

**Westminster Legal Policy Forum Keynote Seminar:
The future for legal aid in England and Wales - scope, fees and access to justice**

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 19th March 2019

Venue: Central London



Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chair's opening remarks**
Ellie Reeves MP, Member, House of Commons Justice Select Committee
- 9.05 - 9.15 **Access to justice and tackling unmet legal need - priorities for reform**
Lord Bach, Author, *Bach Commission: The Right to Justice* and Vice-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid
- 9.15 - 10.15 **The future for the legal aid framework - scope, fees and the future of the market**
To what extent has LASPO delivered in its aim of discouraging unnecessary litigation claims being brought to court, whilst also promoting access to justice? Would increasing funding for early advice do more for long-term savings in the court system than maintaining the current funding by way of a reduction in cases that should not be taken forward, and instead resolved possibly by other means? Given the rise in court users applying for exceptional case funding, how can Government ensure that the supply of this service is not being outstripped by demand? With cuts to legal aid providers, how viable is the overall system of legal aid from the perspective of those administering it, and how can the market best adapt? With concerns over the workforce's ability to meet demand in the sector, how can Government ensure that there are enough legal aid lawyers to cope with demand in the sector? Have the changes made to the evidence requirements for legal aid affected the number of cases, and has this affected access to justice?
Christina Blacklaws, President, The Law Society
Steve Hynes, Director, Legal Action Group
Barrister
Commentator
Questions and comments from the floor with **Lord Bach**, Author, *Bach Commission: The Right to Justice* and Vice-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid
- 10.15 - 10.20 **Chair's closing remarks**
Ellie Reeves MP, Member, House of Commons Justice Select Committee
- 10.20 - 10.40 Coffee
- 10.40 - 10.45 **Chair's opening remarks**
Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP, Vice-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid
- 10.45 - 11.10 **The administration of legal aid and advice - operational priorities**
Shaun McNally, Chief Executive, Legal Aid Agency
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.10 - 11.30 **Further options for reform: policy development outside England and Wales**
Denise Swanson, Head, Access to Justice Unit, The Scottish Government
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.30 - 12.30 **Responding to the demand for alternative sources of legal advice - new providers, mediation and strengthening public legal education**
Further to the Bach Report's call for a national public legal education and advice strategy, what steps should be considered to better educate the public and make certain that those who are in need of legal aid and who qualify for it, use the system correctly? For example, in instances where service-users do not have access to legal advice, what more can be done to signpost them to alternative routes of dispute resolution, such as mediation? Given the importance of early legal help when undertaking litigation, what can be done to promote access to alternative sources of advice at the first stages of a case, in order to support both the service-user and the efficiency of court procedures? How effective has the supply of pro-bono services, voluntary and university providers been in satisfying increased demand in the sectors cut by LASPO - such as social welfare and private family law cases - and what can be done to ensure that those who are in need of legal advice are aware of other options at their disposal? What reforms to the Client and Cost Management System can be taken to ensure that it is easily accessible for clients, and could this be extended to further include criminal cases?
Pamela Fitzpatrick, Director, Harrow Law Centre
Joanna Sidhu, Head of UK, CrowdJustice
Mary Banham-Hall, Managing Director, Focus Mediation
Tom Franklin, Chief Executive Officer, Young Citizens
Senior speaker confirmed from the **Personal Support Unit**
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 - 12.55 **The post-implementation review of LASPO - key areas of discussion and their implications for policy**
Nick Goodwin, Director, Access to Justice Policy, Ministry of Justice
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's and Westminster Legal Policy Forum closing remarks**
Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP, Vice-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid
Sean Cudmore, Deputy Editor, Westminster Legal Policy Forum