

**London Legal Support Trust –
London Specialist Advice Forum meeting**

2-4pm, Wednesday 21st February 2024

Chair: Victoria Marks, ATLEU

This document contains detailed notes from February's London Specialist Advice Forum meeting.

They are divided by headings so you can skip to the part most relevant to you. There is also a full recording of the Forum session available [here](#)

1. **Juliette Kelvin, The National Lottery Community Fund: Update on new funding strategy, followed by Q&A**
2. **Lindsey Poole, Advice Services Alliance: Presentation on Wellbeing in the Advice Sector, followed by discussion**
3. **Sarah Ruggirello & Cqimere Girigari, GamCare: Meet-the-Agency presentation**
4. **Matt Howgate, Director of the LAPG Management & Leadership Hub: Thoughts and tips on well-being arising from practitioner workshops**
5. **London Legal Support Trust: AOB**

1. **[Juliette Kelvin, The National Lottery Community Fund: Update on new funding strategy, followed by Q&A](#)**

*You can find out more about the National Lottery strategy [here](#)
Presentation slides [here](#)*

- a) Introduction:
 - I'm here to share an update about our new strategy. I'll start by providing some background on how we developed it, followed by the launch of the strategy, and our plans moving forward to 2030.
- b) About the National Lottery Community Fund:
 - We are the National Lottery Community Fund; a non-departmental public body delivering public funds.
 - Our funding reaches every parliamentary constituency across England and over the last year we have distributed over £600m a year to communities across the UK.
- c) How we developed our strategy:
 - The strategy reflects our day-to-day experiences and insights gathered from communities and civil society organisations.
 - We actively listened to the challenges facing communities currently and in the future.
 - Colleagues across the fund were interviewed to understand community needs, as well as the fund's overarching vision and purpose.
 - We also conducted desktop research, workshops, and community engagements to develop a framework for the new strategy.

- From January to March last year, we consolidated these insights into an internal strategy, alongside an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) plan to refine our approach.
 - The strategy was publicly launched to staff in June 2023, with implementation commencing straight after.
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- d) Introducing “It starts with community”:
- Our strategy starts with the community, and focuses on enabling them to address their priorities effectively.
 - We value civil society organisations as crucial hubs for community engagement and support.
 - We recognise that society faces some really big challenges and therefore bold responses are needed.
 - Not all communities have the opportunities hence our investment is focused on where our greatest needs are with people, places and communities.
- e) Our purposes:
- We back initiatives that build resilient, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable communities. These efforts aim to bolster society and enhance lives throughout the UK.
- f) Three hallmarks of the strategy:
- We’re looking to make a bigger difference in the years ahead, by listening and responding to communities, and by focussing on supporting bolder change.
 - This includes strengthening grassroots communities through our [National Lottery Awards for All](#) programme fund.
 - We have also become bolder in the pursuit of change and have come up with four community-led missions. The four community-led missions are 1) Communities are healthier, 2) communities that children and young people thrive in, 3) communities that come together and 4) communities that are environmentally sustainable
 - We will also continue building on the success of the funding we have given in the past and renewing our ways of working.
- g) How we’ll fund:
- Our funding approach will continue as usual, but we will be introducing programmes tailored to achieve specific outcomes and target particular areas.
 - Alongside this, we’ll maintain targeted funding to address specific mission areas.
 - Our open and responsive funding, such as the Award for All funding, will remain unchanged.
- h) How we’ll work:
- Our values have been embedded into our strategy so we will continue to be inclusive, ambitious, impact-focused, adaptable, and compassionate.
 - Our way of working will start with a relational approach of going out to the communities and talking to communities and building from that.
 - We pride ourselves in having simple processes and we will continue to operate with transparency and openly share information.

- We are an open funder and continue to be that and invest where the need is greatest.
- There will be a focus on the environment, climate and nature. Impact and learning is core to how we will work and what we are funding and learning, and help inform where our funding goes.
- We will continue to build partnerships and make the most of the investments we make.
- Funding is crucial, but we also utilise other tools to foster fairer, sustainable, and resilient communities. This includes championing the sector, providing spaces for collaboration among organisations, offering leadership and support, and giving out grants.

i) Towards 2030:

- As we move towards 2023, implementing our strategy will involve various approaches.
- New governance structures are being established to oversee and facilitate implementation.
- Detailed plans for each community-led mission will be developed and published by June 2024.
- Our country teams will implement the strategy, aligning missions with local priorities. Implementation will be continuous, with ongoing engagement of colleagues, partners, and stakeholders.

j) Current funding opportunities:

- We are open for funding now and our funding priorities are stronger relationships, shared sustainable space, and early action to prevent problems and tackle inequalities
- [National Lottery Award for All](#)- Small funding programme
- [Reaching communities](#)- Our standard funding programme
- [Award from UK Portfolio](#) which are open UK wide
- All applications go through our website and we are open to work with applicants in the support they need. You can find out more [here](#)
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k) Q&A

