

The logo for The Low Commission, featuring a solid dark blue square with the text "The Low Commission" in white, sans-serif font.

The Low  
Commission

The logo for LAG (the access to justice charity), featuring the letters "LAG" in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the letters, the text "the access to justice charity" is written in a smaller, grey, sans-serif font.

LAG  
the access to  
justice charity

**Legal and advice services**  
**what next?**

# Low Commission



**LAG**  
the access to  
justice charity

***“Meets the need for the public, particularly the poor and marginalised, to have access to good quality independent advice and legal support;***

***Is informed by an analysis of the impact of funding changes and by an assessment of what can realistically be delivered and supported in the future; and***

***Influences the thinking and manifestos of the political parties in the run-up to the general election in the UK and the 2016 election in Wales.”***



# Background to the Low Commission

## Legal aid cuts in cases from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013

Area of law	Cases
Family	232,500
Debt	105,050
Employment	24,070
Housing	53,200
Welfare Benefits	135,000
Immigration	53,290
Other	19,890
<b>Total</b>	<b>623,000</b>

Ref: Figures taken from the government's updated impact assessment June 2012 see p125 Austerity Justice, pub LAG



# Demand for advice

- London has higher levels of poverty than the rest of England – 38 per cent compared to 29 per cent;
- Eight of the ten English local authorities with the highest rates of child poverty are in the capital;
- London accounts for 75 per cent of households in temporary accommodation in England;
- the proportion of households that are in arrears with their bills is higher in London than any other English region.

# Local government cuts

- 28% cut in real terms 2010-13 compared to 8% on average for central government departments;
- 2015-16 16% cut in central government grant for London boroughs;
- Estimated £3.4 billion (31%) pressure on services by 2019-20 due increased demand from an aging population, increased levels of disability and other pressures on adult and children social care.

Source- London Councils- Local Government Financial Settlement 2014-15: Consultation



**Tackling the advice deficit-**  
**A strategy for**  
**access to advice and legal support on**  
**social welfare law in England and Wales**

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**The Low  
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## Low key points

- £100m implementation fund
- Local planning and co-ordination of advice services
- Creation of a cross department ministerial post
- Restoring legal aid for housing cases
- Urgent reform of the exceptional cases provisions



# Criminal Legal Aid

**justice alliance**



*cordially invites you to a*

# **Relay for Rights**

*from Runnymede*

*(birthplace of the Magna Carta)*

*at 12 noon*

*Saturday 21st February 2015*

*with special appearances by*

*King John Grayling and The Magna Carta*

*See Justice Alliance website for travel details to Runnymede*

to the **Not the  
Global Law  
Summit**

*Monday 23rd February 2015*

**Rally**

Defend the Magna Carta

Defend Legal Aid

Defend Access to Justice

1pm, Old Palace

Yard, Westminster,

opposite Houses of  
Parliament

<http://justiceallianceuk.wordpress.com>

**LAG**  
the access to  
justice charity

# Health and advice services- LAG GP survey

- *Q1. Over the past year, do you think that the number of your patients who would have benefited from legal or specialist advice on each of the following social welfare issues listed has increased, stayed the same or decreased?*

*Benefits 67% increase*

*Debt 65% increase*

- *Q2. To what extent, if at all, do you think that a patient not having access to legal or specialist advice on social welfare issues can have a negative effect on their health (e.g. causing stress, anxiety, hospitalisation or other medical intervention)?*

*Great extent 48%*

*Some extent 40%*

# LAG opinion polling- Government losing the argument

- *In 2013, a third (34%) of adults aged 18+ in Great Britain agreed that legal aid should be cut as part of the deficit reduction programme, but there has been a shift in opinion with only 23% agreed in 2014.*
- *In 2013, 44% of people disagreed with the statement that legal aid should be cut to reduce the government spend deficit, compared to 49% in 2014.*
- *A quarter of adults neither agreed nor disagreed that legal aid should be cut to reduce the deficit in 2014, compared to just under one in five (18%) in 2013, an increase of 7 percentage points.*



# Low II

- Updated report to be launched in March
- Ongoing work with the Conservatives
- Transition fund roll-over