

The City Bridge Trust

Bridging Divides: Application for a grant



About your organisation

Organisation Details

Name of your organisation: North Kensington Law Centre	
If your organisation is part of a larger organisation, what is its name? n/a	
In which London Borough is your organisation based? Kensington & Chelsea	
Contact person: Mrs Annie Viswanathan	Position: Interim Director
Website: http://www.nklc.co.uk	Social Media Accounts: @NORTHKENLC
What Quality Marks does your organisation currently hold? Lexcel	

Legal Status

Legal status of organisation: Registered Charity			
Charity Number: 279699	Company Number: 1480110	CIC Number:	Bencom Number:
When was your organisation established? 10/01/1970			
Aims of your organisation: North Kensington Law Centres aims to positively influence people's lives by providing legal services in immigration, employment, housing, crime and welfare benefits. We use our expertise of the law to affect policy and social change and to ensure local vulnerable people e.g. migrants cope better with their challenging circumstances.			

Main activities of your organisation:

North Kensington Law Centre reaches sections of the community more likely to be isolated, helping them out of crisis, to cope better, and improve their health and well-being through expert legal support, advice and representation. NKLC operates in housing, Immigration, employment and welfare benefits. Under immigration we have triaged 1,500 clients. Under Housing, between April 2017 and March 2018, and provided support for 65 legal aid funded households covering homelessness, possession and disrepair help.

NKLC is directly under Grenfell Tower. The June 2017 fire caused an unprecedented need for legal services. NKLC rapidly set up and still hosting a 'Grenfell Legal Team' for housing / immigration. Although much housing work is face to face, there is also a substantial policy driven section aimed at encouraging the local authority to change its entrenched views on supporting those affected. Our ongoing constructive feedback ensures RBKC resolves to change problematic areas (without acting as a roadblock to residents waiting to move into housing)

Your Staff & Volunteers

Full-time:	Part-time:	Trustee/Board members:	Active volunteers:
6	5	5	50
Do you have a Safeguarding policy? No			
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?
Rented	Ongoing

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

We have not taken any action in the last year however we are looking to take action to reduce the amount of paperwork we generate by becoming paper light.

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	
Grants & donations:	£395,330	£360,063	£0
Earned income:	£45,922	£33,629	£0
Other income:	£0	£0	£0
Total income:	441,252	£393,693	£0
Charitable activity costs:	£383,922	£477,154	£0
Cost of raising funds:	£34,320	£0	£0
Other costs:	£750	£0	£0
Total expenditure:	£418,981	£477,154	£0
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end:	£52,604	£0	£0

What is your organisation's reserves policy?

Currently our reserves are below our desired operating level of 3 to 6 months expenditure so part of our forward planning includes a focus on rebuilding these up over the coming years, to a level of around £120000 to meet liabilities in the event of insufficient future funds coming in and therefore the closure of the Law Centre. These reserves include cash in the bank and unrestricted operating funds. We have determined the £120000 by looking at existing resources carefully and taking staff/monthly commitments/capital liability and casework into account.

For your most recent financial year, what % of your income was from statutory sources?
11-20%

Organisational changes

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

In April 2018 a new interim Director was appointed. Her post is about to be made permanent. In April 2018 the outgoing board of trustees resigned and a new Board of Trustees was appointed comprising of experienced trustees with long standing links to the Law Centre.

Grant Request

Which of the Trust's programmes and priority areas will your application deliver?
Advice and Support

Which of the programme outcome(s) does your application aim to achieve?
Advice & Support/More people access debt and legal services for support before they hit crisis point
Advice & Support/More Londoners have improved economic circumstances

Please describe the purpose of your funding request in one sentence.
To continue to identify and meet the advice needs of local residents through an effective system of triage.

When will the funding be required? **30/01/2019**

Is this request to continue work that is currently funded or has been funded in the last year by:

City Bridge Trust?
Yes

Another funder? (if so which)

How much funding are you requesting?

Year 1:	Year 2:	Year 3:	Year 4:	Year 5:
£49,500	£50,500	£0	£0	£0

Total Requested: £100,000

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

We want to support 3000 vulnerable service users to build the skills and confidence to engage with other agencies so that they are more able to negotiate key issues as well as manage their own affairs more effectively in the future.

We want to encourage and empower 100 volunteers over the 2 years to develop their employ-ability skills through training and development, to such a degree that they are able to seek and retain paid employment.

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

We want to deliver an effective triage service (a vital initial point of contact with our Law Centre) which enables us to offer legal advice to 3000 people over 2019 - 2021 of which 900 will receive additional specialist support.

