

£3.1 million for support to those representing themselves in court

- new grant will enhance access to free legal advice and support
- jointly delivered by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Access to Justice Foundation
- full £3.1 million now awarded to a range of local, regional and local services

A new MOJ and Access to Justice Foundation joint initiative has now awarded all of its funding, working with 11 new projects that cover more than 50 different organisations across England and Wales – providing advice and guidance to those without legal representation.

This marks an important milestone in the [MOJ's Legal Support Action Plan](#), helping those who are representing themselves in court. The grant is working with partnerships of not-for-profit organisations, providing new routes to support at local, regional and national levels.

At the regional level, funding has been targeted at areas of England and Wales where it can have the most impact. As a result, MOJ has awarded just under £1 million to three new partnerships:

- North and Mid-Wales, where seven Citizens Advice branches in the region have partnered with Bangor University to increase access to legal advice and support.
- the North East of England, where 13 local organisations will set up two virtual support hubs, sharing their expertise and allowing people to access specialist advice from anywhere in the region.
- Devon and Cornwall, where nine organisations have come together to establish a network of specialist support across both counties.

At the local level, we are working with frontline organisations to increase the reach and impact of their services, targeting the issues they know need to be focused on in their communities. MOJ has awarded just under £1 million from the new grant to 5 new partnerships:

- Suffolk and Norfolk, where a new service will take mobile, free legal advice out to people who cannot normally access it.
- Mid and North Yorkshire, where the capacity of specialist legal advice will be expanded, including a rural outreach service.
- Greater Manchester and North Lancashire, where two new community hubs will be set up to help people work through a broad range of issues.
- the East and West Midlands, where access to support will be strengthened and expanded into new parts of the local area.
- Dorset and South Somerset, where 9 organisations will work together to provide more access to specialist advice and share their expertise to train more advisers.

Setting up all of these new projects follows the [£500,000 investment already awarded by MOJ](#) through the new grant to three national projects.

Justice Minister, Alex Chalk said:

I am delighted to see this funding going out to so many vital frontline projects across England and Wales, providing support to people navigating the justice system.

Our partnership with the Access to Justice Foundation to successfully deliver this funding has gone from strength to strength, and our work together will have a significant impact on the lives of those who need advice and guidance.

Lord Goldsmith QC, President of the Access to Justice Foundation, said:

This important initiative with the MOJ will increase the support available to litigants in person and ensure that key resources are in place at a local, regional, and national level to help people facing the legal process alone to access free and affordable advice.

The Foundation has identified areas in England and Wales where funding will have the most impact and we look forward to further supporting our grantees over the next 2 years as they develop these significant projects.

Audrey Ludwig, Director of Suffolk Law Centre (who lead the Suffolk and Norfolk partnership), said:

We are delighted to be partnering with Norfolk Community Law Service on this MOJ funded project, which builds on and shares each of our organisation's expertise in providing legal advice to people unable to afford lawyers.

Covid and the closure of some other advice agencies has seen an increase in vulnerable, isolated clients with clustered issues, that can be resolved or dealt with by early legal advice interventions like those we will deliver through the new funded project.