



for a stronger third sector



Annual Review 2010/11

www.lasa.org.uk

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This year we've helped empower and support thousands of third sector organisations across the UK – from **Shelter** to **Action on Hearing Loss** and **Age UK**.

To find out how we can help you please call 020 7377 2748 or email zamar@lasa.org.uk

Here to support you through tough times

Chair's report

This year has been one of enormous change. We've seen riots, and huge cuts to public funding.

But throughout it all we've been here, supporting thousands of third sector and government organisations with our resources and advice. Our job is to help take some of the strain by arming you with the essential tools for your job in tough times.

The value we add to the sector has been recognised by being the only organisation in the UK to receive a grant from Google, via their charitable foundation. The grant will allow us to build digital literacy for charities in the UK and Europe, helping them to use technology to do more with constrained resources.

We were delighted to be recognised by a major Nominet award, "Opening the World of Knowledge", that is given to charities using the internet to make a difference. The award was won by our 'rightsnet' website, an advice and information support service for frontline advice workers working with some of the most marginalised and disadvantaged communities across the UK.

You might also remember that we launched our refreshed brand last year, as we knew we needed to communicate with you more effectively. It has had a very positive reception, improved our profile

and helped more charities across the UK understand how we can help them.

As pressure mounts on the sector, we have remained steadfast in our goals this year. We have advised countless charities and government bodies how to use technology to work more efficiently. We have helped thousands of organisations give better advice to their clients. And as funding cuts bite, we've campaigned hard on access to justice issues and better funding for third sector technology.

I'd like to thank the thousands of third sector organisations, funders, and government bodies who have supported us this year. If you haven't already done so, I hope you will join them in using our services.

More changes lie ahead for us all in the coming year. We're here to make sure you get the resources you need for challenging times. Get in touch with our team to find out how we can help you.

Liz Sewell
Chair



Our impact 2010/11

- Lasa was the only organisation in the UK to receive grant funding from Google
- Knowledgebase, the UK's leading website for third sector technology information, received over a quarter of a million (294,000) visits
- Rightsnet, the UK's No 1 website for welfare rights news and case law, was awarded a major Nominet Internet award
- 100% of delegates rated our training courses as excellent or good
- The Suppliers' Directory – the only directory of trusted and vetted third sector technology suppliers – received over 154,000 visits
- Rightsnet had 176,000 unique visitors, who made more than 8,000 contributions to the discussion forums alone, which were viewed more than 1 million times

Helping you meet the rising demand for advice

Tens of thousands of people across the UK urgently needed benefits advice this year as they lost their homes or work.

Our rightsnet website was used by thousands of organisations, including Citizens Advice Bureaux, the Child Poverty Action Group, local authorities, the BBC and the Tribunals Service.

At the time of writing, rightsnet had been shortlisted for The Guardian Social Enterprise Award, which recognises social enterprises who have made a big impact.

rightsnet was awarded a prestigious Nominet Internet Award, under the "Opening the World of Knowledge" category, for the difference it has made to charities through the internet. There were



176,000 unique visitors to the rightsnet site this year, who made more than 8,000 contributions to the discussion forum alone, with those contributions being viewed more than a million times. We helped hundreds of advice workers solve their clients' welfare benefits problems through our telephone advice lines and advice support project. In addition, over 250 organisations took up the offer of our AIMS Free database, our free and easy to use contact management database. In response to the government's welfare reforms, we launched a series of very popular topical half day workshops to keep advisers up to date with changes in the law.

Watch the video about our Nominet Internet Award for rightsnet – <http://bit.ly/nominet>

Our trainers, who are all leading welfare rights experts, trained over 1,500 people.

With proposals to drastically reduce the scope of civil legal aid, including all welfare benefits cases, we have been a key member of the Justice for All campaign, lobbying MPs and councillors. We have also been instrumental in establishing links between the Justice for All campaign and the Disability Benefits Consortium, a coalition of 50 disability charities.

We have worked closely with LVSC, NCVO, and Age UK to highlight the current challenges facing the advice sector. We are proud to represent over 1,000 advice workers through the London Advice Forum, which brings together key advice networks and pan-London advice agencies. It is highly regarded as the key body to consult on issues affecting access to advice across London. We have also worked with the Mayor of London's office to highlight the crucial role of independent advice provision to many Mayoral strategies.

