

IT'S NOT JUST
PEANUTS

Donate your unclaimed
client account funds and
give access to justice to
those that need it most.

*With our
indemnities,
your donation
can be made
risk free.*

THE
ACCESS
TO JUSTICE
FOUNDATION

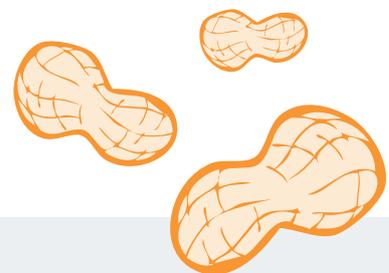
Who we are and what we do

The Access to Justice Foundation was set up by the legal profession to improve access to justice for the most vulnerable in society. Since 2011, law firms across the country have been working closely with us and donating dormant client account balances in accordance with the SRA accounts rules.

To date, over £1,000,000 has been raised, helping us get closer to our goal of providing legal assistance to members of the public who live in poverty, but are not eligible for legal aid. We are committed to leaving no stone unturned and are driving the campaign into a new phase of fundraising. With your help, we can continue to identify and utilise dormant client funds, so that it goes to the causes where it is needed most.

Through our deep links with the legal community, we are able to fund pro bono and advice projects throughout the country and make a real difference to people who are in desperate need of legal help but simply cannot afford it. You can read the stories of Sofia, Charlotte and Miss S[†], who were all able to access justice through the projects that we support.

By following the steps in this brochure, residual client balances can be donated to the Access to Justice Foundation and will make a major impact to those who are unable to access legal aid.



Liverpool, Vauxhall Community Centre

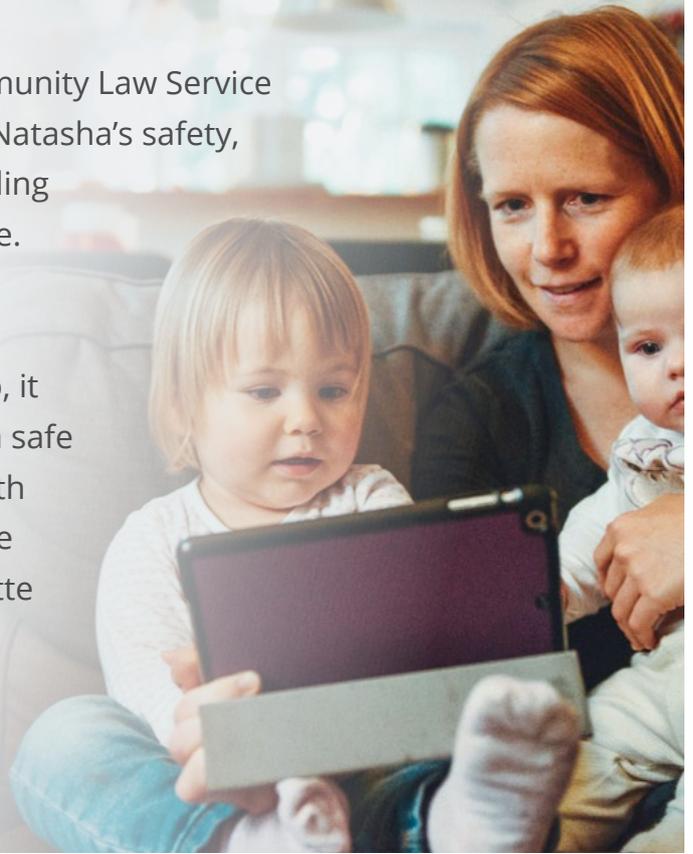
Miss S is a single parent and suffers with a combination of physical and mental health problems. She made an application for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) as one of her children, J aged 10, had been diagnosed with Autism. Not only was this application refused, but Miss S' own DLA was impacted as a result.

Through our funding, Vauxhall Community Centre helped Miss S appeal the decision and represented her at the tribunal. The tribunal made an award granting Miss S additional benefits, ensuring her family received an appropriate level of care and support.

📍 **Norfolk, Norfolk Community Law Service**

Charlotte approached the Norfolk Community Law Service after having concerns for her daughter Natasha's safety, due to incidents of her partner's controlling behaviour and history of domestic abuse.

