
LONDON ADVICE SERVICES ALLIANCE COMPANY LIMITED

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2008**

Company Number: 1794098

LONDON ADVICE SERVICES ALLIANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Company Information

Board of Trustees	John Blandford Nadine Clarkson Palomares Annette Figueiredo Jenny Keohane Paul Lowenberg Hugh Lyon Samantha Mauger Elizabeth Sewell
Chair	Elizabeth Sewell
Vice Chair	Hugh Lyon
Treasurer	John Blandford
Secretary	Andrew Gregg
Company Number	1794098
Charity Number	800140
Registered Office	Universal House 88-94 Wentworth Street London E1 7SA
Independent Auditors	Gotham Erskine LLP Chartered Accountants Friendly House 52-58 Tabernacle Street London EC2A 4NJ
Bankers	National Westminster Bank plc 130 Whitechapel High Street London E1 7PS

Contents

	Page
Annual Report	1 - 10
Independent Auditors' Report	11 - 12
Statement of Financial Activities	13
Balance Sheet	14
Notes to the Financial Statements	15 - 23

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

The Board of Trustees present the Annual Report and the financial statements of the London Advice Services Alliance Company Limited, Lasa, for the year ended 31 March 2008.

The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the memorandum and articles of association and the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in March 2005.

The Trustees commend the staff for not only managing to maintain Lasa's key services but also to develop new initiatives. The Trustees recognise that to achieve growth and further diversify the income base is a significant achievement in a period when many voluntary sector organisations are facing reductions in grant and other income.

Principal activities

The objectives of the charity are:

To relieve poverty by promoting the provision of high quality independent advice for all and in particular:-

- a) to promote the development, improvement and co-ordination of legal and advice services and to encourage co-operation between agencies providing such services;
- b) to promote and assist in the introduction of information technology in charitable agencies;
- c) to carry out, commission and publish studies and research into the provision of legal advice and voluntary services and to develop policy responses to this research.

Lasa's mission and aims

Lasa's mission statement reads:

Lasa provides strategic and innovative services to support the provision of expert independent advice for all.

Lasa aims to see good advice available to all who need it and works to secure this by:

- Providing high quality support services to legal advice and information providers
- Promoting access to advice
- Promoting and developing new approaches to the use of ICT in voluntary and community organisations
- Being a source of good practice and innovation.

Background

Lasa was established in 1984 to provide specialist support to advice and information providers. These services include advice, information and training in the field of information technology and welfare benefits support. In addition, Lasa undertakes policy work to promote the role of advice services with policy makers, central and regional government bodies and funders.

An independent organisation, Lasa provides services to organisations that include the main advice networks, national and regional organisations with an advice and information function, local community based organisations (especially those working with minority ethnic and refugee communities) as well as public sector organisations such as housing associations and local authorities.

Based in London, some of Lasa's services are primarily delivered in the London region but increasingly publications, websites, software, training and consultancy services are accessed by organisations throughout the UK.

Lasa has 33 staff (25 full time and 8 part-time) who operate in specific teams and projects supported by the Finance and Central Services Teams who provide key administrative and financial support.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

Governance issues

The affairs of Lasa are governed by the Board of Trustees who met five times during the reporting period. In addition to these and the AGM, there was also an Awayday which allowed the Board and the Directorate to revisit and review the mission of Lasa and also acted as a teambuilding and induction session for new members of the Board.

During the year Liz Sewell continued as Chair of the Board with Hugh Lyon as Vice Chair and Acting Treasurer following the resignation of Noeleen Adams as Honorary Treasurer at the start of the financial period. During the year we recruited four new members to the Board after a process of external recruitment. These new members are John Blandford, Nadine Clarkson Palomares, Jenny Keohane and Paul Lowenberg. They bring considerable new skills and experience to the Board.

As part of its regular discussions about the governance of Lasa, the Board continued its procedure for declaring and recording conflicts of interest. Regular risk analyses were carried out by the Board covering both financial and other risk areas for Lasa. In addition to regular Board meetings the Finance and Resources sub committee continued to meet five times in the year.

During the year Lasa budgeted in order to make a contribution to its reserves and we will continue in future years to build up our reserves so as to move towards our policy of holding three months running costs in reserve.

During the year the Directorate and the Senior Management Team continued to meet on alternate weeks and Lasa continued its programme to support and develop its middle managers. A review of all Lasa's policies and procedures was completed with the assistance of an outside consultant. Work also commenced towards the Investors in People standard against which we will be assessed in June 2008.

Overview of the work of Lasa in 2007-8

Despite an extremely uncertain environment, Lasa has had a successful year and we have been able to develop our services and provide expert resources and support in each of our agreed outcome areas. We have developed a number of new initiatives and have secured funding for these as well as finding new ways to generate income from services.

We continue to be closely involved in the Voluntary Sector Forum of London Councils and have also contributed actively to their advice sector forum. Lasa works closely with all the advice networks as well as key agencies such as London Voluntary Services Council, Government Office for London, Advice Services Alliance, NAVCA and NCVO

During the year we continued and developed our involvement with the Change Up and Capacity Builders programmes at all levels – national, London-wide, sub regional and borough levels. We are the lead agency in a project with London's Councils for Voluntary Service to develop plans to improve ICT infrastructure across London. We host the London ICT Champion. We Chair the London Advice Forum which is the advice subgroup of the London Regional Consortium of Change Up as well as hosting the ICT sub group.

