



THE JUSTICE FIRST FELLOWSHIP

Supporting the next generation of
social welfare lawyers to deliver justice
for communities

The
Legal
Education
Foundation


Justice First
FELLOWSHIP

INTRODUCING THE JUSTICE FIRST FELLOWSHIP



The Legal Education Foundation exists to help people better understand and use the law. We believe that this is fundamental to supporting civil society, economic development and democracy. Many people are unable to access the information, legal advice and representation they need. Communities must have talented and committed social welfare lawyers who are able to work in innovative ways to address this gap.

In 2013, the Foundation established the Justice First Fellowship – a scheme to provide fully-funded training contracts, pupillages and wider development opportunities for the next generation of specialist social welfare lawyers. Fellows spend two years working in leading UK organisations, which act as hosts and enable them to learn alongside the best in the profession. In partnership with a growing number of sponsors and host organisations, the scheme has now placed 53 Fellows who are already meeting legal needs in communities across the UK.

The Foundation and its partners are keen for the scheme to grow in scale and prestige so as to help more people build long-lasting and effective careers as leaders in this vital field of legal practice. We hope you find this brochure a helpful introduction to these subjects and possibly even the start of a rewarding and long-lasting involvement in the scheme.

Matthew Smerdon
Chief Executive, The Legal Education Foundation

WHY IS SOCIAL WELFARE LAW SO IMPORTANT?

Social welfare law is a broad term covering areas such as debt, housing, employment, welfare benefits, community care, immigration and asylum. It is often referred to as ‘the law of everyday life’.

Recent changes to legal aid and pressure on local authority budgets mean that vulnerable people are increasingly unable to access legal help in these areas, even when they need it the most.

Legal advice and representation are nevertheless crucial to addressing disadvantage, helping people to take more control over their lives and to secure fair treatment and protection.

Leaving legal problems unresolved contributes to a range of adverse consequences, such as poor mental health, and prevents progress in many areas of life.

Another consequence of reduced public budgets is that opportunities for aspiring social welfare lawyers to complete compulsory training are scarce, prompting concerns about how the next generation of specialists will emerge. The Justice First Fellowship helps to address this by enabling lawyers to complete their training and go on to a career in which they use the law to bring about positive change in people’s lives.



Justice First
Fellows, 2017-19

ARE YOU A FUTURE JUSTICE FIRST FELLOW?

If you are passionate about using the law to deliver social justice, and you are looking for a fantastic opportunity to complete your training and move on to the next stage in a career advancing access to justice, then the Justice First Fellowship is for you.

You need to:

- ✓ Have passed the Legal Practice Course (or Bar Professional Training Course for Pupillage) in England and Wales, or its equivalents in Scotland and Northern Ireland;
- ✓ Be able to demonstrate passion for access to justice, along with the highest level of skills and aptitude and the potential to drive innovation in future legal practice; and
- ✓ Be willing and able to commit to serving a two-year term as a Fellow.

Competition for places is intense, with only the very best and most committed going on to be selected.

While completing the Fellowship, Fellows also work with their host organisation to develop a project that will help advance access to justice. This is a crucial part of the scheme, helping Fellows to gain programme development experience and offering the hosts additional capacity to open up new areas of work and further meet legal needs.

Thanks to the support of BPP University, Fellows access free places on the Professional Skills Course at BPP campuses in England and Wales.

Fellows are also twice a year brought together to receive additional support and training, and to feel part of a movement of lawyers dedicated to serving their communities.

If you would like to apply to become a Justice First Fellow, find out more at jff.thelegaleducationfoundation.org

SPOTLIGHT ON CURRENT JUSTICE FIRST FELLOWS



Without the Justice First Fellowship, and support from other organisations which champion social mobility and diversity in the legal sector, I very much doubt I would be where I am now with my legal career.

Barbara Likulunga
Avon & Bristol Law Centre 2015–2017

The project element to the Justice First Fellowship Scheme is indispensable. For mine, I am producing a free on-line toolkit that guides parents through the process of challenging their child's exclusion from school. I hope the toolkit will mean more children are given the chance to continue their education.

Alex Temple
2016–18



I've only ever been interested in social welfare and equality law, civil liberties and human rights. The Justice First Fellowship Scheme provides everything you could possibly want (and more) to forge a career in these areas. What's not to love?

Sami Halpern
Islington Law Centre 2016–2018



IS YOUR ORGANISATION A FUTURE JUSTICE FIRST FELLOW HOST?

Justice First Fellows are hosted by some of the best social welfare legal organisations in the country. Organisations go through a rigorous selection process and have to demonstrate that they:

- ✓ Are experts in their areas of social welfare law
- ✓ Do work that is of national significance
- ✓ Are innovative, effective, and think creatively about future sustainability
- ✓ Meet the requirements to supervise a trainee and have a strong training ethos

Host organisations receive a grant from The Legal Education Foundation that fully covers the salary, supervision and associated costs over two years.

The project component of the scheme has already helped current hosts to open up new areas of work and develop interesting new models that could go on to employ Fellows at the completion of the scheme.

The recruitment process for 2019 will soon be underway.

If you would like to host a Justice First Fellow, find out more at jff.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/host-opportunities

IS YOUR ORGANISATION A FUTURE JUSTICE FIRST FELLOW SPONSOR?

The majority of Fellowship funding is contributed by The Legal Education Foundation, with our Governors committing £3.8 million of the Foundation's resources so far.

In order to raise the profile, prestige and reach of the scheme, the Foundation has also been working with sponsors in a variety of ways and is keen to develop these partnerships further.

Sponsoring a Justice First Fellowship is not just about helping promising lawyers to train in their chosen field. Through supporting a Fellow's work, sponsorship directly helps the hundreds of people that

Fellows serve in the course of their training. It is a clear way for sponsors to contribute to their communities and to demonstrate a commitment to the role that the legal services sector plays in social justice, both now and in the future.

If you would like to sponsor a Justice First Fellow, please contact us at info@thelef.org

£5 million committed to the scheme to date

Below are the organisations that have hosted Fellows so far:



HOW SPONSORS CONTRIBUTE

The Foundation has developed five principal ways for sponsors to be involved:

1

Targeted Host Support

This ties financial support from a sponsor to a Fellowship at a specific host organisation. It is an excellent way to leverage support and build on an existing relationship with a legal advice partner.

2

Regional Consortium

This model combines contributions from a group of law firm sponsors in a particular region to fund a Fellowship at a local organisation. For example, this has been done in Birmingham and Bristol.

3

Single or Regular Donation

An organisation can simply make a general contribution to the overall Fellowship fund.

4

Corporate/Law Firm Partnership

This could be a funding partnership between a company and the law firms it uses or it could be a direct contribution by a company.

5

Part Sponsorship by Legal Aid Firm Hosts

Under this model, legal aid firms part sponsor a Fellow at their firm.

All the costs of administering the Fellowship scheme are covered, and so any sponsorship goes directly towards putting Fellows in place in local communities.

If you would like to enquire about sponsoring a Justice First Fellow, contact us at info@thelef.org

SPOTLIGHT ON A JUSTICE FIRST FELLOWSHIP SPONSOR

Herbert Smith Freehills is a leading global law firm with 24 offices worldwide. It has generously sponsored a Justice First Fellow at Child Poverty Action Group.

‘In light of the extensive cuts to legal aid in the UK, the need for social welfare lawyers has never been greater. If we are going to continue to provide meaningful access to justice then investing in home-grown, talented individuals who are passionate about this area is the most logical way forward.

As part of the Fellowship, the Fellows undertake a project that aims to advance access to justice. We see this as an excellent addition to the training contract with the potential to create real change.

We are delighted to have sponsored a Fellow at our long-term pro bono partner Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and are looking forward to working together to strengthen our relationship further. We wish all the Fellows the best in embarking on their Fellowship and look forward to watching them flourish – who knows they may well be our pro bono partners of the future!’

Emma Cooke
Head of Citizenship

‘In light of the extensive cuts to legal aid in the UK, the need for social welfare lawyers has never been greater’

OUR JUSTICE FIRST SPONSORS

Here are the organisations who have provided support.

Foundations



A B Charitable Trust



Universities



Bar



Banks



Charitable Trust

Law Firms



THE GLOBAL SUCCESS OF SOCIAL WELFARE LAW FELLOWSHIPS

Social welfare law fellowships are not just a UK funding innovation. They build on a global movement of organisations working to increase access to legal advice and representation for vulnerable people.

