

The City Bridge Trust

Bridging Divides: Application for a grant



About your organisation

Organisation Details

Name of your organisation: Ealing Law Centre	
If your organisation is part of a larger organisation, what is its name? No	
In which London Borough is your organisation based? Ealing	
Contact person: Ms Vicky Fewkes	Position: Supervising Solicitor
Website: http://www.ealinglawcentre.org.uk	Social Media Accounts: Twitter :@EalingLawCentre , Facebook: @officialealinglawcentre
What Quality Marks does your organisation currently hold? Legal Aid Specialist Quality Mark	

Legal Status

Legal status of organisation: Charitable company			
Charity Number: 1151243	Company Number: 08151033	CIC Number:	Bencom Number:
When was your organisation established? 20/07/2012			
Aims of your organisation: Ealing Law Centre (ELC) has been set up with the aim of relieving poverty, suffering and distress among persons resident or working within the London Borough of Ealing and neighbouring Boroughs through provision of legal advice and assistance; and the advancement of education for these residents and working persons. Currently, ELC provides people in need expert legal advice and representation, free of charge, in housing, immigration and welfare rights law. Our advice, representation and appeals services help vulnerable victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, asylum seekers and refugees. We provide a casework and appeals service for people at risk of losing their homes and with welfare benefit problems. Through outreach services at Ealing Food Bank and Brentford County Court our Crisis Navigator advises and assists persons facing crisis at their point of need.			

Main activities of your organisation:

Legal advice and representation in Housing and Homelessness Law funded through our Legal Aid contact. Representation at County Court level and Judicial Review.
 Housing Advice and representation at Brentford County Court as Duty Solicitor
 Telephone advice in Housing areas not covered by Legal Aid
 Telephone advice in Immigration cases
 Advice and representation work in Immigration Upper Tribunal and Judicial Review funded through our Legal Aid contract
 Advice on Welfare Benefits appeal to the Upper Tribunal - Legal Aid Contract

Anti-Poverty Unit - Welfare Benefits advice including representation at Tribunal level
 Housing Advice and representation which falls outside of the scope of Legal Aid
 Crisis Navigator Service as part of our Big Lottery Funded - Help through Crisis Project at Foodbanks and at Brentford County Court
 Housing outreach at Acton Homeless Concern

Your Staff & Volunteers

Full-time:	Part-time:	Trustee/Board members:	Active volunteers:
6	4	4	6
Do you have a Safeguarding policy? Yes			
Are the following people in your organisation subject to DBS checks?			
Paid Staff Yes	Volunteers No	Trustees / Management Committee Members No	

Property occupied by your organisation

Is the main property owned, leased or rented by your organisation?	If leased/rented, how long is the outstanding agreement?
Leased	31st July 2020

Environmental Impact**What action have you taken in the past year to progress environmentally sustainability principles and practice?**

ELC reduces waste by recycling cardboard, paper and all other recyclable items. We do not print documents routinely, and consider whether it is possible to share documents by electronic email. We reduce the use of energy by using timers and switching of lighting if not required.

Finance Details

Organisation Finances

	Year of most recent audited / examined accounts	Current financial year forecast	Next financial year budget
End of financial year date	31/03/2018	31/03/2019	31/03/2020
Grants & donations:	£184,153	£226,319	£198,030
Earned income:	£80,821	£78,640	£88,000
Other income:	£8,333	£514	£9,000
Total income:	£264,974	£305,473	£295,030
Charitable activity costs:	£240,967	£306,966	£359,365
Cost of raising funds:	£0	£100	£300
Other costs:	£72	£600	£1,300
Total expenditure:	£241,039	£307,666	£360,965
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end:	£108,468	£99,709	£51,725
What is your organisation's reserves policy?			
In the longer term, Ealing Law Centre aims to set aside reserves equal to 6 months' operating costs; however, as a developing organisation this is an aspirational goal and in the shorter term it is the Law Centre's intention to ensure that its reserves increase in each year of operation as a proportion of its total annual operating costs.			
For your most recent financial year, what % of your income was from statutory sources? 0%			

Organisational changes

Describe any significant organisational changes to your structure, financial position or core activities since the date of your most recent accounts.

Our core activities remain unchanged.

Last year ELC recruited two trainee solicitors. One of these posts is supported through funding from The Legal Education Foundation.

Additionally, through ELC's partnership with Law Centre's network ELC's immigration team has been delivering information and advice sessions for community groups across London about EU Citizenship Rights after Brexit.

These changes help increase service provision.

