



EALING EQUALITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2013



**"An equal society recognises people's different needs,
situations, and goals and removes the barriers that limit what
people can do and can be."
Equalities Review 2007**

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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

We have developed into a dynamic charity advancing equality and human rights for all. We remain focused on those in our communities who are most vulnerable and socially excluded. We've been providing free legal advice and advocacy in both generalist and specialist areas in conjunction with the Community Advice Programme (CAP) and retain the pro-bono services of both solicitors and qualified barristers to provide free legal advice.

EEC was originally formed in 1963 with the main aim and objective to deliver advice and has helped disadvantaged communities for the past 50 years. Equality is not a minority concern – it matters to every one of us. At some point in our lives, all of us face barriers that may prevent us fulfilling our potential, or participating fully in society – promoting and advancing equality for all persons is the basis for a united, thriving and happy society.

VISION

ADVANCING EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL PERSONS

OBJECTIVES

- To work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination and inequality:
- To promote and advance equality of opportunity and good relations between all persons including persons of different racial groups: Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, Migrant and Refugee communities (BAMER/BMER) and all persons experiencing disadvantage, discrimination and deprivation
- To engage in the promotion and advancement of Equality and Human Rights for all persons
- To engage in the delivery of legal advice and casework
- To offer training and support to volunteers

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



KWAME AKUFFO, OBE

The severe economic recession and the global financial crisis of recent years have touched many ordinary people deeply. Everyday lives have been adversely affected by unemployment and the general spending cuts which have meant that people have less money to meet their basic needs. For the most vulnerable in our communities, the last year has been extremely difficult and the notion of equality of citizenship and access to social and economic resources has been contradicted by increased hardship arising out of welfare reform in particular and the severe diminution in Legal Aid provision. These difficulties have been captured by the significant increase in the casework undertaking by EEC at the Lido Centre and the various outreach programmes we run across the borough, including Acton, the Grand Union Village and Northolt.

As the principal equality and Human Rights organisation in the London Borough of Ealing, we have a responsibility to highlight the consequences of changes in state policy and material provision for people that place real barriers in the struggle to achieve equality and justice for all in our society. The withdrawal of Legal Aid in many critical areas such as Family Law matters for many people have had disproportionate and damaging consequences for women and children in particular. Similarly, the coming into effect of Universal Credit and the various aspect of welfare reform over the past year in areas such as Housing Benefits, disability and out-of-work benefits, has increased the vulnerability of many in our communities because they are significantly poorer now. In making these observations our intention is not to deny the case for reform of our social security system

or state funding for people with serious legal need (areas that generate spiralling costs) but to question the wisdom of specific policies and programmes that affect the poorest and most vulnerable the most. It is important that our organisation is able to engage such issues at the policy level in an effort to ensure the progressive development of the equality and human rights agenda. Equality and human rights are only meaningful if they enable the material and social wellbeing of all.

Also, in commenting on the standing and activities of our organisation over the past year, it gives me great pleasure to place on record, the significant development in our advice and advocacy services in Ealing and Hounslow and the success we have achieved in recruiting, training and deploying volunteers and providing work experience for a wide diversity of people. I would like to acknowledge the commitment and hard work of the Executive Committee in providing leadership and strategic direction to the EEC and to the tireless freedom fighter - Director, Ricky Singh and to our Administrator, Daphne Stewart who together keep our business and crucial services going. Finally, I am very proud to also acknowledge the amazing dedication and contribution of our volunteers – without them, we simply could not have achieved the outcomes recorded last year and I urge our readers to pay particular attention to the inspirational personal accounts provided by some of our volunteers elsewhere in this Annual Report.

The EEC is now 50 years old. Our Anniversary coincides with Martin Luther King's now immortalised "I have a dream" speech. Joining these events together reminds us of the distance we have travelled through our collective struggle but also, of the continuing need to collectively press the claim for the fundamental entitlement of all to be free from discrimination of any kind and to have equality of opportunity and life chances.

In looking forward to the year ahead, I am very grateful indeed that the help and support that we have received from the leadership of the London Borough of Ealing and Local Councillors and Local MPs, ECN, ECVS as well as the network of community organisations and individuals with whom we work, has helped to consolidate Ealing Equality Council and makes it possible for us to achieve even greater things for the benefit of our communities.

DIRECTOR'S

REPORT



RICKY SINGH

It has been a progressive year for the Ealing Equality Council, which celebrates its 50th year of existence – continuing to work for the best interests of the people in the LBE and its environs.

Further, of significance is the award of the OBE to our Chair Kwame Akuffo JP for services to west London. In my view this is a fitting tribute to the co-founder of the Community Advice Programme (CAP) now in its 21st year which has as its core purpose the development (so as to become employable) and training of law students to gain practical legal skills while engaged in helping the community of the LBE. We are privileged to see how CAP has developed – under the management of the EEC - in collaboration with the Law School at the University of West London.

Our Executive Committee, our staff and our wonderful volunteers make it possible for the organisation to function at a highly effective level in delivering services to the disadvantaged persons in London Borough of Ealing and in Hounslow. Further, I am grateful to our Funders for enabling us to deliver the following services:

- Training volunteers in 'Community Legal Advice' delivery and support
- Providing work experience and training for volunteers and schools' pupils
- Dealing with all forms of Hate Crime in Hounslow - working in partnership with ECVS, Outwest [LGBT] and Hounslow Disability Network to deliver a 3 year hate crime support service
- Delivering advice to people with disabilities in their home in partnership with Disability Network Hounslow [project is known as the Hounslow Home Buddies]
- Delivering the LBE's Black Minority Ethnic Refugee and Migrant Advice Service in partnership with CAP, UWL, supported [among others] by MTG & DH Law Sols, Andonian Gulbenkian Sols, Andrews Monroe Sols, Michael Goldberg, Solicitor, Direct Access Barristers Josephine De Souza and Kuljeet Dobe
- Engaging with policy and other matters outlined below for the benefit of all the communities of the LBE and Hounslow.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

EEC is committed to equal opportunities and has extensive voluntary & community sector (VCS) experience. Delegates from EEC serve on several partnership boards/committees as representative members and contribute to wider VCS discussions, as well as advise on equalities issues, as outlined below:

- Ealing Community Network (ECN) – EEC has a place on ECN as a Vice-Chair. The ECN serves as an engagement platform between the statutory sector and the VCS for Ealing, where issues such as Ealing Council's Savings Plans and Localism Agenda are discussed.
- Hounslow Community Network (HCN) – EEC has a place on HCN as an Executive Committee member. HCN was recently launched (July 2012) and EEC has made use of its representation experience to support the development and establishment of HCN for Hounslow's VCS. HCN operates like ECN and with similar aims.
- West London Network (WLN) – EEC has a place on WLN as Chair. WLN brings together key players in West London's VCS and undertakes cross borough projects.
- West London Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans Forum (WL-LGBTF) – EEC has a place on WL-LGBTF, which brings together LGBT stakeholders from across West London, including frontline VCS groups to statutory led projects and bodies (e.g. Met Police, West London Gay Men's Project). EEC has a place as a member of the Safer Ealing Partnership Board representing the wider voluntary & community sector.
- Services: EEC supports local residents through the provision of legal advice via assigned caseworkers and via the collaboration between EEC and the Community Advice Programme (CAP).
- We are amazed at the outputs and the outcomes due mainly to the efforts of our wonderful volunteers and our pro bono Solicitors who work tirelessly for the good of the disadvantage in the LBE and its environs. Their good work is set out in this Annual Report below which I humbly commend to you.

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH VOLUNTEERING:

“... We refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity...” Martin Luther King



Ealing Equality Council's volunteering scheme has gone from strength to strength improving the lives of our service users by offering them meaningful legal services to get involved in, but also providing community volunteers with an opportunity to give something back.

Volunteers help in bringing a wide range of benefits and transforming our organisation. Not only can they enhance our services and help us to do more things in different ways, they bring new vitality and insight to everything we do. They bring diversity and new or differing perspectives to the organisation. When they are well integrated into our organization they can make a significant contribution to day-to-day work and longer term planning. Our Volunteers are the organisation's strongest advocates and our most honest critics. They are with our organization because they care; and harnessing this passion will bring tremendous benefits all round.

Benefits of volunteering include:

- Making a positive difference to the lives of service users
- Positive attitude and self-worth
- A route to employment
- It gives a chance to try something new which may lead to a career change
- Sharing and learning new skills
- Enhancing volunteers' CVs
- Meeting new people
- An enhanced quality of life - having fun with new friends and colleagues

A VOLUNTEER SAID:

“I had all this spare time on my hands and wanted to do something that would make difference, then I heard about volunteering at Ealing Equality Council and I am still here for the last three years. It gives an opportunity to have fun and make friends, offers me to learn new skills, gain confidence, enjoy sense of achievement, increase my skills and experience, and feel valued through helping others.”

VOLUNTEERS ARE PRECIOUS GEMS OF THE ORGANISATION



Advice is given by volunteers who make time to help the community and are from various backgrounds. These include legally qualified individuals such as judges, barristers, solicitors, academics, law graduates, law students from the University of West London's Ealing Law School. These professionals gain invaluable experience of dealing with a diverse community such as Ealing. EEC for many years has provided work experience and learning opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Their fresh eyes, research interests, hard work and enthusiasm have been an inspiration to us all and have contributed greatly to the ethos of the office. Some of our students have progressed to work in equality and diversity roles in the public and voluntary sectors.

EEC relies heavily on its extensive pool of over 100 dedicated volunteers who advise residents under the supervision of assigned legal experts (e.g. employment law specialists will oversee cases involving employment law). Following the closure of Law For All and with the lack of a Citizens Advice Bureau Office in Ealing, EEC is the premier source of free legal advice for residents local to Ealing. EEC has a notable reputation in Ealing and beyond, drawing its volunteers from afar as Letchworth, Herts, Kent, Essex, Croydon, and South London, etc. EEC operates a robust volunteer training programme ensuring its volunteers are motivated and well supported to deliver services



SOME OF THE VOLUNTEERS OFFERING THE LEGAL ADVICE SERVICE



CASE STUDIES:

Case of X

Below is an email from a client which has been anonymised. The client is now offering to help others who are similarly disadvantaged.

