

LSA

Legal Services Agency

Doing the Right Thing,
the Right Way

Annual P/Review
2013–2015



We have been going 25
years so we know what
we are doing ...

www.lsa.org.uk

Case statistics: The total number of new cases (that is, not including the many thousands carried over from earlier years) dealt with in financial year 2013–14: **2,783**: up from 2,251 in 2012–13, an **increase of 25%**.

Mental Health incapacity and related cases: **657** cases taken on 2013–14: up from 509 in 2012–13.

Asylum, trafficking, humanitarian protection and related cases: **277** new cases taken on in financial year 2013–14: up from 218 cases in 2012–13.

... and why!

This Annual P/Review explains a little about what we have been doing over the past few years. It also summarises some of our plans for the future.

The first thing the Steering Committee that set up Legal Services Agency Ltd. did, over 25 years ago, was identify what we are here for. That hasn't changed. **We aim to tackle the unmet legal needs of those in disadvantage.**

This entails not only aiming for quality, but also volume. We don't believe anyone should be left out.

The sources of these principles are ideas about **social justice** and **human rights**.

Broadly, we aim to work in partnership with all concerned to do so to achieve social justice for people who are excluded both in Scotland or are affected by what happens in Scotland.

Through casework, education and campaigns we aim to help all of Scotland's people, or those affected by what happens in Scotland, to get their human rights. We recognise that the other side of this coin is observance of the human rights obligations we all have to others.

Why social justice?

“Abolition of want... was easily within the economic resources of the community: want was a needless scandal due to not taking the trouble to prevent it”.

Beveridge's judgement of the late 1930's is as valid today as it was in his report on Social Insurance published back in 1942.

When Legal Services Agency started off there was also a major scandal of poverty, particularly in West/Central Scotland and this is still an issue. Professor David Donnison at the time described it as a “social disaster”.

One thing that became plain from the Referendum Debate – whether yes, no or maybe – is that everyone accepted that Scotland should be fairer. Yet the needless scandal to which Beveridge made reference continues with a million Scots classed as poor.

For instance, in Glasgow, one in three children still live in poverty, while more than a quarter of children are in poverty, for instance, in Inverclyde. There are huge numbers of individuals who have not enough money to feed, heat and clothe themselves, far less enjoy the recreational opportunities that the city and indeed the rest of Scotland have to offer. Overall nearly half of Glasgow's population live in 20% of the most deprived areas in Scotland.



Yet Glasgow has done well over the past 25 years. Apparently the city has the third highest GDP per capita of any city in the UK, only London and Edinburgh possess higher. Outside central London, Scotland is the third best off region.

However, employment is definitely no longer necessarily a route out of poverty: we are told that a huge percentage of working age adults in poverty live in a household where at least one person is in employment.

Those concerned by poverty often forget Will Hutton's insight:

"As for falling wages, the real enemy is not immigration but gravely weakened Trade Unions. If the wage share in national income were the same as 35 years ago, the average worker would be £100 a week better off."

Of course, some things have improved enormously with the regeneration of many disadvantaged areas, as well as the provision of tax credits and the minimum wage.

Awareness of mental health problems has increased, however, the concentration of them in poorer areas remains similar to 25 years ago. Overall, health has improved, however, life expectancy in Glasgow remains an enormous 12 years behind the most affluent areas of Scotland, with some categories (ie rough sleepers) in a very much worse position.

Concern about homelessness has moved centre stage but eviction actions for rent arrears or rough sleeping remain major problems.

So the background to Legal Services Agency's work remains similar. There have, of course, been improvements. It is largely accepted that people suffering disadvantage should have advice, assistance and representation where appropriate. Legal Services Agency's support from the Scottish Government and a number of key local authorities and trusts as well as the Scottish Legal Aid Board has increased as a token of this.

We do not think that pursuing legal remedies will solve problems caused by absence of social justice. Until, however, all Scotland's people have adequate income, good housing, a decent environment and access to all the great things Scotland has to offer, we have no doubt that the deployment of our and similar services to tackle the problems caused by the needless scandal of social injustice will be necessary.

This we do by providing advice, assistance and representation in all relevant courts and tribunals to clients we identify as having an unmet legal need. This includes clients and families threatened by homelessness through, for instance, rent arrears or mortgage arrears. Other areas of homelessness covered include people who are actually homeless: roofless or maybe living on the streets. We also provide help to homeless people who have difficulty accessing the temporary accommodation to which they are entitled to by law.

We provide holistic services to clients and members of their family including carers who have an incapacity, including mental health problems or dementia.

We provide a full service to women, young people and children who seek asylum or have an insecure immigration situation and seek humanitarian protection. We provide specialist services for trafficking victims.

