



for a stronger third sector

# Annual Review 2011/12



*Martha Lane Fox catches up with Terry Stokes, Lasa's CEO, before her keynote at the Lasa technology conference.*

# Annual Review 2011/12

Charities, along with the people they support, need our help more than ever before. We've worked with thousands of charities across the UK this year, including **Age UK**, **Parkinson's UK** and the **Metropolitan Housing Trust**.

# Delivering value to thousands of charities in a year of high demand

## Chair's report

I am very proud that Lasa has continued to deliver so much in a year of increased pressure on the sector.



With the economic crisis, further cuts to charity funding and more people needing advice and help as their financial situations worsened, charities are undoubtedly under strain. But Lasa is always an organisation that is light on its feet, adapting to change and responding to demand. Our mission is to continue to help thousands of

charities across the UK by offering services that make their jobs easier in tough times. I want to thank Lasa's talented, creative and hard working staff team for everything they have accomplished this year.

These qualities – and the impact we have had on the sector and the people it supports – have been recognised once again this year. We are delighted to have been awarded a Technology4Good award for our partnership project 'Get Connected.' SCIE was the lead partner in this initiative and we also worked alongside CTT. All three organisations have been jointly nominated for a Charity Times Cross-Sector Partnership of the Year award for this project. And our rightsnet team won a LexisNexis Taxation Award along with our partner the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group for the [www.revenuebenefits.org.uk](http://www.revenuebenefits.org.uk) website.

Our technology work has been in great demand this year too. Many charities and government bodies are seeking to tap into the power of technology so that they can raise their game further and work as efficiently as

possible. Our Google funded programme of technology events for charities has attracted huge interest from the sector. We hope to see you at some of the events.

Equally, we've risen to the challenge of the growing need for advice services. Whether it's through our successful collaboration with Advice UK on the Advice Local project, or the popular Universal Credit training courses that we've been running, we are here to help.

Lasa has an excellent track record of collaboration. From CTT to Advice UK, we've chosen our partnerships carefully over the last few decades to help us achieve even more. We think that these relationships, and those with future partners, will be even more important in the times ahead.

Thank you to the thousands of third sector organisations, funders, and government bodies who have supported us this year. If we haven't worked with you yet, do contact us to find out how we can help you through our expertise and services.

**Liz Sewell**  
Chair

# Our impact 2011/12

- More than **75,000** service users and over **80,000** carers and staff in adult social care now have better access to digital technology thanks to our partnership work with SCIE (the Social Care Institute for Excellence) and CTT (Charity Technology Trust) on the 'Get Connected' project
- We were honoured to be part of the partnership chosen to receive a **Technology4Good award** for SCIE's Get Connected project
- Rightsnet, the UK's No 1 website for welfare benefits and tax credits information, had more than **200,000** unique visitors, who made more than **9,000** contributions to the discussion forum, which were viewed more than **1 million** times
- **100%** of delegates rated our training courses as excellent or good
- Knowledgebase, the 'go to' site for charity technology information, received almost **a third of a million (314,663)** visits
- We were awarded a **LexisNexis Taxation Award**, in partnership with the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group, for our [www.revenuebenefits.org.uk](http://www.revenuebenefits.org.uk) website
- Our technology team launched a flagship programme of Google funded technology events for charities

# As cuts bite, we've helped people get the advice they need



*Bharat Mehta OBE,  
CEO of Trust for London,  
addresses our London  
Advice Conference*

As the UK economic situation worsened, more people needed benefits to keep afloat.

**In 2011/12 Citizens Advice Bureaux reported that 2,252,853 people needed their help with benefits problems.**

Our rightsnet website – the UK's No 1 source of the most up to date, high quality welfare benefits and tax credits information online – was used by thousands of organisations including Citizens Advice, Shelter and Age UK. The site won the prestigious Nominet award in the 'Opening the World of Knowledge' category, as well as a LexisNexis Taxation Award, in partnership with the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group, for the [www.revenuebenefits.org.uk](http://www.revenuebenefits.org.uk) website. Over the last year, rightsnet attracted over 200,000 unique visitors, and published more than 1,800 updates, covering welfare rights, debt, housing, employment and community care law. The discussion forum boasts over 9,000 contributions, which were viewed more than 1 million times.

