal Services Commission:

i. Email from careers centre:

Dear Student,

You are invited to the following careers talk:

Careers in legal aid, Monday 17th November, 5.45pm

Carol Storer, the director of the Legal Aid Practitioners Group will talk about the type of work undertaken by lawyers working in the publicly funded sector of the legal profession. She will also be talking about the 150, 2009 start, training contracts that are being funded by the Legal Services Commission under their Training Grants scheme.

For more details about the Training Contracts Grants Scheme go to [www.legalservices.gov.uk/aboutus/press\\_releases\\_8903.asp](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/aboutus/press_releases_8903.asp)

For more information about the Legal Aid Practitioners Group go to [www.lapg.co.uk](http://www.lapg.co.uk)

ii. Email from careers centre:

Dear student,

We have now opened bookings for students for the following careers workshop:

Applications For legal aid Workshop, Wednesday 19th November, 15:00 - 17:00 (see booking instructions below)

To coincide with the LSC issuing £3m worth of training grants to legal aid firms, this workshop will look at how to successfully apply for a training contract at legal aid firms and what these firms are specifically looking for from applicants.