Because we learn a great deal about people's problems and the law from our work, we feed back to policy makers the lessons we believe can best inform decision making. This we do in partnership with a wide range of other organisations.

In summary, we attack social injustice by keeping people in their homes, by helping people who are vulnerable get or keep the resources to which they are entitled and by helping people use the law to obtain the remedies which the law provides, irrespective of their circumstances. Fundamentally, we try to make sure people in disadvantage remain visible and heard.

Why Human Rights?

Legal Services Agency has always been committed to using the law to achieve peace and social harmony through justice as defined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and as set out in the preamble to the European Convention of Human Rights. This is what gets us out of bed in the morning.

Aiming to help groups and individuals assert their human rights in difficult circumstances is a common motivation amongst lawyers, advice workers and other campaigners. The particular approach that Legal Services Agency offers is to assist our clients in asserting their human rights irrespective of their personal circumstances, whether those circumstances include ethnicity, incapacity, poverty, disadvantage or exclusion for any reason.

In the absence of organisations such as Legal Services Agency Ltd., there is no means whereby the rule of law and the provision of principle based ways of resolving disputes and holding the powerful to account may be achieved for our client group.

In deploying human rights arguments, we do not necessarily use statutory provisions that are labelled human rights law. In many ways human rights principles preceded their codification in the Human Rights Act and the principles are located throughout our law.

Core human rights principles include the rule of law and the accountability of powerful bodies to an independent court or tribunal where the arguments may be tested. This is particularly important for people who cannot bring pressure to bear in other ways. This includes people at the margins or who are excluded.

Fairness in the testing of important matters entails “equality of arms” so that each side may be represented in a competent and professional fashion.

Where draconian remedies are sought by one party, a “contradictor” acting for the other party, bringing out and testing all the relevant arguments in order that the court or tribunal may apply the law correctly, is fundamental.

We apply these principles in our work in many areas including, for instance:

- Defending eviction cases which might well otherwise result in a family’s homelessness.
- Making submissions relating to an individual’s application for asylum or humanitarian protection.
- Researching and representing cases relating to compulsory detention for psychiatric treatment.
- Judicial review of the decisions of powerful bodies including relating to community care, homelessness or Criminal Injuries Compensation decisions for instance.

A human rights approach also involves protecting the rights and possessions of individuals who are unable to do so themselves. We do this through relevant claims and litigation, as well as through administration of the financial affairs, even if modest, of those with incapacity.





Seminars and Publications

There is no point in having a remedy if you do not know about it.

Our seminars and publications are aimed to raise awareness of the fundamental principles of the law as well as the techniques whereby remedies may be obtained.

We aimed to demystify the law and legal remedies.

Legal Services Agency has had a commitment to this approach since the day we started. Since then we have organised thousands of seminars and conferences.

The pattern of our work is now to organise two, three or even four events a week, often in very specialist areas with 10–15 much more major conferences each year.

Our education activities draw together all those interested in the issues that concern us. We publicise our events to between 16,000 and 20,000 email addresses in all relevant sectors in Scotland. Thus, charities, community organisations, voluntary organisations, local and central government staff as well as private sector lawyers, Advocates and advisors attend. Equally importantly, speakers are sourced from a similarly wide range.

LSA Legal Services Agency
Doing the Right Thing,
the Right Way

Preventing Homelessness

Defended Eviction and Defended Mortgage Repossession: free advice and representation* for tenants and homeowners in Glasgow

At Glasgow Sheriff Court or LSA's offices
Tel: 0141 353 3354
Freephone: 0800 316 8450
www.lsa.org.uk



LSA Legal Services Agency
Doing the Right Thing,
the Right Way



NORTH GLASGOW ADVICE CENTRE (NGAC)

A Joint Legal Services Agency
and Glasgow Central CAB Project

North Glasgow Advice Centre
1160 Boylan Road
Glasgow G20 1ET

Tel: 0141 770 7803
Fax: 0141 770 7075
Email: ngac@nswm.com
www.lsa.org.uk

Legal Services Agency Ltd - Charity No. SC207160
Glasgow Central Citizens Advice Bureau Ltd - Charity No. SC201130

LSA Legal Services Agency
Doing the Right Thing,
the Right Way

Inverclyde Housing Rights Project

Help to prevent homelessness for
everyone in Inverclyde

Tel: 01475 725665
www.lsa.org.uk
Our vision: no more homelessness

LSA Legal Services Agency
Doing the Right Thing,
the Right Way

Tackling unmet legal needs

Preventing Eviction and
Mortgage Repossession.

Tackling Homelessness.

Mental Health and Incapacity Rights.

Employment Law.

Criminal Injuries Compensation.

