LSA

Legal Services Agency

a Scottish Law Centre

Doing the Right Thing, the Right Way

2025-2028 Strategic Plan

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Introduction

Established in 1989, Legal Services Agency (LSA) is a Scottish Law Centre and Charity committed to tackling inequality, defending legal rights and using the law to effect social change. We focus on supporting individuals in vulnerable circumstances who would otherwise find it difficult to access legal advice, assistance and representation. We achieve this by offering high-quality legal advice and representation, raising awareness of legal rights and campaigning to challenge legal system failures.

We take pride in using a person-centred approach and drawing on our expertise in social welfare law. We address complex legal issues to combat disadvantage and discrimination, empowering individuals to assert their legal rights and reach their full potential. Our service operates on a broad scale, covering all of Glasgow, with a dedicated base in Inverclyde, and extending support to communities throughout Scotland.

Strategy Review

The strength of our service is based on the collective effort of our professional staff team, our board of directors, and the many volunteers all of whom contribute to the work of LSA. We rely on our funders for essential financial support and our partners in the field with whom we work closely. And, ultimately, we ground our work through our clients who trust us with their legal challenges. Their trust and confidence in our work enable us to deliver crucial services.

Our strategy for the next three years has been developed by reflecting on the delivery of our services over the past few years through consultation with our team, Board of Directors and our wide range of stakeholders. Our future priorities are influenced by emerging legal needs, the external policy landscape and the growing socio-economic challenges facing individuals and communities.

Key lessons:

- The key lessons we carry forward in building our next three-year strategic objectives is delivering a holistic, person-centred service that is responsive to the diverse needs of our clients. Individuals accessing our service are always at the heart of what we do.

- By expanding into a larger geographical area, we aim to increase our impact, reach more communities and respond to the emerging legal needs of those experiencing disadvantage. Our goal is to provide expert legal support by applying our extensive expertise in human rights, social welfare, housing, mental health, employment, and equality law.

- We recognise that our organisation must continue to evolve effectively and efficiently to meet these challenges. We are committed to maintaining high standards, taking ownership of our promise to deliver outstanding service, and ensuring our actions are informed by learning and evidence.

Our strategy is not just about maintaining what we do, but about evolving to meet the growing and changing needs of the communities we serve. It reflects our commitment to adapting to new challenges while staying rooted in our core values of social justice and empowerment. Looking ahead, our focus will be on consolidating our existing services, expanding our reach, deepening our impact, and ensuring that those facing disadvantage can access the expert legal support they deserve. With this in mind, our vision, mission and values will continue to guide us as we work towards a fairer, more just society.

LSA's Vision is of a fairer society where every person, regardless of their circumstances, can understand and exercise their rights with dignity and respect.

LSA's Mission is to reduce the impact of poverty, disadvantage, and inequality by providing high-quality legal advice, representation, and education empowering individuals and communities to secure lasting change.

Our mission is led by the following strategic priorities:

1

Combat Inequality:

We relentlessly challenge the impact of poverty and disadvantage to empower individuals to overcome barriers, secure their rights and improve their living conditions through targeted legal support.

2

Advocate for Equalities and Human Rights:

We champion equality and human rights challenging discrimination to protect the rights of individuals with incapacity and empower individuals and underrepresented communities to secure their rights and access essential services.

3

Empowerment through knowledge:

We promote awareness of legal rights and build capacity within the sector to protect legal rights, whilst expanding legal services to underserved geographic areas to empower communities by ensuring they are informed, represented and able to exercise their legal rights.

4

Influence policy and practice:

We will pursue strategic cases to reshape policy and influence legislative developments to advance rights advocating for early intervention and prevention.

5

Foster a thriving and inclusive workplace:

We are dedicated to investing in the well-being and growth of our team, building a culture of innovation and continuous learning to enhance employee engagement, support career development and achieve financial sustainability.

Key activities:

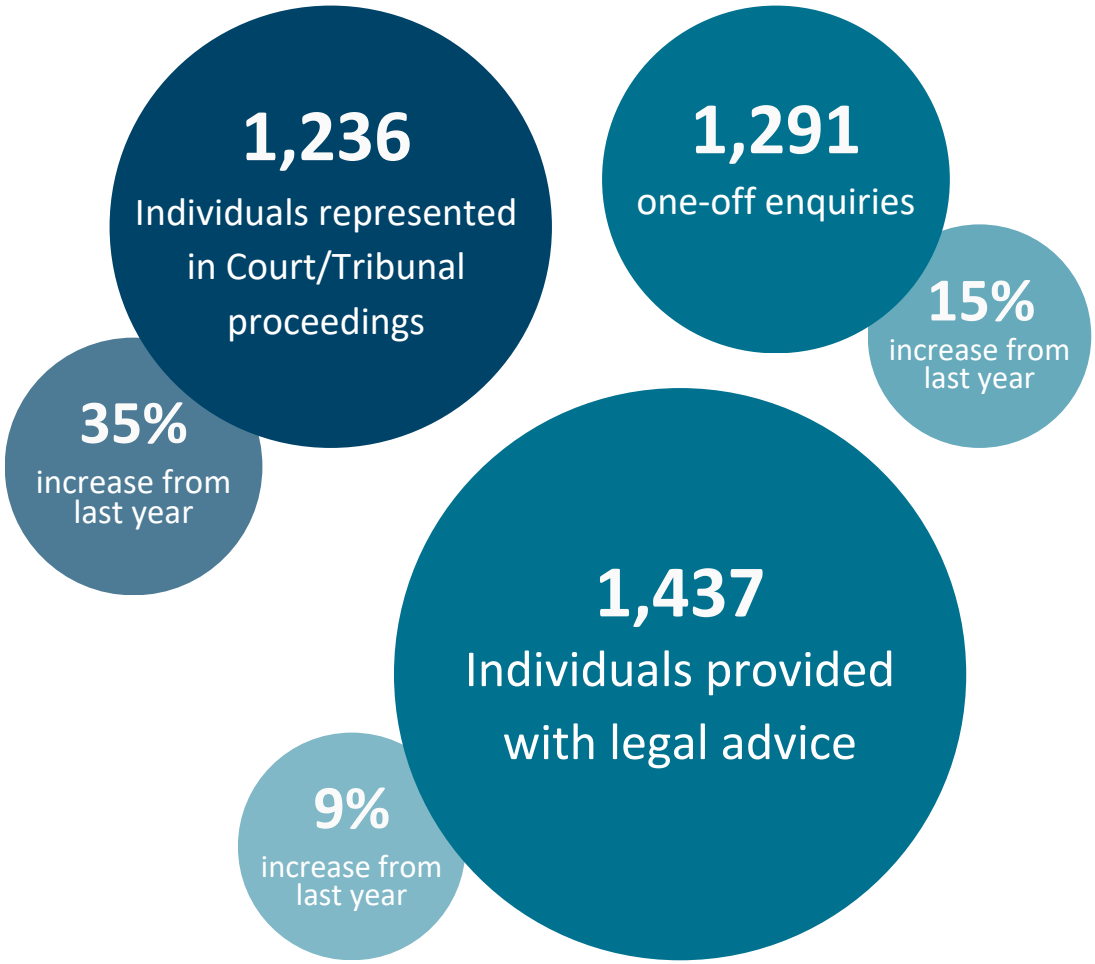
Our Values:

Underpinning all our work are our **values:**

Inclusivity	We embrace diversity, promote equality, and design services to ensure no one is left behind, treating everyone with compassion, respect, and dignity.
Accountability	We take responsibility for our actions, continually improving our services by listening to those we support and our partners.
Collaboration	We build strong, respectful partnerships, empowering each other to deliver more through teamwork.
Integrity	We act transparently, prioritising a person-centred approach and safeguarding the trust of clients, funders, and stakeholders.
Ambition	We foster a forward-thinking, courageous team dedicated to excellence and innovation in addressing social injustices.
Adaptability	We are resilient and proactive, evolving to ensure our impact remains strong and relevant.

Growth:

As we reflect on the data accrued from the past year, it's clear that we are experiencing sustained growth, both in the number of individuals we support and in the scope of our impact. This growth reflects not only the increased need within the wider community but also our continued commitment to providing essential services to those in need.



These numbers underscore the importance of our mission and the growing demand for our services.

In response to this growth, we have developed a strategy that will guide our future efforts. This strategy will direct us as we continue to consolidate and expand our impact, address emerging legal needs, and uphold our commitment to social justice for the communities that need us most. By collaborating with our partners and stakeholders, we will work to create a fairer and more equitable society.

What we will do and why:

1. Combat Inequality

We relentlessly challenge the impact of poverty and disadvantage to empower individuals to overcome barriers, secure their rights and improve their living conditions through targeted legal support.

(a) Prevent homelessness and promote good housing conditions

- Provide specialist legal advice and representation for tenants and homeowners facing eviction or repossession to prevent homelessness.
- Actively challenge housing disrepair, unsuitable temporary accommodation, and poor housing standards to promote dignified living conditions.
- Advance the range of legal remedies by applying our knowledge in housing, equality and human rights law.