We also want to recruit and train 50 triage volunteers a year to deliver the triage service on a rotation basis.

We want to produce self help and self advocacy materials to enable people to help themselves and others before reaching crisis point.

You and your grant request

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

In 2014 we were given a 3 year grant to establish an effective triage system. This application is for a continuation grant to cover the on-going costs and to develop and improve the triage system which is now well established and an integral part of the effective delivery of legal services in North Kensington. The scheme has allowed us to assist over 3000 vulnerable clients a year who can access the service through telephone, e-mail and in person. We will use the money to cover the full time cost of a triage coordinator to manage and oversee the whole project plus related costs for IT etc. This will also pay for the additional costs of recruiting, training and supervising a team of triage volunteers. Ideally we will have 2 trained volunteers available per day to cover reception. We will also use funds to monitor and evaluate the project.

How will the project described achieve your stated outcomes?

North Kensington Law Centre reaches sections of the community more likely to be isolated, helping them out of crisis, to cope better, and improve their health and well-being through expert legal support, advice and representation. We ensure that residents have access to a high quality legal triage service so that they achieve improved awareness and understanding of their legal rights and access to public services and are empowered to use that knowledge to help their local community. In the next two years we aim continue to deliver on this through effective legal triage. 100% of users will either receive direct legal services or be referred to another provider. 80% of those at risk of homelessness will be assisted in preventing the loss of their homes, 300 people will be supported with immigration advice, a further 100 with employment advice, 250 with welfare benefits advice and 150 with criminal advice.

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

The need for this work is demonstrated in the number of users who regularly access our service. NKLC is situated in one of the poorest boroughs in London. Last year we triaged over 3000 clients more of which have interconnected legal issues. For example punitive Home Office legislation in respect of migrants means we see many more clients with housing and/or benefits issues connected to their inability to prove their right to live and work in the UK. For example during triage a client was identified as the victim of domestic violence. She had no leave so could not access public funds and was facing homelessness. She was treated as high priority and seen immediately by both the Immigration and housing team. Two months later she has Indefinite Leave to Remain and safely housed. A Effective triage enables us to identify clients at risk and intervene promptly to prevent homelessness.

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

Based upon open access our centre is open from 10am to 5pm offering appointments and queuing system. Each person is seen by a trained volunteer (15-20 minutes) Our two trained volunteers are supervised by the triage coordinator who refers complex cases to a specialist adviser for further assessment/support. The initial comprehensive interview includes assessment and monitoring information and appropriate referral routes (negotiated with external agencies where applicable). If our centre takes on the client they will be given an appointment with a specialist adviser immediately if urgent or within 5 days. Depending on the case and the needs of the client the adviser will either undertake full or partial representation. For example a client with an employment issue might simply need help drafting a grievance or they may need full representation at tribunal. An immigration client may need a form checked or full legal representation in an asylum claim.

Why are you the right organisation to do this work?

The Law Centre employs an expert and professional staff team delivering legal advice and representation locally in areas of social welfare law. Solicitors and advisers employed by the Law Centre provide an appointment and telephone advice service in addition to a casework service to local people who would otherwise find it difficult to access legal advice. The location, funding support and experience of working with clients means that the Law Centre is able to assist those who would otherwise have little prospect of receiving legal advice from other providers. The legal advice service is offered in an atmosphere of support in which clients are comfortable. When clients' issues are dealt with promptly they do not escalate into more serious problems that can have a financial saving to the community. Areas of law and staffing consist of housing and homelessness, immigration and asylum, welfare benefits, employment, debt and crime.

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

It is clear from the demand that NKLC would not be duplicating services within the area. Locally Kensington and Chelsea CAB are a generalist advice service who refer cases to us. Organisations such as Nucleus offer employment advice however many of our clients have interconnected issues and we offer a fuller package of services which is unique in the area. If an employment issue is connected to an immigration matter we can assist with both where CAB advice is limited to level 1 advice for those in RBKC. We offer advice and representation up to the Supreme Court and we assist clients from outside of the borough. We recently represented a 'Windrush' client who had had her benefits cut, was facing eviction but being prevented from working because she did not have papers. We helped her apply for her documents and attended court to prevent eviction.

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

NKLC has historically developed an expertise in working with groups that are exploited and disadvantaged. All of our clients are disadvantaged and face a myriad of complex legal issues including being dependent on benefits, insecure immigration status, poor quality housing, are facing eviction, are in low paid, low skilled employment with little job security and this makes them vulnerable to exploitation. As well as recruiting and training local volunteers to deliver the triage we will continue to work collaboratively with key local support groups such as Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea, Glass Door, Maggie's the Caring for Cancer Charity to develop outreach/drop in services for communities of interest with limited access to services (using data gathered from previous triage to identify such areas of greatest need). Working alongside other Law Centres and external support agencies we will develop evidence into usable reports designed to influence local/regional decision making.

