

PRESS RELEASE - 21 JANUARY 2019

The Legal Education Foundation passes fifth anniversary.

The Foundation has invested £21m in legal education and advice, including creating 68 new trainee lawyer posts, since its launch in 2013.

TLEF's 2018 Annual Review (published today) shows its year-on-year funding growth continues. Last year, 91 organisations received grants, worth £5.7m - 12% up on 2017.

2018 grants included £1.2m for TLEF's Justice First Fellowship, which aims to create future leaders in social welfare law.

TLEF's newly-published 2018 annual review shows that its support for the UK's social welfare law sector has grown each year since the grant-giving charity was launched in 2013. In the last five years, TLEF has made almost 370 grants, totalling £21m.

In the year to 30th June 2018, TLEF made grants of £5.7m, to support the work of 91 organisations across the country, including law centres, advice agencies, charities, universities and law firms.

The Foundation's flagship Justice First Fellowship scheme continues to flourish, with the creation of a further 15 new trainee solicitor and barrister posts in 2018. The latest recruits bring the total number of Justice First Fellows to 68, almost half of whom are now qualified, or are due to qualify later this month (January 2019).

The 2018 Annual Review can be found here:

https://www.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/TLEF_AR18.pdf

In his introduction to the Annual Review, TLEF chief executive Matthew Smerdon says:

"Since TLEF was launched in 2013, we have developed an approach centred on helping people to understand and use the law to secure rights, fair treatment and protection. Legal education plays an essential role in helping them know and access their rights." (page 4)

He acknowledged the multiple challenges facing many of the organisations TLEF supports:

"The work we support takes place in wider system and structures, and policy and constitutional environments which are complex, dynamic and under great strain. Civil society organisations need to be supported to engage and share expertise and to make heard the voices of the communities they represent." (page 5)

TLEF's Justice First Fellowship scheme created trainee lawyer posts at 15 social welfare law organisations, including solicitors' firms, barristers' chambers, and six law centres (Avon & Bristol; Ealing, Merseyside, North East, Southwark, Suffolk). Other organisations hosting fellows include the leading public law firm Bhatt Murphy, Public Law Project, drugs charity Release and Prisoners Advice Service.

Grants made during 2018 include:

North Kensington Law Centre (£66,788) - towards creation of Grenfell Tower fire response team, providing immigration and housing law advice to former residents of the tower. (page 18)

Youth Access (£173,413) - to deliver nationwide Make Our Rights Reality legal education programme aimed at increasing young people's understanding of their legal rights.

Anti Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit (£45,500) - to train legal practitioners working with trafficking victims.

Suffolk Law Centre (£45,500) - continuing to support creation of a new law centre, including work to develop additional sources of funding and to expand capacity.

The Annual Review also includes in-depth case studies of three key projects funded by the Foundation, written by TLEF head of communications Fiona Bawdon.

The case studies cover:

- Pioneering research by UCL into the link between social welfare law problems - such as debt, housing, immigration and employment - and mental and physical illness (page 10);
- Refugee Action's Frontline Immigration Advice Project, which is using digital training to create more qualified immigration law advisers at non-legal organisations (page 22);

- How RCJ Advice's Justice First Fellow Alexandria Lowry helped the not-for-profit agency secure a £1.1m grant from the government's Tampon Tax Fund to increase availability of legal advice for domestic violence victims (page 35). The case study includes a first-hand account from violence survivor Marianne, on how her life was transformed after she was able to take out an injunction against her violent ex-partner (page 38).

The case studies are also being published as a series of articles on thejusticegap.com

For more information about the annual review, contact Fiona Bawdon:
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The Legal Education Foundation 2018 Annual Review is available here:

https://www.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/TLEF_AR18.pdf

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