Through our advice support project, we helped more than 200 organisations develop their skills and confidence in welfare

benefits advice. As welfare reform continued rapidly, our training service continued to be very popular, and we trained 1,750 people from over 250 different organisations. We also ran a very popular series of half day workshops on welfare reform, including Universal Credit.

We were awarded funding by the Greater London Authority and launched a new 'Advice Local' service, providing frontline charities in 6 deprived London boroughs with the resources to help them give clients the best possible advice.

AIMS, our case management database, assisted 100's of UK agencies to deliver effective and efficient services direct to the public. Since its launch 12 years ago AIMS has adapted to meet the changing needs of its users, and to this end the next twelve months will see some new developments. The free version of the database, designed for new groups, celebrated its 1000th download.

As legal aid cuts deepened, we continued to lobby local and central government, including MPs, the Mayor's Office and

other policy makers, highlighting the need for advice. We helped to build links between the Cabinet Office advice review team and London's advice sector, including a round table meeting for agencies and networks. We have engaged with funders and policy makers such as Big Lottery Fund, London Councils and Trust for London through our partnership work with other advice networks and organisations.

We continue to chair the London Advice Forum, a high profile group of pan-London advice agencies and advice networks, and co-ordinate advice policy and provision across London as a member of the London Advice Executive.

Lasa partnered with Citizens Advice Bureaux, the Law Centres Federation and Advice UK on a highly successful London Advice Conference, hosted by global law firm Clifford Chance in Canary Wharf. Over 120 delegates attended and speakers included Andy Slaughter MP, journalist Liz Barclay, Lord Bach, Bharat Mehta OBE and Legal Ombudsman Adam Sampson.

**Derek Stainsby, Welfare Rights Advisor, Gallions Housing Association:**

“Rightsnet is by far the best place to get up to date information. It is also the best for information sharing. Engaging in ‘debates’ on the forums has improved my confidence and my ability to research material ... I have saved people from eviction, and clients’ improved financial situation has led to improvements in their health. I would not be nearly so good at what I do if it had not been for rightsnet.”

**Zoya Sears, Training and Development Leader, Islington Council:**

“The feedback we received from our delegates has been exceptional. Delegates have commented on how well informed the trainers are and that they have been given tools and techniques to use in their workplace straight away. The rightsnet training service is efficient, friendly and can tailor training to your needs and budget.”

**Mel Morris, Southwark Council, Integrated Children’s Support Services:**

“I always know that Lasa is there whenever I need them to help or reiterate welfare benefits information on complex cases.”

**Anna Bigda, Learning & Development Project Officer, Parkinson’s UK:**

“The training course was well delivered and responsive to our specific requirements, offering opportunities for discussion and information sharing which broke down what was a meaty subject into bite sized chunks.”

# Here to help you deliver more in tough times by using technology

This year we worked alongside hundreds of charities and government bodies to help them ensure their sustainability, work as efficiently as possible and support more people.

## The solution? Technology.

We were recognised for our contribution in this area when we were awarded a distinguished Technology4Good award jointly with our 'Get Connected'

project partners SCIE and CTT. At the time of going to press, the project had also been shortlisted for the Charity Times Cross-Sector Partnership of the Year award. More than 75,000 service users and over 80,000 carers and staff in adult social care now have better access to digital technology thanks to this project.

We were also funded by Google to provide a flagship programme of events on important technology issues for charities, including a mobile technology summit hosted by JustGiving. The events will run until April 2013 so please keep an eye on our website for more information.

Our 7th annual technology conference, hosted by IBM at their UK headquarters on London's South Bank, had outstanding feedback from delegates. Speakers included UK government digital champion Martha Lane Fox, Chief Executive of IBM UK and Ireland Stephen Leonard, CEO of US based non profit NTEN Holly Ross and broadcaster Kim Catcheside. The event also included a successful round table with Gareth Thomas MP



*Photo courtesy of Teesside Ability Support Centre, who benefited from SCIE's Get Connected partnership project with Lasa and CTT*

for CEOs, funders and other decision makers.