Dear Sir,
I trust this email finds you well. My name is X, I came to your office over a month ago in order to seek your advice, assistance and legal intervention.

First, I would like to deeply thank you for your kind assistance on the day I came you. I deeply appreciate your help.

Secondly, as I have mentioned I am willing to volunteer for your centre but the issue is that I am currently in xxxxx. However, I am more than happy to provide with translation from xxxxx if required (please find my CV attached).

Finally, I would like to pay a visit ... so are there any particular days in the week that you will not be in the office?

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

X

Immigration and Nationality Case: B

Client B is a lady who had applied 23 years ago to the Home Office to regularise her stay in the UK. She was married to a British person and was in a subsisting relationship. They had a house, a child, jobs etc – having never been in receipt of Welfare Benefits etc.

After much correspondence and representation (over a period of 2 years) on behalf of this family we were able to successfully bring this case to a positive outcome and the client was allowed to remain in the UK. Below is her expression of appreciation. These cakes were baked by her especially to be given to volunteers.



Mental Health – Rehousing C

C was referred by a Charity. She had a query on mental health issues regarding her son and required suitable accommodation, meeting her disability needs.

C is mentally disabled and complained that her mentally disabled child A is being neglected by the Care System in the LBE. He is in the care of the NHS West London Mental Health Trust.

C was interviewed and advice was offered; a letter was written to the NHS Mental Health Trust (NHS MHT). A meeting was arranged for C to meet with NHS MHT. Client was offered new accommodation. The Outcomes were that the Clients' needs were adequately provided for by the Local Authority and continues to be happy with her new housing provision.

Homeless Client P

Client was sleeping rough. Female Client claims to be disabled and applied for incapacity and disability benefits. Client went to council and was granted accommodation for one night. Client is seeking advice in relation to temporary accommodation and the responsibility of the LBE towards her as an Eastern European Citizen. She felt discriminated against. Client P received help from the Local Authority because they became aware of her disability after representations were made by us.

LGBT and Disability

This client told us that he suffers from mental health challenges and suffers discrimination as a result of both being disabled and gay. Further, he alleged that he also had certain difficulties with his housing.

Representations were made to the Police, the housing provider and the Mental Health Trust – all of whom were willing to assist the client. Much time and effort was expended on the client's behalf and we were able to support him in dealing with his difficulties

Traveller Family

A client came to see me (Rick Wilms) at the Lido Centre. The lady was a settled Traveller, single mother with three young children. She wanted to be moved from her present home to another due to harassment from neighbours as well as troubles on her estate where her children were being unfairly blamed.

She had appealed to the council to be moved but the council had refused saying that she was in a lower band of housing meaning that she is not a priority to be moved.

I contacted the council and pleaded her case regarding the harassment which was racially motivated. I got her moved to a higher band and thus moved house within 3 months. The client was also claiming the wrong benefits so I was able to assist her to claim her proper entitlement which will help them to deal with their disadvantage.

She was very satisfied and has referred more people to us.

Hate Crime

One case we concluded, and hopefully for good, is that of a young partially sighted woman with two small children, one of whom is deaf. Her neighbours kept complaining about noise, and one left racist graffiti on her door. She was threatened with eviction and asked to sign an acceptable behaviour order.

With the help of the solicitor we were able to take the list of events complained about, 73 in total, and by taking out incidences of domestic sounds (not an ASBO matter), matter relating to her brother (she got him to move out), and matters which were duplicated, we were left with 2 events, both of which she had already apologised for.

It then became clear that it was one particular neighbour who had made nearly all the complaints, vindictively. Luckily our client never, on our legal advice, signed the acceptable behaviour order as that would have shown acceptance of 73 incidences of wrong behaviour, which, as it turned out, never occurred.



TRAINING - UTILISING THE SKILLS OF VOLUNTEERS



KULJEET DOBE TRAINING VOLUNTEERS



ADVICE AND CASEWORK

EEC and CAP have seen an upward trend in enquiries related to welfare benefits, nationality, housing, consumer, fuel poverty/debt, employment, disability, and family etc.

To meet these rising needs EEC has provided advice services 5 days per week and held fortnightly weekend drop in advice sessions with the Community Advice Programme, in association with the Ealing Law School at the University of West London (UWL). However, with the demise of Law for All we continue to experience a huge increase in demand for our advice services. We have now moved to 11 sessions per week at the Lido Centre and at 6 outreach locations in the most deprived areas of the LBE as well as providing appointment only evening advice clinics with MTG and a Saturday (drop in only) at CAP.

Some of the problems encountered by our clients are so profound that they cause financial, physical and mental stress, loss of employment, resulting in debt, homelessness and family breakdown and so on. By resolving these issues we are ensuring that local people can move on and in good time feel confident enough and empowered to make a contribution to society. It is worth remembering that in many cases we are supporting some the most deprived and vulnerable people in Ealing. We have seen an upsurge of housing problems experienced by

BMERM peoples; and recently in June 2012 the EEC was approached by the Met Police to enlist our help in dealing with these issues related to Sheds/Outhouses, rough sleeping etc.

The EEC service is available to all of the LBE and Hounslow Communities. In Hounslow we are in a partnership with ECVS, Outwest and Disability Network Hounslow, where we deliver a Hate Crime Support Service funded by the London Borough of Hounslow.



Volunteers happily supporting each other; left to right:

Nirma, Farah, Barbara – front: Janet, Roxana, Irfan

OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

- People in greatest need receive timely, accurate and effective legal advice that is quality assured and joined up with other services, so that they are equipped to deal with their problems and improve their lives
- People avoid disadvantage because commonly encountered legal problems are identified and prevented
- The advice and casework helps to reduce child, family and pensioner poverty by a take-up of benefits
- We help reduce homelessness by dealing with landlords both in the public and private sector, and by appropriate housing advice; reducing debt, poverty and fuel poverty etc by casework intervention with debtors; and by benefits advice etc

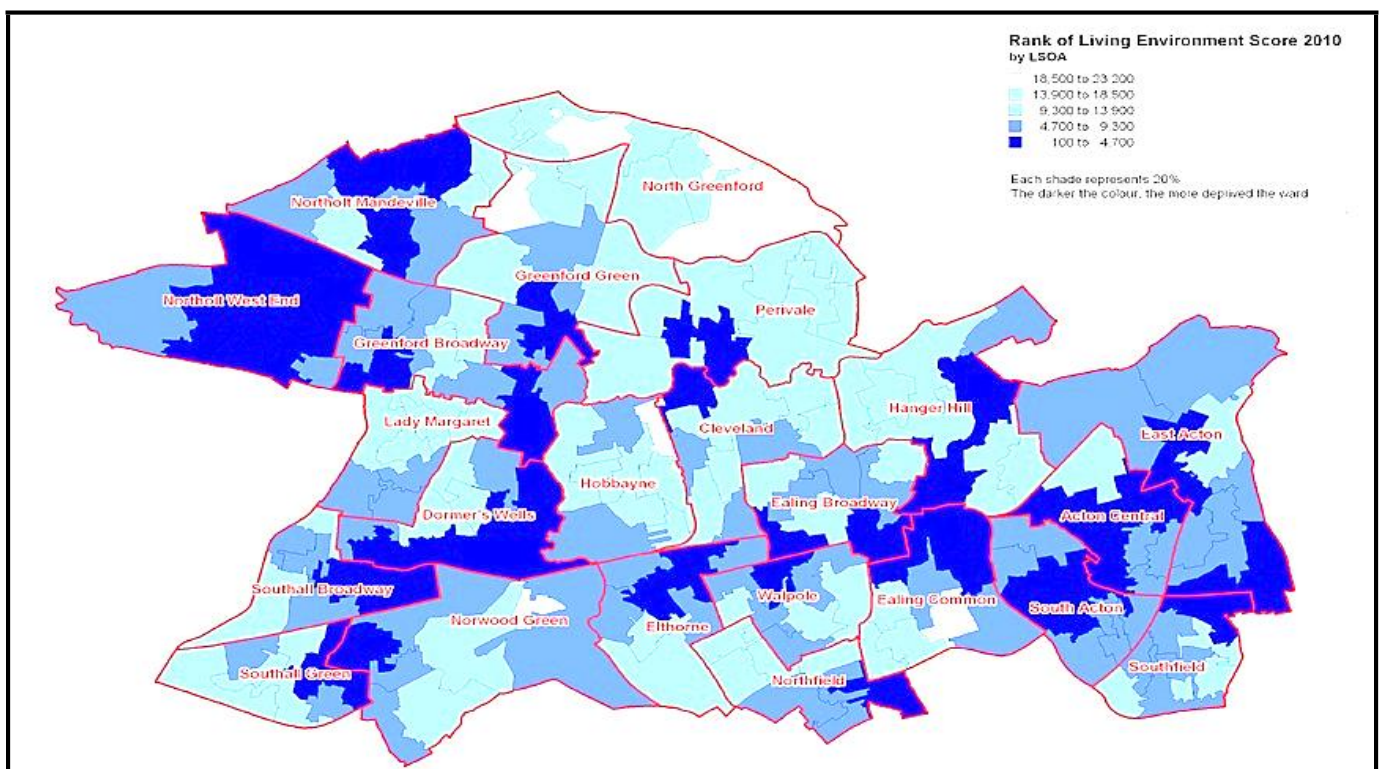
OUTCOMES VIA DELIVERY OF A CASEWORK SERVICE ENSURE THAT:

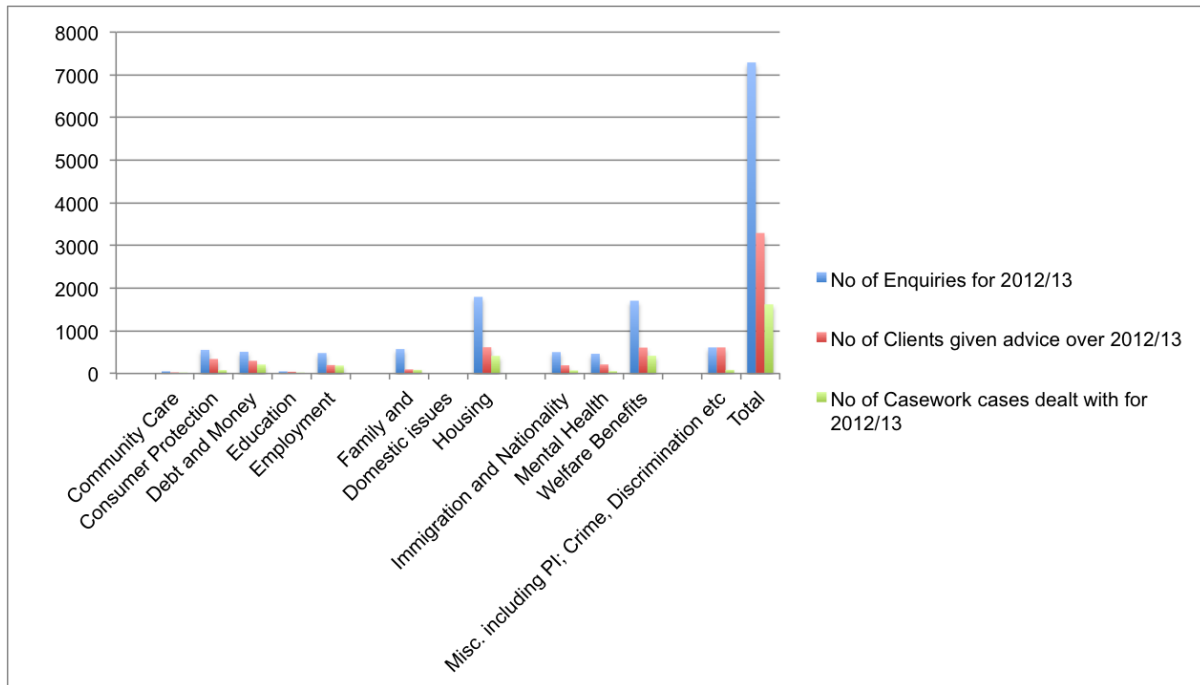
- People in greatest need have better access to legal advice services that help them to avoid or overcome disadvantage and improve their lives and commonly encountered legal problems are identified and prevented:
- People receive their entitlements and are made aware of their obligations - reducing financial exclusion through access to debt advice and intervention with creditors etc

- Reducing fuel poverty by access to representation and advocacy with fuel providers and advice on how gain income maximisation
- Delivery of an advice service fit for purpose and one that is quality assured. A recent Quality Mark Audit resulted in the EEC being awarded the Quality Marks for Casework Advice in the following categories: Racial Discrimination, Racial Harassment, Employment, Consumer, Contract, Debt, Welfare Benefits, Housing, Immigration and Nationality
- We practice social inclusion by helping clients – many of whom are already marginalised in wider society at the outset, to resolve issues which are so personally damaging that they stop them from participating fully in society at all.
- We contribute to community cohesion by diffusing tensions and dissolving misunderstandings between people from different backgrounds, e.g. through our advocacy intervention and mediation work.

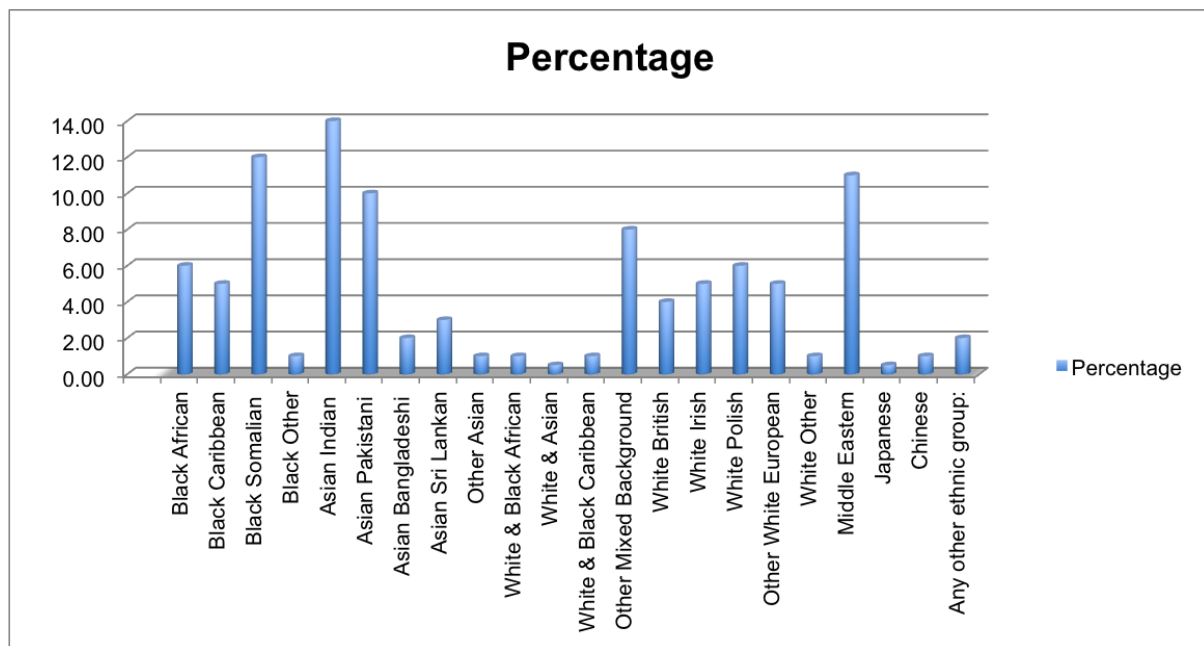
SOME STATISTICS

Living Environment Deprivation 2010: Reference - Joint Strategic Needs Analysis LBE