Grant Request

Which of the Trust's programmes and priority areas will your application deliver? Advice and Support/Provision of advice and support				
Which of the programme outcome(s) does your application aim to achieve?				
Please describe the purpose of your funding request in one sentence. To continue to provide free specialist legal advice and representation in Welfare Benefits and Housing to disadvantaged clients in the London Borough of Ealing				
When will the funding be required? 25/05/2019				
Is this request to continue work that is currently funded or has been funded in the last year by:				
City Bridge Trust?		Another funder? (if so which)		
Yes				
How much funding are you requesting?				
Year 1:	Year 2:	Year 3:	Year 4:	Year 5:
£64,464	£62,675	£0	£0	£0
Total Requested: £127,139				

What 3 main differences or outcomes do you want to achieve through your funding proposal?

Reduce destitution and poverty by helping clients overcome barriers to obtaining welfare benefits which are due to them.
Reduce homelessness caused by rent arrears which have arisen as a result of resolvable benefits issues and/or a lack of knowledge of housing rights
Reduce the number of people refused Local Authority help by being deemed "intentionally homeless"; we will provide people threatened with homelessness but who do not qualify for Legal Aid with advice which prevents them from doing things which would rule them out from Local Authority assistance

What are the main activities or outputs you will deliver to achieve these differences?

A weekly housing advice line providing "brief intervention" expert housing law advice to self-referrals and clients of partner agencies to identify issues at an early stage and triage clients into appropriate in-depth services. Delivery methods will include phone interviews, clinics in partner agencies and video links to maximise accessibility.
A weekly benefits referral and advice line. This will provide specialist telephone advice on complex cases to front line advisers at partner agencies, and agree handover arrangements in cases where the client is being referred to ELC's casework or appeals & tribunals services
Casework service. This will provide more in-depth/ongoing assistance in a smaller number of Welfare Benefits and Housing cases where referral agencies have reached the limit of their expertise or where expert preventive work could avert a crisis. Partners will include foodbank, HADEA, MIND and other community organisations.

You and your grant request

What, specifically, are you applying for (your project)?

We are seeking continuation funding for two part-time posts:

Our Welfare Benefits caseworker (0.6 FTE) negotiates on behalf of clients and pursues appeals against adverse benefits decisions: ESA/PIP disability-related requests for mandatory reconsideration and Tribunal appeals, JSA sanctions, tax credit determinations and Universal Credit issues.

Our Housing Trainee (0.6 FTE) works with people whose housing problems cannot be dealt with through the Legal Aid system ? either because their income is marginally above the qualification point for Legal Aid or because the type of problem they are experiencing is no longer covered.

These posts form a vital part of ELC?s outreach programme. They enable us to maintain advice clinics at partner agencies, to pick up people in crisis at Ealing Food Bank and Brentford County Court, to run our welfare benefits and housing advice lines, and represent clients in Courts and Tribunals who would not otherwise have access to representation.

How will the project described achieve your stated outcomes?

By enabling ELC to continue to work with people who do not have access to Legal Aid, and who need specialist advice/representation to resolve their problems.

Our services are used by many marginalised people who face linked difficulties with housing and welfare benefits, are at risk of eviction, destitution or both, and who have been unable to access early legal advice. We work closely with front line advice agencies to identify such cases, providing outreach clinics, taking referrals of complex cases, and providing training for their staff.

The two part-time posts provide much of the capacity which makes this work possible. They are also responsible for running our housing advice line and sanctions hotline.

Digital exclusion is becoming a major issue, especially with Universal Credit. To help address this we will introduce a form-filling clinic where volunteers, supervised by the Welfare Benefits Caseworker, will help clients complete paper/online forms.

How do you know there's a need for this work?

ELC occupies a unique position in Ealing?s advice network. It is the borough?s only specialist level advice provider, the only voluntary organisation in the borough which employs full-time, qualified and experienced solicitors, and Ealing?s only non-profit Legal Aid provider, with contracts in housing law, Upper Tribunal Welfare Benefits work, and immigration.

The inclusion of immigration support in our services is particularly important given that Ealing is the fourth most diverse borough in the country, with over half of its population born outside the UK, and especially so given the current hostile environment for EU nationals in the benefit system. Our diverse team of staff and volunteers, and holistic, multi-disciplinary approach make us well-placed to respond to these challenges.

The quality of our work was recognised in 2018 when we won the Legal Aid Providers Group?s annual Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year awards in the Not For Profit Agency category.

How will the work be delivered - specifically, what will you do?

Our solicitors and caseworkers will provide an appeals and representation service for people referred by front-line agencies who are challenging benefit sanctions or who have complex benefit issues which have reached the mandatory reconsideration stage

Our housing team will provide specialist advice and representation on housing law and benefits for people who are on low incomes and do not qualify for Legal Aid and who are in danger of losing their homes.

