

Company number: 1408520

Charity Number: 280805

# Disability Law Service

Report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 May 2020

Company number	1408520 (registered in the UK)																									
Charity number	280805 (registered in England & Wales)																									
Registered office and operational address	The Foundry 17 Oval Way London SE11 5RR																									
Trustees	<p>Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the company in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 May 2020 was 8 (2019 - 9). The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charitable company.</p> <table><tr><td>Rich Watts</td><td>Chair (until September 2020)</td></tr><tr><td>Lynne Brooke</td><td>(until April 2020)</td></tr><tr><td>Laura McLeod</td><td>(until April 2020)</td></tr><tr><td>Mark Newbery</td><td>(Acting Chair from September 2020)</td></tr><tr><td>Brenda Parkes</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Vijay Samtani</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Nicola Talbot-Hadley</td><td>(until February 2020)</td></tr><tr><td>Berit Thoresen</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Alexander Woolfson</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>John Horan</td><td>(from April 2020)</td></tr><tr><td>Emma Vogelmann</td><td>(from April 2020)</td></tr><tr><td>Edward Richards</td><td>(from July 2020)</td></tr></table>		Rich Watts	Chair (until September 2020)	Lynne Brooke	(until April 2020)	Laura McLeod	(until April 2020)	Mark Newbery	(Acting Chair from September 2020)	Brenda Parkes		Vijay Samtani		Nicola Talbot-Hadley	(until February 2020)	Berit Thoresen		Alexander Woolfson		John Horan	(from April 2020)	Emma Vogelmann	(from April 2020)	Edward Richards	(from July 2020)
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Principal Staff	David Laurence Eric Appleby	Chief Executive (from 1 April 2020) Director of Operations and Fundraising (from 1 April 2020)																								
Patrons:	Prof. Luke Clements Rt. Hon. Sir Ed Davey MP Andrew Small The Rt. Hon. Lord Woolf CH																									

**Bankers**

Unity Trust Bank plc  
PO Box 7193  
Planetary Road  
Willenhall  
WV1 9DG

**Independent  
Examiner**

Fleur Holden FCA  
Sayer Vincent LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
118-114 Golden Lane  
London  
EC1Y 0TL

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2020. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the requirements of a directors' report as required under company law, and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities -applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102.

### **Board of Trustees and staff**

The Board of Trustees comprise 8 members at year-end, 6 of whom are disabled people and 1 the parent of a disabled person. Trustees are also Directors of the Company. The Board considers that its primary role is to establish and monitor the strategic direction of the charity, ensure financial viability, adhere to the highest standards of governance and actively maintain its commitment to equal opportunities and combating discrimination. The Trustees are committed to maintaining a Board membership that comprises at least 75% disabled people and to ensuring that at least 50% of paid staff, at all levels, are a disabled person. This is in line with the requirements to be a Deaf and Disabled Persons Organisation. The Board is also committed to ensuring that the charity carries out its work in line with the requirements of the Social Model of disability.

The Board meet bi-monthly and hold an Annual General Meeting each calendar year. Trustees take decisions on all matters concerning governance, major strategic plans and finance. Day to day operational matters, including staffing, work planning and finance are delegated to paid staff through the Chief Executive.

Trustees are recruited via open advertisement with a view to filling gaps identified in an annual skills audit. They are appointed by the Board and receive a full induction programme.

Trustees provide line management and supervision for the Chief Executive, led by the Chair of the Board.

### **Risk Review and Change Management**

2019-20 presented some challenges, notably delays in legal aid payments and the Covid 19 pandemic. We responded by a robust approach to fundraising that saw a £75,000 grant from the Community Justice Fund stabilise our financial position and applied for renewal of our Three Guinea Trust and Trust for London grants, both of which were successful after the end of the financial year, such that we are now in a secure financial position. We have responded well to the pandemic and work remotely with efficiency, ensuring contact by holding regular team meetings by video link two times each week.

Our Deputy CEO, David Laurence, was appointed as Chief Executive as his predecessor, Eric Appleby stood down to continue to provide the benefit of his wealth of experience in the position of Director of Operations and Fundraising.

During 2020 we have recruited additional Board Members who are disabled people such that we can operate as a Deaf and Disabled Persons Organisation (DDPO). To do so at least 75% of trustees must be disabled people and at least 50% of all paid staff, at all levels, must be disabled people. This means that we are now user-led and, as a DDPO, can ensure more insightful representation for disabled people.

Trustees have continued to review risks on a regular basis and taken steps to mitigate them, both day-to-day and longer-term.

### **Public Benefit**

The Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. In particular, the Trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

### **Objectives and Activities**

DLS's purpose is to challenge the poverty and inequality of disabled people by working with them to secure equal access to their legal rights and entitlements.