- *Q: If a charity is already receiving a grant from you, are they still able to go for other programmes?*
- A: That is not a problem but we would need to know that there would be no duplication. You can get Reaching Communities funding and also go for the Awards For all funding you just need to check in with your funding officer.
- *Q: I'd like to discuss your definition of communities. Typically, communities are thought of as geographic areas, but we work closely with a small minority: deaf people and people who use sign language. Unlike traditional neighbourhoods, there aren't specific deaf communities. Does your definition of communities also include groups based on shared interests or language? And does this influence how funding is allocated?*

- A: We don't define what a community is, a community can come in many different forms and it is for you to tell us what you mean about it and how you would define yourself.
- *Q: The National Lottery has co-funded through the Access to Justice Foundation, would organisations who were successful through that funding stream be affected if they apply for other grants with the National Lottery?*
- A: No it wouldn't but it would need to be clear that that funding is outlined in the application and discussed with us.
- *Q: I understand duplication, what about if it is an enhancement of an existing project for example we want to enhance the service we are already getting funding for?*
- A: As long as you are not asking about the same thing we are already funding it is okay. We also want to understand why there is an additional need that was not originally asked for in a bit more detail so this is something you should discuss with your funding officer.

2. Lindsey Poole, Advice Services Alliance: Presentation on Wellbeing in the Advice Sector, followed by discussion

Presentation slides [here](#)

a) Introduction:

Advice Services Alliance is an organisation that gathers information, we talk to frontline organisations and collect insights through our involvement in the Advice Quality Standard. This is what we've learned so far about Wellbeing in the Advice Sector.

b) How do we know we have a problem?

- We've noticed some recent trends, like more staff leaving their jobs, and challenges in recruitment and retention.
- Managers' have reported an increase in staff illnesses, raising concerns about employee well-being.
- People are increasingly open about discussing mental health at work, which is positive but also highlights a growing concern.
- More employees are seeking mental health support, including counselling and helplines.
- Some individuals express reluctance to return to the office, preferring to work from home due to lingering pandemic-related anxieties.
- This anxiety extends to meeting clients in person, reflecting the ongoing impact of the pandemic.
- Increased workloads are causing frustration among both clients and staff.
- Usual systems, like referrals, are not functioning as efficiently, leading to client dissatisfaction.
- Overall client satisfaction has decreased, and there are signs of empathy fatigue and burnout among staff.

c) Discussion: Think about a job you had that you enjoyed

- Thinking about the best job you had and what the aspects you enjoyed, why were these important to you, how did these help with work
- *Example 1: My best job ever was when I was in my early 20s, I cleaned the offices of the MOJ. Why it was good is because I didn't speak to anyone and was accountable for my job and I was able to see London at its best and allowed me to do what I wanted, all that makes my job great it makes my current job great.*
- *Example 2: A short term role I had when I was customer service assistant and what was interesting, the autonomy you had and it was hard work and 12 hour shifts but there was a sense of freedom.*
- *Example 3: Working in record shops surrounded by music and we were allowed plenty of time for fun. However currently also very lucky to be supported by colleagues and comfortable speaking by well-being because of the support we give each other*
- The interesting thing about these examples is the passion and job you are doing, the importance of work-life balance and the idea of autonomy.

d) What is likely to make job satisfaction:

- The sort of thing that gives people a strong sense of job satisfaction and are less likely to have issues with wellbeing.
- This includes environmental and workplace relationships, which is something we can cultivate and develop.
- Career growth and opportunities and looking at ways to establish that and give people opportunities to go to events.
- A fair and competitive salary which can be challenging especially when competing with other sectors.
- Another thing we can build in when working is recognition and reward.

e) What makes a job:

- To tackle the issue, we need to consider three levels:
- **Overall context**, including complex client needs, ineffective policies, COVID-19 impacts, cost of living, housing insecurity, climate change, and global conflicts.
- **Organisational factors** like purpose, culture, processes, relationships within teams and externally, and operational efficiency.
- **Individual factors** such as skills, qualifications, experience, personality, ambition, values, health (both physical and mental), disabilities, and necessary accommodations.

f) Q&A:

- *Q: Do you think we have more of a problem than before or are we just talking about it more now?*

A: It is a little bit of both and I think the culture of acceptance of people with well-being issues is very important and people feel they can talk about it at the workplace. It is to be encouraged and it is something that can happen in developing a culture around that.

- *Q: Is there an issue with resilience or just that it has gone so much harder?*

A: Yes, it has got harder, there are fewer solutions, your flight/fight systems are often about where you can't deal with things. Hanging onto resilience is becoming more

difficult.