Access to services will be available through referral from advice agencies, self-referral via our helplines, ELC outreach advice surgeries and ELC's Crisis Navigator attending Ealing Food Bank and Brentford County Court Duty Desk.

ELC will collaborate with the borough-wide network of front line advice services in order to reduce poverty and homelessness. Our team will also provide training and information sessions to front line agencies on housing, welfare, immigration and citizenship law, and share and promote good practice.

Why are you the right organisation to do this work?

ELC occupies a unique position in Ealing's advice network. It is the borough's only specialist level advice provider, the only voluntary organisation in the borough which employs full-time, qualified and experienced solicitors, and Ealing's only non-profit Legal Aid provider, with contracts in housing law, Upper Tribunal Welfare Benefits work, and immigration.

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How does your work complement and not duplicate other services within your area?

Since we were set up in 2013, ELC has worked closely with Ealing's network of front line advice agencies to repair the damage which was done by the catastrophic collapse of the borough's main advice provider, Law For All, which had previously filled the role of both law centre and mainstream generalist advice provider (Ealing is the only borough in London without a CAB). We are active members of the Ealing Advice Forum, and we are part of the Big Lottery funded Help Through Crisis consortium which provides a range of coordinated services across the Borough. Our services are specifically designed to act as a resource for front-line advice agencies, providing them with a place to refer clients who need specialist legal advice and/or representation in Court or Tribunal (we are the only voluntary organisation in the Borough offering this), as well as access to specialist advice and training.

How will you ensure that your project will hear and represent the views and needs of disadvantaged people and/or diverse communities?

ELC asks all clients to complete feedback satisfaction questionnaires; we also gather feedback from the training we provide for partner agencies. In future we will introduce caller user surveys and annual user group meetings.

Testimonials from clients, partner organisations, local MPs and Councillors were instrumental in ELC securing the 2018 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year award for best Not for Profit Agency. ELC attends meetings of the Ealing Advice Forum and Community Network where agencies raise concerns about individual clients, difficulties in accessing particular services, discuss any emerging patterns in advice seeking, and coordinate efforts to reach disadvantaged groups.

As part of the Law Centres Network we ensure our clients' views and needs are fed into policy debates and government consultations. By being accessible to those at the point of crisis we represent the most marginalised people, not just those who actively seek out advice from a lawyer.

How does your project engage and empower individuals and/or communities to come together on this issue? Will you be working with people who are particularly excluded?

Our clients are among the most excluded in society. ELC's clients tell us that they value being listened to by our caseworkers. Often clients have felt trapped by the system, unheard and increasingly excluded from an online system; our services empower clients as they are often believed for the time and can finally see a potential resolution. Clients are often relieved to learn they are not alone.

ELC engages and empowers individuals/communities to come together through its partnership networks. The Help Through Crisis project's steering group includes clients in quarterly meetings - this provides valuable lived experience. These networks enable ELC to learn about issues of current concern for residents of Ealing and neighbouring boroughs and engage in responses to consultation, participate in research and influence policy within the borough and nationally.

Our volunteers and trustees are from the community and well placed to guide ELC about community need.

Is the focus of your project meeting an already identifiable need (acute or otherwise) or are there elements which are preventative and/or incorporate early action?

The project meets an identifiable need - to ensure that residents of Ealing and neighbouring boroughs are prevented from spiralling into poverty and debt, or left without housing due to a lack of specialist legal advice, and that people have access to the rights and benefits that they are entitled to. Providing legal services at the point of need addresses the immediate situation that needs redress, such as eviction or benefits sanction/delays in Universal Credit. However, an important part of ELC's work is support from Caseworkers and our Crisis Navigator to address the underlying issues that gave rise to the crisis, such as build-up of rent arrears resulting from benefits difficulties, and to prevent a recurrence of the problem.

The preventative aspect of the project is supported by training of partner organisations to identify issues at the earliest stage and refer clients to specialist services with confidence and without delay.

Who might you need to work closely with in delivering this project - whether before, during or afterwards?

During the project we will work with partner organisations and ensure our services are coordinated and reach those in need. We will report to funders, regulators and work closely with trustees who provide governance and oversight for ELC.

The direct delivery of services will require working with other departmental staff and volunteers within ELC and legal professionals in the field. To maintain our expertise and knowledge we will procure training through organisations such as CPAG.

The provision of outreach services will involve close coordination with staff and volunteers at Ealing CVS, Ealing Advice Service, Ealing Food Bank, Brentford County Court, Law Centres? Network, Ealing Community Network, Help through Crisis Consortium, MIND, Hestia, Age UK and Ealing Council's Homelessness Forum.

During and after the project delivery we will work with partners to ensure that the service model is responsive to the needs of the community and to identify future funding streams.

