

# THE CITY OF LONDON SOLICITORS' COMPANY

## Press Release



### **CLSC ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR THE CLLS SOCIAL WELFARE SOLICITORS QUALIFICATION FUND**

We are proud to announce that the CLSC Charitable Fund has pledged its support for the City of London Law Society Social Welfare Solicitors' Qualification Fund (SWSQF), which is officially launched today.

The SWSQF addresses the overwhelming deficit in the UK for junior social welfare solicitors, and will make a lasting difference in the field of social welfare law.

This cross-sector and nationwide fund targets dedicated social welfare legal workers by providing them with the funding to train and qualify as social welfare solicitors. It addresses the persistent shortage of social welfare lawyers by directly tackling barriers to qualification, such as debt or low wages.

The SWSQF increases access to justice for users of social welfare services, at the same time as broadening entry to the legal profession. The fund covers the full training and assessment costs of successful applicants, each of whom once qualified will deliver approximately 1,500 social welfare law hours annually.

The SWSQF is led by the City of London Law Society in partnership with training provider, BARBRI, the Young Legal Aid Lawyers Group, the Legal Aid Practitioners Group, and the Law Centres Network, with financial support from over a dozen City law firms and the Charitable Fund of the Worshipful Company of Solicitors of the City of London ("the Solicitors' Company").

Together, these organisations believe that talented social welfare lawyers of the future, whatever their income or background, must have every opportunity to qualify into the profession. The application and selection process is expected to take place in January and February 2022, with the first SQE course for successful applicants beginning in May 2022.

Master of the Solicitors Company, Robert Bell, commented

"I am delighted that the Solicitors' Company's Charitable Fund is in the vanguard of supporters for this very worthwhile initiative and has pledged £10,000 to fund one of the initial qualifiers for the SWSQF. I hope the Charitable Fund will be able to commit a similar amount in each of the subsequent two years, contingent upon continuing support from CLLS member firms."

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He continued "This assistance will make a significant contribution to widening access to the profession and in turn to improving access to justice for some of the most vulnerable in our society capturing two of our key charitable aims".

### Notes for Editors

Social welfare law describes a range of legal support which includes debt counselling, housing and immigration advice given by solicitors to the less advantaged in our society through law centres, charities and similar organisations.

The City of London Solicitors' Company is the Livery Company for City solicitors. The Company reflects the history and tradition of the City and its institutions, but it is also a modern professional organisation with a strong track record of donating to charitable causes.

For more information, visit: <https://www.citysolicitors.org.uk/social-welfare-solicitor-qualification-fund/>

6<sup>th</sup> December 2021