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NORFOLK COMMUNITY LAW SERVICE

Providing Access to Justice and Equality

SERVICE STRATEGY

2018 - 2021

**Norwich Community Law Service Ltd.
Registration No: 3524607
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Charity Registration No: 1069066**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Over the last three years, we have continued to consolidate and improve our existing services, as well as develop new services, despite increasing funding pressures, at the same time as we have experienced a substantial increase in demand.

1.2 As with the whole of the advice sector, we are facing increasingly difficult challenges, particularly the continued impact of Legal Aid cuts and Welfare Reform, combined with the reduction in public sector funding for advice services.

1.3 Norfolk has been particularly affected by the Legal Aid cuts which are making it increasingly difficult for people with limited means to access the legal advice they need at the same time as the demand for advice is increasing as a result of the Government's Welfare Reform and the impact of the recession.

1.4 As from 1st April 2013, Legal Aid was no longer available for debt or housing cases except where there is a risk of repossession, for employment except in the case of discrimination, or for welfare benefits except on points of law in the Upper Tribunal. It is still available for private family law but only in cases of domestic abuse or child protection issues (although very few solicitors in Norfolk are still undertaking private law family Legal Aid). There is no Legal Aid available for immigration law except for asylum/human-trafficking cases. And even where people can apply for Legal Aid, eligibility for full costs is strictly limited. Although NCLS did not have a Legal Aid contract, a number of partner agencies who did are no longer able to provide specialist debt, housing, family and welfare rights advice.

1.5 There was a 35% overall increase in the number of clients we saw between 2013/14 and 2015/16 and a further increase of 6.7% in 2016/17 when we saw a total of 2,493 new clients. In addition, the issues presented by clients are becoming more and more complex.

1.6 In an attempt to meet at least some of this demand we have managed to develop our services in a number of ways, as set out below, although we are very clear that this does not in any way fully compensate for the loss of specialist legal advice delivered by qualified solicitors.

- Introduced a Welfare Rights Representation Service, thanks to the support of experienced volunteers working with UEA law students
- Increased the number of family and employment solicitors available at each Norwich FLA session from one to two and reduced the number of clients seen by each solicitor from 8 to 6 to give the solicitor more time with each client to address the increasingly complex issues being presented
- Used the law students to develop more in depth employment advice under strict supervision from the solicitor e.g. triaging the clients before they see the solicitor, drafting letters to employers, filling in forms, etc.
- Developed a free legal advice service at Great Yarmouth
- Developed our Family Court Support Service (formerly 'McKenzie Friend' pilot) to provide support for parents seeking access to their children

- Where appropriate, made referrals to the Bar Pro Bono Unit
- Worked with our Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN) partners to identify areas of unmet need and increase use of the on-line client referral system

2. Background

2.1 Norfolk Community Law Service (NCLS) is a company limited by guarantee (Registration No. 3524607) with charitable status (Charity No. 1069066).

2.2 NCLS was originally established as a charity in 1985, under the name Norwich & District Legal Services (NDLS) and was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 1998. In March 2005 the organisation changed its name to Norfolk Community Law Service Ltd.

2.3 Although not established as a formal organisation, in December 1980 the Committee which originally developed NDLS set up the Larkman Advice Scheme, a free legal advice scheme provided by a rota of pro bono solicitors and volunteer receptionists. A celebration of the 35th Anniversary of this first service delivery was held in May 2016.

3. Mission Statement

3.1 NCLS exists to provide access to justice and equality in Norfolk through identifying and meeting unmet legal need.

3.2 We aim to do this by -

- Offering specialist, professional, high quality legal advice and representation
- Supporting other organisations to improve and increase appropriate social welfare legal advice
- Improving public understanding of legal rights and responsibilities
- Contributing to public legal debates and policy development

4. Values

4.1 The core values of NCLS are -

- Everyone has the right to high quality information, advice, advocacy and representation about their legal rights and responsibilities regardless of ability to pay.
- Our services should seek to empower clients to assert their legal rights and fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- The advice we provide should be **free, independent and confidential**.
- Diversity in the workplace and society should be valued.
- Equality in the workplace and society should be promoted, protected and valued.

- NCLS believes that its services and the communities we serve are enhanced by the contribution and active development of volunteers.
- NCLS should provide its staff and volunteers with a supportive, safe and positive working environment and seek to assist them with their professional development.
- NCLS is committed to partnership working because we believe that clients and communities benefit when organisations work together.

5. Aims and Objectives

5.1 The **objectives** of NCLS are to:

- increase access to justice and equality in accordance with the principles of social inclusion;
- work with partner agencies through the Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN) to identify areas of unmet legal need and to develop services for people living or working in Norfolk (the area of benefit) in order to try to meet that need;
- provide complex legal advice, casework and representation (Tiers 3 & 4 – see Appendix 2 for details of the four tier model of advice) services to complement those provided by other agencies;
- provide legal advice services for those not able to afford to pay but not eligible for Legal Aid and, therefore, not able to access services provided by partner agencies or private solicitors.;
- particularly target our services at disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, offenders and ex-offenders, BME groups, migrant workers, travellers and gypsies and people with mental health issues, learning difficulties and long term physical disabilities;
- raise public awareness of legal rights and how to access legal services;
- improve practices of employers and service providers through informal/ formal training, public lectures, production of written material;
- Ensure a mechanism is in place to feed back and act on social policy issues.

6. Area of Benefit and Evidence of Need

6.1 Objectives

6.1.1 The objectives of NCLS are to provide services on a county-wide basis. NCLS services are available to everyone who lives and works in the County of Norfolk (the 'Area of Benefit').

6.1.2 However, whilst our area of benefit is the whole County, the effective reach of individual services has been restricted by funding and availability of resources. Though we may not be able to deliver all services physically in each district, we accept clients from anywhere in Norfolk.

6.1.3 In terms of delivery of specific services, we started a weekly Free Legal Advice (FLA) session in Cromer in 2011 and in Great Yarmouth in 2014, both of which have proved to be very successful.. For a number of years we have delivered our Migrant Worker Service in Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth and from 2013 to 2015 we delivered a debt service in Kings Lynn. As a result of funding secured through the Advice Services Transition Fund in 2014, we were able to extend our service delivery in 6 out of the 7 Norfolk Districts. Subsequently in 2016 we became a partner of the Mid and South Norfolk Advice Project funded through the Big lottery 'Help Through Crisis Fund'

6.2 Size and population

6.2.1 Norfolk is the sixth largest of the 27 'shire counties' by size but is relatively sparsely populated, with the sixth lowest population density. In mid-2014, Norfolk's population was estimated to be 877,700, an increase of around 6,700 on the previous year. All local authorities in the County increased in population between mid-2013 and mid-2014, the highest being South Norfolk (which gained 1,656) and Norwich (1,572). The lowest increase was in Great Yarmouth (369) (Office of National Statistics, Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland).

6.2.2 The distribution of population across Norfolk districts is as follows:

District	Mid-2014 Population
Breckland	133,986
Broadland	125,961
Great Yarmouth	98,172
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	150,026
North Norfolk	102,867
Norwich	137,472
South Norfolk	129,226

6.2.3 Outside the main urban areas of Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Thetford and King's Lynn, Norfolk is very rural in character. There are 21 market towns and 539 parishes, half of them with fewer than 250 residents. With 53% of Norfolk's population living in rural areas, rural isolation is one of the most noticeable trends of recent years due to the reduction of basic services such as transport, banks, post offices and local shops in the community. In addition, the number of households without a car is double the rural norm – 35.5% compared to 14.4% which means that the most in need of services and support are amongst the least able to access them. Practical issues of service delivery mean that NCLS has had to concentrate its services in the more deprived urban centres with the aim of reaching both those living in the towns and in the surrounding countryside, but recognise that they are not always accessible to those who do not have access to transport. We are increasingly using e-mail and telephone advice, as well as skypeing, to try to reach more isolated communities.

6.3 Age

6.3.1 Norfolk has a relatively older age profile, with over 23.4% of the population aged 65+, compared with 17.6% in England overall. This is further compounded by the projected increase by 87% of the over 85 age group over the next 20 years. In addition, 10.82 % of Norfolk's population is aged 75+ and 3.21% aged 85 and over. There are fewer than three people of working age for every person of pensionable age (23% of the Norfolk population is 65+ compared with 58% 18-64). Norfolk's oldest age groups are projected to grow the quickest in the next decade – with the 75-84 year olds projected to increase by 32.9% and the 85 and overs projected to increase by 39.7%. The age structure of the population varies across Norfolk's local authority areas, but in the main, Norfolk has an ageing population going forward. There is a significant variation of age distribution across the 7 Norfolk districts:

District	% of population under 0-17	% of population under 18-64	% of population under 65+
Breckland	19.71	56.62	23.68
Broadland	18.65	56.65	24.70
Great Yarmouth	19.99	57.07	22.94
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	19.19	56.07	24.75
North Norfolk	16.08	52.71	31.21
Norwich	18.74	66.48	14.78
South Norfolk	20.49	56.04	23.47

6.4 General Deprivation

6.4.1 In September 2015 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published the English Indices of Deprivation 2015 (ID 2010). This includes county and district summary measures, and a series of separate domains and other measures at the level of Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). Norfolk is the 88th most relatively deprived out of 152 upper tier local authorities where 1 represents the most relatively deprived. This is an increase in relative deprivation compared to 2010 when Norfolk was the 97th most deprived upper tier local authority. 7.6% of the Lower-layer Super Outputs Areas (neighbourhoods) in Norfolk are in the most deprived 10% nationally. In Norfolk this affects approx. 68,000 people or 7.9% of the Norfolk population.