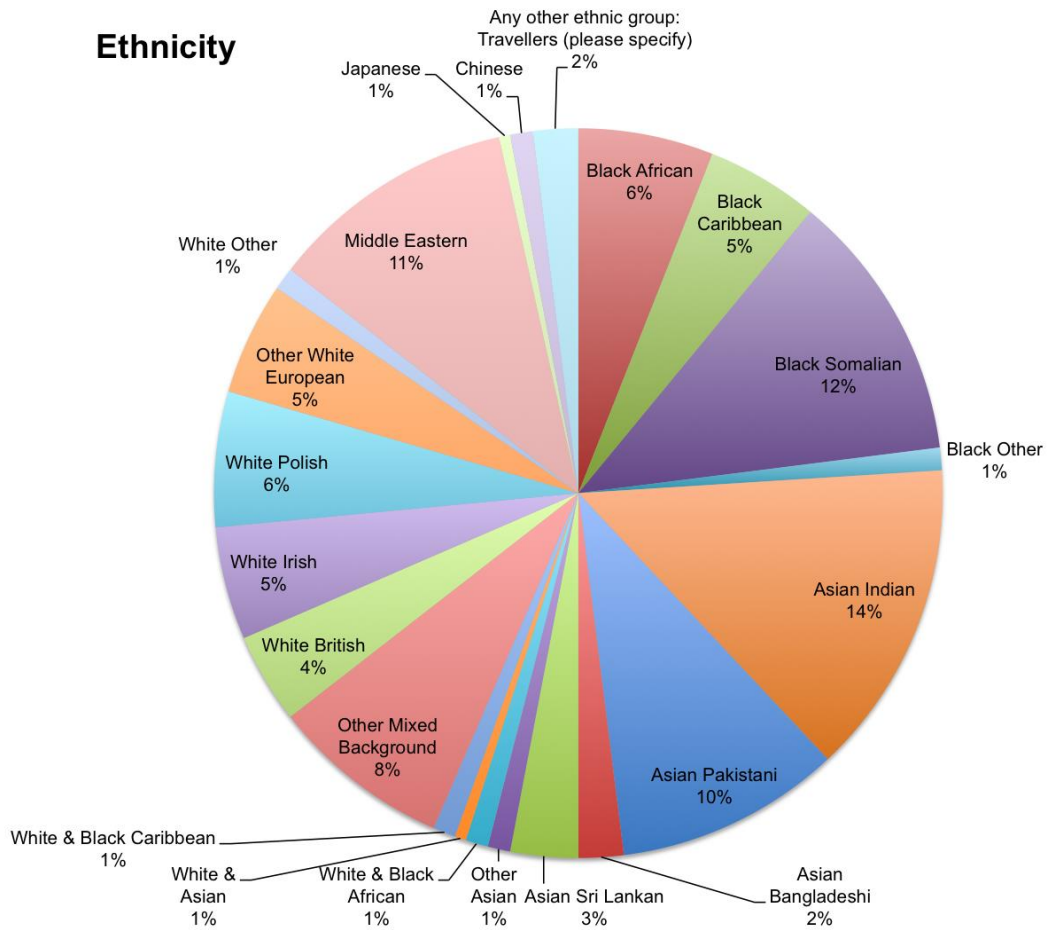


BREAKDOWN OF ENQUIRIES BY CATEGORIES

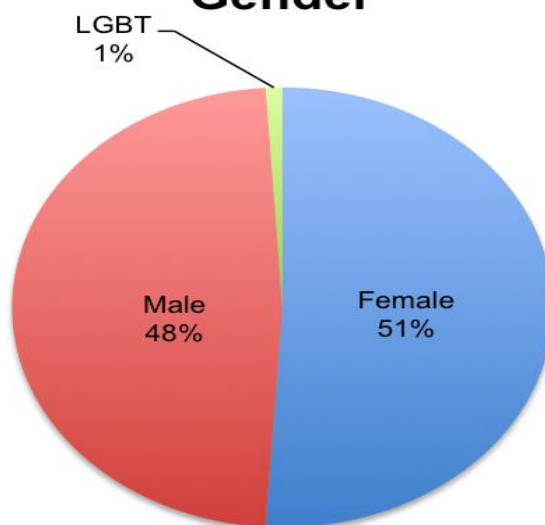


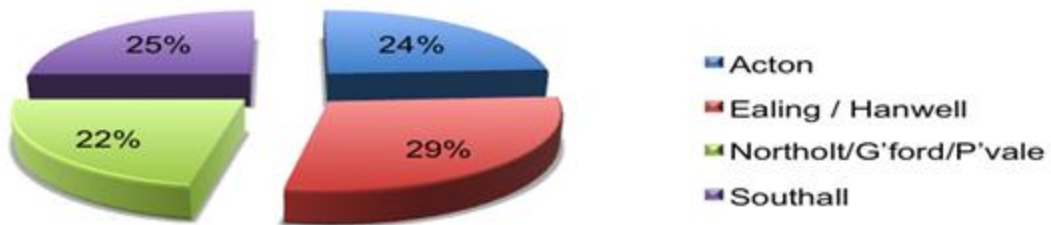
SERVICE USERS' ETHNICITIES

Ethnicity



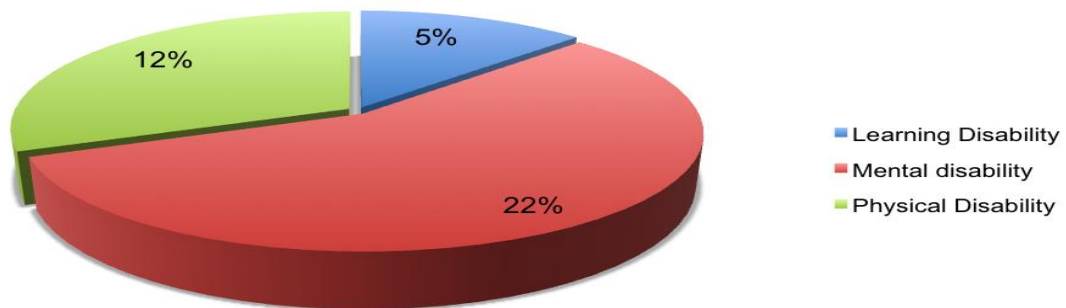
Gender



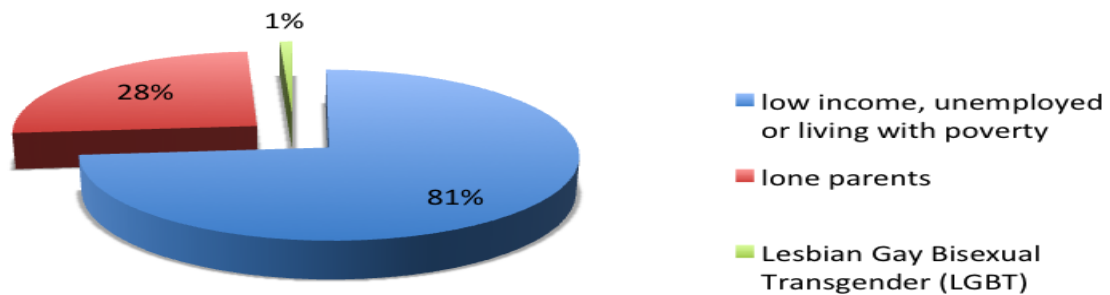


BREAKDOWN OF BENEFICIARIES BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

Disability of Beneficiaries



Other details of beneficiaries





Visit to the Lido Centre arranged by the Ealing Community Network – pictured are Disability Minister Esther McVey and MP Angie Bray. Discussion included Welfare Benefits cuts and matters relating to the Disabled etc



Meeting with Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society at the Cabinet Office to discuss matters such as cuts to legal aid etc

THE THINGS WE DO THAT CHANGE LIVES

For 50 years we have developed into a dynamic and complex charity working right across Ealing Borough with a diverse group of people. We remain focused on those in our communities who are most vulnerable and socially excluded.

These are the things that we do that change the lives of our service users, but also show how we support the wider community to help them make a difference in the lives of others.



CLIENTS ARRIVING FOR THE FREE LEGAL ADVICE CLINIC



VOLUNTEERS OFFERING ADVICE



COMMUNITY ADVICE PROGRAMME

CAP – Community Advice Programme – a Saturday drop in session

This year we have completed 20 years of excellence in service with the Community Advice Programme which is an advice clinic taking place every other Saturday on a drop in basis where local solicitors, barristers and students from the University of West London give advice to members of the public on all areas of law.

Nirma Kothari

I have been volunteering with Ealing Equality Council since April 2012. It has been wonderful and a great learning experience for me in EEC. I have completed my MBA in HR and hold CIPD qualification. Currently, I am working as an HR administrator and along with this I am doing Lantra level -3 volunteer management course. My role in organization is to support the administration manager and the director:

- Be the first point of contact for all HR-related and admin queries.
- Administer HR related documentation, such as agreement, forms, and filing.
- Ensure the relevant Casework records are up to date, accurate and complies with legislation.
- Assist in the recruitment process.
- Conduct interviews, inductions, training and on-board support for the new volunteers.
- Help in conducting timely appraisals, training and meeting with volunteers
- Manage volunteers, rotas and allocate them in different areas, like Copley Close, Hounslow Hate Crime and Greenfield Centre, Acton.
- Arrange executive committee meetings, which include sending off invitations, designing agenda and minutes.
- Help in quality mark inspections and annual report designing.

- Attend committees and meetings on behalf of organisation.
- Offer advice and information to volunteers and external organisations through face-to-face, telephone and email contact.

RECRUITMENT:

This is another year of wonderful and great learning experience for me working as an HR administrator in Ealing Equality Council. I have completed my MBA in Human Resources and hold a CIPD qualification. As an HR Administrator my duties are to manage all elements of volunteering on behalf of the Ealing Equality Council according to the organisation's needs and then meeting those needs through the recruitment, induction, placement, training and retention of volunteers.

I am extremely thankful to everyone at EEC especially Ricky and Daphne for giving me an excellent opportunity for joining the EEC team and for all the support and guidance they have given me this past year. Being at Ealing Equality Council has been a boost to my confidence and enhances my knowledge through attending different courses and training in house.

EEC always quoted that young people are our future. We recognize therefore that pathways to enable young people to connect to their communities in safe and meaningful ways will lead to enriching experiences for law students, help to build their leadership skills for the future and strengthen the sense of achievement and belonging to society, through the meaningfulness of volunteering. They bring their strengths and abilities to their civic participation and the value of that engagement accrues to the whole community.

VOLUNTEERS' PERSPECTIVES

FARAH UL-HAQUE - ADMINISTRATION:

I have been volunteering with Ealing Equality Council for a year now as an administrative assistant. I volunteer at the Lido Centre 3 days a week, and on Tuesdays I attend the Hounslow Hate Crime Support Service. I also volunteer at the CAP sessions that are held on alternate Saturdays. My duties include taking telephone calls, booking appointments, filing client records, mailing and entering client data onto the database etc.

When I started to volunteer with EEC, I had hoped to build up my CV and also gain an insight as to what it would be like to work in a legal environment, but working with EEC

has given me so much more. I am regularly sent on training courses (such as legal evidence training course where I learnt to take statements and store information legally admissible in court) and also legal seminars to be updated about recent changes in the legal system. I am certain I would not have been able to gain the experiences which I have with EEC anywhere else. In the past, when I was a receptionist people would have to first tell me their issues for me to be able to direct them to the necessary organisation that would help them with their enquiries. As an EEC volunteer I am now in the position to provide assistance.

Volunteering with EEC has helped me become more confident in reaching out to people and getting them to tell me their problems so hopefully we can help them. I have also learnt how to showcase a caring and helpful attitude to clients to show that whatever their problem is, we will try and help them to the utmost of our ability.

I am extremely thankful to everyone at EEC especially Ricky and Daphne for all the support and guidance they have given me this past year.

MUSTAF SALAH- WORK EXPERIENCE

Arriving in on the first day, I expected myself to be doing filing and miniscule things for the workers of the Ealing Equality Council; however I couldn't be more wrong. Rather than sheltering me from the front lines like traditional work experience placements, I found myself actively encouraged to engage clients and book appointments. From my experiences with the clients, Ealing Equality Council's efforts go a very long way as the majority of the clients find themselves with barely any options and in very difficult situations. The workers here are testament to the goodwill of people, as the clients often have their cases solved very effectively by solicitors and by the very special team that operate here.

From the onset, I was made to feel very responsible and feel a part of the team. As well as sharing particular responsibilities with the senior volunteers, I found myself interacting with the director of the whole council. Often students partaking in work experience find themselves detached and rarely in contact with the leader of the team they're working for, however here I communicated and I worked with the Director, Mr Ricky Singh who was a very welcoming gentleman in his own right.

Originally I intended on fulfilling this placement simply to get a taste of law and an everyday work environment, however I ended my placement not only more experienced in dealing with clients but with a very valuable understanding and a perspective on the problems the peoples of Ealing face. This serving as a constant reminder of how fortunate I am, and how grateful I should be towards the things I possess.

Upon answering phone calls, it's clear how invaluable the work done by Ealing Equality Council is to the people of Ealing. On the second day of my placement I found myself on the phone to a client on the brink of losing her home – immediately I felt responsible and upon consulting with a co-volunteer I fully dealt with the problem. This once again highlighting the trust the team bestowed upon me during my placement.

I would like to thank Ealing Equality Council for providing me with such a valuable opportunity. I would like to thank Daphne Stewart for taking me in the midst of her very busy schedule, and I would like to thank everyone else for the help and insight they've given me into law and the operating nature of a legal advice council. Lastly, I would like to wish the EEC the best of luck in its future endeavours and I haven't the slightest doubt that they will continue to provide an amazing service to everyone.

MARIE SHEEHAN – VOLUNTEER

I volunteer fortnightly on the Saturday drop-in sessions at the reception of the Lido for the Community Advice Programme (CAP). I started out as a client and was so impressed with the advice, kindness and understanding of my situation that I wanted to be able to help other people feel the same way I did after meeting the volunteers in the centre. Often the clients come in completely stressed and do not know what to do or where to start, the majority of the clients leave CAP happier than when they came in, with an understanding of their position within the law and a strategy on how to move forward.

What is great at Ealing Equality Council (EEC) is the range of backgrounds of the volunteers and their experiences to accommodate the diversity of the issues that come through the door on Saturday. Each client that comes to the Lido is assigned an appropriate advisor, or solicitor depending on their issue. Sometimes, clients have problems with literacy, and the volunteers help fill out the initial forms to ensure that the client is seen. If there are language problems, there is usually a volunteer that speaks the particular language or someone knows someone who speaks the language, everyone looks for a solution. As long as the client is inside the door of the Lido on the Saturday sessions by 13.00hrs then they will be seen. Often, the clients panic as there is so many of them waiting and are reassured by the volunteers that they will be seen unlike other services. The volunteer solicitors and advisors look after each person individually and tailor the response accordingly for each case.

