

Trustee report for period 1 January 2023 – 31st December 2023

Objective

Removing financial barriers to the legal profession for aspiring solicitors.

Strategy

Raise funds from law firms, in-house legal departments, companies, financial services firms, and other donors to help provide grants that deliver meaningful assistance with tangible benefits to eligible, socially mobile, aspiring solicitors identified through a fair and objective application process.

Vision

Financial barriers will no longer impact aspiring solicitors seeking to enter the legal profession in the UK.

Values

- We promote equality of **opportunity**.
- We **empower** people to achieve their potential.
- We offer **practical** solutions.
- We are **collaborative** in our approach in the **necessary** change.

Overview

The Aspiring Solicitors Foundation (AS Foundation) was established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation 16 April 2018. A period of research, platform development, and benefactor engagement enabled a successful live launch on 29 January 2020.

The Legal Social Mobility Fund has a registered Charity Number of 1177969 and is governed by the Charity Commission CIO Association Model Constitution.

The object of the Legal Social Mobility Fund is the relief of financial hardship facing undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students (part time / full time), from the United Kingdom, to help them to pursue a career as a solicitor in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, in particular but not exclusively by making grants by way of the provision of items (either outright or a loan) to facilitate, or connected with, education and/or vocational training including but not limited to books, laptops, chairs, printers, or other expenses connected with vocational training, travelling expenses to help fund training.

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the AS Foundation's aims and objectives and in setting grant making policy for the period.

An independent examiner has inspected the Legal Social Mobility Fund accounts. The Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Legal Social Mobility Fund has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the 'going concern' basis in preparing the financial statements.

The Legal Social Mobility Fund has a policy to provide sufficient reserves to finance its liabilities and statutory requirements.

Charitable Activities

The Legal Social Mobility Fund has continued to grow during the period. We refreshed our board of Trustees and hired additional contractors to help support the charity during the rebrand.

We received 365 applications in this reporting period, and have been able to provide 56 laptops, 33 textbook grants, 2 travel warrants, 40 grants for business clothing, 48 scholarships for SQE or LPC postgraduate courses, including other financial support to

successful applicants. 6 individuals applied for a grant that fell outside the categories listed above..

With our robust, anonymised scoring system, we are confident we are reaching those who need our support the most. Our successful applications record the following profile of applicants:

- 86% attended a state school (non-selective) secondary school.
- 84% are the first generation of their family to attend university.
- 60% were eligible to receive free school meals aged 11-16 due to financial limitations.
- 16% are a full-time carer for a loved one.
- 11% have been a refugee or asylum seeker.
- 8% have spent time in local authority care.
- 65% were in paid employment during holiday periods of their university degree to support themselves.

We believe the Legal Social Mobility Fund continues to be a unique charity for the UK legal profession, as far as we are aware, no other charity performs the same function of granting items that are needed to aspiring solicitors.

Funding and Support

For this financial period, we continued to rely on two key income streams:

- Donations from law firms, corporate legal teams, and other business organisations. The majority of these were unrestricted cash donations.
- Donations from individuals.

Board and Staffing

Our board of Trustees decreased from seven members to three. Our Trustees have a variety of experiences in the legal sector and we continue to look to strengthen and diversify our board where needed.

During the period, we reduced our paid staff to one following an internal review to channel resources more effectively.

Future

Trustees have identified the following actions:

- Develop existing and new funding streams with multi-year commitments.
- Continue to build relationships with universities, student unions, and charity partners.

The Trustees present this report along with the financial statements of the Legal Social Mobility Fund for the financial year ended 31 December 2023. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages [-] and comply with the AS Foundation's constitution and applicable law.

This report was approved by the Trustee Board on 7 October 2024.

The Trustees present their report with the unaudited financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31st December 2023.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity No. 1177969

Registered Office

9 Park Lane Business Centre
Park Lane
Langham, Colchester
Essex
CO4 5WR

Trustees'

The following Trustees' service during the year:

E. Cope	(Resigned 31 May 2023)
S. Griffin	(Resigned 26 July 2023)
B. Howells	(Resigned 11 October 2023)
R. Lindberg	
U.J. Onwumelu	
S. Samani	(Resigned 29 September 2023)
S. Sinclair	(Resigned 29 September 2023)
T. Smith	(Resigned 29 September 2023)
C.C. White	

Accountants

L J Rose Accounting Ltd
9 Park Lane Business Centre
Park Lane
Langham
Essex
CO4 5WR

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

The above report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime as set out in Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

Signed on behalf of the board

C.C. White
Trustee

06 March 2024

The Trustees present their report with the unaudited financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31st December 2023.

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C.C. White
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06 March 2024