Rights for Refugee and Asylum Seeking Women,
Young People and Children

Representation for Migrant Women, Young
People and Children in Scotland

Tel: 0141 353 3354
Freephone: 0800 316 8450
www.lsa.org.uk

Registered Office: Forth Roadhouse,
101 Buchan Road, Glasgow G3 8AT
Registered in Scotland: SC 212078. Charity No. SC211768



LSA Legal Services Agency
Scotland's National
Law Centre

Mortgage Repossessions: The New Law

A guide for homeowners and their
advisers on mortgage repossessions
through the Sheriff Court by
Alistair Stalker, Advocate.

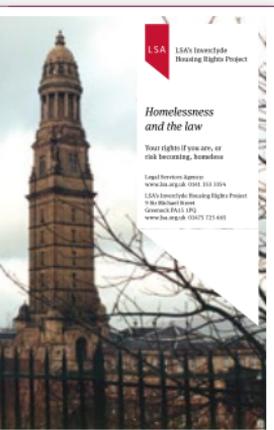
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Legal Services Agency
www.lsa.org.uk
0800 316 8450

LSA Legal Services Agency
Doing the Right Thing,
the Right Way

Your rights: legal advice to protect refugee, asylum- seeking and migrant women who have experienced violence and abuse

The LSA Women's Project provides legal services to protect
women and children in Scotland who have an unsettled asylum/
immigration position and have experienced violence and abuse.

Tel: 0141 353 3354 Freephone: 0800 316 8450 www.lsa.org.uk



LSA Legal Services Agency
Innovative for People Young
and Homeless

Your rights: if you are a young person from abroad, we can help you with your legal problems

The LSA Young Persons' Project provides legal services to protect refugees, asylum seeking and migrant children and young people (under 25) living in Scotland.
Tel: 0141 353 3354 Freephone: 0800 316 9400 www.lsa.org.uk

Some highlights of the past 25 years!

- The first social welfare law event on human rights which took place on the day the Human Rights Act came into force: it was free and we had to hire security staff to prevent the venue being dangerously overcrowded!
- Our seminars on incapacity law of various types have broken all records with one or two events each month taking place for the entire period of 25 years.
- Our free events on social security “reform”, the “bedroom tax” and Discretionary Housing Payments, which were booked out within two hours of the publicity being sent out!
- Hundreds of speakers have contributed to our education work. Our heartfelt appreciation to them for what they have done.

To obtain information on our events visit our website on **www.lsa.org.uk** or join our email circulation list by contacting **seminars@lsa.org.uk**

Legal Services Agency’s publications fit into the same philosophy as our seminars. We aim to tell ordinary people with problems or those helping them, not only where to get help but also some of the principles of the law that may be relevant to them.

Some examples of our approach include:

- Our booklet on rent arrears and eviction is now in its 14th edition and tens of thousands of copies have been produced. It has been in print for 25 years.
- As soon as the law in core areas of our work changes we publicise it. Thus, partially as a result of an LSA initiative, when new rights for homeowners with mortgage arrears came into effect, we produced a booklet which is now in its third edition.
- As the law on homelessness has improved so we have updated our booklet.

These and other publications are generally free. They are available for free download on our website and are circulated electronically as well as being made available in paper form. A current publications' list appears at the end of this booklet.

We have a substantial backlist, some of which, whilst a little out of date, is still useful and available. These include major text books on residential evictions (Barrowman) and homelessness (Mullan), as well as home loss and disturbance payments (Collins and Brown).

LSA staff continue to contribute to publications elsewhere, including on mental health law, trafficking and criminal injuries compensation.

Housing and preventing homelessness

Housing law in general and defended eviction in particular were core activities right at the beginning of Legal Services Agency and have continued to be so ever since.

- We have attended virtually every eviction court at Glasgow Sheriff Court every week for the last 25 years and the same applies to the defended mortgage repossession court since the law was changed to permit mortgage holders with mortgage arrears to defend repossession. We have saved the homes of thousands of families.
- We have pursued many test cases. One on Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSST's) established that, where an eviction from temporary accommodation is being pursued by a public authority, if there might be a human rights proportionality argument involved, the public authority must provide detailed reasons on request. This duty to provide reasons probably applies to a range of situations in addition to SSST's. This test case was explicitly referred to in the Parliamentary memorandum explaining the background for the introduction of a statutory requirement that landlords give tenants reasons for the termination of SSST's.
- We have developed our service by providing, for instance, a freephone number and evening drop-in surgeries each week, as well as opening over lunch hours. We have drop in surgeries every day of the week and continue to work with partners in developing these.
- We have taken up a range of areas of housing cases, including, for instance, a number of recent tenancy deposit cases with client financial gain of well over £8,000.



- We have pursued novel remedies, including, for instance, one of the first applications in this context of Section 129 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974, where the court made a “time order”. This enabled a mortgage to be paid off at a reasonable rate, effectively amending the agreement. Another case where UK remedies appeared to be exhausted is being prepared for an application to the European Court of Human Rights!