Its current key objectives are:

- To ensure that disabled people have access to high quality, specialist legal services.
- To improve awareness and understanding of the legal rights of disabled people and the range of legal and advice services available to them.
- To challenge discrimination and exclusion by enforcing and strengthening laws that protect the opportunities, choices and legal rights of disabled people.
- To ensure DLS is high performing, well run and well regarded.

In order to achieve these objectives the charity carried out the following activities.

### **Legal Access Service**

This is a "first port of call" for disabled people seeking specialist legal help, and offers diagnostic advice, legal information, referral to DLS legal advisers and signposting for those whose problems fall outside DLS's areas of legal expertise or capacity.

### **Specialist Legal Advice**

This service gives disabled people access to a solicitor or qualified legal adviser for free, providing confidential legal advice in the areas of community care, employment (including workplace discrimination) housing and welfare benefits. Each advisor provides telephone advice and responds to email and letter enquiries.

We are accredited with the SQM quality mark and are also a Centre of Excellence under the London Legal Support Trust programme.

### **Casework**

DLS can support individuals through the whole legal process by preparing the case, negotiating settlements, providing one-to-one consultations and, where capacity allows, full representation in the courts.

### **Information**

DLS produces a range of easy to understand factsheets on legal issues relevant to disabled people, together with template letters for commonly occurring situations. Most can be downloaded from DLS's website which also gives information on the charity, current issues of concern relevant to the legal rights of disabled people and links to relevant sites of interest.

We are working continuously on improving the website in order to make it more accessible to our service users. Our website has seen many more people making use of it and more people contacting DLS as a result. Allied to this, our Facebook page and twitter accounts are also proving to be a rich source of shared information and mutual support between our users. We have recently appointed a volunteer through Media Trust's programme to review and make changes to our website in order to make improvements.

In the first quarter of next year we expect to launch WorkRights, a new digital guided pathway, to increase the ways in which disabled people can access advice.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers provide a vital role helping DLS meet the demand for its service and the Board is committed to sustaining and developing their involvement in our work. We have a rich source for volunteers through our strong relationships with the University of Law and the LSE (which also provides a modest grant annually to support our work with their students). The charity trains and supports volunteers who assist its legal, administration and communication activities. Many of these are part-qualified law students who are keen to get the sort of experience and supervision that DLS can provide.

We have recruited and trained volunteers to carry out a range of tasks to provide support in all areas of our work. Volunteers have also been invaluable in carrying out research on specific topics and updating our factsheets to ensure that they encapsulate the most recent developments.

Employees from large city law firms Linklaters and Kirkland & Ellis have provided pro bono assistance with clinics focusing on Employment and Community Care cases respectively. DLS would like to thank the volunteers for their time, commitment and support to DLS.

## Policy and Advocacy

This year DLS has continued its work on analysing the impact of policy relating to disabled people and the law. We aim to focus on areas where our legal expertise can add genuine value, by focussing on legal issues that are not being pursued by other organisations.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted disabled people and their carers in an extremely disproportionate way. Our work in this area includes:

- Sitting on a committee involving the Care and Support Alliance, the Disability Charities Consortium and the Disability Benefits Consortium (which together represent some 150 disabled charities) in order to assist in advising on legal issues arising out of the pandemic;
- Preparing a paper with our Patron, Professor Luke Clements, highlighting the problems and unlawfulness of the limitations on the application of the Care Act introduced by the Coronavirus Act 2020;
- Working with our trustee and barrister John Horan to highlight how these limitations were in breach of the United Kingdom's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD);

We also now sit on a panel organised by the Brexit Civil Society Alliance, a UK-wide alliance of civil society groups working together to protect fundamental rights and standards in the Brexit process and ensure that legislating for Brexit is open and accountable. The panel aims to bring together civil society in order to bring pressure on the Government to legislate to bring the UNCRPD into force in domestic law, something that is required under the terms of the UNCRPD.

We have continued our campaign to amend the Equality Act 2010 such that carers should have the same right to reasonable adjustments in the workplace as the disabled people for whom they care. Our patron, Sir Ed Davey MP, has introduced a Private Member's Bill in order to effect the required amendment to the Equality Act.

Our campaign in relation to discrimination by Local Authorities against autistic children has moved ahead at some pace. Through our own research and surveys, we had become concerned that autistic children were being refused an assessment by the Children with Disabilities teams at Local Authorities because of policies that required an autistic child to have another condition or a diagnosis of autism before being considered for assessment, something that is unlawful and discriminatory.