Our technology consultancy service, which offers expert advice and support to charities and government bodies, was in high demand this year. Our work here included projects with The College of Social Work and Children England.

Nearly a third of a million (314,663) visits were made to the Knowledgebase, the UK's leading website for technology advice, information and resources for the third sector. The site continues to go from strength to strength, with a breadth of new contributors. Our Suppliers Directory, which is the only UK website which connects charities with vetted and trusted technology suppliers, now offers over 120 services to the sector.

As part of our mission to help as many charities and government bodies as possible get the advice they need about technology, we provided e-newsletters including Computanews and the ICT Bulletin. We now also offer these via our Knowledgebase website, meaning that they can be seen by as many as 25,000 people a month.

**Jeff Skipp, CEO, Deafblind UK:**

"Good independent support as Lasa provides is very much needed in the sector ... We commissioned Lasa for ICT consultancy work in July 2011 and Ethical IT for our IT support company in March 2012. Based on the consultancy report, we have upgraded desktop, network and broadband and will start virtualisation of servers and hardware this August 2012 ... We are confident that we've made the right decision and came up with the right solution to improve our ICT."

**Colin Weatherup, Development Director, Citizens UK:**

"Lasa helped review our whole IT system ... As a result of implementing Lasa's ICT strategy report; we can achieve tasks more simply, efficiently and easily, and communicate with staff and volunteers much better in sharing documents and resources."

**Charlie Messum, Office Manager, Domestic Violence Intervention Project:**

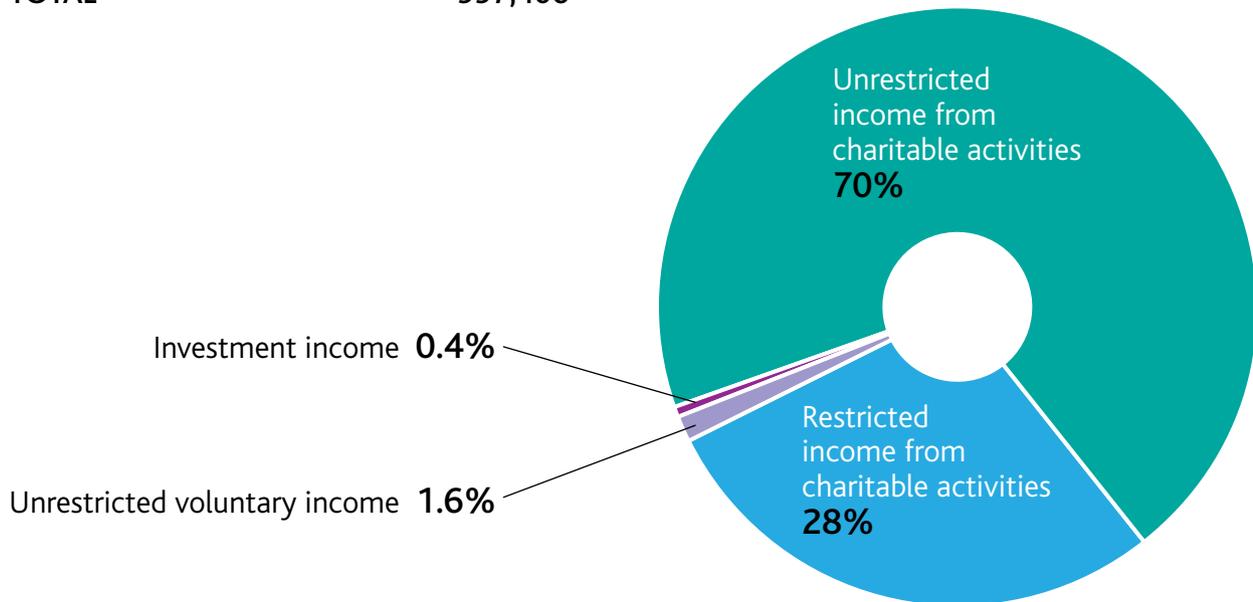
"Without Lasa's support our charity would have been blindly searching for a costly ICT solution and on-going support in the dark ... With Lasa's knowledge and expertise we were able to access priceless, impartial advice allowing us the security to employ an efficient and cost effective solution to outdated ICT issues."

# Income and expenditure

## Income

**£997,406**

Unrestricted voluntary income	16,248	(1.6%)
Investment income	3,785	(0.4%)
Unrestricted income from charitable activities	696,089	(70%)
Restricted income from charitable activities	281,284	(28%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>997,406</b>	



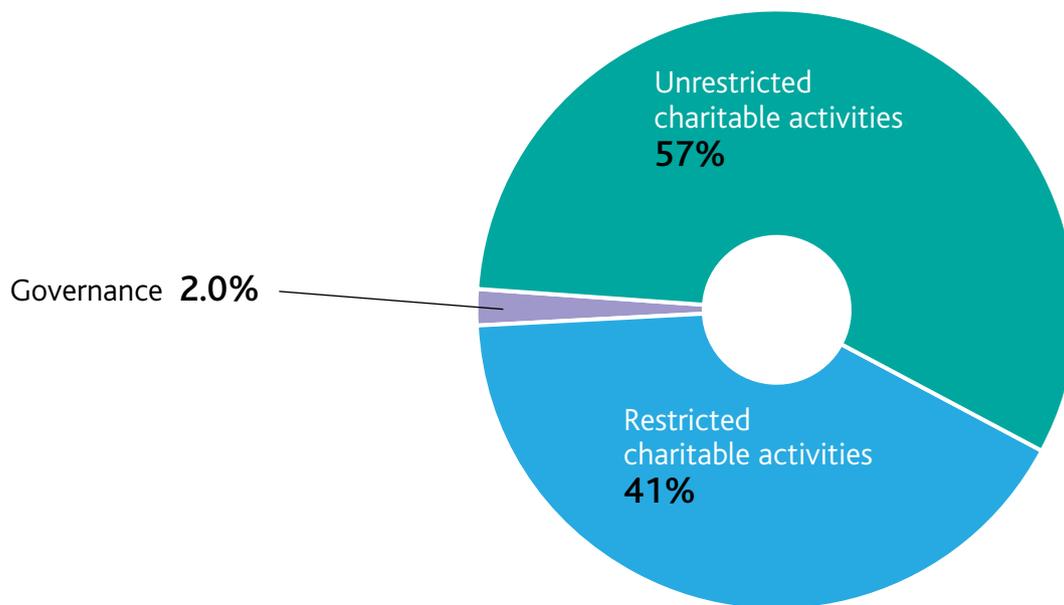
## Expenditure

**£1,139,227**

Unrestricted charitable activities	647,950	(57%)
Restricted charitable activities	469,378	(41%)
Governance	21,899	(2%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,139,227</b>	

If you would like a full copy of Lasa's Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2012 please contact us.

These figures are extracted from accounts independently audited by Gotham Erskine LLP.



# Thank you

We would like to thank the following funders who made invaluable contributions to our work in 2011/12.

## London Councils\*

The Big Lottery Fund

The City Bridge Trust

Cripplegate Foundation

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Google Inc. Charitable Giving Fund  
of Tides Foundation

Greater London Authority

Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

John Ellerman Foundation

Trust for London

The Wates Foundation



*Cripplegate Foundation Helping since 1500*



## Corporate partners

We are very grateful to the following who have supported us this year.

IBM

Baker & McKenzie

Mayer Brown

Bates Wells and Braithwaite

JustGiving



MAYER • BROWN



JustGiving

## Charitable partners

We would also like to thank **Charity Technology Trust** and the **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation** for providing venues and refreshments for a number of internal and external events.



Finally, we'd like to say a big thank you to everyone else who has offered their time and expertise to help us deliver our events and services.