My background is an ex nurse, ex midwife and I work in the pharmaceutical industry as a marketer. I do have an MBA in business from Kingston University. I enjoy volunteering at EEC/CAP and seeing the positive difference this service has on the community as a whole.

SHARON VARDI AND MICHAEL GOLDBERG – SOLICITOR:

This year, the EEC/CAP Saturday sessions have gone from strength to strength. More clients are seen each session and more clients go away feeling supported and reassured with the advice they need - all vital for the welfare of our clients. Being welcomed warmly, treated with respect and understanding and having needs assessed as soon as possible are and must always be priority aims. We hope these goals have been better achieved by the implementation of a number of improvements to the EEC/CAP Saturday sessions.

At reception, client intake volunteers are making every effort to ensure that each client receives a personal welcome to CAP and is immediately made to feel appreciated, no matter how busy the session may be. Rather than simply being asked to fill out a questionnaire, every client now benefits from a short discussion with a client intake volunteer to determine the nature of their legal issue, the degree of urgency and to identify a volunteer to assist with the appropriate level of legal expertise and knowledge. This has resulted in clients' needs being better met and CAP resources being more effectively allocated.

Further key refinements have been made to the reception area. This has resulted in a clearer reception area and a more professional working environment.

Going forward, we eagerly await the coming training sessions that are geared towards improving both the legal knowledge and the client management skills of both volunteer legal advisers and intake volunteers.

The introduction of badges for CAP volunteers has further helped by making it much easier for clients and volunteers to be identified. This is especially important when there are large numbers of clients arriving at CAP for each session and all legal advisers need to make themselves properly known to both clients and other volunteers.

From a legal perspective, these efficiencies mean that valuable time is not wasted by clients being assigned to a volunteer who may not necessarily have the right legal skills to assist the client with their problem.

With these changes, CAP is now able to manage and allocate the weekly rush of clients so as to ensure that legal advice is provided to clients as quickly as possible and that the waiting time to see a legal adviser is kept to an absolute minimum.

In the future, we would like to see more student volunteers shadowing and sitting in with EEC/CAP's experienced legal advisers and taking a more active role, for example by taking notes, preparing supervised correspondence and carrying out research.

With the introduction of these changes, and more afoot, EEC/CAP legal advisers are now able to focus more effectively on the needs of our clients and to deliver legal services more closely tailored to their needs.

And that has to be a good thing!

**LET ME WRITE SOMETHING ABOUT MY EXPERIENCE SAYS IGOR KRAVCENKO
(STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON):**

"CAP sessions and outreach surgeries by the Ealing Equality Council are an extremely wonderful opportunity for all lawyers and students to put their knowledge into practice in order to help people who are unable to pay for legal services.

Here students get invaluable opportunity to gain legal experience where they are monitored by highly professional staff with years of experience.

Personally, I always enjoyed seeing the faces of my clients that were much happier after getting the advice they needed.

CAP and EEC definitely is the best place for all! "

**MY EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH EEC/CAP AND HOW THE SERVICE BENEFITS
THE COMMUNITY: REBECCA OKORIA**

Since I commenced working with EEC/CAP in 2011 as a Volunteer Legal Adviser I have gained very valuable legal experience. I have learnt about new and controversial developments in various areas of law that has had huge impacts on the wider community. I have seen how volunteering has helped change the lives of people who are not privileged to access legal advice privately and how our input has made such a difference.

The structure of this program is very beneficial to me as an aspiring Barrister and it includes an early training session in the morning on various aspects of client interviewing, giving advice and legal research and in addition we often have a seminar after each session covering topics such as Personal Injury, Employment Law, Immigration Law, Housing, Welfare Benefits and Human Rights etc. I have found this remarkably rewarding and always look forward to the volunteering sessions.

The benefits of this service to the community is immeasurable as the sessions evidence this from the amount of people that attend the sessions fortnightly for legal advice. There has been a lot of positive feedback from the community in respect of how the service has

assisted them and clients who have used the service have also recommended it to their friends and families.

There have also been returning clients who have had a positive experience with an initial legal issue that has been resolved and have decided to return to the session for further assistance in a new legal matter.

RICK WILMS:

“Good morning sir, good morning madam. My name is Rick. How can I help you today?” This is how every Saturday morning starts at EEC and CAP. I’m eager to see what challenges will be put before me today. Tissues ready and a cup of water!

I’ve been volunteering with the EEC and CAP for just over three years now and every day delivers a new challenge and sometimes even a surprise.

My clients come from every walk of life and different cultures. I help them all! It is my duty, my calling. I love it and I love the smile on the face of a happy client. Seldom do I have to disappoint someone but this does happen and just like them it is a cross I have to bear. I’ve laughed with clients and I have cried with them too.

Contract disputes, family matters, domestic violence, crime, wills, housing and benefit matters and even an autopsy report review...I do it all.

These people need me and I am here for them, as much as I can be.

The volunteers I work with...well, they are second to none. I have at one stage or another, consulted with them and relied on their experience and insight, every one of them a hero in my eyes. Thank you. Our fearless leader, Ricky Singh, a beacon! He has guided me and nurtured me from day one. He has encouraged and believed in me and I have become a better advisor for it. Thank you Ricky! Daphne, our administrator, you are a legend, keeping us all in check. Well done and thank you!

Also, all the rest of the ladies and gentleman that work so tirelessly for the greater good and often behind the scenes, I thank you too. You all have helped me become a better advisor and I salute you.

May this charity live long and carry on doing the great work it does so that those in need of access to justice may have their day and get their justice. As for me, I will carry on doing what I love and forever be part of this great, great organisation.

MY EXPERIENCE OF WORKING AT THE EALING EQUALITY COUNCIL: ELIZABETH SALMON

I have only been at the Ealing Equality Council for 2 months and my experiences so far have been very good. I work during the week at the Lido Centre and at the Wood End Library and Children's Centre Outreach fortnightly. The atmosphere is welcoming and professionals and all of the staff are determined to provide a high standard of legal advice to the community. The work is not always easy but there is an enthusiasm for the aims the service that ensures that the work is completed to the satisfaction of clients. I have gained more confidence in my ability to advise clients within a work environment that encourages my professional advancement.

The service benefits the clients by empowering them to deal with the next stage of their issue and providing clients with options where they may have thought there were none. In recent times some of the options clients have are limited by recent cuts to benefits but often by simply talking through the issue with the client, a suitable course of action can be found.

BARBARA KARAYI:

My name is Barbara. I have been volunteering for Ealing Equality Council for over 2 years, doing 2 days a week at the Lido Centre in Ealing, and one day in Hounslow where we are partners in the Hounslow Hate Crime Support Service. This is a new project funded by Hounslow Council to all victims of hate crime, where we: engage in casework; try to assist in reporting to the police; deal with on-going issues the client is experiencing or mediate between other services on behalf of the victim.

In Ealing I am responsible for one of the outreach clinics in Copley Close on a Friday afternoon, where we often see 8 clients a week, and lots of the day to day running of the Ealing office. This involves phone advice, making appointments, discussing a case, thinking up ways to evolve our service, though we usually too busy to do much of the latter.

At the moment I am looking at client database software and how to improve the Hounslow Hate Crime Support Service and ensuring all matters at the office are attended to. Also I have contributed to the redesign of our website.

There is a constant flow of information between our volunteers, and we talk a lot, as it is important we communicate effectively with each, so that people on the different days are informed about changes, client communication and so on. We are all using what's App on our mobile phones to communicate amongst ourselves and to be sure no client is left by the wayside.

IRFAN ARIF:

Presently a Legal practice Course student I have been with the Ealing Equality Council since 2010, where I have developed personally and professionally from assisting on case work to conducting casework of my own.

I have now progressed to the role of a volunteer supervisor on the Hounslow Hate Crime Project where I work very closely with our service partners across two Boroughs to ensure smooth delivery of the project. My front line role is that of an adviser, supporting and advocating on the behalf of clients who have been victims of hate crime and other forms of discrimination.

SUMERUM LEHRI:

My name is Sumerum Lehri and I am a volunteer. I am helping to supervise the Community Advice Programme, which runs every second Saturday. My role is to allocate clients according to their issues to the designated solicitors and barristers. As I have finished my Legal Practice Course I have knowledge and experience of the legal issues surrounding clients' needs. I have to make sure that the clients and solicitors are suitably matched so as to ensure that they are properly advised in a private and confidential setting. We see over 60 clients per session and this is only possible because we have the services of around 30 legal volunteers. At the end of the sessions I ensure that the files are safely stored away.

MARIAM MASUD:

I've been volunteering at the Ealing Equality Council since 2007, when I was a law student. During this time I have done the LPC and am currently studying the Legal Executive Course.

During my time at the EEC, I have been trained in several aspects of client care. I have also been involved with a lot of different cases over the past few years. I have mainly been involved with employment law and benefit cases, along with cases other areas of law.

Currently, I am volunteering 3 times a week in the office and managing the one of our outreaches legal sessions in Southall. The outreach in Southall deals with Housing, Welfare and Employment.

I have been very happy, with my time at the EEC, as I have learned a lot of valuable things, as well as met some interesting and supportive people.

WORK EXPERIENCE: JAMAL

I wanted to volunteer my services for Ealing Equality Council (EEC) for many reasons. The first was to gain an understanding of the legal field. As an A-Level student, work experience is essential, especially when applying for university. By volunteering at the EEC, I was able to see how the Law practically can affect all of our lives. I was able to gain a stronger understanding of the legal field, experiencing a working environment. The second reason was to help those who were in need of it. I wanted to provide any help I could and by volunteering at the EEC, they enabled me to do that.

What drew me towards volunteering at the EEC was the vast range of issues they deal with. All volunteers apply themselves to each and every case, giving a service that is above average – This is done by each and every volunteer challenging themselves, to make sure the client can release the burden they carry. By working with fellow volunteers, I was able to push myself further, to overcome any mistakes I made. This was done by the support of the other volunteers at the EEC and their guidance and help. The EEC volunteers are all from different backgrounds, each providing knowledge and experience. There is so much to learn from each individual as they all bring something different to the environment.