Our vision is that everyone threatened with homelessness should have advice, assistance and representation and that no one should ever be turned away.

We aim to provide high volume, high quality services to everyone who needs them.

In recent years, our commitment to clients who are actually homeless has soared. In financial year 2011–12, we took on 30 homelessness cases (including rooflessness). This category rose to 227 cases in 2012–13 and 517 cases in 2013–14. To this should be added files where we required to threaten Judicial Review, making a grand total of 577. This represents an over 1,500% increase in homeless clients over three years.

We provide emergency remedies for rough sleepers, people unable to access temporary accommodation and other related issues.

Defended eviction for mortgage or rent arrears cases are often highly adversarial. We have to prepare for around four to five proofs relating to eviction or repossession each week on average and threaten Judicial Review in a homelessness matter around 50–70 times a year. Our lawyers appear in Glasgow and Greenock Sheriff Courts on around 2,000 occasions each year.

When Legal Services Agency started, clients accessed us through a small office above a fish and chip shop. We now not only run a large number of outreaches but also have offices tackling homelessness in central Glasgow, Royston and Greenock.

Mental Health Legal Service

Legal Services Agency was one of the first organisations to identify, back in 1990, as an issue, the absence of advice, assistance and representation for patients compulsorily detained in hospital.

Since then the law has developed enormously, as indeed has awareness of the practical, legal and human rights issues concerned.

We started off committed to providing a comprehensive service to clients with mental incapacity, or their carers, and we continue to do this.

A comprehensive approach means that we provide advice, assistance and representation to clients with mental health problems or dementia in all the legal areas that may confront them. Issues dealt with include, compulsory detention and treatment, discrimination and employment rights, community care, homelessness, financial and welfare guardianship, social security, debt, accident and negligence claims, family law and Criminal Injuries Compensation to name but a few.

Our approach means that we pursue remedies through all relevant courts and tribunals and do so to a high volume and high quality.

Originally LSA's work in the field of mental health and incapacity law was undertaken in our Mental Health Legal Representation Projects, Strathclyde and Edinburgh & Lothians.

Recently, in order to simplify and modernise the name of the department, they have been relabelled as **Mental Health Legal Service (Glasgow and the West)** and **Mental Health Legal Service (Edinburgh and the East)**. The name has slightly changed but the work remains the same.

Some highlights:

- The Mental Health Legal Service, along with the rest of the organisation, continues to pursue criminal injuries compensation applications for vulnerable clients, many of whom have suffered very severe injuries. Recently, several have been settled for between £50,000 and £100,000 and in one case for over £150,000 and another for well over half a million. These awards transform people's lives.
- The Department pursued a claim for serious failure to monitor the prescription for Lithium to a very vulnerable client. The inadequate medical service resulted in severe paralysis with a very large award through the courts being made.



- Since its inception, the Department has looked after funds for clients with brain injuries or dementia, or who, for other reasons, are unable to look after their own funds. This services is provided to clients sometimes with small amounts of money.
- A client orientated service: clients are seen through appointments but also, particularly, at home, residential establishments, hospital or prison. Several visits are made to clients every day of the week.
- The Department undertakes a high volume of litigation through all relevant courts and tribunals. At any one time, several Judicial Review cases are going through the higher courts (most recently with regard to community care issues) and quite a number through the Sheriff Courts. On occasion the complexity of these matters means that LSA solicitors have been in court for three weeks or more!
- The service has a high commitment to education not only through LSA's seminar programme but also in a community, charity or academic context. Thus, the Department has run a series of seminars on Incapacity and Mental Health Law for voluntary organisations and hospitals in the north of the city, a number throughout the city on Powers of Attorney and for carers. The service also lectures to students at Glasgow University, including running a "mock tribunal".

- Consistent with its vision of providing comprehensive service, the Department acts for clients with mental health problems or disabilities in a wide area of law. Recent cases include:
 - An emergency recall of a case back into court where a client with schizophrenia had had an eviction order pronounced against him on the basis of his misuse of his home. He is an obsessive collector of animal paraphernalia and newspapers. We are arranging to defend his action and have arranged for his house to be tidied up.
 - The service acts for a physically disabled adult whose contact with his son has been reduced to nil by the court. This matter is being appealed with extensive investigation and Social Work support.
 - The Department has extensive involvement in the Children’s Hearing system, with several appeals on the go at any one time, including one recent one against a removal of contact by a mentally ill parent and her child.
- The Department is committed to sharing its expertise in a variety of ways, including service on Law Society of Scotland specialist committees, the Mental Health Tribunal itself and the Mental Welfare Commission. One member of staff is a solicitor/advocate, one the annotator of the principal statute and two lectures at higher academic institutions.
- We were one of a number of legal firms involved in the start of the conversation on Powers of Attorney campaign. This involved talks to a variety of voluntary sector organisations and the production of two leaflets, which are available free. The services talk to clients about issues arising from Powers of Attorney on a daily basis.