\*London Councils is committed to fighting for more resources for London and getting the best possible deal for London's 33 councils. London Councils has a website about its grants service. To read about our grants funding and the work of some of the 300 groups we support please visit [www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/grants](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/grants)

# Our board

## Chair

**Liz Sewell** is former Chief Executive of single parent's charity Gingerbread. She has worked at a national level with government departments, including the Cabinet Office, the Department of Health, Department for Work and Pensions and the Sure Start Unit, and locally with NHS trusts, local authorities and voluntary organisations such as the Daycare Trust and One Parent Families on strategic, communications and training projects.

Liz leads the Take Three Days programme, which works with national and local government organisations to help parents return to work, education and training.

## Vice Chair

**Hugh Lyons** is highly experienced in advice sector issues, and is a former manager of a Citizens Advice Bureau. He also has an extensive background in research.

## Treasurer

**John Blandford** has many years of experience both as an IT Consultant and a senior IT Manager, and works as a self employed IT consultant for a number of charity, private and public sector organisations. He is Chair of another leading charity.

## Trustees

**Nadine Clarkson Palomares** is a lawyer at Hansen Palomares Solicitors, a well known law firm in the welfare benefits field. She is well versed in charity management and in working with voluntary and public sector minority groups.

**John I Davies** is a highly experienced manager and consultant in technology and communications. He was previously Programme Manager of iT4Communities at ITC and Chief Technology Officer at Movirtu. He has also been a sales/technical consultant in fixed and mobile telecommunications at companies including Orange and Sema Group. John is an active volunteer with Age UK Hackney, helping older people get online, and a STEMnet Ambassador to UK schools.

*(continued)*

## Trustees – (continued)

**Annette Figueiredo** has significant experience working in a number of charities and in the public sector in management, development and advice capacities. She currently works at the Greater London Authority on environment and sustainability policy and project work.

**Paul Lowenberg** is former Chief Executive of Edinburgh District Council and has also acted as Chair of Family Mosaic and a board member of regeneration company EDI Ltd. He now runs a public and voluntary sector focused consultancy practice. Throughout his career he has developed and reviewed major advice and information services projects.

**Mohammad Marashi** is the founder and director of MITUD Ltd, a multimedia, web solutions and consultancy provider. In addition he has worked at a number of charitable bodies including the Evelyn Oldfield Unit, PRESTO Advisory Group and The Employability Forum.

**Samantha Mauger** is Chief Executive of a high profile, London based network of charities which works closely with key voluntary and statutory sector organisations. She has particular interests in advice, equality and social inclusion.

# Lasa's steadfast focus on impact and delivery

## Chief Executive's report

Like any charity CEO at the moment, I know how hard the last year has been for the sector. Nevertheless, we at Lasa are undaunted in our aim to support thousands of charities at this time.

I'm pleased with all our achievements this year, whether it's our awards from Technology4Good and Lexis Nexis or our programme of Google funded technology events for charities. This is further proof that the impact and relevance of our resources and services has only increased. Thank you, and well done, to my hard working staff team for all that they have achieved this year.

The sector is far from out of the woods yet. I'm a realist, and I know that there are further cuts to come over the next year and beyond. Our goal at Lasa is to support as many charities and government bodies as possible, whatever the future may bring. That is why we are here, and that is what motivates us to do what we do. Many of you have told us how heavily you rely on our



services and advice, and I'm happy that we're able to have such an impact.

A strong theme of our work this year has been partnerships, and we will continue to build on the success of these relationships. Like you, we at Lasa will need to be agile in the year ahead. We have services and advice to help you navigate the challenges we all face, so do get in touch with us.

Finally, I'd like to thank our funders and the thousands of charities and government bodies who have worked with us this year. We look forward to working with you again.

**Terry Stokes**  
Chief Executive

# How we can help you

Lasa is a charity which offers knowledge, support and resources in technology and welfare rights advice to the third sector. Lasa also influences policy for the advice and legal services sector. We help thousands of third sector and government organisations across the UK provide better services for their clients each year.