The fourth London Advice Conference, organised by Lasa with Advice UK, Citizens Advice and Law Centres Federation, took place at Clifford Chance offices in Canary Wharf. Karen Buck MP, and Tony Travers, LSE, were keynote speakers, and delegates had a range of topical workshops to attend, networking opportunities and a funders panel. We worked with Sound Delivery to make podcasts of the views and opinions of speakers and delegates on legal aid reforms, charging for advice, welfare reforms and much more.

“ Lasa is an invaluable source of knowledge and training that could not be easily replicated. I cannot thank or praise everyone at Lasa enough and my own success has to be shared with you.

Keith Sangster, Paragon Housing (Elmbridge Housing Trust)

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

Mel Morris, Southwark Council, Integrated Children's Support Services

“ I have called on Lasa on many occasions to get the law clarified and have found the information to be timely and correct. If Lasa wasn't there this would impact on the quality of service I can give to my clients.

Lisa Davies, The Albert Kennedy Trust

“ Fantastic quality welfare rights training ... responsive, accommodating, very quick client service ... Your speed and turn around time is fast ... Your training helped us to meet the criteria to successfully bid for LSC funding.

Gareth Gilleeney, Learning and Development Manager, Shelter

Supporting you in using technology to meet rising demand



With more people needing urgent help from third sector and government organisations, our technology services have helped hundreds of them save money, become more efficient, and deliver better services.

In recognition of the leading role we have played in helping charities use technology, we were honoured to be one of only 10 organisations internationally (and the only one in the UK) to receive a grant from Google. The grant will help us support more charities in using technology to work as effectively and efficiently as possible.

We continued to work closely with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to provide technology advice, support and resources for their Get Connected project. This aims to help

social care providers get online. We played a significant role when advising SCIE in shaping the project and sat on the project steering group.

2,500 people benefited from our online magazine, Computanews, a popular jargon free guide to technology aimed at third sector organisations. Over 2,000 people also took advantage of our monthly free ICT E-bulletin.

We partnered with the City Bridge Trust, Wates Foundation and Cripplegate Foundation on the 'Building Bridges to ICT Excellence' project. We helped their grant officers review the technology elements of over 350 funding bids.

We worked closely with central government and leading funders to highlight the urgency of the third sector's technology needs.

Over 294,000 visits were made to the Knowledgebase, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. We marked the occasion with a series of events and articles, including a 'tweet chat' where technology experts answered charities' technology questions via Twitter. The Knowledgebase is the UK's leading website for technology advice, information and resources for the third sector. Over 154,000 visits were made to the Suppliers' Directory, which connects third sector organisations with trusted and vetted technology suppliers.

Finally, we held our annual European not for profit technology conference which included speakers from Salesforce, IBM and Microsoft, and sessions to help small and medium sized charities use technology to achieve their goals.

“ When Age Concern Hounslow needed to replace our technology and develop staff training, we turned to Lasa for advice and help ... we developed a more strategic view of how we use technology with staff and volunteers as well as with service-users who benefitted from a new resource: an internet café.