(b) Strengthen Social Security and Welfare Access

- Collaborate with partners to strengthen legal arguments and evidence to challenge unfair welfare benefit decisions.
- Offer representation in welfare benefit appeals including cases at the Upper Tribunal and undertaking Judicial Reviews.
- Enhance our expertise in challenging welfare benefit injustices and securing essential entitlements, engaging in test strategic litigation to set new precedents and strengthen protections.

(c) Support debt management

- Assist people facing rent, mortgage arrears and debt management to stabilise their financial position and prevent future crises.
- Collaborate with advice partners making cross referrals to ensure holistic financial solutions that empower people to regain control over their financial circumstances.

(d) Defend employment rights

- Provide legal advice to address exploitation in the workplace, challenging unfair dismissal practices, loss of wages and unlawful discrimination.
- Our representation will tackle systemic employment issues, advocating for fair pay and equal treatment.

(e) Ensure survivors of crime receive compensation they deserve through criminal injuries compensation

- Ensure survivors of crime are informed of their rights and options to pursue a compensation claim.
- Support survivors with submitting an application for compensation, and challenge unjust decisions by assisting with reviews and appeals.
- Actively engage with partners to highlight gaps in the system and influence policy that better protects the rights of survivors.

What we will do and why:

2. Advocate for Equality and Human Rights

We champion equality and human rights, opposing discrimination to protect the rights of individuals with incapacity and empowering individuals and underrepresented communities to secure their rights and access essential services.

(a) Enhance Comprehensive legal support for individuals with incapacity or experiencing mental ill health

- Provide specialist legal advice and representation for individuals detained under mental health legislation.
- Assist and guide people with the process of preparing a Power of Attorney to manage their affairs effectively.
- Assist individuals through the process of applying for Guardianship to ensure proper legal support is in place, protecting the rights of those deemed unable to manage their personal welfare, property or financial affairs.

(b) Expand legal services to challenge disability discrimination

- Provide legal advice to protect the rights of disabled people to ensure they receive fair access to services, accommodation and opportunities.
- Challenge disability discrimination through legal intervention improving disability rights applying equality and human rights law.
- Collaborate with partners to raise awareness of legal rights and identify cases with significant impact.

(c) Enhance legal support for underrepresented groups

- Strengthen legal advice and advocacy for asylum seekers, refugees and migrant communities ensuring they receive access to justice and protection from discriminatory practices.
- Invest in services and collaborations that empower these communities to exercise their legal rights, particularly concerning improved housing, employment, welfare and access to services.
- Actively collaborate with partners to identify systemic gaps and advocate for improved policies that protect and safeguard rights of racialised and marginalised communities.

(d) Improve access to Health and Social Care

- Specialised legal advice focusing on strengthening access to health and social care entitlements for disabled people, carers and those seeking care.
- Actively collaborate with partners to identify gaps in community care and advocate for policies that ensure compliance with the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 and the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.
- Conduct proactive outreach services to increase awareness of legal rights and entitlements to address health inequalities.

What we will do and why:

3. Empower through knowledge

We promote awareness of legal rights and build capacity within the sector to protect legal rights, whilst expanding legal services to underserved geographic areas to empower communities by ensuring they are informed, represented and able to exercise their legal rights.

(a) Innovation in public legal education and collective action

- We will leverage digital platforms to broaden our reach, using social media, podcasts, and webinars to engage new and diverse audiences.
- Offer tailored training events to empower communities and practitioners.
- Our marketing and communications strategy will be built around innovation, ensuring our message resonates with all corners of society.
- Produce targeted blogs and resources focused on pre-emptive legal strategies to address problems before they escalate, using data-driven insights to identify emerging needs.

(b) Enhance sector capacity

- We will collaborate with partner organisations to provide second-tier advice, sharing our expertise to enhance the knowledge and capacity of the wider sector.
- By empowering other agencies to identify legal issues early, we can broaden our reach and ensure more comprehensive support for communities.
- Through training, consultations, and resources, we will strengthen the sector's ability to recognise and address legal challenges, creating a more robust and responsive support network.
- Integrate lived experience into delivery of legal advice provision, ensuring insights from those directly affected by legal issues shape the design and delivery of services, empowering communities with the most relevant and practical legal support.

(c) Expand services geographically and virtually to underserved areas

- We will expand our geographic and virtual presence by forming strategic partnerships with third-sector organisations, offering outreach clinics and tailored legal services in underserved areas.
- We will advocate for the development of resources and infrastructure to enhance access to justice across Scotland.