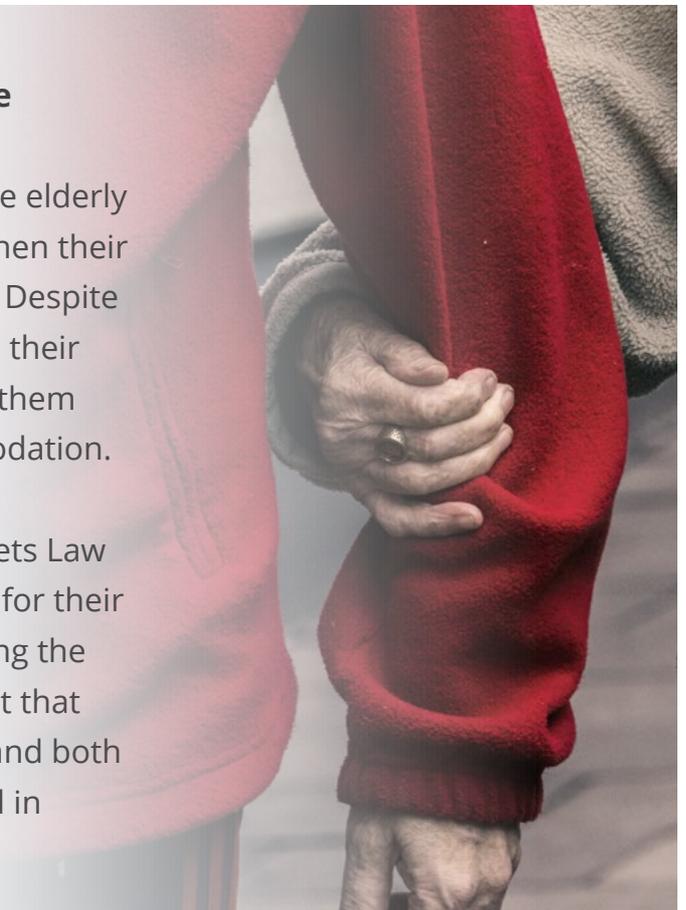
The Norfolk Community Law Service supported Charlotte, and with their help, it was possible for both parents to agree a safe and sustainable structure for contact with Natasha. Without the funding behind the Norfolk Community Law Service, Charlotte would have been unable to access the support and legal advice that she needed to come to an agreement with her former partner.



📍 **London, Tower Hamlets Law Centre**

Sofia and her husband, both of whom are elderly and speak little English, were shocked when their adult son threw them out of their home. Despite their circumstances, the council declined their application for housing benefits, forcing them to live in expensive emergency accommodation.

Through our projects in the Tower Hamlets Law Centre, we were able to provide funding for their appeal and ultimately succeeded in having the council's decision overturned. This meant that all accommodation debts were paid off and both Sophia and her husband were re-housed in ground floor sheltered accommodation.



How much does a legal advice clinic cost to run?