The BBC became interested in our research and sent FOI requests to all Local Authorities in England, the data returned being analysed by a team at Leeds University led by Professor Luke Clements. The report that we then produced concluded that 41 local authorities in England are unlawfully discriminating against autistic children. We met with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) after which the BBC reported on the story online and in regional TV news programmes in the

North of England, as did the Daily Telegraph. Our patron, Sir Ed Davey, wrote an open letter to all Local Authorities in England calling on them to review their policies and he will write to all 41 councils identified in order to call for change. We will report back to the EHRC when we have the responses from the councils.

### **Legal advice and casework in 2019-20**

Over the year DLS' legal access service answered 28,000 calls seeking help for legal advice, information and other help with legal problems; this is a 13% increase on the previous year and reflects not just the increased staffing but also the massive contribution made by our volunteers. Increasingly, however, requests are coming in via email and social media. Many of these will receive simple advice from our trained helpline staff, while over 4750 cases were passed on to our expert advisors. However, we are not able to assist in every case, where the issues lie outside our remit or because of limited capacity and, wherever possible, these are signposted elsewhere for help.

Referrals come from telephone helplines, information and advice agencies and from other disability charities and reach us via phone, email and, increasingly, via social media. Free specialist legal advice was provided by the DLS legal team in the areas of Community Care, Employment (including workplace discrimination), Housing and Welfare Benefits.

### **Employment**

The Employment Team provides specialist legal advice and casework support to disabled people and in cases where it provides representation has a success rate of 80%, either through suitable adjustments being made to enable employment to continue or through an out-of-court settlement being reached that is satisfactory to the client. In limited cases where settlement is not possible we have represented clients in tribunal hearings.

This work is funded by a grant from Trust for London which has been renewed until September 2023. The ongoing relationship with Trust for London (TfL) is a testament to the importance and value of this work. We have ongoing contact with TfL through its employment law forum

During the course of the year we have provided advice and assistance to over 1,000 disabled employees in relation to their employment problems. They have been able to benefit from a telephone advice session from both our specialist employment solicitor and another solicitor who spends part of his time on employment work. This enables our service users to gain a better understanding about their legal rights in any particular situation they find themselves in at work as well as gaining a better understanding of Tribunal processes. Many of these were provided with substantive casework and representation in respect of problems with their employment, enabling them to challenge unfairness and discrimination at work.



A large proportion of matters we deal with are cases arising from employers' duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, an area in which many employers appear to have great reluctance to accept that adjustments are either needed or can be beneficial for all parties. This is especially the case with clients with mental health issues where employers are often ignorant of the issues faced by their employees. We strive to persuade employers to make changes without the need for any litigation, as this will enable our clients to retain their employment.

The number of cases being pursued in the Employment Tribunal has continued to increase following the removal of fees for bringing claims, but the lack of legal aid for them to bring such claims means that many do so without any legal advice or representation. Also the inadequate resources of the Tribunal mean that many claims become prolonged. Our advice enables clients to be clear about what their claims relate to, which in turn is likely to make resolution without the need for a full hearing more likely. Also, in appropriate cases we are able to represent clients to ensure that they are given a proper opportunity to put their claims forward. Although our capacity for such representation is limited we strive to provide help to as many clients as possible.

### **Community Care**

With the benefit of a Legal Aid contract and increased staffing, our Community Care team were able to offer numerous acts of assistance to 785 disabled people fighting to obtain the support that they need to live.

With the current social care funding crisis, the need is greater than ever for the work we provide. Disabled adults are increasingly having their care needs unmet through unsuitable accommodation, reduced care packages, lack of respite care and lack of access to the community. While the Care Act 2014 undoubtedly has positives, the position of local authorities as they carry out assessments whilst also having to find the resources to implement the outcomes, means that very many fall short in carrying out not just the spirit and intentions of the Act, but also the formal processes and associated guidance. This concern has deepened as result of the COVID pandemic and the additional stresses placed on local authorities.

It is particularly important to us that we support people who are unable to obtain legal help elsewhere because they do not have the resources to pay for advice and/or are ineligible for legal aid and find commercial firms unwilling to take on their case, either because of capacity or an assessment that it will produce insufficient financial return.

Where possible we support clients to address their difficulties themselves by helping with the drafting of letters or by giving detailed advice as to the steps they need to take to gain access to the care needed. However, many other cases have required firm and timely intervention.

## **Housing**

As a relatively new practice for us, our housing work has continued to grow over the year and we work across a number of areas covered by our legal aid contract. Importantly, we also provide a free helpline which provides advice on areas not covered by legal aid. Over 300 people have accessed our help over the year. Most frequent have been cases of local authorities refusing to accept individuals as homeless, often claiming that they have made themselves intentionally so, thereby rendering them ineligible for housing assistance. Other cases feature repossession by landlords - who may be private, local authority or a housing association - matters of disrepair or harassment by landlords.

## **MS Legal Line**

The Multiple Sclerosis Society funds the DLS to employ a Legal Officer dedicated to advice and support for people with MS, and their carers, in the areas of law that are most relevant to their lives, namely employment, goods and services discrimination and community care.

The service has been contacted on more than 1400 separate occasions. Callers are offered a full telephone appointment to explore the issues and receive full legal advice, with further support as necessary.

Inevitably, some enquiries received are out of scope of the service, but these still receive a listening ear and signposting to appropriate agencies.

As an additional and important part of the service, the MS Legal Officer is a regular speaker at MS Society events, provides case studies and feedback to the MS Society, for use by their policy team, assists in training their helpline staff and is also available to the Society to answer legal questions, particularly for their publications and grants team.

## **MS Benefits Line**

The Multiple Sclerosis Society also funds a welfare benefits advisor dedicated to supporting those with MS. This has been a much used service with a total of 1040 acts of assistance over the financial year.

## **Welfare Benefits**

It is no surprise that our Welfare Benefits advice service has continued to attract an overwhelming number of enquiries – over 1950 in the last year. These are supplemented by the weekly outreach sessions at three different venues, although due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these sessions have had to end although the outreach hosts continue to make referrals. Despite benefiting from the assistance of a number of trained and knowledgeable volunteers throughout the year, the service has been stretched beyond the point where we have been able to deal with all the requests for help that we receive.

Our Benefits Advisor was able to represent a limited number of clients at Tribunals but it is clear that there still remains a huge unmet need both for representation and for other forms of advice and support. At one level, there is a need for basic form-filling, for advice on appeals or, in some cases, simply reassurance that the client is taking the right steps themselves. We are unable to attend assessments, a service for which there is a massive demand and there is also a pressing need for advocacy on behalf of many clients. Outreach sessions are notable for the significant numbers of people with mental health problems who are experiencing multiple issues and with limited support.

However, at the end of the year we received the news that our funders, aware of the demand and the positive impact of our work, had agreed to the appointment of a second adviser who then took up post in July 2020

### **Financial Review**

Income in 2019-20 increased from £524,000 to £572,000. The balance between restricted and unrestricted funds shifted, with an increase of 33% in unrestricted income, allowing greater flexibility in responding to the challenges that presented themselves during the year. There was an overall surplus of £19,925, made up of a deficit of £58,270 due to the spending of a large restricted fund carried over from the previous year and we were able to make an addition to our unrestricted reserves of £78,195. Our free reserves of £198,707 represent 5 months' expenditure in line with our Reserves Policy.

A reasonable level of reserves is important in that there remains a considerable time lag in receiving payment for work carried out under our Legal Aid contracts, with claims on Legal help cases only able to be made once the file has been finally closed. We have instituted new billing procedures during the course of the year to ensure that claims are submitted as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Looking ahead, we have three more years of the Legal Aid contracts and were recently successful in being awarded renewed three-year grants from the Three Guineas Trust and Trust for London for welfare benefits and employment advice respectively. After year-end, we have received three years' of core funding from each of the Henry Smith Charity and from the AB Charitable Trust, together with a tapering five year grant from the City Bridge Trust to support the London element of our work. We were also during the year recognised as a Centre of Excellence by the London Legal Support Trust, thereby qualifying for an automatic grant of £10,000. We were also fortunate, at the end of the year, to receive confirmation of a grant of £75,000 from the Community Justice Fund to help us through COVID pandemic.

Alongside these grants we are fortunate to receive support from a number of smaller trusts and Foundations, meaning that we maintain the flexibility to respond to cases in a timely manner.

We have built on our partnership with the MS Society to create a specialist MS Benefits Advisor post. We continue to benefit from generous corporate sponsorship from Linklaters law firm, who have confirmed their support for a further three years. They also support us in other ways with in-kind donations, as do Herbert Smith Freehills. In addition, we have received both regular and one-off donations from individual supporters.

While funders have generally been quick and generous in their response to the problems brought about by COVID-19 the longer-term funding environment is likely to remain challenging and the scale of unmet need significant. DLS is currently in a healthy position, with the resources in place to carry out our plans for 2020/21, but we will continue to review and develop different routes for fundraising in the coming year in order to increase our unrestricted income and provide the flexibility that is essential to a healthy and responsive organisation.

### **Reserves policy**

The Trustees aim to hold a minimum of three months operating costs in unrestricted reserves and has set a target of 4 - 6 months. At the end of 2019-20 unrestricted reserves stand at £198,707 representing 5 months' expenditure. The Board reviews its reserves policy annually to ensure there is a realistic and practical reserve to protect against the immediate impact of possible reductions in funding.

## **Structure, governance and management**

### **Legal framework**

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 11 January 1979 as Network for the Handicapped Limited, and registered as a charity on 27 October 1980. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association, which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed by its Articles of Association. The organisation changed its name to "Disability Law Service" on 30 June 1998.

Disability Law Service (DLS) provides independent, free and confidential legal advice, representation, information, training and consultancy. Its beneficiaries are disabled adults and children, their carers, enablers and families. Over the last 45 years DLS has grown steadily from a parent support group to a highly respected organisation providing a much-needed range of professional services. DLS's Patrons are Professor Luke Clements, Rt. Hon. Sir Ed Davey MP, paralympian Andrew Small and the Right Honourable Lord Woolf of Barnes

### **Principal Risks and Uncertainties**

The Trustees have assessed the principal risks and uncertainties to which the organisation is exposed, in particular those relating to the key operational areas of the charity and its finances in line with Charity Commission guidance.

Principal risks have been identified as those associated with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic upon staff, both on the morale of existing staff as a result of isolation when working remotely and, in particular, on the ability to induct, train, support and integrate new staff whilst working remotely. Additional online meetings, training, supervision and social events have been instituted in order to address this risk.

A further risk relates to the considerable delays in receiving payment for work carried out under Legal Aid contracts, notably legal help cases, with the consequent effect on cashflow. This risk is mitigated by the building of sufficient reserves in order to be able to cope with these delays.

Whilst Trustees believe exposure to risk is unavoidable they believe that by ensuring controls over key financial systems, monitoring reserve levels and thoroughly examining on a regular basis the operational and business risks faced by the charity, they have established effective systems to mitigate any risks.

### **Information on fundraising practices**

Disability Law Service's fundraising strategy is to focus on trusts, foundations and partnerships with other disability organisations. With the exception of those taking part on our behalf in the London Legal Walk, there have been no fundraising events or fundraising campaigns around individual giving or community fundraising. There were no relationships with professional fundraisers or commercial participators during the year nor any complaints related to fundraising. DLS is aware of the need for particular care to be taken when seeking funds from potentially vulnerable donors and does not seek donations from its clients.

### **Remuneration Policy**

Remuneration of all staff, including key management personnel, is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees, taking into account current market rates and affordability

### **Plans for the future**

DLS is uniquely positioned to provide legal services that protect the rights of, and empower, disabled people. Furthermore, we are conscious of the growing levels of unmet need within the system, placing an ever greater onus on DLS to maintain and expand our offer.

Our previous five year plan expired this year and we are pleased to have succeeded in achieving, or exceeding, most of the targets set in that plan. Trustees and staff have worked collaboratively to develop a new plan that was launched in January 2020. We will continue to seek responsible and sustainable expansion of the services that we provide and to increase our capacity to look at different modes of delivery to ensure that we are as accessible to a wide range of disabled people as our resources will effectively allow. We will be seeking to build on our new digital guided pathway in relation to reasonable adjustments in the workplace by expanding it into other areas of

law relating to disability as a means of enabling more people to take the first steps to improving their position.

### **Statement of the Trustees' responsibilities**

The Trustees (who are also Directors of Disability Law Service for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

The trustees' annual report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

**Independent Examiner**

Fleur Holden of Sayer Vincent LLP was reappointed as the charitable company's independent examiner during the year and has expressed her willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the Trustees on 17 November 2020 and signed on their behalf by

Mark Newbery  
Acting Chair

## **Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of the Disability Law Service**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Disability Law Service for the year ended year ended 31 May 2020.

This report is made solely to the trustees as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Company you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act')/Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the Company's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accounts in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 The accounts do not accord with those records; or



- 3 The accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 The accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Name: Fleur Holden FCA

Sayer Vincent LLP, Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TL

1 December 2020

## Disability Law Service

### Statement of Financial Activities *(incorporating an income and expenditure account)*

For the year ended 31 May 2020

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2020 Total £	2019 Total £
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations	3	–	201,561	201,561	115,549
Charitable activities					
Legal advice and casework	4	252,000	117,476	369,476	399,157
Sundry income		–	1,412	1,412	8,992
<b>Total income</b>		<b>252,000</b>	<b>320,449</b>	<b>572,449</b>	<b>523,698</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds		–	14,409	14,409	15,311
Charitable activities					
Legal advice and casework		310,435	227,680	538,115	455,980
<b>Total expenditure</b>	5	<b>310,435</b>	<b>242,089</b>	<b>552,524</b>	<b>471,291</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure) for the year</b>		<b>(58,435)</b>	<b>78,360</b>	<b>19,925</b>	<b>52,407</b>
Transfers between funds		165	(165)	–	–
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	6	<b>(58,270)</b>	<b>78,195</b>	<b>19,925</b>	<b>52,407</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>95,731</b>	<b>127,382</b>	<b>223,113</b>	<b>170,706</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>37,461</b>	<b>205,577</b>	<b>243,038</b>	<b>223,113</b>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 13 to the financial statements.