While volunteering at the EEC, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to shadow solicitors, during their consultations with clients. This was very useful to me as I hope to pursue a career in Law. I was able to see how a solicitor works, giving up their time to provide their expertise. It was fascinating to see how the solicitor communicates with the client, extracting as much information as possible with every word meaning so much towards the client's case. For example, a client was seeking advice on how he could reduce a household bill he could not afford. The solicitor asked to see certain documents and from the documents asked specific questions. The information the solicitor gained, could be critical as it could be the factor that can win a case. This showed practical application of the Law and how selective a solicitor must be. After my experience, this has pushed me further to pursuit a career in law and has made me more determined than ever. I also carried out administrative tasks such as updating databases and booking appointments. I was able to gain new skills when booking appointments as I would have to communicate in a clear but compassionate manner, taking their circumstances into account, whether they are minor or major.

Overall, my experience at the EEC has been much more than I expected. To see how much commitment and effort the volunteers give, is astonishing. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity, to interact with many individuals. It has also changed the way I perceive the Law, as I have seen how active the law is, and how it shapes our everyday lives.

HOUNSLOW HATE CRIME SUPPORT SERVICE:

The Hate Crime Service has gone from strength to strength from its humble beginnings at the Star Centre to its new home atop of Hounslow's Treaty Centre, a befitting base as the service watches over the residents of Hounslow. Hate crime is a crime where the perpetrator commits the crime because of a dislike of the victim's characteristic, eg race, sexual orientation or gender, disability and so on.

The service is funded by Hounslow Council to offer advice, advocacy and support to victims of hate crime within the borough. This can take the form of legal advice and support, or taking the report anonymously to add to the police's record. We also do lots of publicity work, from parties in the park to sessions in children's centres.

The service now bursts in its second year of operations reaching the most vulnerable and making real changes to the lives of those affected by hate crime.

This service aims to provide support to individuals who feel they have been the target of hate crime and build capacity to address hate crime in the Borough.

The ethos of the Ealing Equality Council has been carried through service delivery in Hounslow, being underpinned by the importance of offering a service which meets the specific needs of different hate crime victims.

The work of the hate crime team is focused on providing practical advice on possible civil remedies, criminal prosecutions and other legal issues. The service's wider aim is to raise public awareness about the need to report incidents of hate crime, provide effective ways to report hate crime, increase awareness and capacity through focused outreach sessions.

The first strand of our work focuses on the team now actively assisting the Police in supporting victims through a combination of home visits while also empowering victims to make reports through our Police Station assistance service which allows victims to be properly supported within the Police Station environment.

The second strand now is through the operation of several very challenging outreach posts which have been setup throughout the Borough, working closely with our service partner organizations - ECVS, Outwest and Disability Network Hounslow - to develop links deep within the community to help those previously unreachable by a hate crime support service.

Sometimes we usually deal with less clear cut cases and advise upon areas such as employment discrimination, verbal abuse on the street, caste discrimination perpetrated by criminal gangs, and antisocial behaviour on estates. For example, one case we concluded, and hopefully for good, is that of a young partially sighted woman with two

small children, one of whom is deaf. Her neighbours kept complaining about noise, and one left racist graffiti on her door. She was threatened with eviction and asked to sign an acceptable behaviour order. With the help of the solicitor we were able to take the list of events complained about, 73 in total, and by taking out incidences of domestic sounds (not an ASBO matter), matter relating to her brother (she got him to move out), and matters which were duplicated, we were left with 2 events, both of which she had already apologised for.

So we keep on promoting and being present in Hounslow. In September we are at the Brentford Festival and the Security event at West Middlesex Hospital, and we run a monthly advice session off-site in Isleworth. We will also be publicising this service, via live interviews on local radio in the autumn – subject to local radio stations accommodating us.

Barbara Karayi

As a volunteer I visit the Hounslow Hate Crime Service once a week. The clients that we have been receiving are discrimination against race cases and mental health cases. I feel the service we are providing is surely reaching out into the community.

I believe it is an important cornerstone in the community as it helps those who are vulnerable and in need of support. The services offered by the team are beneficial to all, in particular the outreach program in building communication and trust within the community.

Hasnat Chaudary

HOUNSLOW HOMES BUDDIES:

The Hounslow Homes Buddies scheme is a ground breaking new project which has been introduced into Hounslow, by the Ealing Equality Council and Disability Network Hounslow. This project allows legal advisers to visit disabled and vulnerable people in their homes in Hounslow and deliver quality legal advice as required.

We have been running for the last few months and have a list of over 30 clients. Our cases range from form filling, explaining the procedure of claiming benefits, researching different disability types, research and liaise with different help groups within the Hounslow Borough. We have also dealt with clients who need telephone advice, who need advice about medical equipment, explanations about the NHS and other medical professional bodies. In addition to this, we have liaised with Hounslow Council and other welfare benefit professional bodies on behalf of clients.

The majority of our clients have been from the Hounslow deaf community. This has been challenging work, as out of the three caseworkers we have on this scheme, only one can communicate with sign language. However, this work has also been rewarding, as we have really been able to help them. We are actively recruiting volunteers who are able to communicate via sign language and this will help us to be better equipped to deliver this service.

I hope that we can continue helping the disabled community in this way.

Mariam Masud, Senior Legal Adviser

OUTREACH SURGERIES:

ACTON PARK CHILDREN'S CENTRE: SAPHIA GULAI

Every Monday

In April 2013 we started the East Acton Park advice clinic. So far we are seeing clients with a range of legal issues, from landlord and tenant issues, benefits and family law matters etc.

Many problems, for example, centre on possible evictions by landlords, inability to pay rent and how to access benefits. We give advice on what procedure their landlords should follow to evict them and steps they may want to take to try and resolve the issues of paying rent. Other matters we give advice on are the requirements and procedure to divorce. We advise clients in what they should take into account when thinking about a divorce and their option for mediation before taking steps to actually divorce.

I think the service we are providing is vital for the local community especially with legal aid cuts and for people with low to middle incomes, who cannot afford to pay for legal advice on a private basis.

The service we provide is very useful because we see clients time and again with other legal issues which we help with. This shows the need for our service. Oftentimes clients thank us for putting matters into perspective as many come with a lot of stress and anxiety that it is difficult for them to think clearly.

The service that Ealing Equality Council provides has assisted me immensely in developing my lateral thinking approach when tackling cases. I feel I have developed a lot in how I approach legal issues and thinking of alternative ways to solve cases.

GREENFIELD CHILDREN'S CENTRE: MARIAM MASUD

Southall UB2 5PF. Every other Wednesday

The free legal advice surgery at Greenfield Children Centre in Southall has been in running now for over a year. This surgery is run with the law firm DH Law. This surgery has taken a little time to attract clients from the local community, as the local community relies on word of mouth recommendations. We believe that changing the timings of the surgery, which was done last year, has been beneficial for us, as we have been able to

see a more diverse client base.

However, this surgery has become increasingly popular over the past year. We have a wide range of legal issues. We have given legal advice on: welfare benefits, housing and immigration, mainly, however, we have had seen an upsurge in clients who sought advice on education, consumer, mental health, and medical law.

We believe that as we have had several positive results this year that the surgery will become more popular in the year to come. We are also planning to create more awareness in the future, by leafleting in neighbouring religious buildings. This will make more clients more aware of the surgery.

WOODEND LIBRARY CHILDREN'S CENTRE: SAKINA ELMAHDI

Whitton Avenue West North Greenford, UB6: Every other Tuesday

I have been a Volunteer Legal Adviser at EEC since 2010. I was called to the Bar in 2008. As part of my work at EEC I participate in one of the many outreach projects run by EEC. We have been running an outreach project at Woodend Children Centre for over a year. It has become increasingly busy and is quite successful as the project covers many areas of law such as Housing, Welfare Benefits, Immigration and Family.

We deal with many cases. In particular Welfare Benefit is becoming increasingly complex and members of the community are turning to us for real help and support. This is because the recent changes to the law made by the government have left quite a few ambiguities and this has filtered through to the way the Local Authorities are applying the law.

This is currently leaving the clients in my view at a disadvantage, as it seems there is no transparency or clarity in the way the Local councils are applying the Law. This has now become such a problem and I believe EEC is now one of the few pioneers in conveying the voice of the community to the government.

This is of course part of our long standing mandate at EEC to promote equality and diversity by actively influencing and shaping social policy, always keeping the community at the heart of this.

Further the project is a real opportunity to develop my career. It enables me to really focus on these areas of law (above) and the community. It gives one an opportunity to conduct research on the clients we receive and the problems that they are facing. This is a very good opportunity for me as a member of EEC to develop a better understanding of the problems that the community is facing and to offer feed back to our organization.

COPLEY CLOSE CHILDREN'S CENTRE: BARBARA

Ease @ the Base, Copley Close, Hanwell, W7 1AZ. Every Friday

We have been running the Copley Close legal advice service with MTG on Friday afternoons for over a year, and it has been by far the most popular session outside of the Lido Centre. This is despite the session being held less than a mile from our HQ at Mattock Lane. We usually have all the advice slots booked up and the centre is open all year round. We chose the location as it is in one of the most deprived parts of Ealing, in the middle of a large housing association housing estate, consisting of flats in 2 or 3 storey buildings.

The venue itself is a children's centre which runs many other services so legal advice is now another speciality on offer. We focus exclusively on housing and welfare enquiries. These range from housing benefit overpayments, some potentially fraudulent, some caused by unjustified lengthy delays within the council. In one case it took the council over a year to adjust the housing benefit payment, so the client, for a year, thought the adjustment had been made but in fact was paid too much!

There is great need for our service in this area, as is clear from the amount of bookings, and quite a few of the attendees become casework clients, that is, they require follow up work.

