

Justice Together Initiative Consultancy Brief - Local Authority learning around funding for immigration legal advice

1. Background and Context

In May 2023 we launched [‘It’s a no brainer: Local Authority funding for immigration legal advice in the UK’](#) a report by Jo Wilding, exploring the extent and nature of existing Local Authority funding and commissioning for immigration legal advice in the UK. The report details case studies of the different ways in which Local Authority funding schemes can be set up. We commissioned this report as we were keen to explore how Local Authorities could fund immigration advice, but first, we wanted to get a clear overview of existing funding. What was surprising is the level of immigration advice that is being funded across the UK by Local Authorities, and also how this varies significantly from area to area. Some Local Authorities are unaware they are ‘allowed’ to fund this type of advice whilst others are funding significant amounts.

At the report launch event, 160 people signed up to attend, of which 110 attended; there were a large number of Local Authorities from across the UK. Local Authorities were extremely keen to connect and learn more about how they could fund immigration legal advice. Many Local Authorities are struggling to support people who, with legal advice, may be able to regularise their stay and access mainstream benefits or find employment. For Local Authorities, the case is made very clear how legal advice can save significant amounts of money but many are unsure how they would go about funding the advice.

Since the report's launch, Local Authorities have been in touch to learn more about how they can fund legal advice and have asked for connections with other local Authorities doing this work. Jo has also been invited to speak to a number of Local Authorities about the findings.

The report has revealed not only the ways in which Local Authorities can fund immigration legal advice but also the significant appetite amongst Local Authority workers to learn from their peers how they can do this.

2. Activities

We want to create a series of peer learning spaces, for Local Authorities and for organisations delivering immigration legal advice or commissioning it to come together and share learning about how Local Authorities can fund and support immigration legal advice.

We are looking to recruit a consultant to do the following activities:

- Review Local Authorities who were part of the research and/or have shown an interest to develop this work, categorising them based on those that are more expert and those who are still on the journey and would like to learn more. Utilise information from Jo’s research, attendee lists from the launch event and follow-up emails, and contacts from the Local Government Association (LGA), Convention on Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Welsh Local Government Association, Northern Ireland Local Government Association and the NRPf Network.
- Set up a dissemination plan for the No Brainer research, and ensure it is disseminated to relevant networks, and opportunities to speak about the research are identified, including writing a blog for the research and separating out the case studies from the research so they can be used as stand-alone documents.

- Set up a learning exchange programme to share learning between Local Authorities and organisations working with Local Authorities to deliver legal advice. Identify interested people primarily from Local Authorities for a learning exchange; this could be an open advertisement with clear criteria and a panel to decide.
- Work with Local Authorities to develop a maturity framework assessment tool, which Local Authorities can utilise to see how ready they are to fund and support the delivery of immigration advice.

There will be some flexibility with these activities, especially around the form of the learning exchange, which will be based on a needs assessment. It could be a mentoring or buddying system, action learning sets, or regular meetings set up to share learning.

3. Outputs and Outcomes

The outputs of the project would be:

- A list of Local Authorities and categorisation as to whether they are funding immigration legal advice, interested in doing so or not interested.
- An established learning exchange programme, for peer-to-peer support and learning.
- A maturity framework assessment tool for Local Authorities, around readiness to fund immigration legal advice.
- Blog and separated out case studies on Local Authorities funding immigration legal advice.

The outcomes would be:

- Local Authorities report increased knowledge and learning around funding immigration legal advice.
- Local Authorities report a readiness to start funding immigration legal advice
- Local Authorities funding immigration legal advice (who had not done so before)
- Organisations delivering immigration legal advice working together with Local Authorities

4. Budget and timeline

We have a total budget of £10,000 for this work, which includes the delivery of a learning exchange programme.

We do not have a set timeline for the work, but we would like it to start as soon as possible, and take up to one year.

5. Consultancy - qualities, experience and skills

The initiative is very much driven by its [values](#). We would expect the consultant/s to be in agreement with those values and be led by them in their work.

In assessing applications, we will look for:

- Knowledge of Local Authorities and how they work
- Knowledge of Immigration advice and how it is funded
- Experience of organising and running inclusive workshops or learning programmes
- Experience of collaborating with partners and stakeholders to co-produce
- Understanding and interpretation of the brief and its objectives

People with lived experience of the issues related to immigration, asylum or nationality system and the intersection with structural racism are particularly encouraged to apply.

6. Application Process

Applications will be assessed by an internal commissioning panel.

Please submit your CV and a written proposal in a word format no longer than three sides of A4 to Jennifer Burgess vacancies@thelef.org detailing:

- How you meet the required qualities, experience and skills.
- Approach to the work.
- Rough budget including: staffing costs (e.g. consultants time), travel expenses, administrative costs. Include VAT, or if VAT is not chargeable specify this.
- Two referees.

Proposals should be submitted by 9am on the 9th January 2024

We expect interviews will be held online on the 24th January 2024 where shortlisted applicants will be invited to present their approach to delivering the work.

Please contact Hazel Williams hazel.williams@justice-collaborations.org.uk if you have any questions. Please note Hazel will be working through December but on leave from the 1st – 8th January and unable to answer queries.