## Welfare rights advice

**Rightsnet** – Lasa can help advice workers give the best possible welfare benefits advice to their clients, through [rightsnet.org.uk](http://rightsnet.org.uk), the UK's No 1 website for the most up to date, high quality welfare benefits and tax credits information. It also offers breaking news about community care, debt, employment and housing law. The site includes news, resources and discussion forums. [Rightsnet.org.uk](http://Rightsnet.org.uk) also advertises the latest advice worker vacancies and volunteer opportunities across the UK. [www.rightsnet.org.uk](http://www.rightsnet.org.uk)

**Rightsnet services** – Brought to you by the team behind the award winning rightsnet, we offer a range of services to help you stay up to date with the latest welfare benefits and tax credits all year round. Our services include training, workshops, publications, email and phone advice and more. Email: [rightsnet@lasa.org.uk](mailto:rightsnet@lasa.org.uk)

**Rightsnet Welfare Rights Training** – 100% of delegates rate our welfare rights courses and workshops as excellent or good, reporting that our training helps improve the quality and effectiveness of their advice. Our training events cover a wide range of subjects and are tailored to suit different levels. [www.rightsnet.org.uk/training](http://www.rightsnet.org.uk/training)

**Review Magazine** – The latest welfare benefits and tax credits news, including upcoming legislation and case law developments. Published bi-monthly. [www.lasa.org.uk/publications](http://www.lasa.org.uk/publications)

**Welfare Rights Support Service** – Quality assured welfare rights advice and casework support from our in-house welfare rights team. [www.lasa.org.uk/welfare-rights](http://www.lasa.org.uk/welfare-rights)

**Advice Line** – Lasa deals with hundreds of welfare rights queries from London based advice workers each year.

Tel: **020 7247 1735**.

Hours: Monday 10.30am–12.30pm, Tuesday 10.30am–12.30pm, and Thursday 2pm–4pm

## Technology

Lasa helps third sector and government organisations use technology to deliver better services to their clients, saving money and improving efficiency. Our services include:

### **Technology consultancy and health-checks**

– We can advise you on and support your technology needs, including technology funding applications, choosing the right suppliers, project management and more.

[www.lasa.org.uk/ict/consultancy](http://www.lasa.org.uk/ict/consultancy)

### **ICT knowledgebase**

– The Knowledgebase is the third sector's go-to website for technology issues. It offers impartial technology advice, made simple.

[www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk](http://www.ictknowledgebase.org.uk)

### **AIMS (Advice and Information Management Software)**

– AIMS is an easy to use contact management database that will help you track client contact and report quickly and easily to management and funders. Tel: **020 7377 2806**.

Email: [aims@lasa.org.uk](mailto:aims@lasa.org.uk)

[www.lasa.org.uk/aims](http://www.lasa.org.uk/aims)

**Publications** – Want the latest third sector technology news written in plain English?

Find out more about our e-newsletters and publications, including Computanews and the London ICT e-bulletin.

[www.lasa.org.uk/publications/ict-publications](http://www.lasa.org.uk/publications/ict-publications)

### **ICT suppliers directory**

– We've helped many charities find trustworthy, reputable technology suppliers who understand and who work with the third sector. All suppliers have been vetted to ensure that their work is high quality, professional and reliable.

[www.suppliersdirectory.org.uk](http://www.suppliersdirectory.org.uk)

**Circuit riders** – We've pioneered the use of mobile technology workers across the UK who help a caseload of small third sector organisations with their technology needs.

Find out more about our projects, conferences, seminars and training events in this area.