OUTREACH SURGERIES:

Venue:	Day
Acton Park Children's Centre East Acton Lane, Acton W3 7LA	Mondays (every week) drop-in
Wood End Library Children's Centre (North Greenford) Whitton Avenue West UB6 0EE	Tuesdays (every other week) by appointment
Greenfields (Southall) Children's Centre Recreation road Southall UB25PF	Wednesdays (every other week) By appointment
Grand Union Village Dev Trust, Weaver House,	Thursdays (once a month) Drop-in

6 Higham Mews Northolt UB5 6FP	
Copley Close Children's Centre EASE – the base 187 Copley Close Hanwell, W7 1AZ	Fridays (Every week) By appointment
At MTG Offices: 7 th Floor Westgate House Westgate Road Ealing W5 1YY	BY APPOINTMENT: Mondays: Immigration Tuesdays: Employment Wednesdays: Wills, Probate, Debt Thursdays: Family + Litigation, Housing + Benefits

WEEKLY ADVICE SESSIONS BY APPOINTMENT:

Housing and Welfare Benefits (LIDO CENTRE)	Monday (Morning)
Family (LIDO CENTRE)	Monday (Afternoon)
Debt (LIDO CENTRE)	Tuesday (Morning)
Employment (LIDO CENTRE)	Tuesday (Afternoon)
All areas of law (LIDO CENTRE)	Wednesday
Housing and Welfare Benefits (LIDO CENTRE with Barwaqa)	Thursday (Morning)
Housing and Welfare Benefits (LIDO CENTRE)	Thursday (Afternoon)

All areas of law (LIDO CENTRE)	Friday
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ANU KHANDUJA:

I am a Solicitor who recently came from India to live in the UK. I was really lucky to have found the Ealing Equality Council where I was able to volunteer and help persons who are so disadvantaged.

One day my Director asked me to accompany him and the Local Borough Commander of the Metropolitan Police. We were asked to assist the police who wanted us to visit with them people living in garden sheds and outhouses in the London Borough of Ealing. As I spoke Punjabi I was able to engage in interviewing these unfortunate people who confided in us – and in me particularly as they viewed me as ‘a sister’. We were able to find out from them why they have travelled to the UK and how difficult their lives were etc.

Further, we visited the homeless people sleeping under the flyover. On both these occasions the Police was always very courteous to these people and told them that they were there to offer help and assistance – if at all possible.

The director brought these matters to the attention of both Ealing and Hounslow Councils. These councils were willing to help – especially the women and children living in sheds.

Hounslow Council’s Gurpreet Thethy met with my Director and some other EEC’s volunteers as EEC was concerned about reports of Hate Crime perpetrated against the ‘rough sleepers’. Gurpreet explained what help was being provided for those Unfortunates living under the flyover. [Some persons living under the flyover were found to be British Citizens.] All of these persons were offered help by the Hounslow Council’s staff who were liaising with the appropriate Public Authorities.

I was shocked that such conditions existed in the UK.



“Police took me and my EEC Director to Southall, where we found large numbers of people are living in sheds and in very poor conditions under the motorway-fighting and surviving in rain and snow.”

ADMINISTRATION MANAGER'S REPORT



Daphne Stewart

This year has been another successful year for EEC which celebrates its 50th year of service provision for the various communities in the LBE. Like most groups we have struggled to stay afloat. However, with the hard work of our Director Ricky Singh and his determination to make EEC a success he has gone the extra mile to ensure that he submitted as many funding application as possible to raise the funds we needed to employ further staff for the organization so as to release the pressure from both of us, enabling us to focus on other vital matters.

Members especially our Chair Kwame Akuffo, OBE (congrats) and Councillor Ian Potts our Treasurer, and most of all our volunteers, stepped in to fill the gap. We have a brilliant team of volunteers who are committed and passionate about the work we do, I admire them for their strength determination and belief in the work that EEC delivers.

I gratefully acknowledge the work and assistance of our volunteers, law students, trainees, graduates and practitioners from University of West London and from several other universities. I would like to say thank you to all of you for your continued support. It has been a pleasure working with you all, observing your progress, and seeing how clients benefit from your dedication, hard work and advice. The assistance received from all of these volunteers is priceless as it enables us to accomplish our commitment to the clients and to our service users in the LBE.

I am particularly grateful to, Barbara, Mariam, Maryam, Marie, Janet, Irfan, Linda, Farah, Elizabeth, Nirma, Roxana, Saphia, Sakina, Waleed, Enrico, Sumerum, and to all the other administration volunteers for their valuable support and assistance. I have noticed a vast increase in the administrative workload as a result of the extra pressures placed on the

advice and casework. Even so this is to be seen as a positive thing for the disadvantaged in the community as it means we are able to offer much needed assistance to them.



MTG SOLICITORS - A mutual commitment with EEC in reaching out to the local community.

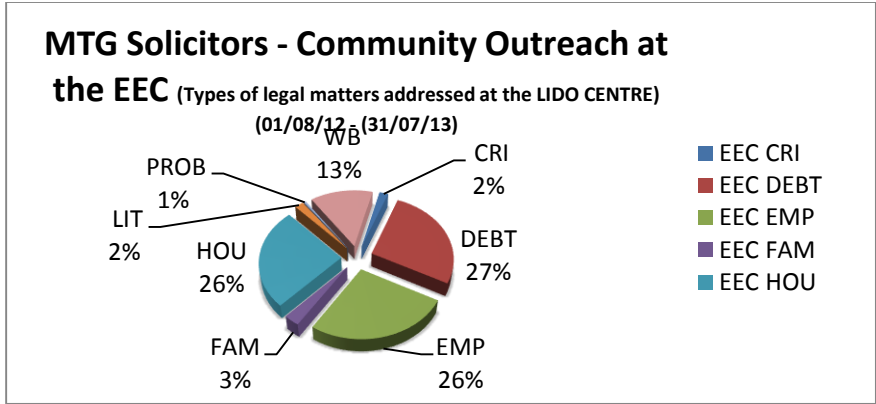
Over the last few years our support for the excellent work carried out by the Ealing Equality Centre (EEC) has been a serious and productive one.

Since the austerity cuts and the major changes within the legal aid system, we have found the need and demands for legal help has certainly increased.

Working alongside EEC has been a prosperous relationship, dealing head-on with the multitude of legal quagmires and challenges at the grassroots. From our daily to weekly **FREE** legal surgeries, we have been able to address critical legal problems in the most varied of cases.

Our commitment towards the EEC has even extended in us providing free consultation rooms and outreach facilities at our Perivale offices, enabling us to support further the EEC and their tireless work. With the major fluctuations within legal aid, our commitment and efforts have only increased, and we see a future with us “more” engaged and presenting alternative means to access legal resolve and justice.

The pie chart below shows a percentage of the type of key legal areas that we have addressed in the last 12 months. Employment, Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefit have certainly been a major demand for the locals. Although in percentages family, probate and Litigation shows a smaller percentages, the cases that we dealt with were very serious and required urgent legal attention.



Some of the departments that frequent the LIDO Centre and Copley Close amongst others are mentioned below, with comments regarding their experiences.

Housing: We believe the Ealing Equality Council at the LIDO Centre provides an invaluable service to the Public. Catering for all genders, ages and religious/ethnicity groups they are open to all who are in need of help and guidance. In my experience this guidance can prove critical where people’s livelihood and homes are usually at stake.

By running regular daily legal advice and outreach sessions, the Ealing Equality Council have broadened their scope and are now able to provide a service where Solicitors can attend on a daily basis and provide a wide variety of legal services free of charge.

In addition to the advice sessions at EEC LIDO Centre, the Ealing Equality Council has set up outreach sessions throughout the Borough. A prime example is at Copley Close, Hanwell that attracts a multitude of persons per session. These sessions are held on a weekly basis and follow-up appointments and free advice is given during these sessions in legal matters relating to housing, Benefits and debt.

We are certain that this relationship with Ealing Equality Council will continue successfully in working together in providing a friendly and proactive service to those seeking urgent legal help.

Employment: Weekly at the EEC we interview and advise clients on a wide range of employment law queries. We attend and advise the individuals completely **FREE** of charge.

We greatly enjoy advising the diverse range of clients who attend the EEC. We usually advise on issues such as discrimination in employment, unfair dismissal and unpaid wages.

We find that when we advise individuals on employment queries, the queries often lead to issues involving different areas of law as MTG have capacity to provide legal assistance to individuals across wide areas of law.

Unfortunately the government has recently abolished Legal Help for employment matters. Sadly this has meant that vulnerable individuals can no longer receive free employment legal aided advice.

Further, we also offer a '**no win no fee**' arrangement for complex or contentious matter enabling them to achieve legal justice. We feel that this is one of many ways in which we acknowledge and embrace our corporate social responsibility and make a difference to individuals in the community.

We feel that attending the Ealing Equality Council is very rewarding and it makes a difference to individuals who cannot afford the spiralling legal costs. Otherwise these individuals would be left without recourse to legal justice.

Debt: As solicitors advising on debt and insolvency, we continue to monitor problems that are brought before us by clients. As a nation, we are slowly recovering from a difficult economic climate, but one of the areas that will always remain is the harsh reality of meeting and managing our finances.

We have noticed that an increasing number of clients experience chronic difficulties with their mortgage repayments and seek advice as to the multiple options and avenues available to them within the legal sphere. Another common observation is the increasing number of insolvency-related advice that is sought and specifically people seeking advice on bankruptcy.

Unfortunately, difficulties in finances arising from circumstances such as a redundancy or simply due to the recent reduction in state benefits since April 2013 has exposed many clients to significant dangers, ranging from a loss of their home, failing to honour essential expenditures such as council tax and repayment of loans and credit cards as well as legal proceedings being issued against them by creditors.

It is absolutely key to meet the needs of clients and despite the many challenges faced by them, we are always confident that we can explore and assist with ways to overcome or mitigate these challenges.

Conclusion

As the arena for legal support continues to change, we at MTG Solicitors are delighted to work with EEC in helping and reaching out to the local community in all their essential legal needs. The ECC's work is essential for the LBE communities to have this unique voice, which gives the locals an access to real hope and real direction.



Rheian Davis: We are a local firm of solicitors who have worked with EEC over the last 4 years. They are both a professional and dedicated team.

We support the EEC in outreach surgeries at Southall, and by helping the clients who are referred to us by the EEC. We are specialists in Disability, including Mental Health support to the disadvantaged in the London Borough of Ealing and have the privilege of being awarded the accolade of Mental Health Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year 2011.

We are also the only firm outside the city and docklands to be rated in Employment Law on Super Lawyers. Our firm is currently a finalist for the Ealing 'Pride in our People' award in the business category for the work that we have done in the community. This award is in recognition of our advocacy on behalf of those who suffer, inter alia, discrimination and are victims of disability hate crime etc.