Our aim as a funder is to help people move positively between any of the four stages of Surviving, Coping, Adapting and Thriving. For your project at which of these stages will most people begin their journey?

Most people who access our housing and welfare rights services will be at the 'surviving' stage; they will often have been unable to exercise their rights to benefits entitlement which in turn will have led to a build-up of rent arrears and risk of homelessness. Cuts in Legal Aid for early advice in housing and welfare benefits have left many clients with nowhere to turn for help before they reach a crisis point.

Clients will often make first contact with us through the Food Bank, the duty desk at Brentford County Court, our advice clinics or our advice lines. Frequently, our clients find themselves in this situation through difficulties in understanding correspondence (especially those whose first language is not English), and not having access to appropriate help. A large and increasing number of our clients are digitally excluded and need our help with Universal Credit claims online.

Will there be any elements of this project that will help you or your beneficiaries to reduce your environmental footprint?

Only tangentially. Beneficiaries of our project will be better placed to take up their recycling responsibilities once they have secured their entitlements to housing and welfare benefits and have a secure and stable base; as part of our casework, we will signpost them to organisations that provide guidance on efficient use of energy and help with reducing their cost of living as well as their carbon footprint.

Like other responsible organisations, ELC takes its carbon footprint seriously and we recycle paper, plastic, cardboard and all other recyclables; we turn off lights when they are not needed, and ensure that the temperature in the office is not unnecessarily high. We will be taking up City Bridge's offer of an eco-audit to see what further steps we can take.

Funding required for the project

What is the total cost of the proposed activity/project?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Employment Costs	146,744	175,194	0	0	0	0
Compliance Costs	3,477	3,477	0	0	0	0
Volunteer and project costs	1,125	1,125	0	0	0	0
HR recruitment costs	350	0	0	0	0	0
Central Staff Costs	45,924	45,924	0	0	0	0
Premises Costs ,LHP etc	46,675	39,175	0	0	0	0
IT Client Recording system and Comms	10,046	10,046	0	0	0	0
Other overheads	9,027	9,027	0	0	0	0

TOTAL:	263,742	283,342	0	0	0	0
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What income has already been raised?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Big Lottery	42,080	5,381	0	0	0	0
Henry Smith	46,925	24,650	0	0	0	0
Justice First Fellow	19,196	14,397	0	0	0	0
Earned Income	73,000	105,000	0	0	0	0

TOTAL:	181,201	105,000	0	0	0	0
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What other funders are currently considering the proposal?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
No others are considering at present	0	0	0	0	0	0

TOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0
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How much is requested from the Trust?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Employment costs	35,453	35,123	0	0	0	0
Compliance Costs	4,435	4,597	0	0	0	0
Volunteer and Project costs	167	167	0	0	0	0
HR recruitment costs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central Staff costs	9,929	9,929	0	0	0	0
Premises costs	10,346	8,725	0	0	0	0
IT recording systems	2,124	2,124	0	0	0	0
Overheads	2,010	2,010	0	0	0	0
TOTAL:	64,464	62,675	0	0	0	0

Who will benefit?

How many people will directly benefit from the grant per year?

500

In which Greater London borough(s) or areas of London will your beneficiaries live?

Ealing

Hounslow

Does this project specifically target any groups or communities?

No - open to everyone

This project will specifically work with the following age groups:

0-15/16-24/25-44/45-64/65-74/75 and over

This project will specifically work with the following gender groups:

Male

Female

This project will specifically work with the following ethnic groups:

Asian/ Asian British (including Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Chinese; Any other Asian background)

Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British (including African; Caribbean; Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background)

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups

White (including English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British; Irish; Any other White background)

Refugees and asylum seekers

If Other ethnic group, please give details:

This project will specifically work with Deaf and disabled people:

No

This project will specifically work with LGBTQI groups:

No

This project will specifically work with other groups or communities:
The service is open to anyone living or working in Ealing and neighbouring boroughs.

How will you target the groups/communities you have identified? What is your expertise in providing services for these groups?

The service is open to all anyone living and working in Ealing and neighbouring boroughs. ELC is part of Ealing's Community networks and our details are widely shared.

Are there any groups or communities you think your organisation will find hard to include through this project?

No

If yes, please specify which groups or communities? Where possible using the categories listed above.

Not applicable

If yes, what steps will you take to make your services accessible to and meet the needs of the groups/communities you have identified?

Not applicable

Declaration

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, all the information I have provided in this application form is correct. I fully understand that City Bridge Trust has zero tolerance towards fraud and will seek to prosecute and recover funds in every instance.

Please confirm: Yes Full Name: **Vicky Fewkes**

Role within **Supervising Solicitor**
Organisation: