

ILPA information sheet

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Strategic Legal Fund for Refugee Children and Young People

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In October 2011, the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund launched the Strategic Legal Fund for Refugee Children and Young People. This information sheet provides information about this Strategic Legal Fund.

Aim

The aim of the Strategic Legal Fund is to test a model for supporting legal work. It is concerned with legal work that has importance beyond an individual client in an individual case. It aims to support legal work that will result in changes to law, practice and procedures that will generally uphold and promote the rights of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people.

The Strategic Legal Fund is currently set to operate until July 2012. It will then be evaluated, and a decision taken whether to continue the Fund and, if so, whether to adapt it in any way.

How the Strategic Legal Fund works

An expert panel meets once a month. The panel considers applications for funding. If the view of the panel is that an application should be approved, it is passed to the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund for approval and if approved a grant is expected to be made within two weeks.

The members of the expert panel are listed at:

<http://www.migrationwork.org/strategic-legal-fund/expert-panel>

Criteria for applications to the Strategic Legal Fund

The Strategic Legal Fund will not provide funding for work for which legal aid funding is available. Subject to this, the Fund can provide funding for:

- Work done in preparation for developing a case for litigation. This could include gathering evidence about the impact of Government practice or policy, reviewing relevant domestic or international law or finding a suitable case on which to base a legal challenge.
- Interventions by third parties (e.g. charities and other non-governmental organisations) in ongoing court cases. This could allow a non-governmental organisation to raise points which have wider application than the issues which may arise on the particular facts of the case before the court.

Applications, if granted, must have some significant benefit to refugee or asylum-seeking children. However, this does not mean that the work to be funded must only or even mainly benefit this group.

Applications may be made by:

- legal aid solicitors; or
- specialist legal advisers working in not for profit organisations

The Fund welcomes applications from lawyers working in partnership with voluntary or community organisations.

Making an application

Information about how to apply, including application forms and eligibility criteria, are available at: <http://www.migrationwork.org/strategic-legal-fund/how-to-apply>

Before an application is passed to the expert panel for consideration, the Strategic Legal Fund will consider whether the applicant is a suitable applicant for the fund. However, it is possible to ‘pre-register’ as an applicant. This enables the Fund to consider a potential applicant’s eligibility to make an application before any application is made. The advantage to the applicant is that, if he or she later makes an application, the application can be passed to the expert panel much more quickly for consideration as to whether it should be approved.

Further information

The Strategic Legal Fund has up to £300,000 to distribute to applicants to the Fund. The Fund has identified some general areas of particular interest:

- asylum & immigration matters
- human rights
- community care
- housing
- education
- discrimination
- health

As indicated above, applications to the Fund must, if granted, have some significant benefit to refugee or asylum-seeking children.

The Strategic Legal Fund is supported by the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, Trust for London and MigrationWork Community Interest Company. Details of the Fund are held on MigrationWork’s website:

<http://www.migrationwork.org/>