- *Q: Why has our job become more demanding, are there more clients or is the pressure of the job?*

A: It's confusing when people facing problems can't find solutions, even when everything around them suggests they shouldn't be struggling. Many systems are intentionally complex, making it harder for people. We should do more campaigning to bring these issues to light and help those in need.

3. [Sarah Ruggirello & Cqimere Girigari, GamCare: Meet-the-Agency presentation](#)

Presentation slides [here](#)

a) Introduction:

- We work with people who experience gambling harms and the interesting thing about the conversation about resilience is that resilience is something that we are meant to rely on temporarily to get us over a difficult period, not permanently.
- We're noticing a trend where people are expected to be resilient in situations where they shouldn't have to be. Financial pressures, work stress, and other challenges, including those from social media, are coming at people from all directions. It feels like we are in a time when sources of stress increase.
- Gamcare delivers gambling support and treatment, we were founded in 1997 and work part in the National Gambling Support Network.
- We provide treatment for anyone harmed by gambling and our mission is to provide awareness of it. Some of our services include National Gambling Helpline, Online Forum and chatroom, remote and face-to-face services and money guidance services.

b) Gambling activity in the London Region:

- In the UK, over half the population have gambled and just over 40% in the last month.
- When we are talking about gambling we are talking about buying national lottery tickets to gambling every day in a casino.
- We measure gambling harm on a continuum using the Problem Gambling Scale Index which asks questions about behaviour.
- London has around 3,838,000 people across the region who gambled in 2021 and has the highest proportion of people with problem gambling behaviours.
- People in the London region are less likely to gamble across the region but are more likely to gamble problematically.
- Over the years there has been an increase in online gambling which is open 24/7.

c) What else do we know about gambling?

- Males are significantly more likely to engage in gambling with negative consequences (17.8%) compared with 11.7% of females.
- Younger adults have a higher prevalence of gambling with negative consequences in London.
- People from ethnic groups are less likely to engage in some of the gambling, but they are more likely to engage and more likely to experience problem gambling.

- Full-time students are less likely to gamble but when they do are more likely to demonstrate problematic behaviours.
- People who are unemployed or economically inactive are slightly more likely to be gambling with negative consequences than those in employment.
- When we are thinking about harm we talk about mental harm, financial harm, loss of relationship, losing home etc.
- It is estimated that there are over 400 gambling-related suicides a year but it is worth remembering that gambling is well hidden in comparison to other behavioural problems.

c) About London Adult Support Team:

- The London Adult Support Team consists of 12 outreach and engagement practitioners who specialise in gambling support. They are strategically located in key areas across London.
- Additionally, we have partnerships with Barclays Bank, and we offer both one-to-one and group sessions at our main office in Farringdon.
- For clients needing support beyond gambling-related issues, we offer referrals to specialised support services and aftercare.
- Our team also supports the prison service, with one practitioner stationed at HMP Wandsworth Prison.
- Lastly, we have a coordinator who brings lived experience to our team.

d) Accessing Gamcare London:

- To access Gamcare you can contact the London Treatment team directly [here](#).
- Clients will then be connected for an assessment and within 5 days they will be offered a treatment appointment.

e) Our mission:

- We want to go and develop community champions to create a supportive network.
- These champions play a crucial role in providing peer support, which is invaluable for reducing stigma and encouraging individuals to seek help.
- To establish a diverse and supportive network, this approach will ensure that individuals from various backgrounds in an environment that is welcoming.
- We strive to build a diverse and inclusive support network, ensuring individuals from various backgrounds feel welcome.
- Additionally, we offer training programs for professionals to recognize signs of gambling awareness and harm.
- Our CPD-accredited awareness training equips professionals with the knowledge to understand various forms of gambling, intervention techniques, treatment options, and referral pathways.

f) Q&A

- *Q: I know gambling affects everybody but you mentioned the group impacted by gambling ethnic minorities, students, and unemployed people. For me it reflects poverty, are people with poverty are more likely to gamble. Is there a link between class and gambling?*
- A: There's no simple explanation for why people gamble, as financial gain often serves as a motivating factor, particularly with early big wins. For example, young

individuals who experience a “big win” may become easily hooked. During assessments, one of the initial questions we ask is whether they've had a significant win, as this can indicate distorted perceptions. Individuals facing poverty may be more susceptible to gambling due to false promises of financial gain. However, it's important to note that while winning is possible, it can also contribute to the problem.

- *Q: To what extent does the industry engage with you to work in good faith?*
- *A: There is a conscience out there and our priority is to ensure people are not harmed by it.*
- *Q: Regarding gamification, it connects with young people at risk of exploitation. During this stage, young individuals are particularly susceptible to influence. Do you believe there's a sufficient understanding of how gambling behaviours develop in young people?*
- *A: It starts incredibly young, we need to be aware and think about how early they are exposed to it.*

4. [Matt Howgate, Director for LAPG management and Leadership Hub: Thoughts and tips on wellbeing](#)

a) Introduction:

- A lot of this presentation is from what people fed into the process and information that we got from the wellbeing workshops, I delivered.
- Before the workshops I asked on social media for people to tell us what impacts well-being for them. In the workshops, I also asked them to identify the 5 key themes that impact wellbeing

b) How can we improve staff wellbeing?

