

Advice Workforce Development Programme

Call for tenders to undertake research investigating the pay and conditions of social welfare advice workers in London.



Introduction

Thank you for your interest in our call for tenders, on what we believe to be an exciting piece of work.

In 2022, a group of London-wide funders, including Trust for London, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and the London Legal Support Trust (LLST) commissioned a piece of consultative research to gather potential remedies to the skills gaps within the capital's advice sector. This work built on previous research which identified a systemic advice skills gap in the sector which needed addressing as a matter of critical importance. The findings of the 2022 research provided the partners with a clear list of recommendations to work towards as part of our commitment to the social welfare advice sector in London. You can see this research [here](#).

This work falls under our [Advice Workforce Development Programme](#) (AWDP), an area of work supported by a London-wide funder initiative, [Propel](#), a partnership between City Bridge Foundation, Trust for London, National Lottery Community Foundation, Legal Education Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and the Greater London Authority, which seeks to address the root causes of the issues facing civil societies in London. The AWDP focuses on addressing the multitude of workforce issues impacting recruitment, training, progression, and retention across the advice sector. When we say the advice sector, we are referring to the civil society organisations who provide practical support, assistance and advocacy, or representation to people facing various challenges including legal, financial, and social issues. Many of the individuals and families these organisations work with are facing the effects of discrimination, poverty and inequality. Advice organisations will often also seek to identify emerging themes in their caseload, so they are able to use the law in more strategic ways to address an issue at a wider level.

The social welfare advice sector has many challenges, with the demand for services increasing, while the resources remain the same, or in some cases, are decreasing. Our research has identified the difficulty for the advice sector to develop an effective and sustainable career pathway which attracts and builds the workforce. One of the recommendations to remedy this, is to develop and advocate for improved pay scales and conditions. This document outlines a call for tenders to undertake research into current salaries and conditions within the advice sector and produce a report with draft pay scales and conditions which can be used to inform activities within the advice sector, funding sector and beyond.

This work is being overseen by a task and finish group of the Advice Workforce Development Programme, and is made up of sector bodies, funders, and legal professionals.

The research

There are two elements to this research: pay (salaries) and conditions (including benefits).

Pay

The purpose of this part of the research is to collate and analyse existing data available on pay in the advice sector ('sector' hereafter) and wider charity sector in London. This includes looking at datasets held by Advice UK, Citizens Advice, Money & Pensions Service, the Office for

National Statistics, and other relevant bodies. The researcher will also need to consider other relevant parts of the charity sector and local government pay scales. We anticipate this research to be highly technical as it requires the ability to understand datasets and unpack the narrative behind them. The researcher will then be required to use their findings to produce a paper with a draft pay scale for the advice sector. We are open to hearing alternative methods that the researcher might propose in relation to the task of obtaining, collating and analysing data about pay in the sector.

Conditions

The second part of this research is to produce a report on the conditions for people working in the sector currently and explore how these conditions can be improved. This could involve primary and secondary research looking at conditions in the charity sector and to gather data from publicly available sources. We envisage this report to be broken down as follows:

- Statutory conditions (such as maternity leave; workplace pension scheme, etc.);
- 'Extra conditions' (such as additional leave above statutory entitlement; compressed hours, etc.);
- Benefits (distinct from conditions and covers things such as a bike scheme or discounted gym membership);
- Reasonable adjustments and access to work; and
- Wellbeing (initiatives which are separate from Employee Assistance Schemes which may be used in the sector to help manage stress, address vicarious trauma, etc.).

The researcher may choose to facilitate a workshop on conditions and benefits to enable the working group to build on the initial ideas, but we are open to the researcher proposing appropriate alternative methodological approaches commensurate with the size and scope of the project.

Following the research

A number of datasets already exist in respect of advice sector pay. This will be the first time, however, that data from different sources have been collated, and compared with other parts of the charity sector and local government pay scales. Less research has been undertaken into conditions as defined above.

These two key pieces of work will enable the wider Advice Workforce programme to produce onward guidance: (a) for advice organisations on how their approaches to pay and conditions may improve their ability to recruit and retain staff and how they can make the case to funders for supporting this; and (b) for funders and commissioning bodies on the role they can play in addressing a particular challenge in the recruitment and retention of staff within the sector. Finally, your work will contribute to the wider activities of the programme, including the building of organisational capacity, and development of a London-wide Advice Strategy.

Criteria

We are looking for a researcher(s) with the following skills, knowledge, and experience:

- Extensive research experience in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, including experience of working on projects from inception through to completion.
- Ability to write in a clear, concise, and accessible manner;
- Knowledge of the legal advice sector;
- Experience of working in or with civil society organisations, or able to demonstrate an understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing such organisations;

- Ability and willingness to develop and maintain relationships with organisations and funders committed to improving access to justice;
- Ambitious, with the ability to dream big whilst remaining focused on the potential change which could happen in the present;
- Experience of presenting at and facilitating meetings/workshops in an engaging way;
- Ability to give and receive honest and constructive criticism on a project;
- Ability to reflect individually and in a group on actions and approach; and
- Exceptional organisational skills and experience of project management.

We know that one person is unlikely to meet all the criteria above, hence our openness to tenders from a team of individuals.

Eligibility to tender

We welcome tenders from organisations with the appropriate experience and expertise, including not-for-profit organisations, private companies, and universities. We also welcome tenders from individuals (or a team of individuals) who can demonstrate that they have the skills, capacity, and infrastructure to undertake all the required elements of this research project.

The contract for this research will be between the London Legal Support Trust and the successful applicant. Full terms and conditions will be provided upon offer of the contract.

Budget

Based on our experience of commissioning research, the indicative budget for this work is £17,500. As part of your application we will require a breakdown of costs and number of days you will need to complete the work.

Timeline

We expect this research to commence from the week commencing 20 May. We have outlined, below, an illustrative timeline which we are working towards. Final dates for deadlines will be discussed with the successful researcher.

Milestone	Date (all 2024)
Call for tenders	Friday 15 March
Deadline for tender submissions	Midday on Thursday 11 April
Shortlisted applicants notified	By Friday 19 April
Interviews with shortlisted applicants	Weds 1 May – Weds 8 May
Researcher appointed	By Friday 10 May
Work commences	w/c 20 May
Presentation of methodology to the task and finish group	By Thursday 6 June
Presentation of research findings to the task and finish group followed by workshop on conditions and benefits	September
Written feedback on first draft	End-September
Deadline for final draft	Mid-October
Final reports published	Thursday 31 October

Process for tendering

To tender for this contract, we require you to send us the information below by midday on Thursday 11 April 2024:

1. Proposal

The proposal must be no more than 2000 words and should address the following:

- your interest in this research and your motivation for tendering;
- a summary of your understanding of our requirements for this research;
- proposed approach to undertaking this research. Please cover how you will use quantitative and qualitative research methods for this project and give examples of the datasets you will examine;
- skills and experience. Outline your skills and experience as a researcher and how it is relevant to this tender, focusing on the requirements provided in the criteria above;
- details of proposed research team, their roles and relevant experience;
- any specific risks or challenges you foresee and how you might mitigate these;
- any actual or potential conflicts of interest you/research team members may have;
- questions for the London Legal Support Trust. Please tell us what questions you have for us or what additional information you would need from us to be able to undertake this research.

Your proposal should also include links to previously published research reports you have produced.

2. Budget

A preliminary breakdown of costs and number of days you will need to complete the work. Where appropriate, please explain the rationale behind your allocation.

3. CVs

The CVs of all the people who will be involved in this work.

4. References

Details of two referees who can comment on your experience relevant to this tender. This should include their name, contact email, their profession, and your relationship to them. We will request references as part of the due diligence process before any contract is drawn-up.

The documents at 1-4 above should be sent as separate files in one email to christopher@llst.org.uk by midday on 11 April 2024, with the subject line "Pay and Conditions research tender – [name of applicant]".

Contact

If you have any questions about this tender including the indicative budget please contact Chris Scutt at the London Legal Support Trust via email at christopher@llst.org.uk.

The London Legal Support Trust
11 March 2024