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?

From our continued work with the local community, local / central government and other partners we have helped to secure the best outcome for local people. Significantly our Law Centre has been in constant close contact with people affected by the Grenfell fire. We have worked closely with the community to identify trends through which we have then sought to significantly influence policy in respect of housing and immigration. Three examples include our support culminating in a Grenfell re-housing positive policy; immigration concessions for undocumented migrants granted so they could secure 1 year leave grants which lead to settlement after 5 years; and support for relatives able to come to the UK to arrange funerals / support loved ones. The triage role was critical to the Grenfell response as it allowed for a coordinated approach. It gave members of the community a first point of contact and provided continuity.

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?

NKLC has historically developed an expertise in working with exploited and disadvantaged groups. Like many other specialist legal advice agencies the Law Centre acts as a port of call for those in crisis who often only seek our support at the last stage. We are trying to provide advice / negotiation / empowerment to clients at much earlier stages to build skills for early action by clients. We are uniquely placed to help people cope with pressing urgent issues as well as build their understanding and capacity to prevent issues from escalating. We know we can do more in terms of education / awareness raising. A recent project we are working on has come about through data gathered by triage. The project aims to help people to prepare their own straightforward immigration applications in a group setting. Clients will then take this knowledge into the community to help others.

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

The Law Centre takes referrals from other frontline NGO's for example Citizens Advice Bureau, local Members of Parliament and elected representatives of local authorities. We also contribute to social policy work through the Law Centres Network as well as directly influencing local housing policy in the wake of Grenfell. We undertake partnership work with other NGO's, for example, Rights of Women, Public Law Project, Liberty, Justice, etc. Locally we work closely with the Clement James Centre, Peabody Housing Trust, Local schools etc. We have a strong relationships with large private legal firms and use trainee lawyers as volunteers under the LawWorks project. The relationship is reciprocal with firms such as Ashford's funding and space for meetings etc. under their corporate social responsibility obligations. We will continue to ensure through our partner agencies that we can assist the local community in their legal needs before, during and after.

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?

We seek to assist people through the four stages. Our intervention supports people not only by offering a practical resolution to their legal problems but shows them how to avoid these problems in the first place. An inability to deal with affairs because of mental illness can result in job loss, family problems, housing and benefit problems, increasing unhappiness and stress and creating a downward spiral of events that can exacerbate the mental illness. A client was being bullied at work. She felt powerless and belittled and was very distressed. This caused problems in her marriage which led to mental health problems. Our intervention in her employment case resolved the bullying issue, which empowered her and helped her feel better about herself and reduced the pressure on her marriage. She is now on the road to recovery and has transitioned from surviving to coping to adapting and is now thriving.

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

Yes. We are now looking towards a 'paper light' office. The project will enable us to invest in a new case management system (CMS) which will allow us to record all triage inquiries directly into the CMS so bypassing a paper form and eliminating paper waste. This system will also give us access to quick and accurate data to enable us to analyse and so improve the service we provide.

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
Salary costs of a triage coordinator	24,500	25,000	0	0	0	49,500
Employer costs + pension + ENIC	5,050	5,450	0	0	0	10,500
Training and recruitment costs of legal volunteers	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	20,000
Overheads, IT CMS	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	10,000
Supervision costs from legally qualified staff	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	10,000
TOTAL:	49,550	50,500	0	0	0	100,000

What income has already been raised?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
TOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0

What other funders are currently considering the proposal?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
TOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0

How much is requested from the Trust?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Salary costs of a triage coordinator	24,500	25,000	0	0	0	49,500
Employer costs + pension + ENIC	5,050	5,450	0	0	0	10,500
Training and recruitment costs of legal volunteers	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	20,000
Overheads, IT CMS etc	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	10,000
Supervision costs from legally qualified staff	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	10,000
TOTAL:	50,618	50,618	0	0	0	101,236

Who will benefit?

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

3,300

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

Kensington & Chelsea

London-wide

Does this project specifically target any groups or communities?

No - open to everyone

This project will specifically work with the following age groups:

This project will specifically work with the following gender groups:

This project will specifically work with the following ethnic groups:

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:

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

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.

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

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: **Anne Campbell Viswanathan**

Role within **Interim Director**
Organisation: