



## **Statement on the Post-Implementation Review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012**

Young Legal Aid Lawyers (YLAL) welcomes the publication today of the Post-Implementation Review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) and the Legal Support Action Plan by the Ministry of Justice.

We will take time to study the Post-Implementation Review and Action Plan in detail, but we are pleased to note that the Ministry of Justice has committed to make changes in some areas of legal aid policy, including by reinstating access to face-to-face advice in relation to debt, discrimination and special educational needs by removing the mandatory telephone gateway for these areas.

We also welcome the commitments by the Ministry of Justice to carry out a thorough review of financial means testing and eligibility for legal aid, and to run a pilot scheme to assess the impact of early legal advice and the cost savings that early advice can bring to other parts of the state.

The vast scale of cuts to legal aid in recent years, alongside wider cuts to spending on the justice system, has significantly restricted access to justice, a fundamental component of the rule of law on which our democratic society is based. YLAL maintains that significant investment in legal aid and the justice system is needed to repair the damage done in recent years.

YLAL hopes the publication of the Post-Implementation Review of LASPO and the Legal Support Action Plan by the Ministry of Justice will mark a turning point in the government's policy on legal aid.

We will continue to engage with the Ministry of Justice constructively in order to try to rectify the significant problems in access to justice, and to try to ensure that there is a viable future for the next generations of legal aid lawyers.

**Young Legal Aid Lawyers**

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JUSTICE**