

PRESS RELEASE - 24 January 2017

Access to justice boosted by £4.3m grants from The Legal Education Foundation in 2016

Over £12m has now been distributed by TLEF since the foundation was launched in 2012, including £1m from collaborative funders.

The Legal Education Foundation's newly published 2016 annual review* shows that the work of the charity continues to grow. In 2016, it made 79 grants totaling £4.3million to organisations across all four countries in the UK (page 6). This compares with 67 grants in 2015, totaling £3.7million.

Organisations receiving TLEF grants last year to promote how people understand and use of the law included: Central England Law Centre, Avon & Bristol Law Centre, Inquest, Legal Geek, Public Law Project and Legal Advice Centre (University House). The charity Maternity Action received a grant of £57,300 to produce a series of videos aimed at women on low incomes, informing them of their employment rights during pregnancy.

The Foundation's Justice First Fellowship supports the next generation of social welfare lawyers to secure justice in their

communities. Nine new Fellows were appointed at leading social welfare law providers. Recruitment of a further 15 Fellows is already underway for 2017, taking the total to 33, including extending scheme to the Bar for the first time.

2016 saw a particular emphasis on the rights of children and young people: grants totaling £581,000 were made to nine organisations working in this field. Recipients included Coram Children's Legal Centre and Just for Kids Law. Youth Access received a grant of £195,485 for its innovative Make Our Rights Reality project, which is working with partner organisations to educate young people to use their rights in areas like housing, debt and mental health.

The Foundation also launched a Law, Technology and Access to Justice blog (www.law-tech-a2j.org), linked to the @lawtech_a2j Twitter account.

TLEF 2016 grants were boosted by co-funding from 15 other organisations, ranging from Comic Relief, to the Baring Foundation, to City law firms.

In his introduction to the annual review (page 4), TLEF chief executive Matthew Smerdon says:

"As a specialist funder, collaboration is an important part of our ethos, and last year saw us attract £1m from other grant-making organisations to distribute via partnership programmes. TLEF Governors see this as important recognition of the Foundation's expertise, and we will continue to work with other funding bodies in open and constructive ways in future years."

The Foundation will continue to invest in the sector during 2017. Its work over the next 12 months will have a particular focus on funding research into the most effective ways of increasing public legal understanding and how IT can be used to increase access to justice.

A copy of TLEF's 2016 annual review is available here:

<https://www.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Annual-Review-2016.pdf?x57167>

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