Funding a court advice desk

£20,000

Setting up a pro bono clinic

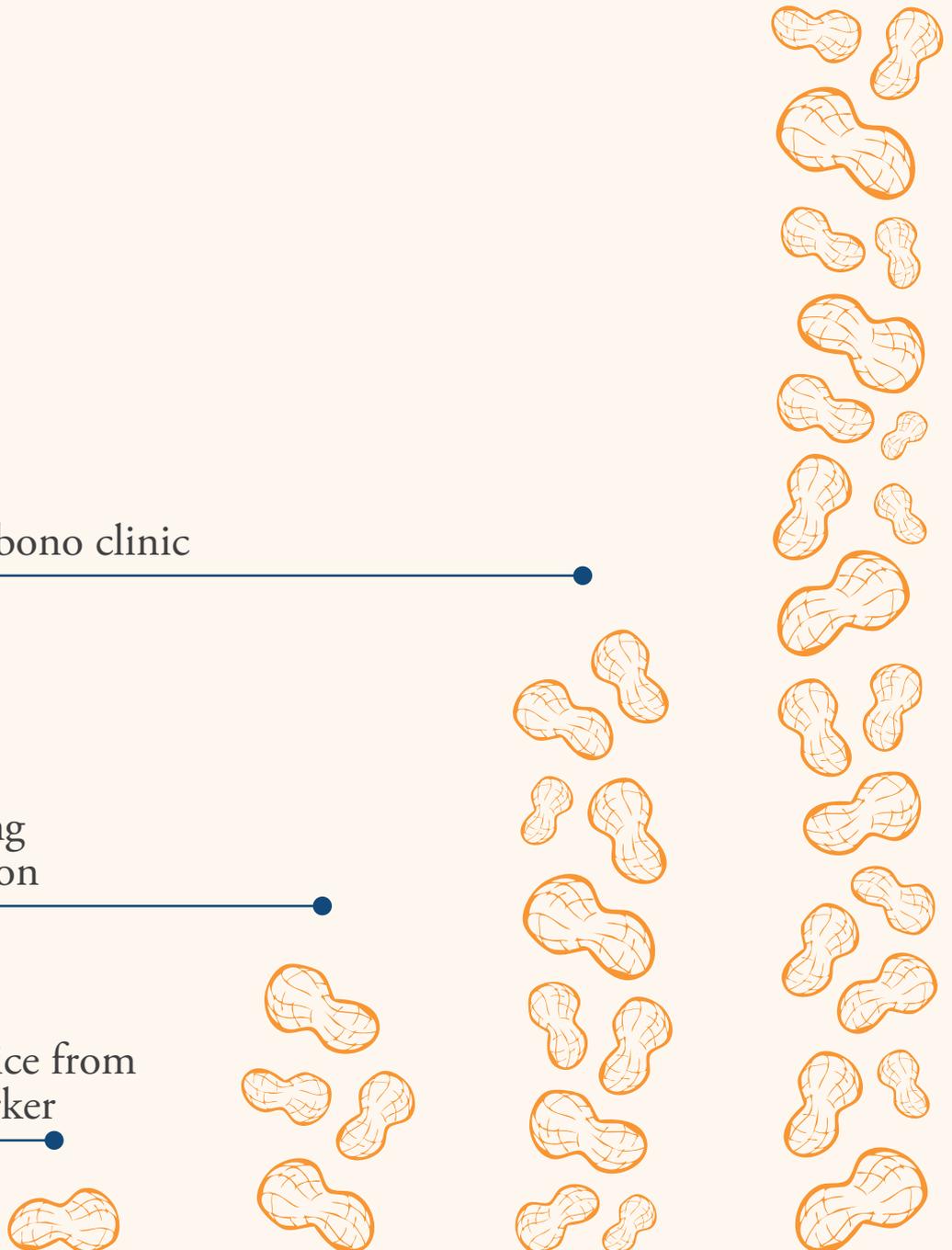
£5,000

One case receiving legal representation

£200

One hour of advice from a trained caseworker

£20



Why now?

There has been a very significant reduction in legal aid funding since the campaign launched in 2011, and we have seen how the need for legal aid greatly outweighs the supply.

- 14 million people live in poverty and can't afford access to justice
- The legal aid budget, in real terms, is £950m less than it was in 2010
- Half of all legal advice services in the UK have closed since 2013[†]



Donating accounts

Balances under £500

To get involved please take the following steps in accordance with rule 5.1(c) of the SRA Accounts Rules:

Step 1: Identify residual client account balances of less than £500.

Step 2: Take reasonable steps to return the money to the rightful owner. The reasonableness of such steps will depend on:

- The age of the residual balance
- The amount of the residual balance
- Access to the client's most up to date contact details
- Costs associated with tracing the client

Firms will be expected to make more intensive efforts to locate the rightful owner for larger or more recent balances; or for balances where more details are held about the client. The SRA suggest the following methods for tracing a client:

- Making use of social media
- Making a search of Companies House and/or the Probate Registry
- Making use of the Department of Work and Pensions' letter forwarding service
- Undertaking any free searches on the internet

Step 3: Record the steps taken to return the money to the rightful owner and retain those records, together with all relevant documentation for at least six years.

Step 4: Donate the balance to the Access to Justice Foundation. This can be done by bank transfer or cheque (see back cover for details). Ensure that no costs incurred in attempting to trace or communicate with the rightful owner are deducted from the residual balance.

Step 5: Keep appropriate accounting records, including:

- A central register which records the name of the rightful owner on whose behalf the money was held, the amount, name of the recipient charity (and their charity number) and the date of the payment
- All receipts from the charity and confirmation of any indemnity provided against any legitimate claim subsequently made for the sum they have received

Balances over £500

Rule 5.1(c) also refers to residual client account balances over £500 and notes that firms will require SRA authorisation before this money can be removed from the client account. If you become aware of any client accounts with a residual balance

over £500, please follow the SRA guidance and submit an application for approval. All amounts donated contribute towards achieving our goal of providing legal advice and support to those who are not eligible for legal aid.

www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/withdrawal-of-residual-client-balances

Indemnifying donations

We can provide a written indemnity for all unclaimed client account fund donations. If your client resurfaces you can ask us for the funds back, making your donation risk free.



Sending donations

Please send cheques to **The Access to Justice Foundation, PO Box 64162, London, WC1A 9AN** and include a note with the client name and internal reference number. We will send you a receipt, and an indemnity for sums over £500. We can provide indemnities on lower amounts on request.

Alternatively, you can transfer the funds to account number **0001 8272**, sort code **40-52-40**, account name **The Access to Justice Foundation**. Please ensure that UCA and the firm's name is included in the transfer reference. You can write to our PO Box address, or email **clientbalances@atjf.org.uk** with the donation details so that a receipt and indemnity can be sent.

For further guidance on donating unclaimed client account funds please contact us or visit our website

 www.atjf.org.uk

 clientbalances@atjf.org.uk

 020 7092 3973

 The Access to Justice Foundation
PO Box 64162, London, WC1A 9AN