6.4.2 People who live in the most deprived areas generally have the poorest health and wellbeing outcomes. On average people living in deprived areas, lower socio-economic groups and marginalised groups have poorer health and poorer access to health care than people resident in affluent areas and people from higher socio-economic groups. There are also hidden pockets of deprivation scattered across some of the smaller towns and the more rural parts of Norfolk.

6.4.3 The key facts about deprivation in Norfolk are:

- Norfolk is the 88th most relatively deprived out of 152 upper tier local authorities where 1 represents the most relatively deprived. This is an

increase in relative deprivation compared to 2010 when Norfolk was the 97th most deprived upper tier local authority.

- 7.6% of the Lower-layer Super Output Areas (neighbourhoods) in Norfolk are in the most deprived 10% nationally. In Norfolk this affects approx. 68,000 people or 7.9% of the Norfolk population.
- The most relatively deprived domains for Norfolk are 'Education' (31st) and 'Barriers to housing and services' (44th).
- The least relatively deprived domain for Norfolk is Crime (142nd).
- In Norfolk Great Yarmouth has the highest proportion of its LSOAs included in the most deprived 10 per cent of LSOAs nationally (16 of the 61 LSOAs for Great Yarmouth, 26 %). On this measure Great Yarmouth is the 20th most deprived lower tier local authority nationally.
- Norwich is included in the top 10 lower tier local authorities with the largest percentage point increase in the proportion of neighbourhoods now in the relatively most deprived decile for 2015 compared to 2010.
- Norfolk has broad ranges of rankings across all the domains. Education, Skills and training, Barriers to housing and services and Living environment showing ranks relatively more deprived. Health Deprivation and Disability, Crime and Living Environment with rankings relatively less deprived. Crime domain shows the least relatively deprived median and Education, skills and training the relatively most deprived median.
- Norwich is included in the 10% of LAs ranked by the 'extent' summary measure for 2015 and was not included in 2010 indicating that Norwich is relatively more deprived in the 2015 index compared to 2010.

6.5 Ethnicity & Migration

6.5.1 The County's ethnic composition has changed significantly since the 2001 Census recorded a minority ethnic population of 30,000 (3.8% of the total). By 2011 this is estimated to have risen to 64,800 (7.6%). Similarly, numbers in ethnic groups other than White rose from 1.5% of the population in 2001 to around 3.5% in 2011.

6.5.2 The 2011 Census indicated that there were almost 8,000 households in Norfolk where no-one had English as a main language, plus another 6,000 where at least one but not all people aged 16 and over had English as a main language. For Norfolk as a whole, the net gain from international migration over the period 2001-2011 was just over 26,000. The County has received significant international migration from the EU, originally from Portugal and more recently from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. There is in addition a largely unquantifiable element of international migration attributable to short-term migrants, here primarily to seek work and highly mobile, but unlikely to be counted as part of the resident population.

6.5.3 The ethnic profile of the various districts as at the 2011 Census are as follows:

District	% of population White British	% of population Other White Ethnicities	% of population Other Ethnicities
Breckland	91.2%	6.3%	2.5%
Broadland	95.9%	1.7%	2.4%

Great Yarmouth	92.8%	4.1%	3.1%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	92.2%	5.1%	2.7%
North Norfolk	96.6%	2%	1.4%
Norwich	84.7%	6.2%	9.1%
South Norfolk	95.2%	2.4%	2.4%

6.6 Disability

6.6.1 Norfolk has a higher number of people with a physical or sensory disability than average. Norfolk has the second highest rate of disability living allowance take-up in the region, and rates of people registered as deaf and hard of hearing, or blind or partially sighted, are all in the upper 25% of areas regionally.¹ There are around 500 British Sign Language users in the county.² In terms of the use of services, Norfolk has the second highest number of people with physical disabilities supported by social care services.

Norfolk: predicted prevalence of selected disabilities and long term conditions³

Disability	Numbers aged 18-64	Numbers aged 65+
Moderate or serious physical disability	55,274	
Limiting long term illness		83,655
Stroke	1,523	4,428
Diabetes	17,923	23,655
Moderate or severe visual impairment	337	22,663
Moderate or severe hearing impairment	22,363	83,800

Many people in Norfolk live with long term conditions. These have been defined as health problems lasting longer than 12 months, ranging from single to complex conditions and requiring ongoing management.⁴ Prevalence levels in Norfolk for chronic heart disease; cancer; chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder and stroke are similar for or lower than average rates for England. Prevalence for cardiovascular disease and diabetes is higher in Norfolk than average levels in England.⁵

6.7 Evidence of Unmet Legal Advice

6.7.1 Quantifying unmet legal need is difficult but we can look at some key data to show the approximate scale and pattern:

¹ From Fingertips web site <http://fingertips.erpho.org.uk/adultsocialcare>

² Information from NCC Sensory Support lead

³ www.pansi.org.uk & www.pansi.org.uk

⁴ 'Long term conditions strategy' – NHS Norfolk, 2008

⁵ From Fingertips web site <http://fingertips.erpho.org.uk/adultsocialcare>

- As a result of changes to Legal Aid from April 2013, the numbers of matters that are no longer in scope for Legal Aid in key social welfare areas of law in Norfolk are as follows:

Subject	Approximate reduction in matter starts from April 2013
Debt	1,350
Employment	130
Family	3,700
Housing	600
Immigration	360
Welfare Rights	2,000

6.7.2 In addition, eligibility for the full cost of Legal Aid has been restricted to those with total assets of less than £1,000 (previously £8,000) and contributions from those who are eligible have risen from 20% to 30% of weekly income, representing a major reduction in eligibility.

6.7.3 This potentially reflects a scale of newly 'unmet' need for legal advice, if one assumes that those who would previously have been eligible for this funding are by definition unable to afford a private solicitor, but this ignores the fact that some small numbers may be able to access pro bono or free advice elsewhere. For example some of the CAB specialist team who previously delivered welfare rights casework are employed or volunteering within CABx or other advice agencies (including NCLS). It also assumes that the supply of Legal Aid funded advice was previously 'needed' as opposed to only being used because it existed and that alternative dispute resolution methods such as mediation may have been better solutions.

6.7.4 Further to the Legal Aid changes outlined above, as a result of developing our Family Court Support Service to support litigants in child contact cases, we have anecdotal evidence from judges, court staff and other advice providers that there is a significant number of individuals who are either choosing to represent themselves (with attendant challenges for the Court and possible ramifications for justice) or alternatively not pursuing contact owing to self-exclusion. The scale of this is difficult to quantify but potentially is represented by the reduction of 3,700 matter starts above.

6.7.5 Welfare Reform continues to drive demand for advice and advocacy. Much of this is new demand and is not easily accommodated within existing resources. The more recent mass migration from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments has created a significant increase in demand for appeals-related casework and representation. The full roll out of Universal Credit, already implemented in Great Yarmouth and due to be rolled out in Norwich in October, will increase demand further from 2018 onwards from clients requiring information, advice and advocacy to navigate the changes. With many advice agencies already at capacity, this represents a potential large scale of unmet need.

6.7.6 In 2014-2015 there were 1,188 appeal receipts for Norfolk, 1,403 disposals, with only 209 attended by a representative, followed by 1,790 receipts in 2015-16

for Norfolk and 1,996 disposals and 473 attended by a representative. (2016-2017 figures will require a further FOI request.) In 2016/17 NCLS represented at 225 Tribunal hearings, up from 170 the previous year. In the quarter up to September 2017, there were, nationally, 108,420 benefit appeals outstanding. This was a 71% increase compared to the same period in 2016. Personal Independence Payment ('PIP') and Employment and Support Allowance ('ESA') appeals accounted for 84% of all appeal receipts.

6.7.7 There therefore continues to be a significant shortfall in the supply of legal representation. Of course, some of those who are unrepresented are capable of representing themselves, but as there is a significant improvement in success for those who have a representative, this still indicates that there is unmet need in this area.

6.7.8 NCAN's original mapping of advice provision in the County undertaken in 2015 identified particular gaps in immigration advice. With the changes to Legal Aid there is now a complete absence of any Legal Aid contract covering Norfolk for immigration even for the elements that remain in scope i.e. asylum. Working with EELGA and other stakeholders to understand the impact of this further, we identified unmet immigration advice need for around 100 individuals across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. Although client numbers may be low, these tend to be complex cases involving specialist casework thus representing a significant resource gap that cannot be met through voluntary sector or pro bono provision.