**Looking after our clients –
Doing the right thing: tackling
exclusion. The right way:
aiming for quality. In volume:
trying to avoid anyone being
left out.**

LSA's Inverclyde Housing Rights Project

Our project for the whole of Inverclyde, based in Greenock, is unique in Scotland: a specialist high street law centre outreach staffed five days a week, now by two lawyers, undertaking all forms of preventing homelessness work. It works closely with local advice agencies, the Council and Registered Social Landlords to provide a comprehensive housing service.

Access is by drop-in surgeries two days a week by phoning for an appointment or by phoning for advice.

The Project also provides publications and runs training events.

The Project has been going for many years and has received funding from a range of sources, as well as support from very many local community and voluntary organisations. More recently, the Project has been funded by Inverclyde Council and it has also received funding from the Scottish Legal Aid Board. 222 cases were taken on last financial year in addition to several hundred cases carried over from earlier years. The bulk of the work is in defended eviction, defended mortgage repossession and homelessness.



Legal Services Agency's Women & Young Persons' Department

The Department specialises in advice, assistance and representation for vulnerable groups seeking humanitarian protection or with an insecure immigration status.

LSA undertook representation for asylum seekers back to before dispersal to Glasgow. On dispersal, LSA obtained funding from Glasgow City Council to set up our Refugee Legal Project.

Whilst the Refuge Legal Project was not only highly innovative and successful, experience indicated that the highest level of need was for particularly vulnerable groups, hence the setting up of the Women and Young Persons' Department.

The Department is divided into two Projects.

• LSA's Women's Project

The Women's Project provided legal advice for refugee and migrant women and children who have experienced gender based violence.

Gender based violence includes domestic abuse, forced and child marriage, sexual abuse, honour related violence and human trafficking.

The Project provides legal advice and representation through all relevant courts and tribunals on claiming asylum and international protection in the UK and immigration status. It also deals with other related issues, including access to safe accommodation, community care and the national referral mechanism.

Access is by way of telephoning for an appointment or telephoning its free advice line.

- **LSA's Young Persons' Project**

The Young Persons' Project provides legal advice and representation for all young people up to the age of 25 in Scotland who come from abroad.

Legal areas covered include asylum, human rights and immigration law, rights and entitlements under Social Work and related law, trafficking and the National Referral Mechanism, as well as the Children's Hearing system. The Project also advises young people from abroad who may have come to Scotland for work or study and require advice.

Access is by way of telephoning for an appointment or telephoning the Project's free advice line.

Some highlights from the Department as a whole:

- As a result of the length of time the Department has been operating, it was, uniquely, in LSA's experience, independently evaluated by two academic and professional experts (paid by one of the Department's funders). The evaluation (2014) was quite extraordinarily positive.

"The findings and conclusions from this evaluation are, however, exceptional in that the evidence gathered was overwhelmingly positive about the Department's approach, performance and achievements. ... We simply were given no negative feedback. In our extensive evaluation experience, this is unusual."

- The Department's "second tier advice to other professionals" has been, recognised not only by specialist organisations particularly within Glasgow but also Scotland wide.

- Specialist training has been delivered not only through LSA's seminar and conference programme but also, on average, more than once a month during the past year to a range of charitable, voluntary and governmental organisations. Topics have included the changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme as they affect asylum seekers and trafficking victims, domestic abuse, child trafficking and court/tribunal procedures in asylum law.
- In addition to case work, the Department has undertaken large numbers of highly complex cases with a high degree of success: for instance, its asylum appeal cases have a significant higher than average success rate.
- Most recently, the Department took part in an Expert Roundtable in Brussels (very much a first for LSA) launching LSA's formal participation in an EU wide project for early legal intervention in trafficking cases. LSA has developed best practice principles in this area.
- Cases are taken up in a variety of ways, including a recent novel award for a substantial sum by way of criminal injuries compensation for a trafficking victim. Generally, as recognised by the independent evaluation, the Department has now gained a formidable reputation for achieving positive outcomes for clients and achieves rates of success, particularly at appeal, considerably above the national average. The evaluation identified no less than 15 critical success factors which contribute to some extent to all case achieving positive legal, practical and personal results for clients.

We are proud to concentrate on the rights of those in disadvantage whether it be through mental illness dementia, vulnerability due to youth or old age, poverty, debt, threatened homelessness or exclusion for any other reason. We do this by telling people about otherwise unknown but important rights, helping clients have a voice when things aren't going well for them and getting remedies for them in all relevant courts and tribunals. When we can't help a client we work with partner organisations to make sure they get help elsewhere.

Policy and Campaigning

As a human rights charity, Legal Services Agency has an obligation not only to take up individual cases but also to raise issues where a casework approach is inadequate or where policy makers may benefit from learning about our experience, that of our clients or that of the sector as a whole. Such input can help prevent problems and eliminate unintended consequences.

Of course, the core of Legal Services Agency's work remains casework. We are, however, proud that our policy work has expanded and are pleased that this has been welcomed by those whom we seek to influence.

Our work spans the whole area of Legal Services Agency's specialisms. Here are some examples:

- Campaigned, successfully, for non means tested legal aid for people subject to compulsory detention for mental health reasons or welfare guardian applications to the court.
- Raised the principle test case, and debated the issues, concerning the use by care homes of Powers of Attorney to compulsorily detain residents.
- Made submissions to the Scottish Government on the Mental Health Bill on, among other points, the proposal to permit health authorities to detain patients compulsorily for an extra week without a remedy, as well as on the proposal to reduce the deadline for appeal applications for transfer to the State Hospital at Carstairs from twelve weeks to four weeks. LSA staff have been invited to give evidence to Parliament.

- Had a fundamental role in the introduction of the Mortgage Rights Act, providing, for the first time, remedies for homeowners in Scotland with mortgage appears as well as a major influence in the development of Pre-Action Requirements. Recently had involvement in the proposals to clarify a range of technical issues.
- Since LSA's commencement, have had a major role in the development of defended eviction for rent arrears law, with involvement in a number of statutory changes including the introduction of Pre-Action Requirements.
- Been among the main organisations in the UK promoting criminal injuries compensation in general and, in particular for family violence/abuse cases. LSA has produced tens of thousands of leaflets, as well as a key text book. The only organisation to supply training (in conjunction with Castlemilk Law and Money Advice Centre) in the field for many years. Client gains over the years are many millions of pounds.
- Campaigned against the draconian cutbacks to criminal injuries compensation in 2012... nearly successfully. Promoting test cases on human rights grounds on a number of issues arising from the 2012 scheme.
- Made submissions to the Scottish Government on a number of housing law reform issues, as well as to the Scottish Parliament on the recent Act. Have given evidence to Parliament on the Act and had a significant influence on the changes to the Act to the effect that the Government will consult on range of issues.
- Gave evidence to Parliament on a range of issues arising from court reform. Campaigned against the introduction of a three month deadline for Judicial Review which was successful in garnering a substantial amount of support, including the submission of an amendment to the Bill and a mention of our evidence in Parliament... an unsuccessful campaign but a worthy one!

- LSA's Women and Young Persons' Department has major commitment to policy and research. This includes its research on how 16 and 17 year old unaccompanied asylum seekers are dealt with by a wide range of Local Authorities. Other policy involvement includes on human trafficking, both at a Glasgow and Scottish wide level. Building on its case work, the Department is on the Strategic Litigation Steering Group on Children's Rights in Scotland, whilst the Department Head is the expert member for Scotland on the Strategic Litigation Fund for Vulnerable Young Migrants in the UK.
- LSA's commitment to preventing gender based violence and assisting those who have suffered from it has been followed through by the Women and Young Persons' Department by involvement in the strategic group on FGM, as well as the National Forced Marriage Network.
- LSA's Women and Young Persons' Department's involvement in policy was recognised by the independent evaluation. The evaluators stated:

"There is evidence from a range of sources that the Department is bringing a unique contribution to work at policy level in Scotland... its contribution is felt to be particularly valuable given ongoing experience of direct and complex client work (allowing up-to-date insights from the front line), a sophisticated understanding of the way in which policy and legal change comes about and a challenging but respectful engagement with others..."

The Future

LSA is a strong, resilient organisation which has weathered many challenges in the past and we intend to keep on doing so.

We believe in what we do and how we do it.

Neither Board nor staff, however, are complacent.

We aim to keep on increasing effectiveness. This we aim to do by continually improving internal training and reviewing the use of technology. We have, for instance, recently started a pilot on the use of digital dictating between our Edinburgh and Glasgow offices. We are also piloting the use of voice recognition technology.

Our data harvesting has improved enormously, with, now, very accurate information on new cases taken on. These “new cases taken on” are all very much alive and most involve scores, if not hundreds, of steps and many appearances in court. We are also reviewing our data to better identify the cases carried over from earlier years which are alive. Meantime, however, the case work numbers referred to in this report do not include the several thousand cases carried over from previous years that solicitors continue to work on.

In terms of governance, in December 2013, we modernised our Articles of Association, “fleshing out” our human rights, equalities and social justice objectives. We will promote awareness of these extended objectives.