## Disability Law Service

### Balance sheet

Company no. 1408520

As at 31 May 2019

	Note	£	2020 £	2019 £
<b>Tangible fixed assets</b>	9		<b>6,870</b>	9,813
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors	10	86,000		25,000
Work in progress		91,600		35,178
Cash at bank and in hand		85,187		190,433
		<b>262,787</b>		250,611
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	11	<b>26,619</b>		37,311
<b>Net current assets</b>			<b>236,168</b>	213,300
<b>Net assets</b>	12		<b>243,038</b>	223,113
<b>Funds</b>				
Restricted funds			37,461	95,731
Unrestricted funds				
Capital fund			6,870	9,813
General funds			198,707	117,569
<b>Total funds</b>	13		<b>243,038</b>	223,113

### Audit exemption statement

For the financial year ended 31 May 2020, the charitable company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- Confirming that the members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476; and
- Complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The Trustees confirm that these accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Trustees on 17 November 2020 and signed on their behalf by

Mark Newbery  
Acting Chair

## Disability Law Service

### Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 May 2020

	2020 £	2019 £
Cash flows from operating activities	(102,808)	16,739
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(2,438)	(11,176)
Net cash used in investing activities	(2,438)	(11,176)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	190,433	184,870
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	85,187	190,433

### Note to the cashflow statement

#### Reconciliation of net movement in funds to Net cash flow from operating activities

Net movement in funds	19,925	52,407
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	–	1,688
Depreciation charges	5,381	6,124
Increase in debtors	(61,000)	(23,915)
Increase in work in progress	(56,422)	(35,178)
Decrease / (increase) in creditors	(10,692)	15,613
Net cash used in/(provided by) operating activities	(102,808)	16,739

**1 Accounting policies**

**a) Statutory information**

Disability Law Service is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England & Wales.

The registered office address and principal place of business is The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR.

**b) Basis of preparation**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) – (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (September 2015) and the Companies Act 2006.

In applying the financial reporting framework, the trustees have made a number of subjective judgements, for example in respect of significant accounting estimates. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The nature of the estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates. Any significant estimates and judgements affecting these financial statements are detailed within the relevant accounting policy below.

**c) Public benefit entity**

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

**d) Going concern**

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern.

The Trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

**e) Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

**f) Voluntary income**

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and gifts and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable. Unsolicited donations and gifts are included as donations and similar incoming resources. All income received from the London Marathon sponsorship is credited to voluntary income.

**g) Revenue grants**

Revenue grants are credited to the statement of financial activities when received or receivable whichever is earlier, unless they relate to a specific future period, in which case they are deferred. All revenue grants relate to legal advice and casework.

**h) Contractual income**

Contractual income is recognised when earned.

**i) Restricted funds**

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

**j) Designated funds**

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Trustees for particular purposes.

**k) Unrestricted funds**

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the charitable purposes.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 May 2020

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**1 Accounting policies (continued)**

**l) Staff costs**

Staff costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the estimated staff time spent on those activities:

▪ Fundraising and publicity	2.5%
▪ Legal advice and casework	97.5%

**m) Expenditure**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Resources expended include attributable VAT which cannot be recovered. Where non-staff costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on the following basis, which is based on the estimate of consumption:

	Fundraising & publicity	Legal advice & casework	Governance
Telephone, premises, printing, postage, stationery	2.5%	94.5%	3.0%
Other costs	0%	100%	0%

**n) Governance costs**

Governance costs relate to the costs of running the charitable company such as the costs of Trustee meetings, independent examination and statutory compliance.

**o) Depreciation**

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset evenly over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

▪ Fixtures, fittings and office equipment	20%
▪ Computer equipment	33%
▪ Website costs	20%

Depreciation costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the use of the related assets in those activities. The minimum capitalisation limit is £100.

**p) WIP**

Income is recognised on casework earned and due ("work in progress" or "WIP") according to the time booked on the matter multiplied by the relevant legal aid or interpartes rate. Appropriate provision is made for irrecoverable WIP.

**q) Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

**r) Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

**s) Operating leases**

Rentals payable under operating leases, where substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership remain with the lessor, are charged to the statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the minimum lease term.

**t) Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

**u) Pension scheme**

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company in independently administered funds. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable under the scheme by the charitable company to the fund. The charitable company has no liability under the scheme other than for the payment of those contributions.

## Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 May 2020

## 2 Detailed comparatives for the statement of financial activities for 2018/19

	2019 Restricted £	2019 Unrestricted £	2019 Total £
<b>Income from:</b>			
Donations	–	115,549	115,549
Charitable activities			
Legal advice and casework	340,930	58,227	399,157
Sundry income	–	8,992	8,992
<b>Total income</b>	<b>340,930</b>	<b>182,768</b>	<b>523,698</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds	–	15,311	15,311
<i>Charitable activities</i>			
Legal advice and casework	262,307	193,673	455,980
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>262,307</b>	<b>208,984</b>	<b>471,291</b>
Transfers between funds	6,942	(6,942)	–
<b>Net income/(expenditure) for the year and net movement on funds</b>	<b>85,565</b>	<b>(33,158)</b>	<b>52,407</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>			
Total funds brought forward	10,166	160,540	170,706
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>95,731</b>	<b>127,382</b>	<b>223,113</b>

## 3 Donations – all unrestricted

	2020 Total £	2019 Total £
Donations from individuals	<b>8,714</b>	22,049
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	–	20,000
Donald Forrester Charitable Trust	–	5,000
Henry Smith Charity	<b>30,000</b>	15,000
Sobell Foundation	<b>2,500</b>	2,500
Linklaters	<b>40,000</b>	40,000
Grocers Charity	–	5,000
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	–	3,000
On behalf of the Community Justice Foundation	<b>75,000</b>	3,000
City Bridge Trust	<b>15,000</b>	–
LLST	<b>14,847</b>	–
Souter Foundation	<b>2,000</b>	–
Lynn Foundation	<b>500</b>	–
Kirkland & Ellis	<b>5,000</b>	–
Shanley Foundation	<b>2,000</b>	–
Persula Foundation	<b>6,000</b>	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>201,561</b>	<b>115,549</b>

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 May 2020

4a Legal advice and casework

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2020 Total £
<i>Grant Income:</i>			
Trust for London	50,000	–	50,000
MS Society	122,000	–	122,000
Three Guineas Trust	80,000	–	80,000
Legal Education Foundation	–	–	–
<i>Other Income:</i>			
Legal Help and Legal Aid	–	117,476	117,476
	<u>252,000</u>	<u>117,476</u>	<u>369,476</u>

4b Legal advice and casework (prior year)

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2019 Total £
<i>Grant Income:</i>			
Trust for London	50,000	–	50,000
MS Society	96,000	–	96,000
Three Guineas Trust	80,000	–	80,000
Legal Education Foundation	114,930	–	114,930
<i>Other Income:</i>			
Legal Help and Legal Aid	–	58,227	58,227
	<u>340,930</u>	<u>58,227</u>	<u>399,157</u>



Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 May 2020

5a Total expenditure (current year)

	Fundraising & publicity £	Legal advice & casework £	2020 £	2019 £
Staff costs (Note 7)	9,897	385,988	395,885	320,181
Legal aid, legal help and other disbursements	–	1,561	1,561	2,905
Subscriptions	–	8,260	8,260	8,597
Depreciation	–	5,381	5,381	6,124
Professional indemnity insurance	–	4,406	4,406	5,287
Consultancy and HR expenses	–	65,105	65,105	47,161
Travelling expenses	–	3,835	3,835	7,135
Telephone	138	5,198	5,336	4,435
Premises costs	953	36,021	36,974	37,266
Printing, postage and stationery	241	9,126	9,367	6,381
Recruitment and training	–	6,998	6,998	12,477
Other costs	–	1,221	1,221	2,816
Fundraising costs	3,046	–	3,046	5,918
Governance costs:				
Independent examination	93	3,457	3,550	3,120
Other governance costs	41	1,558	1,599	1,488
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>14,409</b>	<b>538,115</b>	<b>552,524</b>	<b>471,291</b>

5b Total expenditure (prior year)

	Fundraising & £	Legal advice & £	2019 £
Staff costs (Note 7)	8,005	312,176	320,180
Legal aid, legal help and other disbursements	–	2,905	2,905
Subscriptions	–	8,596	8,596
Depreciation	–	6,124	6,124
Solicitors' practising certificates	–	–	–
Professional indemnity insurance	–	5,287	5,287
Consultancy and HR expenses	–	47,161	47,161
Travelling expenses	–	7,135	7,135
Telephone	114	4,321	4,436
Premises costs	960	36,306	37,266
Printing, postage and stationery	164	6,217	6,382
Accountancy	–	–	–
Recruitment and training	–	12,477	12,477
Other costs	–	2,816	2,816
Trustees' expenses reimbursed	–	–	–
Fundraising costs	5,918	–	5,918
Governance costs:			
Independent examination	101	3,019	3,120
Other governance costs	48	1,440	1,488
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>15,311</b>	<b>455,980</b>	<b>471,291</b>

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 May 2020

6 Net incoming / (expenditure)

This is stated after charging:

	2020 £	2019 £
Depreciation	5,381	6,124
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	1,688
Trustees' remuneration	-	-
Trustees' expenses	-	-
Independent examiner's remuneration	2,825	2,750

7 Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2020 £	2019 £
Salaries and wages	353,087	288,810
Social security costs	33,010	25,861
Pension costs	9,788	5,510
	395,885	320,181

No employee earned more than £60,000 (excluding employer pension and national insurance costs) during the year.

