



Community Justice Fund

Community Justice Fund – what next?

In March 2020 a group of funders, advice sector umbrella organisations and frontline advice agencies came together to create the Community Justice Fund, motivated by the urgent need to support people in need of specialist legal advice to help with problems around housing, employment, benefits, debt, immigration and community care as a result of the pandemic.

Eighteen months in and having made £15m of grant awards to 180 charities providing specialist legal advice, we have taken a moment to reflect on where we are and what we should do next. We recognise the huge strain on the specialist legal advice sector and the people who work in it. We also recognise that years of underfunding means that many thousands of people who really need access to specialist legal advice can't get it. These are enormous and long-term issues which existed before Covid and have been exacerbated by it.

We're hearing loud and clear from the frontline the need for secure, multi-year core cost funding to enable organisations to meet the needs of their communities, properly support their staff and help deal with the staffing crisis which the social welfare legal sector is facing. The people working to resolve these problems are not limitless, but they are indispensable.

We recognise that a long-term solution is required, and we are committed to working together in the long term to achieve this. Long term means at least ten years.

As a group we are committed to making the case for specialist legal advice in order to improve our collective fundraising and influencing capacity. We understand that we need to grow the pot of available funding and we will resource and invest in the work that is needed to achieve this.

Recognising all of this, this small group will embark on long-term changes in funding and working together. This is the starting point and we hope that others will join us. We are committed to creating a sustainable fund for the sector over the next ten years. We will be here, in 2022, 2023 and the years after that. We will be reaching out to various other organisations and initiatives over the next few months to develop a genuinely collaborative effort and will keep you updated on our progress as our work develops.