

Press release: Our vision for legal education

Public Legal Education (PLE) will be given a welcome boost following the launch of a PLE vision statement. Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP will announce the vision today at the All-Party Parliamentary Group Public Legal Education and Pro Bono event.

Legal education is about ensuring people know about the law and their basic civil and criminal rights – from knowing if you’re entitled to a refund in a shop or whether you’ve been a victim of discrimination.

The statement creates a shared vision for the PLE community to aspire to which will help drive forward legal education initiatives. The statement reveals 7 goals for where PLE might be in 10 years’ time.

The goals are:

1. PLE will be supported by a robust evidence base, showing what the need is and what works best.
2. PLE will be of high quality, maintained to ensure that it remains accurate and accessible and useful for the people who need it.
3. PLE will be universal and reach across all demographics, prioritising children, young adults and vulnerable groups
4. PLE will be scaled up through delivery by the legal community
5. PLE will harness technology and be delivered through innovative methods, both on and offline
6. PLE will be embeded into public services and government departments
7. PLE will be understood as beneficial and utilised by other sectors

Speaking ahead of the launch, the Solicitor General said:

Teaching people about their legal rights and responsibilities, together with helping them gain the confidence and skills to get access to justice can really make a difference to people’s lives – as well as our legal system.

The new PLE vision statement creates a shared ideal for the legal education community to aspire to. Focusing all on one common goal – to encourage more people to help educate the public about their legal rights and responsibilities.

Our aim is to create a country where everyone, and every group, is able to access justice. Where nobody, no community, is denied their legal rights. This is why I’d like attendees to sign up to the

vision statement.

There are many ways to get involved in educating people about the law, such as interactive presentations, mock trials and role play exercises to awareness raising campaigns or information in leaflets – which can be tailored to different groups, from educating primary and secondary school pupils to prison inmates, community groups and homeless people.

Commenting on the statement, Michael Olatokun, Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law and James Sandbach, LawWorks said:

Public legal education can enhance knowledge of the law, empowering citizens and communities to give effect to their rights, remedies and responsibilities. The vision published today, developed by a broad range of stakeholders, provides a roadmap to deliver a society in which no-one is denied justice simply through ignorance of the law and the legal system. This is supported by the long-term goals of PLE. The APPG on Public Legal Education and Pro Bono in conjunction with the APPG on the Rule of Law will work alongside MPs and Peers to make the vision a reality.

The statement has been produced by PLE representatives including those from the following organisations: Citizenship Foundation, The Law Society, Bar Council, CILEX, Magistrates' Association, Ministry of Justice, Judicial Office, Solicitors Regulation Authority, Citizens Advice, Law for Life, Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law, Youth Access and Law Centres Federation.