7. Current Services

7.1 Summary

7.1.1 Our services are provided by a combination of experienced employees, . qualified solicitors, barristers or paralegals who undertake work on our behalf on a voluntarily basis, as well as by other trained volunteers, mainly law students, operating under the guidance of NCLS staff Our current services are as follows -

- Free Legal Advice rota in Norwich, Cromer and Great Yarmouth
- Housing Repossession Mediation Service
- Debt Advice for vulnerable clients e.g. offenders
- Advice and Representation for Welfare Benefits Appeal Tribunals
- Domestic Abuse Advice and Representation
- Immigration advice and Welfare Benefits Casework and Representation for Migrant Workers
- Discrimination advice, casework and representation
- Family Court Support Service
- Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN)
- General Services

7.2 Free Legal Advice Service

Objectives	To provide opportunities for clients to obtain free legal advice and to assist them to identify whether they have a legal problem and to help them exercise their legal rights.
Current Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twice weekly free legal advice sessions at St Clements House in Norwich on Tuesdays and Fridays from 12.00 noon to

	<p>14.00 p.m. on a first-come-first-serve basis without appointment and in 15/20 minute slots providing specialist legal advice - Tuesdays family and general advice; Fridays employment and general advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly free legal advice session at Merchants Place, Cromer at 5.00 p.m. on Tuesdays offering employment, family and general advice including wills and probate and power of attorney through a mix of pre-booked appointments and drop in. • Weekly appointment based free legal advice sessions in Great Yarmouth – alternate Tuesdays at 2.00 p.m. at GYROS, Kingside and Enterprise Hub offering employment, family and general advice and alternate Thursdays at 12 noon at Great Yarmouth CAB offering employment, family and wills & probate advice.
Service targets	12 – 18 clients per session or around 1,450 clients per annum in Norwich, 3 - 6 clients per session or 250 clients per annum in Cromer and 3 clients per session i.e. 150 clients in Great Yarmouth.
Future service goals	<p>To increase the number of solicitors available to give advice at each session (currently 65 solicitors in total)</p> <p>To provide additional free legal advice sessions in in the west of the County e.g. Kings Lynn, Dereham.</p> <p>To continue to develop the support for the service provided by UEA law students.to deliver more complex advice e.g. extension of triaging service</p>
Partners	<p>Private solicitors in Norwich, Cromer and Great Yarmouth</p> <p>UEA Law School.</p> <p>LawWorks (Solicitors Pro Bono Group).</p> <p>Norfolk & Norwich Law Society</p>
Staff	The service is managed by the Advice and Volunteer Manager assisted by the Administrative Team.
Volunteers	Currently 65 qualified solicitors, barristers or paralegals (working in a pro bono capacity, supported by a pool of volunteer receptionists and UEA law students.
Responsible Board member	Margaret Sparrow
Budget	No ring fenced budget – charged to General Services.
Funding Sources	UEA Law School, together with core funding from Broadland Council and Norwich Consolidated Charities. Cromer Town Council provides a small grant towards the cost of the Cromer Service (£600 in 2016/17). Victory Housing provided a grant of £2,000 towards the cost of the Cromer service in 2015/16 and 2017/18. .

7.3 Housing Repossession Mediation Service

Objectives	To mediate on behalf of Norwich City Council Housing tenants who are in arrears with their rent payments.
Service	To attend the County Court to meet with tenants who have been invited to attend by the Court at the

	<p>suggestion of the Council and to mediate between them and the Council to try to secure an agreement for the repayment of the arrears which is acceptable to both the tenant and the Council.</p> <p>Where appropriate, clients are referred or signposted, mainly to NCLS services, where they have been identified as requiring debt, welfare rights or other specialist advice.</p>
Service targets	<p>2 sessions per month assisting up to 6 clients per session. An average of 3 clients per session would result in approximately 75 clients assisted per annum. Target is for at least 75% of clients to remain in their home for a minimum of 12 months.</p>
New goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with the City Council to increase the take-up of the service. • To extend the scheme to other social housing landlords. • To recruit trained volunteers from the community and UEA to undertake mediation.
Staff	<p>The service is provided by the Advice & Volunteer Manager and the Operations Manager with support from UEA law students</p>
Volunteers	<p>UEA Law student volunteers provide support at Court, draft letters to the clients etc.</p>
Funding	<p>NCLS has received funding of £5,000 p.a. since 2011/12 towards the cost of running this service from Norwich City Council through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) although this only meets part of the cost. The remaining cost of the service is funded by core funding from Norwich Consolidated Charities and Broadland Council.</p>
Responsible Board member	<p>Vanessa Morton</p>

7.4 Debt Service

Objectives	<p>To provide specialist debt advice to vulnerable clients including offenders, ex-offenders and their families, people with mental health issues or learning difficulties..</p>
Service	<p>Debt advice, casework and, where appropriate, representation. Clients often self-refer or are referred from partner organisations e.g. MAP and Shelter, local District Councils or via the Shaw Trust. The majority of clients are seen at the NCLS offices in St Clements House.- in previous years we have seen some clients at Norwich Prison and Kings Lynn Probation Office. In 2017 we started a pilot service with the Shaw Trust whereby we provide advice remotely to clients in Bure and Wayland Prisons.</p>
Service targets	<p>407 new clients per annum..</p>

Staff	Debt Adviser – Andy Cobb - 37 hours per week Debt Caseworkers – Carol Gormal 30 hours per week Debt Caseworker Susan Craddock retired from her position in December 2017 but now volunteers one day per week. We have deferred the recruitment of a further Debt Caseworker until we are clear as to the future targets to be applied by MAS (see below) and in the short term employed former volunteer Alex Robinson as a Debt Assistant for two days per week.
New goals	Seek additional funding from other sources to enable us to employ additional staffing resources to both meet the targets applied by our main funders the Money Advice Service (MAS) while at the same time continuing to provide casework & advocacy, and also ideally more financial capability support, for vulnerable clients as well as enabling us to respond to ever increasing demand. Extend the remote service provided for offenders in Bure & Wayland Prisons to Norwich Prison. To expand the use of e-mail and skype to enable us to more easily advise clients in more remote areas of the County
Volunteers	The Debt Service is supported by Alex Robinson who still volunteers one day a week in addition to his paid role and 3 to 4 UEA law student volunteers.
Partners	The project is part of a regional project for the Eastern Region managed by CitA.
Budget	Funding for the debt service has been provided by MAS since April 2012 – they pay us £52,000 per annum, an amount which has not increased substantially since 2012 although they require us to see a minimum of 407 new clients per annum, an increase from 280 new clients per annum in 2014/15., The MAS funding is intended to cover 1 full time Debt Adviser and a 0.5 administrative post. In order to meet these high targets but at the same time deliver complex casework to meet the needs of our particularly vulnerable clients, we have employed the additional staff detailed above. The cost of this has been partly financed by grants from Norwich Consolidated Charities and service level agreements with the Shaw Trust; the City Council Financial Inclusion Consortium funding and grants from a number of other national and local charities, including Comic Relief, the Henry Smith Charity and A B Charitable Trust.
Responsible Board member	John Ceybird

7.5 Domestic Abuse Advice

Objectives	To provide legal and housing advice and support for victims of domestic abuse.
Service	A weekly appointment session at St Clements House every Wednesday morning. Clients are provided with legal advice, and where appropriate, representation by a solicitor, as well as being given advice as to their housing options by a Housing Officer from Norwich City Council and general support by an officer from Leeway (both available by phone). NCLS has developed a 'hotline' to Norfolk Constabulary enabling us to ensure that any criminal aspects of a case are being pursued where appropriate. We have recently started to advise clients at Dereham CAB via Skype as part of the Mid-Norfolk Big Lottery Help Through Crisis Project.
Service targets	4 sessions per month assisting up to 4 clients per session. Assuming an average of 3 clients per session would result in approximately 145 clients assisted per annum.
New goals	To include a male solicitor on the rota. To secure funding for court representation. To develop a domestic abuse service in Great Yarmouth To address the diminishing pool of local solicitors who do private law Legal Aid work by working with the Law Society and solicitors to find innovative ways of working and explore Legal Aid contract options.
Staff	The service is managed by the Advice and Volunteer Manager with support from the Administrative Team.
Volunteers	Currently 6 qualified solicitors or barristers who provide the service on a rota basis. Ginny Coleman of Birketts undertakes file reviews. Housing advice provided by Housing Options Officer from Norwich City Council. UEA Law School student volunteers provide support for the solicitors, draft letters to the clients etc.
Partners	Norwich City Council Leeway
Responsible Board member	Vanessa Morton
Funding	NCLS was awarded one off funding of £2,000 from the Lovewell Blake Fund in 2015/16 and £2,000 from the Norwich Businesswomen's Network in 2016/17 towards the costs of running this service. Although the solicitors, housing adviser and Leeway officer provide their time for free, there are costs associated with running the service such as accommodation, management, administration and the element of these not funded by the specific grant are met from core funding from Norwich City Council, Norwich Consolidated Charities and Broadland Council. We are trying to secure further funding for this service.