LSA has always aimed to publicise not only remedies but also our services. We are going through a process of updating and expanding all our publicity material. We recognise that many people do not have access to the internet or are not familiar with internet research, so we will make this material available widely by, among initiatives, a publicity campaign early in 2015.

We are enmeshed in many networks and will build on this, particularly given the challenge that will flow from the Smith Commission proposals and possibly extra powers to the Edinburgh Parliament. In that regard, we will work closely with organisations such as SCOLAG, SCVO and others to ensure that the experience of the network is made available to Parliamentarians and the Scottish Government.

We will build on our improved communications through our regular newsletter, as well as increase our involvement in policy very generally.

This will be done in part through new organisations such as the Housing and Social Welfare Law Campaign Group (a development from the Glasgow Advice Service Campaign Working Group).

Whatever happens in Scotland, we will continue to keep in touch with developments in the rest of the UK, as well as in Europe.

LSA has always had a commitment to providing training opportunities for lawyers at the beginning of their careers: we currently have two trainees and will look to, if not expand, at the very least maintain this level of commitment.

You can't do anything without money. We will work with the Scottish Legal Aid Board to ensure that legal aid continues to be appropriate to support the sort of work that we undertake and value. Notwithstanding legal aid, we could only exist with extensive support from Government, Local Authorities, trusts and charities. We will continue to work with these bodies to maintain our financial security.

In particular, from April 2015, our funding for much of our work in Glasgow moves to a new grant structure and we look forward to the opportunities that this will bring.

LSA's Mental Health Legal Service (Glasgow and the West) after many years support from Glasgow City Council, owing to Social Work cutbacks, recently sustained a significant cut in financial support. It will be a high priority for the organisation to replace this from elsewhere in order that the Department's vital service may continue unabated.

Like the rest of the voluntary sector, we will be studying whatever powers the Scottish Parliament may end up with as a consequence of the Smith Commission and look forward to scrutinising any proposals carefully to ensure that the interests of the "constituencies" we look after are protected.

As always, we will encourage new members of our Board and new members of LSA. We will tell as many people as we can about our work and invite them to join our email network.

We will continue our current case work themes. We will deepen our awareness of the challenges confronted by those in disadvantage, we will endeavour to reach out to them more effectively and maintain our scrutiny of the law, particularly human rights, to bring remedies to bear. In short, we will continue to tackle the unmet legal needs of those in disadvantage.

Women and Children (Asylum/Human Rights): 277

Adults with Incapacity/Welfare
and Financial Guardianship: 236

Judicial Review, both
threatened and actual: 97



Thanks!

Funding during the financial year 2013–14 was received from the following organisations:

Glasgow City Council
Edinburgh City Council
Midlothian Council
West Lothian Council
Inverclyde Council
Scottish Government
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Comic Relief
Inverclyde CHCP/SLAB
Strategic Legal fund for Vulnerable Young Migrants
The Prevention of and Fight Against Crime
Programme of the European Union



Homeless/street homeless cases: 577

**Housing and Homelessness,
including Judicial Review,
defended eviction, defended
mortgage repossession, all
departments: 1,573**

LSA'S Free Publications

All the following publications are free.

Small quantities will be posted out at no charge.

P&P will be charged for larger quantities by arrangement.

Publications on LSA Service Information

- New leaflet summarising all of LSA's work "Tackling Unmet Legal Need".
- New leaflet on "Help for Young People from Abroad" and another on "Help from LSA for Women and Children with an Insecure Immigration Status" (Publicity Material for LSA's Women and Young Persons Department) – (2 Leaflets).
- Publicity leaflet on "LSA's Mental Health Legal Service (Edinburgh and the East)".
- Publicity leaflet on "LSA's Mental Health Legal Service (Glasgow and the West)".
- Publicity leaflet on "North Glasgow Advice Centre" (Holistic Advice Centre run by LSA and Glasgow Central CAB).
- Publicity leaflet on "LSA's Inverclyde Housing Rights Project (Greenock)".
- Publicity leaflet on LSA's services for those that are "Street Homeless" or "Threatened with homelessness" (2 leaflets).
- Other material is available upon request including a small fold over "business card".

Advice Booklets

- What to do if you are facing Eviction for Rent Arrears: Information for Tenants, Housing Associations, Councils and other RSL's in Scotland.
- Advisors Guide for rent arrears cases (not available for mass distribution).
- What to do if you are facing Mortgage Repossession in Scotland – a Guide for Homeowners and their advisors.
- Powers of Attorney: Planning for the Future. Information for people thinking about appointing someone to act upon their behalf.
- Booklet on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).
- Homelessness and the New Law: Summary booklet for people who are homeless or those helping them.
- Criminal Injuries Compensation: Booklet summarising the 2012 Scheme and some of its complications.
- Advisors Guide to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme: Out early 2015.

All LSA's publications are available on LSA's website for reference and free download on **www.lsa.org.uk**.

By arrangement, electronic copies will be made available for transmission through electronic networks.

By arrangement, all publications may be tailored to suit local circumstances.

For orders, please email: **celiahay@lsa.org.uk**

LSA's Seven Projects

Mental Health Legal Service (Glasgow & the West)

Mental Health Legal Service (Edinburgh & the East)

Women's Project (female asylum seekers and their dependent children)

Young Persons' Project (young people up to 25 from abroad)

Inverclyde Housing rights Project

North Glasgow Advice Centre

Defended Eviction Project/Housing and General Court Department

Four Offices in Three Cities

City Centre, Glasgow

3rd Floor, Fleming House,

134 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G3 6ST.

Tel: 0141 353 3354

Freephone: 0800 316 8450

Royston, Glasgow (North Glasgow Advice Centre)

1169 Royston Road,

Glasgow, G33 1EY.

Tel: 0141 770 7869

Edinburgh (Mental Health Legal Service (Edinburgh & the East))

3rd Floor, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place,

Edinburgh, EH2 4RG.

Tel: 0131 228 9993

Greenock (Inverclyde Housing Rights Project)

9 Sir Michael Street, Greenock, PA1 1PQ.

Tel: 01475 725665

Seminars and Education

- Over 100 Seminars and Conferences: Year 2013–2014.
- Eight new publications in 2013–2015, including a contribution to a major textbook.
- Major marketing initiative throughout LSA's entire area of benefit.

This booklet is available in large format.

Board of Directors of Legal Services Agency Ltd.

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Margaret Brawley (Vice Convenor)

Felix Mulholland (Treasurer)

Jean McFadden (Company Secretary)

Paul Brown (CEO)

Tom Adams (Chair, Personnel Committee)

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Councillor Philip Braat

Willie Croft

Anne Jack

Gwynneth James

Barrie Levine

Gordon Millar

Alan Richardson

John L. Robertson

Carol Scott

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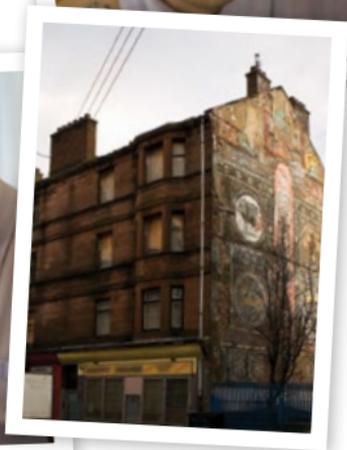
Beth Anderson

Nicola Underdown

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Agnes Bisset, Cashroom Assistant
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Robert Struthers, Seminar Assistant
Kirsty Thomson, Senior Associate
Nicola Underdown, Solicitor
Kirsty Watson, Solicitor



Some things you may not know about LSA!

One speaker has made over 50 presentations to LSA events and is still doing so. Name to be announced at the AGM!

Some members joined within the first couple of months of us coming into being and continue to be members!

LSA staff don't often have to do historical research... but recently we had to investigate what courts there were, where in Glasgow back in the 70's. There was a court in Charing Cross run by Glasgow District Council. Unlike other court records, they are easily accessible at the Mitchell Library.

Jim Garrity recently became only our fourth Convenor (the other Convenors being Colin Porteous, Tom Mullan and the long serving John L. Robertson). Likewise, there have only been four Company Secretaries (Jean McFadden, current, preceded by Willie Croft, Bill Kirkhope and John L. Robertson).

LSA has distributed well over 200,000 booklets and leaflets and uncountable hundreds of thousands of emails.

LSA former staff do a wide range of things: one runs a law centre in Malawi, two are Sheriffs, four work for human rights' bodies, three work for Shelter, two for the Scottish Legal Aid Board, two run other law centres, two are Advocates, whilst several others are in private practice, including at least two at Partner level. Of our volunteers, a number have moved on to other law centres, CABx, legal aid firms and LSA itself, whilst one is Deputy First Minister.

LSA administers millions of pounds on behalf of a very large number of vulnerable clients: in effect, we act as a small bank.

LSA's support staff field over 50,000 calls a year and type over 30,000 letters.



**Over 50,000 phone
calls received**

**Over 30,000 letters
sent out each year**



Glasgow's Advice &
Information Network

see me 

LET'S STOP THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILL-HEALTH
www.seemescotland.org

Legal Services Agency
134 Renfrew Street
Cowcaddens
Glasgow G3 6ST

Freephone: 0800 316 8450
0141 353 3354 www.lsa.org.uk

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