In the US, **Equal Justice Works** has put public interest law centre-stage and helped to create a new generation of social justice lawyers who are passionate and powerful advocates in their chosen areas. It now has a range of programmes for every stage of legal education to train lawyers, develop their practice, and give them the experience to become effective public interest advocates.

Worldwide, **The Bertha Foundation** is sponsoring emerging lawyers with two-year Be Just Fellowships to train in public interest law. The aim is to create a career track in social welfare law and to build a network of institutions where beginning lawyers can become part of a global movement of social-impact law.



THE FUTURE

With little prospect of an increase in funding for legal aid in the near future, social welfare law urgently needs to develop support from new channels.

The Justice First Fellowship is now beginning its fifth round, and we hope to continue expanding the number of Fellowships to help enable social welfare lawyers meet the growing legal needs in their communities.

Most of all, we look forward to seeing our Fellows go on to long and effective careers in which they make a difference to peoples lives.

We look forward to seeing our Fellows go on to long and effective careers in which they make a difference to peoples lives.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Apply

If you would like to apply to become a Justice First Fellow, find out more at jff.thelegaleducationfoundation.org

Enquire

If you would like to enquire about sponsoring a Justice First Fellow, contact us at info@thefef.org

Host

If you would like to host a Justice First Fellow, find out more at jff.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/host-opportunities

JUSTICE FIRST FELLOWSHIPS IN THE NEWS

Law Society 04/08/16

Being part of the first cohort of the Justice First Fellowship scheme... enabled me to qualify as a solicitor in an area of law I am passionate about.

Helen Roberts

Law Society's Gazette,
My Legal Life – 08/01/18

The Greenwich Migrant Hub... focuses on legal rights and integration within the community.

Barbara Likulunga,
Avon & Bristol Law Centre



@SWLLawCentres

Well done to our @The_LEF trainee #Justice1stFellow @cassareep on passing her @BPPLawSchool advocacy exam! One step closer to qualification! #lawcentrestoday
19/01/18

The Times – 28/06/17

One more step is needed in decriminalising homosexuality – Men whose lives are blighted by convictions for importuning must be allowed to have their criminal records expunged.

Katy Watts



@YLALawyers

Congratulations to Young Legal Aid Lawyers vice-chair @SiobhanTWard on your new job; and to @gmlawcentre for hiring an excellent trainee! Great to see another YLAL member benefit from @The_LEF Justice First Fellowship #LegalAidTeam
24/02/18

The Times – 18/05/17

Swingeing cuts to legal aid have left high-street firms concentrating on survival rather than offering training contracts....One programme, though, appears to be swimming against the tide. Now in its third year, the Justice First Fellowship scheme provides a vital training route for the next generation of social welfare lawyers, and it is already bearing fruit.

Legal Voice – 12/01/18

15 new trainee solicitors recruited to 15 leading social justice organisations... as of this month, TLEF has supported 52 Fellowships.

Legal Cheek – 03/08/17

In 2014, the first cohort of Justice First Fellows (JFFs) started their training contracts at social welfare law firms and NGOs. JFFs are funded by The Legal Education Foundation to get people from diverse backgrounds into social welfare law.

Ollie Persey

08/12/17

Sustainable justice first.

Matthew Smerdon,
TLEF Chief Executive,
New Law Journal



@EmilyMacLoud

Very lucky to have @ParissaNajah join us at the @BarProBonoUnit before she goes on to do even bigger and better things at @ChambersTrinity #Justice1stFellow. Thank you @The_LEF!
13/01/18

Legal Voice – 21/03/17

Legal expenses insurance is generally sold as an add-on to household or motor insurance policies. As a result, many people will not even know that they have it, yet it could provide them with access to legal advice which they otherwise could not afford.

Barbara Likulunga

Law Society's Gazette,
My Legal Life – 16/08/17

I work mainly with victims of domestic violence. What I can give to them, I wouldn't get with other areas of law.

Nadia Hussain

Find out more about the Justice First Fellowship
and The Legal Education Foundation at
jff.thelegaleducationfoundation.org

Follow us on Twitter at **[@the_LEF](https://twitter.com/the_LEF)**

Contact us on our website at
thelegaleducationfoundation.org/contact-us

March 2018