7.6 Support for Migrant Workers

Objectives	<p>To provide immigration advice and welfare benefits casework and representation to migrant workers. The Migrant Worker Project is intended to achieve the following outcomes -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable migrants will be more confident to take part in the community, access services and seek the benefits they are entitled to. • Vulnerable migrants will feel happier and more secure from better knowledge of their status in the UK. They will be less likely to feel isolated. • Income maximisation will mean that vulnerable migrants have more choice and will be less exposed to exploitation. • The voice of vulnerable migrants will be heard better by NCLS sharing issues through strategic networks. • Vulnerable migrants will have more knowledge of appropriate services and how to access them from signposting by NCLS.
Service	Immigration Advice and Welfare Benefits Casework and Representation for migrant workers.
Staff	Migrant Worker Advice Co-ordinator, 30 hours per week, and Migrant Worker Adviser 22 hours, both of whom have Level1 Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) accreditation
Volunteers	None currently because of OISC restrictions
Responsible Board member	Gordon Dean
Funding	The service is currently funded by Norwich Consolidated Charities and Norwich City Council through the Financial Inclusion Consortium as well as grants from Comic Relief, the Henry Smith Charity and A B Charitable Trust.
New goals	To secure funding to enable this project to continue. To achieve Level 2 OISC regulation and help other organisations to achieve regulation at Level 1.

7.7 Discrimination Advice, Casework and Representation Service

Objectives	To provide advice and representation for people suffering discrimination on grounds of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age or religious belief in all areas including employment, goods and services, education and health.
Service	Monthly session of face to face advice and casework and, where appropriate, representation provided at NCLS offices on the first Monday of every month.
Funding sources	NCLS currently pays the Ipswich and Suffolk Race Equality Council (ISCRE) to provide this service.

	The cost of the service is currently supported by the funding we receive from Norwich Consolidated Charities.
Service targets	2 clients per session.
New goals	To work with ISCRE, the County Community Relations and Equality Officer and the UEA Law School to undertake research to try to secure evidence to support funding bids to enable this service to be continued and expanded. To support the service by providing discrimination awareness raising for advice agency staff to help them to identify cases of discrimination.
Staff	1 Solicitor employed by ISCRE. The service is managed by the Advice and Volunteer Manager. Support from NCLS Administrative Officer and UEA law students.
Volunteers	UEA Law School students
Partners	Ipswich & Suffolk Racial Equality Council (ISCRE). UEA Law School.
Responsible Board member	Andrew Spencer

7.8 Welfare Benefits Service

Objectives	To provide welfare benefits advice, casework and representation at Tribunal – the Norwich Tribunal results show that clients have a much greater chance of success if they are represented..
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or three advice sessions per month where clients receive advice on appealing welfare benefit decisions and, where appropriate assistance in submitting an appeal. • Representation for clients, mainly referred from partner agencies such as CABx as well as District Councils, whose benefit appeals have been referred to Tribunal. • Representation for clients referred to the Upper Tribunal.
Service targets	300 new clients per annum..
Staff	Welfare Rights Manager – Charlie Sayer - 30 hours per week Legal Assistant – Rob Ireland - 37 hours per week
Volunteers	Two experienced welfare rights advisers. An Advocacy Team of mainly UEA Law students but also BPP and Open University Law Students
New goals	To seek additional funding enable us to continue the existing service but also meet increasing demand due to Welfare Reform – the expectation is that demand will increase significantly as Universal Credit is implemented more widely.

	To extend the service to preparing appeal submissions.
Partners	Norfolk CABx, Equal Lives, Age UK and other agencies who have funding for welfare rights but only for targeted categories e.g. older people, people with disabilities.
Budget	This service is funded through the Norwich City Council Financial Inclusion Consortium, by funding from Norwich Consolidated Charities and grants from Henry Smith Charity, A B Charitable Trust and the Law Society.
Responsible Board member	Sarah Blunden

7.9 Family Court Support Service (formerly McKenzie Friend Pilot)

Objectives	To provide support for litigants in person in the Family Court, particularly around parents and child contact orders..
Service	By appointment interviewing clients, making applications, assisting with statements and bundles, preparing clients for Court; attending Court and supporting clients through the process. Family Court Desk Service for child contact cases where clients who turn up at Court without a solicitor are offered support which is ongoing until the end of their case.
Service targets	150 clients per annum
Staff	The service is managed by the Advice & Volunteer Manager and a part time Co-ordinator – 22.5 hours per week.
Volunteers	9 volunteer McKenzie Friends supported by 1 UEA Law Student plus a family solicitor two mornings per week. The service is supervised by 1 qualified, practising solicitors.
New goals	To secure longer term funding to retain the part time Co-ordinator post as well as a part time solicitor given the low number of family solicitors providing legal aid for family cases in Norfolk and to enable the service to be imbedded as part of our overall services and the LIP national & local Strategy.
Partners	We are working with the Mancroft Advisory Project (MAP) and Leeway who are referring clients. We are working in partnership with the Court and Cafcass.
Budget	We have recently received funding towards the cost of this service from the Access to Justice Foundation as well as the LiPS Strategy and also the Falgate Fund.
Responsible Board member	Annie Grant

7.10 General Services

Objectives	To provide general management and administrative support for NCLS
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General management of the day-to-day running of the organisation on behalf of the Board of Directors; Advising the NCLS Board of Directors on the operations and strategic direction of the organisation; Ensuring the optimum performance of the organisation; Promoting NCLS to the outside world <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration of Board and Committee meetings; clerical and general administrative duties for all NCLS services, including making appointments and assisting clients; general financial control and book keeping; maintenance of Lamplight data base; such other miscellaneous duties which are necessary for the smooth running of the organisation.
Service targets	Management: Meet the objectives of this Service Strategy and secure continuation and development funding. Administration: Efficient running of the NCLS office and well-ordered system of documentation and retrieval and financial management; maintenance of the Office Manual.
Staff	Chief Executive Officer (37 hours) reporting to the Board of Directors and responsible for overall management of NCLS. Operations Manager (37 hours) reporting to the CEO and responsible for day to day running of the office, ensuring compliance with NCLS policies, procedures and practices; managing the Administration Team; and deputising for the Chief Executive Officer. 2 Full time Administrative Officers (1 job share) responsible to the Operations Manager.
New goals	To secure full funding for all core services.
Volunteers	The service is supported by a team of UEA law students who provide administrative support over 5 days a week on a rota basis..
Funding sources	Core funding from Broadland District Council and Norwich Consolidated Charities as well as recharges to individual grant funded projects. General services are currently not fully funded and alternative funding is being explored. The main objective of the Supporters of NCLS is to raise funding for core services and equipment costs.
Responsible Board member	Ben Keane

7.11 Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN)

7.11.1 NCLS is the lead agency for the Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN) which is a network of voluntary and statutory agencies, as well as private solicitors, providing free social welfare law advice, casework and representation. NCAN was formed in 2005 by bringing together the members of the former Norfolk Community Legal Services Partnerships (CLSPs), originally established by the Lord Chancellor's Department in 2000, to identify gaps in the provision in legal advice in Norfolk and work together to seek to develop new services to meet those gaps. NCAN had five year Big Lottery Advice Plus funding for the period October 2009 to September 2014.

7.11.2 NCAN supports partnership working aimed at making best use of limited resources of local legal and more general advice agencies to meet the needs of Norfolk residents, particularly those most disadvantaged by a lack of high quality, timely advice. The Network consists of approximately 50 agencies across Norfolk from the voluntary, public and private sectors covering the full range of social welfare law subjects led by a Steering Group comprising NCLS, Shelter, Age UK Norwich, Norfolk CAB, Diss and Thetford CAB, Mid-Norfolk CAB, Age UK Norfolk, MAP, Equal Lives and the Partnership Lead of the Specialist Contract Group.

7.11.3 As part of NCAN, the NCAN Strategic Partnership seeks to bring together key stakeholders across the voluntary and public sector to:

- take a strategic lead on advice and advocacy in Norfolk
- raise the profile of advice and advocacy in the County
- identify cross-cutting issues and work collaboratively to address them
- exchange information, share knowledge and identify common areas of interest
- promote and advocate good practice in advice and advocacy provision
- seek resources to further the work of the Partnership
- commission pieces of work to deliver advice and advocacy provision in Norfolk
- evaluate provision of advice and advocacy in Norfolk and recommend improvements
- inform the development of NCAN and the work undertaken by the project

7.11.4

Objectives	To ensure that Norfolk residents can access good quality social welfare information, advice, assistance and representation at a time or place when they need them most
Service	Work with partner organisations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the client journey - Ensure best practice - Support the sector to be strategic and collaborative - Support the sector to be cost effective - Ensuring the sector has a voice at strategic level NCAN:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - carries out research into gaps in the provision of legal advice - maintains and continues to develop the NCAN online client referral system and directory - provides training - supports quality improvements in the advice sector - maintains a common outcomes measurement framework for the social welfare advice sector - is working with Norfolk County Council, all District Councils and Norfolk CCGs to develop Social Prescribing across the County
Service targets	N/A
Staff	NCAN Strategy Manager (37 hours) and the NCAN Administrator (22.5 hours)
Volunteers	5 outcomes volunteers and 1 communications volunteer
New goals	To secure longer term funding, support members to engage with social prescribing in Norfolk.
Funding	Norwich Financial Inclusion Consortium Norfolk County Council Healthy Norwich Comic Relief Mid- & South Norfolk Project West Norfolk CCG
Responsible Board member	Paul Steward