Southall Outreach Clinic

We have been working with the Southall Outreach clinic for approximately 2 years and have attended the fortnightly sessions. Our Solicitors and Trainee Solicitors have worked closely with Mariam in advising a wide range of clients in regards to their legal issues.

Our experience has been positive and has seen a wide range of issues, ranging from Housing, Family, Employment, Welfare Benefits, Homelessness, Litigation matters and debt matters. There have been clients who already have Solicitors representing them for the legal matters; therefore some clients come for more basic advice in regards to writing letters or providing them with assistance in completing applications.

On average there are at least 2/3 clients per session. There have been times where clients have failed to attend their appointments.

Although sessions are supposed to last 15 minutes per client, this is often extended due to the length of questions asked by clients and can mean that advisors are at the clinic for more the 2 hour slot.

In regards to the clinic, clients have often mentioned that they have been advised of referred by someone. In order to attract a more diverse range of clients, the clinic may need to be promoted more, particularly in light of the cuts in legal aid. Clients are often looking for more practical advice in dealing with their everyday matters or complaints, as oppose to significant legal issues.

Overall working at the Southall Outreach Clinic has meant that DH Law Ltd have managed to secure some clients. However due to the increasing number of cuts in legal aid has decreased significantly and have been unable to secure any clients from it since April 2013.



Location: Ealing, West London

Comic Relief Grant for: To increase access to quality advice for those suffering economic and social deprivation. Evaluation Report by Rose Challies

Impact of their work:

Ealing Equality Council is made up staff and volunteers with a range of skills in areas such as finance, law, equality and human rights. They work in partnership with a range of organisations to ensure they are professionally and locally linked for the benefit of their people in need.

The Comic Relief grant has helped to pay for the core costs required to co-ordinate the service and ensure training support. They described it as critical to delivery and helped to stabilise and plan on-going delivery (there are weekly schedules for people to gain specialist expertise or advice).

The personal impact is significant with high numbers of people being heard and helped through what is sometimes incredibly stressful and traumatic time for the people seeking help. The needs of people vary hugely and it is of vital importance that the volunteers are very well trained and comfortable advising people on how to address them. This means a big team of legally qualified volunteers, and a supportive peer team approach where people work together to find the best solution for those in need. It also provides invaluable experience for the volunteers, who in many cases are learning specialist fields of practice and gaining experience, helping people in a very practical way, which would otherwise be very difficult to gain.

“One case study example of this was the case of a woman and child who was referred to us by a local councillor. This woman and her son were victims of domestic violence, now living in a woman’s refuge. She asked the LBE Councillor to assist her and was referred to us. Her violent spouse wanted contact with the child, but the child refused to see him.

“The father’s solicitors were insisting that the mother allow access to the child.

“Due to the urgent nature of the case we saw the client immediately. Our volunteer family lawyer- who is a Judge - and our volunteer JP - who sits on the Family Panel at the Magistrates Court- carried out the negotiations and were able to settle the matter without any further detriment to the mother and child.

“At the same time we were also able to help the mother in training for work by helping her to deal with her immigration status via the help offered by our specialist pro bono Immigration Judge.

“Thus the outcomes were: Two persons in great need received urgent and effective legal advice joined up with other advice services- not only dealing with a serious domestic violence issue but also resolving immigration issues. This also shows the flexibility of our services and the range of senior, qualified pro bono volunteers we can deploy to assist Ealing residents.” - Rose Challies



EEC'S COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT INCLUDES:

- Membership of Advice UK
- Membership of the Advice Forum
- Membership of the Prevent Consortium
- The EEC Director is the Vice Chair of Ealing Community Network
- The EEC Director has a place on the Hounslow Community Network Executive
- The EEC Director is the Chair of the West London Network
- The EEC Director is a Member of Local Strategic Partnership Executive
- The EEC Director is a Member of the Safer Ealing Partnership Executive
- Membership of the Discrimination Law Association
- Membership of Ealing Racial Crime Advisory Group
- Membership of the Hounslow Hate Crime Steering Group
- Membership of Ealing Community Network Executive
- Membership of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum
- Membership of Ealing Community and Voluntary Service (ECVS)
- Membership of the Ealing Community and Police Consultative Group
- Membership of Greenford, Northolt and Perivale Community Forum
- Participant of the Equality and Human Rights Reference Group
- The EEC Director is a Member the Hounslow Community Network Executive
- The EEC Director is a Member of Amnesty International
- The EEC Director is a Member of Liberty
- Membership of NCVO
- Membership of ROTA

ACCOUNT SUMMARY
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating Income and Expenditure account)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2013

	Restricted funds 2013 £	Unrestricted funds 2013 £	Total funds 2013 £	<i>Total funds 2012 £</i>
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from				
Generated	74,901	21,640	96,541	121,570
Activities	-	2,513	2,513	628
Investment income	-	34	34	13
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	74,901	24,187	99,088	122,211
RESOURCE EXPENDED				
Charitable activities	52,049	38,555	90,604	79,157
Governance costs	15,232	6,622	21,854	20,202
TOTAL RESOURCE EXPENDED	67,281	45,177	112,458	99,359
MOVEMENT IN TOTAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR - NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR	7,620	(20,990)	(13,370)	22,852
<i>Total funds at 1 April 2012</i>	<i>2,440</i>	<i>40,213</i>	<i>42,653</i>	<i>19,801</i>
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 2013	10,060	19,223	29,283	42,653

Full accounts and notes available from the EEC's Office upon request

Auditors:

Atom Consulting Limited Chartered Accountants Premier House
Bathurst House 50 Bathurst Walk, Iver, Buckinghamshire SL0 9BH

TRUSTEES:

CHAIR: Mr Kwame Akuffo

VICE CHAIR: Ms. Hillary Panford

TREASURER: Mr Ian Potts

R Jain

B McNaughton

J De Souza

M Luthra

P Jones

A Hertenstein

STAFF

Director: Ricky Singh

Administration Manager: Daphne Stewart

VOLUNTEERS INCLUDE:

Nirma Kothari, Irfan Arif, Barbara Karayi, Mariam Masud, Dr Franklin Opara, Petrina Raby, Sumerum Lehri, Anu Khanduja, Roxana Preotescu, Maryam Addams, Saphia Gulaid, Divya Verma, Navdeep, Charmaine Bird, Sagunthala Vicknakumaran, Farah-ul-Haque, Aisha Mohammed, Sakina Elmahdi, Harinder Notta, Poonam Sehmbi, Jyoti Kumar Janet Christie, Caroline Clarke, Hom Bista, Kosar Mohamed, Linda Burke, Gori Singh, Hasnat Chaudhary, Vipul, Susan Gormley, Hardeep Kang, Rick Wilms, Bernard Andonian, Teni Shahiean, Sophie de Canson, Michael Goldberg, Sharon Vardi, Joanna Cargill, Tazneem Hussain, Gurminder Saini, Fadi Farat, Linda Hunting, Anthony Nowacki, Naziana Nazeerally, Luke Foster, Sian, Marilyn Willows, Rebecca Durojaiye, Georgi Korchev, Anna Roxanna, Zaryana Dobosh, Iscelyn Richards, Najeeb Ullah, Adetutu Akinlosotu, Jessica Basterfield, Nazim Shah, Hannah Jones, Daniella Gluck, Renu Thacker, Nirja Gulati, Ana Paula Clares, Karon Monaghan QC, Saphia Gulaid, Kelvin Mawer, Kornelia Kaluza, Kristiyana, Frances Shepherd, Jim and Terri Wong, Nathalie Meeajun, Amarpreet Dhanja, Preema, Charles, Samyayed, Judy Cunningham, Jo DeSouza, Poojan Shah, Selina Oregon, Ian Potts, Rebecca Okoria, Marie Sheehan, Waleed Ali, Sian-Marie Jefferies, Elizabeth Salmon, Igor Kravcenko, Henri Felix, Susan Wright, Kuljeet Dobe, Enrico, Simon, Agatha De Canson, Paul, Matthew, Kuljeet Dobe

Acknowledgements

Without the help of our partners and funders, executive committee members and volunteers, EEC would not be able to make the difference it does in the lives of the people that use our services. We would like to say thank you to everyone for their support over the last year, but most importantly to the volunteers who have given freely of their time to help change the lives of others

Ealing Council for Voluntary Services (ECVS): Andy Roper CEO, Antony Bewick-Smith and Staff Members Laura and Peter; Malik Asim Saeed & Rifat Sheikh, MTG Solicitors and Staff; University of West London Law School (UWL); Kwame Akuffo, OBE, UWL; Hilary Panford, UWL; Josephine De Souza, Barrister, 12 Old Square Chambers; Bernard Andonian, Gulbenkian Andonian Solicitors; Johanna Cargill, Andrews-Monroe Solicitors; Hardeep Kang, Barrister; Teni Shahiean, Solicitor, Gulbenkian Andonian Solicitors; Sophie de Canson, Solicitor; Michael Goldberg, Solicitor; DH Law Solicitors; University of West London Law School; Susan Gormley; Tazneem Hussain, Solicitor; Renu, Solicitor; Fadi Farat, Solicitor; Saphia Gulaid, Solicitor; Rheian Davies, Solicitor & Mental Health Lawyer of the year 2011; Professor Peter John, Vice-Chancellor of UWL; Professor Malcolm Davies & Jane Stevens, Ealing Law School; Naz Shah, Hillingdon Law Centre; Cllr A Kapoor; Cllr A Iskanderian; Cllr A Gulaid; Cllr I Potts; Cllr R Dheer; Cllr J Bell; Cllr N. Bakhai; Cllr S Manro; Martin Smith, CEO LBE; Matthew Booth LBE; External Funding Team LBE: Calum Murdoch; Safer Ealing Staff lead by Susan Parsonage and Mark Wiltshire; Outwest: Chris Boucher; John Seer- Disability Network; Sumir & Barbara Karayi of 1E, Efficient IT Solutions; Angie Bray MP; Steven Pound MP; Virendra Sharma MP; Kuljeet Dobe, Barrister, and Karon Monaghan QC, Matrix Chambers.

This Annual Report was compiled by Nirma Kothari

A large print version available by request

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Community
Legal Service



CabinetOffice



Ealing



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