(d) Develop the next generation of social justice solicitors

- We will continue to offer training opportunities to trainee solicitors, building a pipeline of social justice solicitors.
- Our training programs will focus on nurturing leaders capable of addressing future legal challenges.
- We will also provide development opportunities for volunteers, allowing them to enhance their skills and contribute effectively within the social justice sector.

What we will do and why:

4. Influence policy and practice

We use legal action to shape policy and advocate for lasting improvements. Through research and partnerships, we address key social justice issues, reduce discrimination, and support marginalised communities. We also collaborate to improve access to essential services.

(a) Use legal cases to drive change

- Pursue strategic litigation to shape policy and prevent legal issues early.
- Use evidence from strategic litigation to push for systemic changes.
- Identify trends and collaborate with partners in undertaking research and advocacy to address systemic social justice issues.

(b) Campaigning and law reform

- Participate in campaigns to reform laws impacting communities.
- Respond to consultations and provide expertise to Parliamentary Committees.
- Engage with the Scottish Legal Aid Board and Government on Legal Aid reforms.

(c) Research and Advocacy

- Identify trends and undertake research and advocacy to address systemic social justice issues.
- Collaborate with partners and academic institutions to drive evidence-based reforms and create meaningful change.

(d) Amplify Impact and Share Success

- Strengthen external visibility by telling our story better, promoting our expertise, and increasing awareness through impactful communication and outreach.
- Engage with stakeholders to showcase our proven capabilities, highlight the impact of our work and position ourselves as thought leaders in shaping policy and legal practices.

What we will do and why:

5. Foster a thriving and inclusive workplace

We are dedicated to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes growth, well-being, and diverse perspectives. Through data-driven decisions, we continuously improve our operations for greater efficiency and sustainability.

(a) Empowering Our Workforce

- Invest in staff development through training, mentoring and developmental opportunities to ensure our team remains at the forefront of social justice legal practice.
- Foster a culture of innovation and ambition, encouraging continuous learning.
- Cultivate nurturing leadership at all levels promoting resilience and strategic thinking.

(b) Wellbeing and Inclusive Culture

- Foster a supportive culture of respect valuing the contributions of each team member.
- Prioritise staff wellbeing by creating a supportive and flexible work environment that enables our team to perform at their best.
- Focus on mental health recognising the impact of vicarious trauma from supporting individuals in crisis situations.
- Embed diversity, equity, and inclusion in decision-making ensuring diverse voices are heard and respected in creating a truly inclusive workforce.

(c) Operational excellence and data-driven decisions

- Promote operational efficiencies by making evidence-based decisions to enhance service delivery and organisational effectiveness.
- Continuously improve organisational processes by leveraging data and insights to drive innovation and better staff experiences.
- Establish a culture of accountability and adaptability, ensuring systems are responsive to emerging needs while optimising internal workflows and achieving long-term financial sustainability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this strategic plan outlines a clear and ambitious roadmap for our organisation. It emphasises our commitment to improving access to justice, influencing policy, and fostering a thriving, inclusive workplace. By prioritising collaboration, innovation, and the power of storytelling, we aim to enhance our impact and visibility within the community we serve. This commitment is reflected in the words of our client seeking advice on a dampness disrepair issue, whose experiences illustrate the vital role we play in their lives:

> "I would like to sincerely thank your team for the incredible support […] I will be forever grateful. […] Thank goodness that you exist to help others in dire situations."

Together, we will harness our collective expertise and passion to drive meaningful change to address the effects of poverty, disadvantage and inequality while meeting the needs of those we serve today and establishing a strong foundation for future growth. With dedicated efforts and a shared vision, we are ready to make a lasting difference in the lives of individuals and communities across Scotland. A previous Board Director eloquently expressed their appreciation for the impact our team has on those we serve:

> "I would like to thank the staff for the job they do, the lives they improve and the fights they take on, on behalf of those who have no one else to fight for them."

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our funders, partners, and the many individuals and organisations that have placed their trust in us. Your confidence inspires us to continue to protect legal rights and improve access to justice. We look forward to updating you on our progress and fulfilling the commitments outlined in this strategic plan, as we work together to create lasting change for individuals and communities throughout Scotland. Our partners and collaborators also recognise our value, as expressed in this endorsement from a supportive organisation to whom we provided second-tier support:

> "LSA is a fantastic 2nd tier resource, always helpful for case discussions and the training provided is always very informative and high quality. We would like to see LSA properly funded to allow a higher capacity for representation because we respect their ability to represent tenants' interests to the fullest."

We appreciate your interest in reviewing our strategic priorities. We invite you to contact us to learn more about our initiatives and explore potential collaboration for greater impact.