- We focused on actions that could harm our colleagues' well-being and the decisions behind them.
- It was interesting to see the real problems identified, like too much work and lack of control, and trying to fix the root causes instead of just symptoms.
- Our sector has gotten better at addressing well-being issues, with many organisations offering support like gym memberships or social activities. We've also learned about the impact of vicarious trauma.
- But sometimes, it feels like we're trying to put out a fire while surrounded by matches.

c) Responses to wellbeing?

- The responses from people included:
 - *“Pay people what they deserve, no amount of well-being sessions/supervision /reflective practice, can make up for the stress of struggling to pay the rent in London”*
 - *“Team building and understanding support and evidence”*
 - *“Lack of structural change”*
 - *Insane chargeable hour targets which people struggle to reach”*
 - *“Lack of autonomy and working healthy ways and creates workplace stress*

- *"Follow external values internally"*

d) Information gathered from practitioner workshops:

- Low Pay
- No job security and no opportunity for development
- Long hours, unmanageable workload and relentless emails
- Blocks to effective working- poor technology and lack of support
- Poor supervision and management
- Toxic/lazy colleagues and poor workplace culture/behaviours
- Constant change
- Austerity, inequality and the state of society generally
- Legal Aid
- Vicarious trauma, stress and burnout
- Problems outside of work

e) The impact of funders:

- Any funder who carelessly underfunds a project and/or any manager or Board that makes and implements decisions that create or perpetuate conditions that cause stress, anxiety, job insecurity, financial problems, unhealthy working environments inequity, and unfairness are capable of creating workplace unwellness
- Some of these issues are outside of your control but some are completely out of our control
- Reflecting on when you last did a well-being assessment, these are all part of taking active steps to ensure wellness in your organisation and that is beyond available counselling

f) The takeaway:

- Tackling the problems of workplace wellbeing is a strategy and budgetary issue and can only be addressed if managers and trustees take time to work out what the reach causes are within their organisation
- This is more about counselling and social events
- It is important to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach in this as not every policy or support system is fit for use for everyone.
- Final question: What are you doing (or not doing) and what decisions are you taking (or not taking) that actively harm colleagues' wellbeing

g) Q&A:

- *Q: I can't help but think every decision I make causes stress to staff. There is a lot of scrutiny, I don't see how that changes?*
- *A: It is an essential point, and everyone is aware of it. There is no easier response. We must continually evaluate ourselves, but we also must make decisions, which is part of the role of a manager. We must advocate these causes while also acknowledging that they are beyond our control. It is worth recognising that you make judgments that hurt people for the right reasons rather than the wrong ones.*

- *Q: I was wondering if there was anything that came out of the workshops on “what does work” because it seems to be so subjective, was there anything that stood out as good practice?*
- A: There was nothing that stood out, but those workshops triggered the process on how discussion and action contribute to well-being.
- *Q: Given the difficulty that agencies have in recruiting, when you don’t fill the post it puts immense pressure on the staff. Do you have any suggestions?*
- A: Every situation is different and sometimes the right decisions and living with the consequences is better. The hardest decision is the right one to take. We have to deal with some of the root causes.
- *Q: As part of the Advice Workforce Project, LLST is involved in the task and finish group on pay and conditions, it is interesting to see low pay in the list. During the workshops did you see low pay as the highest ranked issue for wellbeing?*
- A: Pay was the most commonly referred to.
- *Q: Balancing the needs of staff, managers, and services can be challenging with hybrid working patterns. Is there anything special about hybrid working that could be useful?*
- A: My experience is that hybrid working is causing more stress for managers. Managing hybrid working and organisation where you must deliver is more difficult. Many have started to see these issues in all aspects of the work from recruitment to retention to client support. Some junior staff that I have spoken to recently have stated how they would not be considered for new roles if they do not have a remote working option.
- *Q: My question is on measuring well-being, for example, with IT you can gauge the reaction to it via the lack of complaint. How do you measure well-being? Do staff satisfaction surveys work?*
- A: Staff satisfaction surveys are not effective, I would prefer 1:1 with every staff member you probably get more from that. Some of these things are difficult to measure.

5. [London Legal Support Trust](#)

- Forum members will all receive an email with notes from this session.
- Next Forum date is Wednesday 22nd May. Invites will be sent to everyone in advance
- If you want to present or chair our next forum please get in touch by emailing sundus@llst.org.uk