Stephen Hawkins, CEO, Age Concern Hounslow

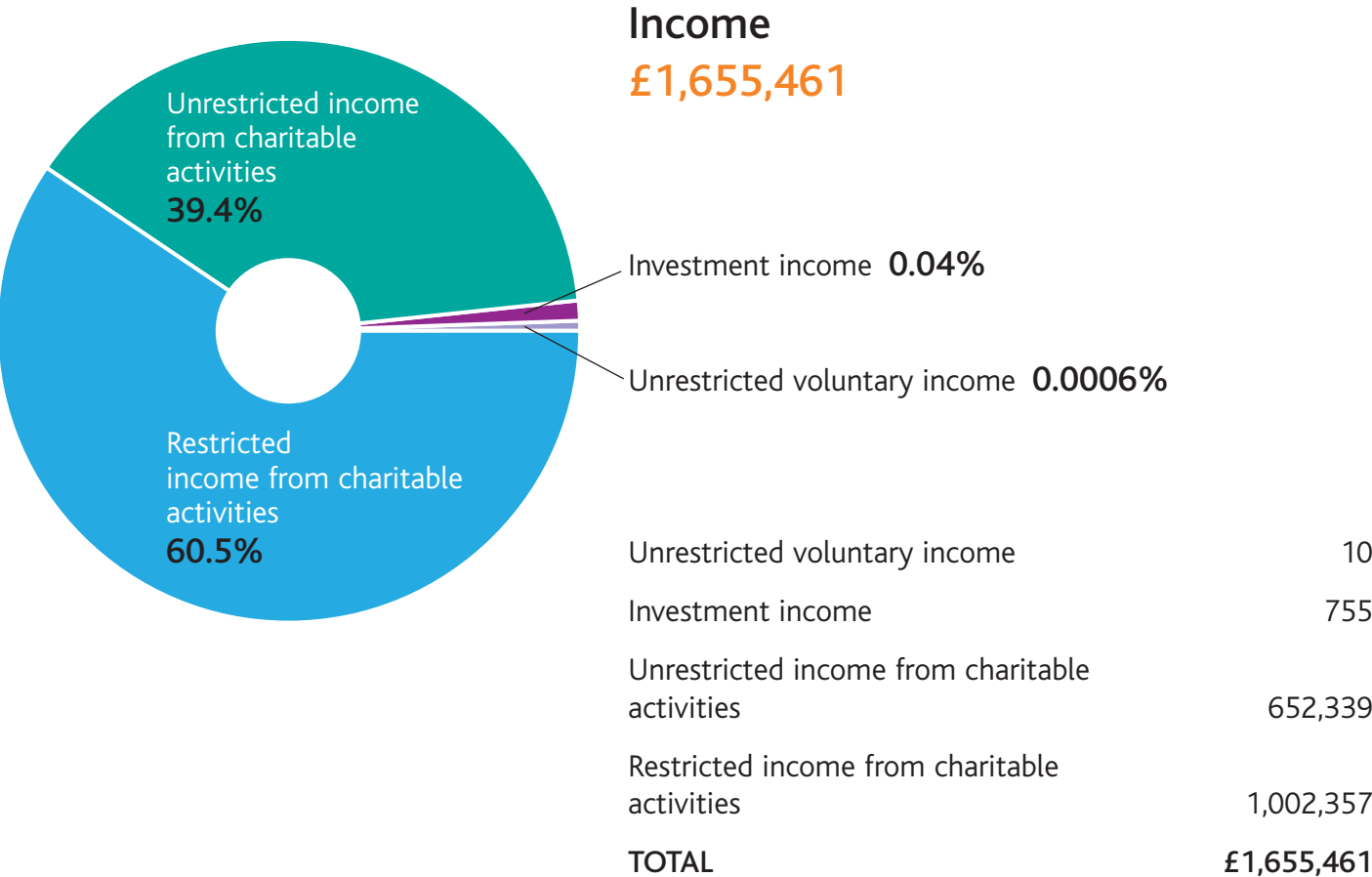
“ Lasa was able to give us more in depth information about the availability and potential of free and paid-for cloud tools and services to achieve our goal of better connecting our two offices so we can improve internal communication and collaboration and deliver our services more effectively. Lasa also helped us explore the issues we would need to take into account when considering migrating to the cloud.

Matt Collins, Communications Manager,
Chance UK

“ ... I can truthfully say it's been the most useful mailing list I've ever been part of.

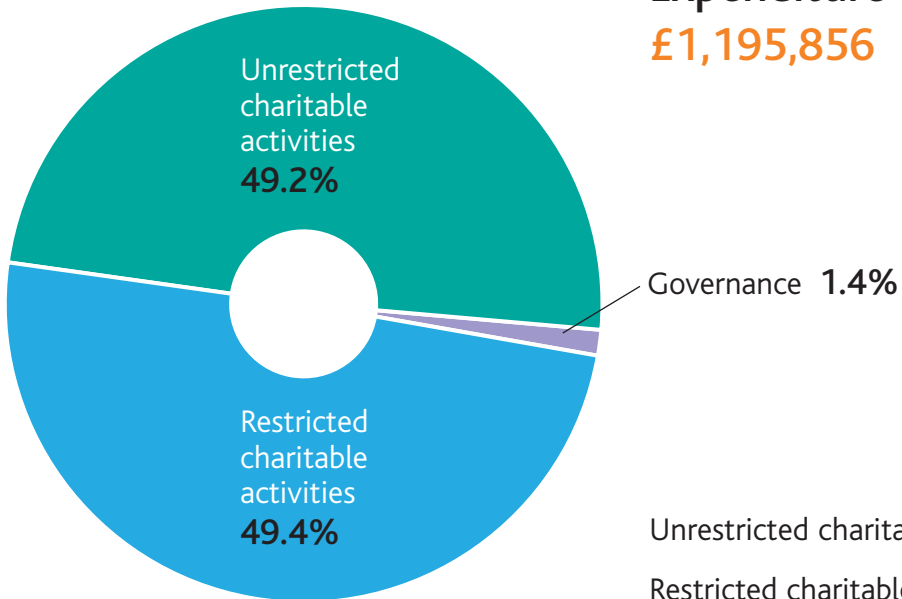
Mike Aldrich, ICT Officer, Cornwall Rural
Community Council, Subscriber to the UK
Riders' list