[www.lasa.org.uk/ict/lasa-circuit-riders](http://www.lasa.org.uk/ict/lasa-circuit-riders)

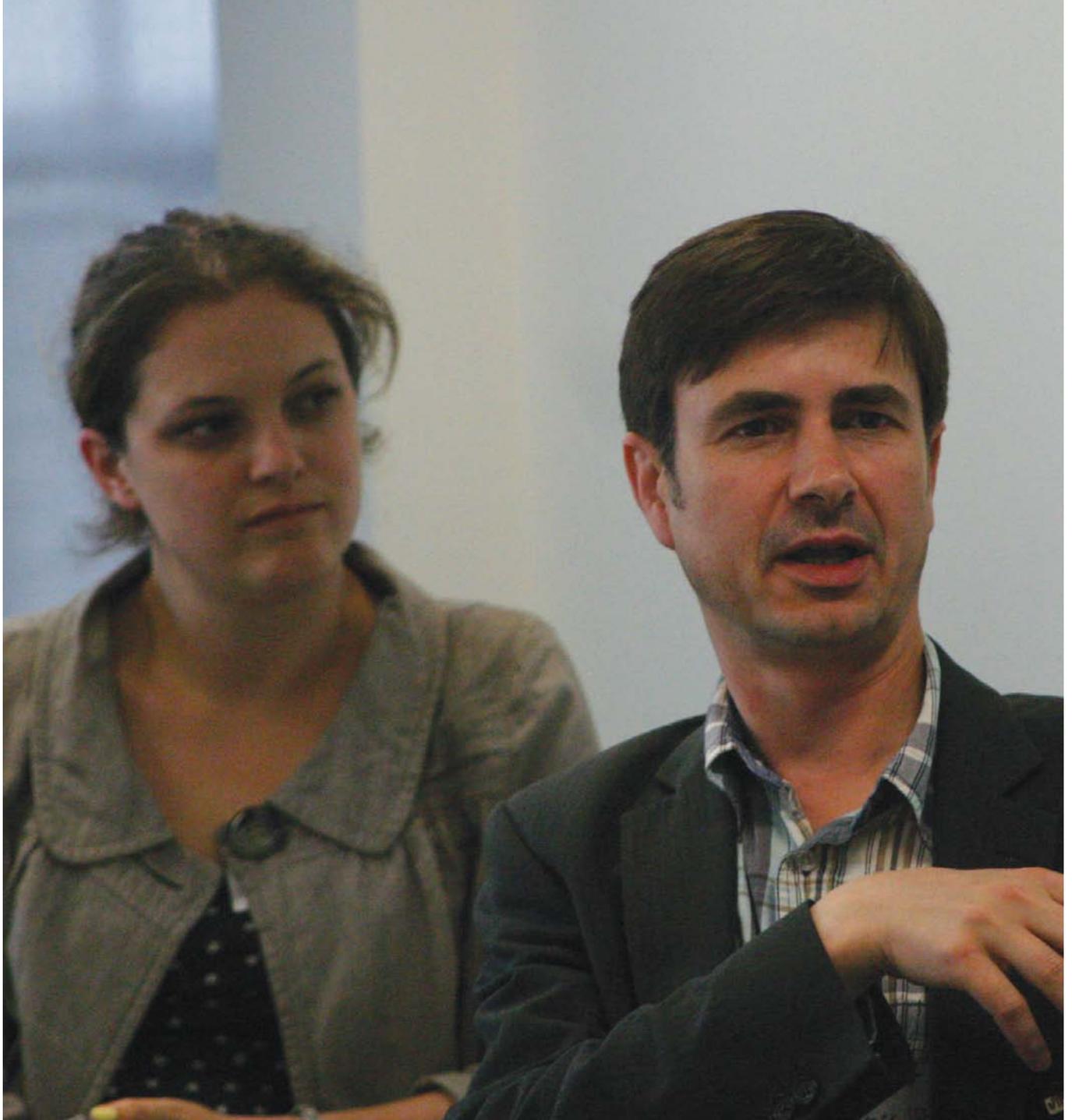
## Policy

We lobby government and funders to improve access to justice and third sector technology. To find out how we can work with you to influence policy, and for the latest briefings and news visit

[www.lasa.org.uk/policy](http://www.lasa.org.uk/policy)

We're here to help you deliver efficient, high quality services.

To find out more please call **020 7377 2748**  
or email **[info@lasa.org.uk](mailto:info@lasa.org.uk)**



*Delegates from vInspired and The Children's Society at the Lasa mobile technology summit hosted by JustGiving*



for a stronger third sector

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