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Legal advice and education sector boosted by £5m from The Legal Education Foundation during 2017.

Grants last year included £1.25m for creating 15 new trainee lawyer posts at leading social justice organisations.

Foundation growth continues: 2017 grant funding up 16 per cent on previous year.

The Legal Education Foundation made grants totalling £5m in 2017, supporting the work of legal organisations, including law centres, advice agencies, universities, charities, and solicitors' firms.

The Foundation's 2017 annual review (published today) shows that it made 91 grants last year, totalling £5m, an increase of 16 per cent on 2016 (£4.3m), when it made 79 grants (page 6).

https://www.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/TLEF_AR17.pdf

Writing in his introduction to the annual review, TLEF chief executive Matthew Smerdon says:

'Drawing all The Legal Education Foundation's work together is a driving belief in the role of the law as a tool to solve people's problems. This underscores the urgency of finding ways to integrate and embed effective legal education and legal services in the places where people most need them (page 4).'

Since it was founded in 2013, TLEF has made grants totalling £15m to support legal advice and education.

Grants made during 2017 include:

- **North Kensington Law Centre** (£1,500): to cover the cost of laptop computers to set up a mobile office in the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire (page 23). Subsequently, TLEF has

made a further grant to NKLC of £67,000, to enable its dedicated Grenfell Response Team to provide immigration, housing, and public law advice to former residents of the tower, and to conduct strategic litigation to address wider implications of the disaster;

- **Legal Aid Practitioners Group** (£146,000): for LAPG to develop a programme of practice management training, tailored to help advice agencies and legal aid firms work more effectively and become financially sustainable (page 24);
- **UCL Centre for Access to Justice** (£65,000): to support research into how resolving legal problems can lead to improvements in people's health, and develop policy in this area (page 25);
- **Disability Rights UK** (£98,000): to create an online interactive guide to increase disabled people's understanding of their legal rights (page 13).

TLEF's flagship Justice First Fellowship scheme continued to expand during 2017, with 15 new trainee solicitors recruited to 15 leading social justice organisations, including Liberty, Deighton Pierce Glynn, North Kensington Law Centre and Coram Children's Legal Centre (page 32).

TLEF chief executive Matthew Smerdon says:

'Our Justice First Fellowship scheme is now firmly established as part of the fabric of the social welfare law sector. This year, we saw our first cohort of Fellows qualify, with all of them going on to secure jobs as solicitors. We also recruited 15 new Fellows to the scheme, who will qualify in two years' time. The Fellowship continues to attract host organisations with a national reputation for the quality and importance of their legal work. By January 2018, we will have supported 52 Fellowships, which means this sector is benefitting from a significant and much needed increase in capacity.'

TLEF's annual review includes detailed case studies of three projects funded by the foundation, to highlight the range of its work. These include:

- c-App, an award winning 'virtual advocacy' app created by the Hastings-based charity seAp, which supports disability benefits claimants (page 9);
- Street Legal, an innovative project to break the cycle of rough sleeping by bringing specialist lawyers together with homelessness outreach workers (page 18);
- Justice First Fellows at Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (page 28).

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The Legal Education Foundation's 2017 annual review is available here:

https://www.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/TLEF_AR17.pdf
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