Income and expenditure



Expenditure

£1,195,856



Unrestricted charitable activities	587,970
Restricted charitable activities	591,306
Governance	16,580
TOTAL	£1,195,856

If you would like a full copy of Lasa's audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011 please contact us.

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

Thank you

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following funders who made invaluable contributions to our work in 2010/11.

London Councils

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

Big Lottery Fund

The City Bridge Trust

Cripplegate Foundation

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

European Commission Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency

Google Inc. Charitable Giving Fund of Tides Foundation

Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)

Trust for London

Wates Foundation

Corporate partners

We are very grateful to IBM and appiChar for their support, and to City law firm Baker & McKenzie for kindly assisting us with pro bono legal advice.



Cripplegate Foundation Helping since 1500



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.

Muge Dindjer has over twenty five years of experience in local and regional government, and working alongside and influencing national government. She has held senior roles at the Greater London Authority including Acting Head of Social Inclusion and Health.

Sanja Dujmovic Potnar is the Registration and Nationality Service Manager at Barnet Register Office and has over sixteen years of experience working at a senior level in the voluntary sector. She is former Head of UK Programmes at Education Action International. Previously, Sanja worked as a project manager at the World University service.

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.

Trustees – continued

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 – working with you to create a stronger third sector

I am proud of what we have achieved at Lasa during my first year as Chief Executive.

We have had a very successful year, and I am delighted that the hard work of my staff has been recognised by Nominet and Google. I would like to thank my team for everything that they have helped Lasa achieve.

I am conscious how fortunate we are given the current challenges facing the sector. Without being unduly pessimistic, things are likely to get worse before they get better. I and everyone at Lasa remain very committed to reaching as many organisations as possible. We will do whatever it takes to help support charities and government bodies through these times, and we are well placed to do so.

I want to thank the funders, third sector organisations and government bodies who have supported us, and who make our work possible. Many of you have cited our services and advice as being essential to your jobs. That is wonderful to know, and we want to make sure we continue to help you as much as we can.

One of my mantras is that technology underpins the work of the sector, and we will continue helping organisations use it to achieve their goals next year. So whether you want to know how to use technology to save money or be more effective, or you want to be able to give better advice about benefits to your clients we can solve your problems.



I believe that we can help you survive another challenging year by working together, so do get in touch to find out how we can help you.

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, 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 also advertises the latest advice worker vacancies and volunteer opportunities across the UK. www.rightsnet.org.uk

Rightsnet Welfare Rights Training – 100% of delegates rate our welfare rights courses as excellent or good – reporting that our training helps improve the quality and speed of their advice. Our courses cover a wide range of subjects and are tailored to suit different levels.
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

Advice Line – Lasa deals with hundreds of welfare rights queries from London based advice workers each year. Tel: **020 7247 1735**.
Hours: Monday and Tuesday 10.30am–12.30pm and Thursday 2pm–4pm

Specialist Support Advice Line – We offer free welfare rights advice over the phone or by email to advice agencies in Wales who have one of the following:

- a LSC Unified Contract; *or*
- a Specialist Quality Mark (in any area of law); *or*
- General Help Quality Mark (in any area of law).

Tel: **0845 271 3230**. Email: ssp@lasa.org.uk
Hours: Monday–Friday 10am–4pm

Welfare Rights Support Service – Helps develop advisers' skills. The service includes training and support with complex casework and client representation at social security tribunals.
Tel: **020 7247 1735**

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

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 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

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

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

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

Policy

We lobby government and funders to improve access to justice and third sector technology access. 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



for a stronger third sector



Together, we can create
a stronger third sector
for a better world.

To find out more about how we can help you
please call 020 7377 2748
or email zamar@lasa.org.uk



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www.lasa.org.uk

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