8. Staff and Volunteer resources

8.1 Staff

8.1.1 As at March 2018, NCLS employs 17 staff (13.24FTE) as follows:

- Chief Executive Officer (37 hours) – Ros Brown;
- Operations Manager (37 hours) – Sarah Clack
- Advice and Volunteer Manager (37 hours) - Judi Lincoln;
- Debt Advisor (37 hours) – Andy Cobb;
- Debt Caseworkers (30 hours) – Carol Gormal;
- Debt Assistant (15 hours) – Alex Robinson
- NCAN Strategy Manager (37 hours) – Janka Rodziewicz
- NCAN Administrator (22.5 hours) – Emily Balsdon;
- Migrant Worker Advice Co-ordinator (30 hours) – Des McKeating;
- Migrant Worker Adviser (22 hours) – Hana Suzuki
- Finance and Administrative Officer (21.5 hours) – Julie Bennett,
- Administrative Officer (15 hours) – Hana Suzuki.
- Administrative Officer (job share) (7.25 hours each) - Beccy Branson, Joanne Freeman);
- Welfare Rights Manager (30 hours) – Charlie Sayer
- Legal Assistant (37 hours) – Rob Ireland

- Family Court Support Co-ordinator (22.5 hours) – Hannah Hill – currently on maternity leave with cover provided 15 hours per week by Tamsin Roques.
- Trainee Solicitor (37 hours) – Mariah Simms

8.2 Volunteers

8.2.1 NCLS currently has about 130 volunteers including –

- Norwich FLA receptionists – pool of 2 as at March 2018
- Cromer FLA receptionists 1
- Great Yarmouth FLA Receptionists are provided by partners at GYROS and CAB.
- At March 2018, 65 solicitors, barristers and paralegals (from a total of 22 firms) who provide the twice weekly Norwich FLA drop in service;
- 7 solicitors (from a total of 6 firms who provide the weekly FLA service at Cromer;
- 6 solicitors from 6 firms who provide the weekly Great Yarmouth FLA
- 6 solicitors who provide the domestic abuse service, plus solicitor Ginny Coleman who supervises the scheme on NCLS' behalf;
- 1 solicitor who supports the Family Court Support Service and one who supervises it
- Approximately 45 UEA students who undertake a range of roles supporting the delivery of all NCLS services. In addition during vacation periods students from other University Law schools spend time volunteering. At March 2018 we also have 16 Community volunteers.

8.3 UEA Law Students

8.3.1 While we have always provided work experience for UEA law students, since the autumn of 2010, we have introduced a more formal programme of recruiting and training law students to assist with the delivery of all NCLS services including assisting solicitors and caseworkers e.g. taking notes at interviews, drafting letters for clients, carrying out research and taking follow up action on behalf of clients. In the case of Norwich FLA employment clients, the students, working in a fact finding team, triage the clients before they see the employment solicitor, thereby maximising the use of the solicitor's time. They then agree with the solicitor any follow up action they might take e.g. drafting a letter to go from the client to their employer which is carried out under strict supervision by the solicitor.

8.3.2 The student Admin Team provides support on a rota basis five days a week including answering the telephone, dealing with client queries, booking appointments and undertaking a range of admin tasks. As well as increasing our capacity to deal with more clients, this has enabled NCLS to provide a more holistic service for clients, while at the same time provided the opportunity for the students to get hands on experience which complements their academic learning. The Law School entered into a formal three year funded partnership agreement with NCLS in 2011 which was extended on an annual basis and then renewed for a further three year period from August 2017.

8.3.3 The contribution of the UEA students was recognised in July 2013 by the UEA Award for outstanding contribution to Public and Community Engagement

and also in June 2014 when NCLS and the UEA Law School won the LawWorks Best Partnership in Pro Bono Award. Our thanks go to Gareth Thomas and Amanda Dorr of the UEA Law School for their continuing support for this partnership. Thanks also to volunteer Bill Edmonds for his role as Student Mentor.

8.3.4 We are also working with the UEA Law School as they develop their Law Clinic at Earlham Hall, mainly staffed by students with support from UEA lecturers and local solicitors on the campus or at West Earlham.

8.3.5 The Welfare Rights Advocacy Team which started providing representation for welfare benefit appeals at Tribunal in November 2012 mainly comprises law students. The Team has been very successful in securing a good outcome for the clients, attracting very positive feedback from the Tribunal Service as well as the clients themselves. There is a lot of statistical evidence to show that appellants who are represented have a far higher chance of success.

8.3.6 In April 2014 the NCLS/UEA Welfare Benefits Advocacy Team were Runners up in the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards for the Best Contribution by a Team of Students

8.4 Justice First Fellowship

8.4.1 The Legal Education Foundation (LEF), launched the Justice First Fellowship scheme in 2014 with the aim of recruiting each year seven aspiring lawyers with a proven interest in social justice issues to take up training contracts at selected organisations. The LEF offers funding of up to £75,000 over two years to meet the costs involved. However they are very keen to get local sponsors involved e.g. local Law Society, local solicitors, corporate organisations, not only to contribute to the funding but to actively engage with the initiative.

8.4.2 The expectation is that host organisations will look to secure funding to retain the Trainee once they qualify. The Trainee is expected to undertake a campaigning role on social welfare issues, initially during the training period but more particularly once they qualify.

8.4.3 Following submission of an application, NCLS was awarded £60,000 funding over 2 years for a Fellowship starting in January 2017. Having undertaken an open recruitment process, we appointed Mariah Simms to the post of Trainee Solicitor with effect from 9th January 2017.

8.4.4 Following submission of a supervision plan to the Solicitors Regulation Authority. (SRA).we received formal accreditation as a training provider. The supervising officer is Chris Cubitt, a solicitor member of the NCLS Board, with day to day supervision delegated to Judi Lincoln, Advice and Volunteer Manager.

8.4.5 The offer of funding was subject to us securing an additional £20,000 over 2 years from local sources. The project is being delivered in partnership with the Mancroft Advice Project (MAP), to address the gap in the provision of legal advice for young people – MAP provide a range of services for 11 to 25 year olds. The main focus of the project is around legal advice for young people e.g. housing, employment, family discrimination, welfare benefits. MAP has

successfully secured £5,000 p.a. over 5 years as part of a recent Help Through Crisis Big Lottery bid towards the cost of this project. We are pursuing other sources of funding and were recently awarded £2,000 per annum for two years from Mills and Reeve.

8.4.6 Mariah is employed by NCLS and spent the first six months working with our Welfare Benefits Team. In order to enable the full remit of legal subject areas to be covered, she was then seconded to Shelter to undertake a six month housing seat and is currently seconded to Gordon Dean solicitors to gain experience employment law and non-contentious issues e.g. wills & probate, conveyancing etc. she will start a six month family seat at Jo Longe Solicitors in May 2018. Mariah will also spend time with Leeway, a charity providing a wide range of Domestic Abuse Advice Services, as well as with our own Family Court Support Service.

8.4.7 One of the requirements of the funding is that the Trainee takes responsibility for a specific project around access to justice and supports the host organisation to develop a new, innovative area of work which the focus on young people would represent. Mariah is proposing to base the dissertation she is required to complete around provision of housing and welfare benefits legal advice for young people.

8.5 NCLS Board of Directors

8.5.1 The NCLS Board of Directors contains a wide range of skills and experience and its composition is monitored constantly for gender and ethnic balance. Members are elected in their own right and not as representatives of other organisations. There are currently 12 members of the Board.

8.5.2 NCLS Directors carry out some of the management tasks that would normally be the responsibility of paid staff in accordance with the division of responsibilities as set out in the Office Manual (NCLS Board Responsibilities ref: D8.1)

8.6 Supporters of NCLS

8.6.1 NCLS has a Supporters Group which helps to promote NCLS services as well as to raise funds.

8.6.2 The Group was originally established in 2010 as an organisation separate from NCLS, but this began to seem overly-complicated and the Supporters are now part of NCLS. They are assisted by a range of volunteers but the Supporters' Steering Group is chaired by a member of the NCLS Board, currently Vanessa Morton, and this helps to ensure good communication within the organisation. The Steering Group is supported by the Operations Manager.

8.6.3 The Supporters Group –

- Hold five or six fund-raising and promotional events annually, including a prestigious annual law lecture around the general theme of promoting social justice. Past speakers have included Imran Khan, who represented the Lawrence family in the Stephen Lawrence case, Lucy Scott-Moncrieff,

respected mental health and human rights lawyer and President of the Law Society in 2013, Keir Starmer, former Director of Public Prosecutions, Philippe Sands, International Human Rights Lawyer, Vera Baird, former Attorney General and Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria and Martha Spurrier, Director of Liberty.

- Seeks to attract individual, family and corporate members to support NCLS. Since 2014, NCLS has commissioned a consultant to assist us with corporate fund-raising.

8.6.4 The Supporters' current objectives are to –

- Support NCLS in holding informative and enjoyable events
- Achieve and improve on our current target of raising £5,000 a year for NCLS
- Attract new supporters and volunteers
- Extend the geographical reach of Supporters' events within Norfolk
- Work with our partners at UEA Law School in support of NCLS

9. Location and Accommodation

9.1 NCLS was based in Boardman House, Redwell Street from June 2004 to December 2013 at which point we relocated to St Clements House, Colegate where we rent a self-contained office suite from Voluntary Norfolk on the basis of a licence agreement. The majority of the costs of relocating were very generously funded by Norwich Consolidated Charities.