The average number of employees during the year on a head count basis was as follows:

	2020 No.	2019 No.
Legal advice and casework	11	9

Key management personnel are considered to be the Trustees of the charity, who receive no remuneration, together with the CEO. Total remuneration, including employer's national insurance contributions and employer's pension costs for the CEO (which is also the total remuneration for the key management personnel) during the year amounted to £38,548 (2019: 41,557).

8 Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment, fixtures & fittings £	Computer equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>			
At 1 June 2019	2,275	16,898	19,173
Additions in year	2,438	-	2,438
At 31 May 2020	4,713	16,898	21,611
<b>Depreciation</b>			
At 1 June 2019	1,003	8,357	9,360
Charge for the year	750	4,631	5,381
At 31 May 2020	1,753	12,988	14,741
<b>Net book value at 31 May 2020</b>	<b>2,960</b>	<b>3,910</b>	<b>6,870</b>
Net book value at 31 May 2019	1,272	8,541	9,813

All tangible fixed assets are used for direct charitable purposes.

10 Debtors

	2020 £	2019 £
Trade debtors	11,000	-
Accrued income	75,000	25,000
	86,000	25,000

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2020 £	2019 £
Taxation and social security	9,377	8,053
Accruals	11,659	26,363
Other creditors	5,583	2,895
	26,619	37,311

12a Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	–	6,870	–	6,870
Current assets	37,461	–	198,707	236,168
<b>Net assets at 31 May 2020</b>	<b>37,461</b>	<b>6,870</b>	<b>198,707</b>	<b>243,038</b>

12b Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year)

	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	–	9,813	–	9,813
Current assets	95,731	–	117,569	213,300
<b>Net assets at 31 May 2019</b>	<b>95,731</b>	<b>9,813</b>	<b>117,569</b>	<b>223,113</b>

13a Movements in funds (current year)

	At 1 June 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	At 31 May 2020 £
<b>Restricted funds:</b>					
MS Society	–	122,000	(122,165)	165	–
Trust for London	3,637	50,000	(52,064)	–	1,573
Legal Education Foundation	92,094	–	(56,206)	–	35,888
Three Guineas Trust	–	80,000	(80,000)	–	–
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>95,731</b>	<b>252,000</b>	<b>(310,435)</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>37,461</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>					
Designated capital	9,813	–	(5,381)	2,438	6,870
General funds	117,569	320,449	(236,708)	(2,603)	198,707
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>127,382</b>	<b>320,449</b>	<b>(242,089)</b>	<b>(165)</b>	<b>205,577</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>223,113</b>	<b>572,449</b>	<b>(552,524)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>243,038</b>

13b Movements in funds (prior year)

	At 1 June 2018 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	At 31 May 2019 £
<b>Restricted funds:</b>					
MS Society	4,192	96,000	(104,252)	4,060	-
Trust for London	-	50,000	(46,363)	-	3,637
Legal Education Foundation	-	114,930	(22,836)	-	92,094
Three Guineas Trust	5,974	80,000	(88,856)	2,882	-
Total restricted funds	10,166	340,930	(262,307)	6,942	95,731
<b>Unrestricted funds:</b>					
Designated capital	6,450	-	(6,124)	9,487	9,813
General funds	154,090	182,768	(202,860)	(16,429)	117,569
Total unrestricted funds	160,540	182,768	(208,984)	(6,942)	127,382
Total funds	170,706	523,698	(471,291)	-	223,113

**Purposes of restricted funds**

MS Society

This fund is to cover the salary and on costs of the MS Legal Officer and staff expenses incurred in providing legal advice and casework for people with Multiple Sclerosis affected by Disability Discrimination in employment and community care.

Trust for London

The grant is to improve access to legal advice for disabled Londoners to combat discrimination in employment.

Legal Education Foundation

This grant is to develop an online reasonable adjustments guided pathway advice platform.

Three Guineas Trust

This grant is to provide a welfare benefits advice service including outreach.

**Purposes of designated funds**

Capital Fund

This fund represents the future depreciation of unrestricted tangible fixed assets held at the year end.

**Transfers**

Transfers from unrestricted funds are to correct designated fund balance.

14    Operating lease commitments

The charitable company had commitments under operating leases expiring as follows:

	Property 2020 £	2019 £
Under 1 year	8,205	10,610
1 to 5 years	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>

15    Related party transactions

There are no related party transactions to disclose for 2020 (2019: none).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.