9.2 Although this accommodation gives us more private interview space than we had previously, there is still a shortage of rooms and not always enough desks to accommodate the growing number of volunteers.. We recently improved the client reception area in order to increase confidentiality, reduce disruption to staff and volunteers and improve security and also rented an additional room upstairs in the building.

10. Quality

10.1 NCLS held the CLS Quality Mark for General Help with Casework in Debt originally awarded in February 2010 and renewed in February 2012. The LSC General Quality Mark was subsequently taken over by the Advice Services Alliance and we were awarded the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) for casework in both debt and welfare benefits in March 2014 and renewed in March 2016. We continue to maintain and develop policies to comply with the Quality Mark on an ongoing basis.

10.2 Although we had had ambitions to apply for a Specialist Quality Mark (SQM) in respect of our Debt and Welfare Rights Services this can now only be awarded to organisations holding a Legal Aid contract.

10.3 NCLS won a LawWorks (Solicitors Pro Bono Group) award for 'Best Contribution by a Regional Law Firm or Organisation in 2009 for its FLA Service and in 2014 won the LawWorks Best Partnership in Pro Bono Award jointly with UEA.

10.4 As reported in 8.3 above, the Welfare Rights Advocacy Team was awarded the 2013 Group Project award for outstanding contribution to Public and Community Engagement by UEA and in 2014 were Runners up in the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards for the Best Contribution by a Team of Students

11. Equal Opportunities

11.1 NCLS is committed to acting at all times act without distinction or discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation

11.2 In order to achieve this objective we -

- ensure that all employees and volunteers, and all applicants for employment, are given equal opportunity, irrespective of their gender, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality or national origin, disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation or religious affiliation, or whether they are pregnant or recently given birth or are transsexual;
- take positive action to ensure that the services we provide and the composition of our Board of Directors, staff and volunteers reflect society as a whole and are capable of responding to local need;
- actively target all our services at particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups e.g. offenders, ex-offenders and their families, BME groups and specifically migrant workers, people with mental and physical health issues and learning difficulties.
- endeavour to ensure, wherever reasonably practicable and affordable, that all our services are provided in buildings which have disabled access and facilities.;
- subject to the availability of funding, offer free interpretation and translation in respect of all our services.

11.3 INTRAN Pilot

11.3.1 In 2014, the County Community Relations and Equalities Board provided funding for a pilot membership of INTRAN which designs, promotes and delivers interpreting and translation services for public-facing organisations. The normal membership fee is prohibitive for many small voluntary organisations who often need professional interpretation in order to communicate effectively with their clients. Norwich Consolidated Charities have agreed to take over funding of the pilot until 31st March 2018. One of the objectives of the pilot is to obtain evidence of need for such services and to work with the statutory sector to try to secure longer term funding to ensure such services are affordable to voluntary organisations. If good quality advice cannot be effectively provided to a client at an early stage because of a lack of access to an interpreter, there is the risk that their problem will escalate and impact on the public sector.

12. Marketing and Promotion

12.1 As stated above, NCLS is the lead agency for the Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN) and all our services are promoted to partner agencies through the NCAN meetings, website www.norfolkcan.org.uk and directory <http://www.norfolkcan.org.uk/directory/advisor-directory> and regular newsletters. We particularly promote the use of the recently developed NCAN common referral system which enables the efficient referral of clients to NCLS services by partner agencies.

12.2 Information about our services, detailing times available, how to make an appointment, etc, is distributed as widely as possible to reach individuals most in need of our services and access to justice via our website www.ncls.co.uk; general leaflets and service specific leaflets distributed through public outlets, County Court, partner agencies, local authorities, funding bodies, interested individuals etc; newsletters, newspaper articles, radio interviews and telephone directories.

12.3 All our publicity material emphasises that our services are free and available to anyone who lives or works in Norfolk although we particularly target our casework services at vulnerable and disadvantaged groups e.g. offenders, migrant workers.

12.4 We provide leaflets advertising all our services, as well as the leaflet advertising our Immigration Service in a range of languages other than English. We can provide publicity material in larger type on request.

12.5 NCLS staff or volunteers regularly inform other agencies of our services through either attendance at project meetings, formal presentations, informal networking etc.

12.6 The Supporters of NCLS (see above) hold regular events e.g. law lectures to promote our services as well as to raise funding.

13. Training Strategy

13.1 NCLS recognises the need to ensure that all staff and volunteers are trained and supported in all aspects of service delivery. We also recognise that training is vital to individual development and to job satisfaction. In order to achieve these objectives, the NCLS Training Policy provides for 3% of the total staff salary budget to be set aside for staff training within any one financial year. All specifically funded projects allow provision for training of both staff and volunteers.

13.2 Individual training needs are reviewed as part of the staff supervision and appraisal process against the skills and knowledge required as identified in the person specification for each post. A central record is maintained of training undertaken by each member of staff

13.3 The training needs of all volunteers are also assessed in order to ensure that they are able to deliver an appropriate quality of service. Although most of the training provided is on the job training provided by either the Advice and Volunteer Manager or the manager of the relevant service, we will also identify where external training resources are required and either finance training from within the overall NCLS budget or seek to raise specific funding for volunteer training as part of the service development.

13.4 We will also aim to provide training where a need is identified for members of the NCLS Board of Directors either on an individual or collective basis e.g. responsibility of Charity Trustees.

13.5 A particular aim of the Training Policy is to ensure that all NCLS personnel are aware of equalities issues and are provided with the appropriate training.

13.6 Our current training priorities are for appropriate staff and relevant volunteers to undertake training in the changes introduced by Welfare Reform as well as the General Data Protection Regulations which come into force in May 2018.

14. Feedback from Service Users

14.1 Feedback from clients about our services allows NCLS to identify and correct problems with either the advice or service we have provided, to review our systems, procedures and training requirements and identify general trends. Feedback also allows us to demonstrate both internally and externally the levels of client satisfaction we are achieving and focus our efforts accordingly.

14.2 Each service seeks client feed-back on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the service they received. The client feedback procedures are documented. (Ref: G3) All callers to the Free Legal Advice Service are invited to complete feed-back forms before leaving the building. Other service users are sent feed-back forms and pre-paid return envelopes at the point their case is concluded. Analysis of the returns is contained in the monthly service reports to the Board and in the Annual Report.

14.3 In addition, in 2014/15, NCAN successfully piloted measurement of health and well-being outcomes based on the clinically tested Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMBES) and as from April 2016 has encouraged all member agencies to implement these measurements in order to achieve a common outcomes framework across the Norfolk social welfare advice sector. There is a lot of anecdotal evidence that as well as timely social welfare advice contributing to Improved social justice, it can also help to ensure that costly crises such as homelessness are avoided, thereby reducing demand on public sector services as well as leading to improved health and wellbeing and reduced stress.

14.4 The process involves either the client or the caseworker recording answers to a series of questions as to the client's current sense of well-being at the point they seek advice and then following this up with a telephone interview, mainly undertaken by an NCAN volunteer to assess how their circumstances have changed at the point that the case is closed.

14.5 There is a formal Complaints Procedure for any clients wishing to lodge a complaint against NCLS. The Chair of NCLS is the named Board member with responsibility for dealing with complaints. (Ref: G1)

14.6 Any negative feedback or formal complaints are addressed by the service manager and adviser and action taken to improve service delivery where appropriate.

15. A Law Centre for Norfolk?

15.1 At some point in the future, NCLS might consider operating as a Law Centre, if it meets the criteria of the Law Centres Network which holds copyright to the name. A separate Law Centre Steering Group was established in 2002, its work being absorbed by NCLS in 2004. A Law Centre Development Officer was appointed to the staff of NCLS in May 2004 and the duties of the post were subsequently absorbed into the role of the Chief Executive Officer.

15.2 NCLS currently has previously held Associate Membership of the Law Centres Network now no longer available. In many ways NCLS already operates as a Law Centre, although currently does not directly employ its own solicitor, and shares the aspirations of members of the Law Centres Network. In the event of NCLS meeting the criteria for Law Centre membership, the Board will consider whether it wishes to seek membership.

16. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

16.1 Internal Strengths

- Experienced and committed Board of Directors and staff
- Increasing numbers of suitable volunteers e.g. UEA students
- Supporters of NCLS
- Good track record of innovation and project delivery
- Good financial management
- Support of NCAN for all NCLS services

16.2 Internal Weaknesses

- Lack of secure, adequate long term funding
- Insufficient staffing/ volunteer resources to cope with current heavy workloads
- Shortage of suitable office space.
- Insufficient private interview rooms
- Lack of time and funding to undertake all desirable training

16.3 External Opportunities

- Legal Aid cuts e.g. development of Family Court Support Service
- Welfare Reform and increasing demand for advice and representation e.g. welfare benefit appeals
- Working with partners particularly through NCAN to develop services e.g. immigration advice
- Sharing in training, quality, networking opportunities provided by NCAN
- Accessing varied sources of funding – NCLS has good track record of project delivery
- Developing discrimination service
- Developing services for migrant workers
- Linking with health agenda e.g. Social Prescribing
- Further development of outreach services including via Skype

16.4 External Threats

- Increasing competition for funding
- Reduced availability of funding as a result of the recession e.g. public sector cuts, reduction in income from investments
- Difficulty of reconciling targets set by funders with desire to help vulnerable clients requiring complex support
- Difficulty of evidencing need for discrimination services and associated difficulty in securing funding for same

17. Objectives for 2018/2021

General

17.1 Our primary objectives for the next three years are to –

- obtain funding for the continuation and improvement of our existing services, whether through partnership arrangements, service level agreements, contracts or by direct grant aid, with particular emphasis on securing longer term funding rather than being reliant on possible renewal of short term grants;
- continue to work with NCAN partners to identify gaps in the provision of free legal advice and to try to secure funding to develop services to meet those gaps wherever possible. We will also work with NCAN to support our campaigning and social policy objectives

17.2 In furthering those objectives we will seek to -

- Extend and improve the way we work with volunteers and students in terms of support, extended opportunities and measuring the successful contribution volunteers deliver.
- Secure funding to both enable both the retention of the Justice First Fellowship Trainee once they have qualified and also possibly to recruit a further Trainee Solicitor
- Explore the extension of all NCLS services to outreach services in Norfolk, in partnership with relevant organisations particularly through NCAN, including the increased use of e-mail and Skyping.
- Secure funding for interpretation and translation services for all NCLS services.
- Maintain the AQS Quality standard throughout the period of the Service Strategy and explore the possibility of securing a specialist quality mark for debt and welfare benefits if the Advice Service Alliance develop specialist quality marks in the future;
- Continue to develop the partnership arrangements with the UEA Law School, with the aim of continually improving the experience of students working

with NCLS and to work with the Law School to develop the Law Clinic at UEA, including possibly an outreach clinic at West Earlham;

- To work with partner organisations e.g. NCAN, LawWorks, Law Society, Advice UK, Law Centres Federation and Justice for All Campaign to continue to campaign against the cuts in Legal Aid.
- To maintain a constant review of the accommodation needs of NCLS in the light of any service developments;
- To maintain an efficient central administration service, providing support services for the NCLS Board and all NCLS services;
- To continue to develop more effective measurements of the impact of all NCLS services; extend this to improving all our performance and impact data
- To improve the content and distribution of all NCLS publicity and to ensure that the NCLS website is regularly updated;
- To improve internal communication within the organisation between all Directors, staff and volunteers;
- To continue to work with the Bar Pro Bono Unit to try to secure representation whereby we support clients to access the services of a barrister
- To explore services around assisting clients to complete forms such those for Welfare Benefits, complaining about services, PPI claims, other civil matter claims.
- To explore the possibility of developing a service to support clients attending inquests into the death of a family member.
- To explore if there is a need for support around school exclusions.
- To ensure all staff and volunteers undertake training and development in accordance with the NCLS Training Policy
- To campaign on social policy issues and attempt to pursue an educational role to raise public awareness and understanding of legal rights and responsibilities

17.2 Service Specific Objectives

Debt Service

- Improve public understanding and awareness of debt issues, using the media and other avenues as appropriate

- Seek funding to either replace MAS funding post March 2019 if our current contract is not renewed or to secure supplementary funding to enable us to have sustainable and realistic client targets which enable us to provide an holistic service for our vulnerable clients
- Seek to develop the current service level agreement with the Shaw Trust in respect of offenders based in HMP Bure and Wayland
- Seek to develop a similar service in respect of HMP Norwich
- Explore the possibility of raising income via specialised training and/or consultation services

Free Legal Advice Service

- To extend the existing free legal advice services in Norwich, Cromer and Great Yarmouth by increasing the number of solicitors on the rota and increasing the number of FLA sessions
- Explore the possibility of developing additional FLA services – possible locations being Dereham or Kings Lynn which could be achieved through the use of Skype as well as other areas in the city e.g. Mile Cross or West Earlham;
- To continue to develop our extended Employment Advice Service whereby we offer enhanced support for clients such as drafting letters, preparing clients for disciplinary interviews, filling out ET1s and extend this to General law and Family sessions.
- To extend our fact finding across the board to minimise the wrong door experience.
- To expand our support from clients across all the FLA services by drafting letters before actions, assisting with Money Claims on line and manually.
- To explore the possibility of using law students to represent clients at Employment Law Tribunal

Immigration Service

- To continue to develop our current county-wide immigration advice and welfare benefits representation service for migrant workers. This will be carried out along with partner agencies and statutory authorities through NCAN, to ensure that migrant workers are able to access services effectively through improving the awareness and understanding of frontline staff in relation to the needs of migrant workers and ensuring language support is available;
- To achieve Levels 2/3 Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) exemption to allow advice and advocacy in more complex immigration cases and appeals for migrant workers and other BME groups;
- To facilitate other organisations working with migrant workers to achieve OISC level 1 exemption

Welfare Rights Service

- To secure funding to enable us to make the post of Welfare Benefits Adviser full time on a more permanent basis as well as to employ additional resources to meet existing as well as anticipated demand, particularly arising from the roll out of Universal Credit.

- To extend the service to include preparation of appeal submissions

Discrimination Service

- To continue to work with ISCRE and the UEA Law School to develop and promote the existing Discrimination Advice and Representation Service as well as to undertake research to establish evidence of need to support applications for funding to make the service more sustainable – there is a lot of anecdotal evidence of demand but it is difficult for advice agency front line staff or potential clients to identify cases of discrimination, and even where identified, client are often reluctant to pursue cases.
- To provide discrimination awareness training for advice agencies, employers and service providers as well as community groups to help them to identify cases of discrimination.

Domestic Abuse Service

- To increase the number of solicitors on the rota
- Undertake further research into the shortage of solicitors providing Legal Aid for domestic abuse in Norfolk and to work with Leeway and the Norfolk and Norwich Law Society and LawWorks to explore solutions to meet those gaps including the possibility of NCLS employing its own solicitor
- To advertise the service more widely through relevant agencies
- To include a male solicitor on the rota.
- To secure funding for court representation where appropriate
- To explore the possibility of developing a service in Great Yarmouth.
- To work with the County Wide DA Change Programme

Family Court Support Service

- To continue to develop our Family Court Support Service for clients with family matter issues
- To secure additional funding to enable the service to be extended beyond 30th June 2018 when the current funding ends
- To secure funding to extend the employment of a qualified family solicitor to support this service and the FLA and DA services beyond the current temporary period to June 2018.
- To increase the volunteer base and capacity for training and support.
- To work with the Litigant in Person (LiP) Support Strategy, NNLS and Family law practitioners to provide a Norfolk-wide resource for LiPs
- to extend the service to cover other family cases if there is local evidence of need.

17.3 Norfolk Community Advice Network

17.3.1 The NCAN Steering Group has made it clear that is committed to continuing and building on NCAN's activities to date (see above). NCLS is also committed to this and sees NCAN as a significant mechanism for achieving its objective of meeting unmet legal need, as well as making a valuable contribution

to partnership working in the sector. Whilst NCLS is happy to continue as the lead agency for NCAN, it has made it very clear that it can no longer continue to have overall responsibility for funding NCAN and the Steering Group have agreed to hold an away day to review NCAN's future role and funding.

17.3.2 Subject to that discussion, the overall aim of NCAN remains to ensure that Norfolk residents can access good quality social welfare legal information, advice, assistance and representation at a time or place when they need them most. Subject to the outcome of the review of the future of NCAN, in order to pursue this aim we propose to -:

- Pursue longer term funding from NCAN, particularly through charging for public sector use of the referral system
- Continue developing and broadening use of the NCAN Referral System, particularly to include public sector partners
- Continue to provide information, training and support to local advice providers to improve the quality and range of advice provision
- Work with local authorities and other key stakeholders to pursue the Low Commission⁶ recommendation of co-producing a local advice and legal support plan, including a full range of interventions from Public Legal Education through to Court and Tribunal Representation
- Improve the mechanisms for building evidence of what works in the sector and what is driving demand for advice so that services are both fit for purpose, but are also providing information to improve the delivery of public services locally
- Improve the contribution of the sector locally to achieving health and wellbeing objectives, continuing to develop a common health outcomes measurement framework for the sector and supporting the sector to engage with emerging social prescribing initiatives.
- To position Norfolk and NCAN as a national 'centre of excellence' for local advice partnerships
- To support the sector to collaborate effectively in tackling our common challenges as organisations and for our clients e.g. increasing demand and welfare reform

17.3.3 The previous Big Lottery funding ended in September 2014 and we have secured some funding primarily for use of the referral system to support specific activities. To resource the project more widely we propose exploring a hybrid funding strategy through a combination of:

- Earned income from consultancy and training services
- Fees from public sector members for referral system use
- Grant income from national and local funders

17.4 New Service Development

Development of UEA Law Clinic

We are working in partnership with the Law School to develop their Law Clinic at Earlham Hall which provides much needed accommodation for our students to

⁶ <http://www.lowcommission.org.uk/dyn/1389221772932/Low-Commission-Report-FINAL-VERSION.pdf>

undertake casework and prepare legal submissions on behalf of our clients.

We will support the development the clinic as a resource for clients and learning opportunities for students over the WRARS service initially and explore the development of other areas of work.

Representation at Employment Tribunals

We intend to explore the use of law student to represent clients at Employment Tribunals when pressures of other work allow.

Representation at Inquests

We will explore with the Coroner's Office whether there is a need to help family members at Inquests akin to the role of a McKenzie friend.

18. Funding Strategy

18.1 General

18.1.2 NCLS is currently funded through a range of grants including from local authorities, Norwich Consolidated Charities and a number of smaller local charities, Comic Relief, the Henry Smith Charity and the A B Charitable Trust as well as funding through service level agreements e.g. with Norwich City Council, Broadland District Council, UEA and the Money Advice Service (MAS) and funding raised by SNCLS and other individual donations. NCLS is the lead agency for the City Council funded Financial Inclusion Consortium, comprising MAP, Age UK Norwich, Shelter, Equal Lives and Norfolk CAB.

18.1.2 We have just been awarded funding of £195,000 over two years with effect from June 2018 by Norfolk County Council on behalf of the Government's Controlled Migration Fund to provide immigration advice to migrants in Norfolk and Suffolk who are victims of domestic abuse. Some of this money will be used to pay partner agencies to help deliver the advice.

18.1.3 All our services are free to users except that we occasionally charge for attending training courses.

18.1.4 All of our funding is of a short term nature, normally ranging from one year to three year arrangements, which creates ongoing uncertainty about the financial viability of the organisation. The five year Big Lottery Advice Plus grant we received in respect of NCAN, which ran out in September 2014, was the exception. We continue to seek alternative more sustainable sources of finance for the continuation of all our existing services, including NCAN, but also the development of existing services to meet identified demand.

18.1.5 When submitting funding bids for individual projects, wherever appropriate we include provision for the commissioning of support from NCAN e.g. for use of the common referral system and for support in measuring and evaluating outcomes and encourage partner agencies to do the same..

18.2 Core Costs

18.2.1 Although we have been successful in securing substantial funding for individual projects e.g. Big Lottery funding for NCAN and MAS funding for our Debt Service, and also generous funding from Norwich Consolidated Charities towards our core costs which they increased substantially in 2015/16, we continue to struggle to fully fund our core costs e.g. management, administration, development and accommodation. We can recharge a proportion of these core costs to individual project funding, but this still leaves us with a shortfall which varies from year to year as short term project funding fluctuates. The main focus of SNCLS is to raise funding for our core costs as well as promote NCLS services.

18.2.2 Wherever possible we use volunteers to supplement our paid staffing resources e.g. solicitors providing our Free Legal Advice and Domestic Abuse services and UEA Law Students who support all our services, FCSS 'community volunteers' but volunteers still need to be managed and provided with accommodation, telephone and IT resources. We are very grateful for the funding we have received from UEA Law School over the last five years and are hopeful that this funding will be continued.

18.3 Funding Objectives

18.3.1 Our objectives in the short term are to secure sufficient funding to continue our existing services including NCAN and all related on-costs e.g. accommodation, IT, management, administration etc for a minimum of three years, subject to demand for those services continuing during that period. We currently expend a great deal of time and staff resources on making bids to a variety of sources for often very short term funding and, as well as being resource intensive, this situation makes any long term planning impossible and is detrimental to staff morale.

18.3.2 We are hopeful that our current development of more effective measuring and evaluation of outcomes of our services will give us additional evidence, supplemented by research into need carried out by NCAN, to support funding bids for both our existing services as well as expansion of those services to meet any increased demand as well as additional staffing resources to meet the existing shortfall.

18.3.3 One of our principle priorities as stated in 17.3 above is to secure a longer term sustainable funding plan for NCAN and to ensure responsibility for this no longer rests with NCLS. In the meantime we continue to pursue sources of funding for NCAN, particularly around the use of the common referral system e.g. by statutory authorities.

18.3.4 We have been holding regular meetings of the Fundraising Committee over the last year or so and have produced a Fundraising Strategy which sets out a range of options with the aim of securing more sustainable funding over the next few years. We are reviewing the need to secure an additional fundraising resource discussions with an experienced corporate fundraiser around Securing some corporate funding, initially for the Justice First Fellowship.

18.4 Draft Budget 2018/19 and 2019/20

18.4.1 An outline draft budget for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 is attached. We also have individual budgets for all our individual projects which we use for grant raising purposes – at the time of writing this strategy, none of our projects are so far fully funded for the 2018/19 financial year. As can be seen from the attached budget, the estimated shortfall as at March 2016 is £

18.5 Giving Websites – BTMydonate and Localgiving.com

18.5.1 NCLS has signed up to two donations websites, BT MyDonate and Localgiving.com.

18.5.2 The BT MyDonate website enables individuals who wish to sponsor a particular event or organisation being organised by SNCLS to make a donation. The service is provided for free and BT organises the recovery of any Gift Aid payments. The only deductions made are a small amount for processing credit card payments.

18.5.3 Localgiving.com is a social enterprise owned by the Community Foundation Network (CFN) and the Ardrack Foundation, both registered charities dedicated to supporting local charities. The Norfolk Community Foundation supports Localgiving.com with its aims of helping constituted small charities and un-registered community groups boost their profile and increase public donations via a dedicated on-line giving portal. The site enables us to seek donations either for NCLS general costs or for individual projects.

18.6 Financial Management

18.6.1 The NCLS Board receives monthly financial reports from the Treasurer. This role is always held by an experienced financial expert. Changes in budget projections are fully discussed and, if necessary, amendments are made to the projection. Individual project budgets are monitored by the Chief Executive Officer who reports any discrepancies and overall spend to the Board.

18.6.2 Our Reserves Policy is that NCLS revenue reserves which have not been committed or invested in tangible fixed assets should represent three months of estimated total annual expenditure. This level would allow for the financing of a controlled reduction in the scope of our operations in the event of a significant drop in our funding. The level of reserves is reviewed at each monthly Board meeting.

18.6.3 The Chief Executive Officer and the Treasurer each have authority to authorise expenditure up to £250 and can jointly authorise expenditure up to £500. All expenditure over £500 requires Board approval except that the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Treasurer, has delegated power to authorise expenditure in accord with agreed project budgets.

18.6.4 All financial procedures are carried out in accordance with Office Manual Policy financial Procedures C3.1

APPENDIX 1

NCLS Budgets 2017-18 to 2019-20	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Revised 14.03.18 by JC	£	£	£
Total Expenditure	481,260	549,830	553,100
Income			
Norwich Consolidated Charities	120,000	120,000	?
MAS	52,000	52,000	52,000
Norwich City - Consortium share	28,200	46,360	28,200
Norwich City - Housing Mediation	5,000	5,000	5,000
Broadland	5,000	5,000	5,000
Cromer Town Council	600	600	600
Local Councils re NCAN	25,048	38,596	19,298
UEA (£25k pa to 31.7.16; £50k pa from 1.8.16)	50,000	50,000	50,000
Supporters Group	3,000	3,000	3,000
Donations	1,000	1,000	1,000
Bank Interest	300	300	300
Access to Justice re McKenzie Friend	27,500	2,500	
LEFF	30,108	22,250	
MAP/Mills & Reeve re JFF	7,000	7,000	5,000
Comic Relief (11 months 2016-17)	41,300	42,030	6,800
Falgate Fund	5,000		
A B Charitable Fund	15,000		
Mid-Norfolk CAB (from 1.6.16)	4,500	1,500	1,500
Shaw Trust/MAP re debt service	10,000	10,000	
Eastern Legal Support Trust	3,325		
Healthy Norwich CCG/City Council/W Nflk	8,400		
Norfolk & Norwich Law Society	1,000		
Victory Housing	2,000		
Henry Smith Foundation	6,250	25,156	25,785
TGWU	1,000		
Law Society	5,000		
Migrant Worker/Domestic Abuse Project		22,000	29,000
£73,125 18/19 £97,500 19/20 but expenditure not yet known - guess 30% net income			
Additional NCAN income	12,000		
	469,531	454,292	232,483
Deficit for Year	11,729	95,538	320,617
Reserves required at year end	137,200	138,500	143,000
(25% of next year's budgeted expenses)			
	148,929	234,038	463,617
	-	-	-
Less: B/fwd at 1 April	119,917	108,188	138,500
Funding Requirement	29,012	125,850	325,117

THE FOUR TIER MODEL OF ADVICE

This model was developed by the Norfolk Advice & Advocacy Strategy Group as part of work undertaken for the Norfolk Local Area Agreement.

It defines different **tiers or levels** of information, advice, assistance, advocacy & representation. Inevitably there are overlaps, but broadly the definitions are as follows:

Tier 1: Information

Where the agency provides leaflets or basic information about rights, entitlement and services. It also involves signposting callers to further sources of help or specialist advice.

Tier 2: Advice & Assistance

Providing specialist advice to address a problem as well as the practical support to meet that need. Examples include, help filling in benefit or tax credit forms; assistance with sorting out debt problems; advising on immigration rights. It also includes helping people apply for services, for example, as a carer, older person or the parent of a child with special needs.

Tier 3: Advocacy

Pursuing a case by challenging decisions when rights in social welfare law have been refused. It also includes taking up a case when a social care, health or educational service has been denied. In both cases it can involve gathering additional evidence, seeking a review of a decision (by telephone or letter), or lodging an appeal.

Tier 4: Representation

Challenging a decision through representation at a decision-making body such as an appeal tribunal, civil court or social care/education panel hearing. It involves preparing arguments to develop the case using relevant case law, guidance and statute and calling on expert evidence. The advocate accompanies and speaks on behalf of the individual.