Lasa campaigned actively in Parliament and elsewhere around Access to Justice and the implications of the Legal Service Commission's introduction in October of a unified contract. This is already having serious knock on effects for London's not for profit advice sector

Lasa completed its work in two partnerships funded by the ESF EQUAL budget line – EASI which provided a wide range of support activities to asylum seekers and PRESTO which provided a range of pathways into employment and self-employment for refugees. As part of these EQUAL partnerships we developed and provided a highly successful course for refugees and asylum seekers in how to develop their skills as Circuit Riders. Feedback from the course was very positive and included the following comments:

It has given me confidence, and the push to further my learning and improve on my experience.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

Want to thank your organisation for allowing me to come on this course. I gained a knowledge that I never thought I would be qualified for (about computers). It has boosted my confidence a lot. The team has been good.

It has really encouraged me to work as a Circuit Rider or IT Consultant.

It has given me a lot of information that's going to help me in the future.

The only thing I can say is to thank you very much, you have been brilliant.

A lot of confidence to go ahead!

I love the environment and the competent and friendly staff.

Welfare Rights Support Services

Appeals representation

Since 1984, Lasa's Casework and Appeals Team has provided free and expert representation at social security appeal tribunals and to the Commissioners for claimants referred by London advice agencies. The work of the Casework and Appeals Team has been funded by a Contract from the Legal Services Commission (LSC) and it has also received grant funding from London Councils for many years.

The Casework and Appeals Team is now funded solely by the LSC since London Councils rejected our application for continued funding for this service in January 2008. Hitherto the team comprised of four advisors but the level of funding available from the LSC can currently only sustain two full time caseworkers and we had therefore to make two posts redundant during the year.

The Casework and Appeals Team are now funded by the LSC under the Unified Contract since October 2007. This initially had an impact on the number and levels of referrals as Lasa could no longer assist clients who had initially received basic advice or information from agencies working under the Unified Contract. We have been able to improve this through increased outreach services. We now have a fixed outreach service at the Stratford Advice Arcade in Newham and plans are afoot to introduce one in Lewisham where the Law Centre is due to close and the CAB has handed back to the LSC all its specialist contracts.

In 2007-8 we provided 5666 hours of advocacy services and representation at social security appeals with an over 75% success rate leading to an extra £1,118,194 per annum in benefit income for London claimants and a further £569,743.52 in one off payments. Over 433 new cases referred from all the London Boroughs with the highest number from the following boroughs: LB Brent (13.6%), Hackney (8.9%), Lambeth (19.6%) and Waltham Forest (14.6%). A total of 304 voluntary and statutory organisations received in-depth telephone advice and information during the same period

Feedback from clients included the following comments:

"We would not have succeeded without your help!"

Your submissions were excellent. Thank you for helping me win my case.

"You are great people who helped us win our case. Thank you for all your help."

"The service that I received was excellent and I am grateful for the advice and support that I received regarding my case."

"LASA gave me great support – very helpful, supportive and informative"

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

"Extremely friendly and professional"

"I was overwhelmed by your sympathetic and helpful approach and support I was given in my time of need"

The Casework and Appeals Team is continuously working with BMER and Mental health organisations to improve and develop knowledge and skills. Lasa is now undertaking more complex cases leading to increased representation at Commissioners and establishing new test cases in Social Welfare law. We are increasing our work with smaller agencies, especially BMER groups to encourage referrals from their communities. We provide specialist second tier support to organisations via telephone and email, including tactics in challenging negative decisions. Lasa is working with other VCS organisations in recommending changes to the proposed fixed fee and unified contract by the LSC. We also provided updates and written presentations to other community groups on the impact of the proposed changes to their contracts.

Rightsnet website

Rightsnet (www.rightsnet.org.uk) is a welfare benefits and tax credits website for advisers that includes, an on-line discussion forum; daily news and analysis, caselaw summaries; leaflets, factsheets, benefit calculators, benefit rates and the latest advice-related job vacancies.

Use of the website continued to increase, attracting more than 33 million hits during the year from more than 1.5 million visits. Users represent more than 4,000 advice organisations across the UK.

More than 750 articles were published to Rightsnet during the last year, with summaries of and links (within 24 hours of their issue), to new legislation, case law and court decisions, official guidance, and policy documents. Peer support was delivered through the discussion forums with more than 7,500 messages posted by advice workers, viewed by others more than ½ million times.

During the year Rightsnet supported the delivery of services under Lasa's Specialist Support Project's contract with the Legal Services Commission, involving the publication of summaries of the latest welfare benefit and tax credit caselaw. In addition Rightsnet continued to support the work of Lasa's training team - with information on our training courses and online booking available via the site - and Lasa's policy team who publish the latest advice policy news and resources to the site.

Work was also carried out during the year on a redesign of the site, to be launched during 2008, with improvements in response to user feedback.

Review

Six editions of Lasa's bi-monthly welfare rights 'Review' magazine were produced and each distributed to more than 2000 organisations in 2007/08. Review contains information and news to enable advisers to keep up to date with changes in welfare benefits and tax credits. In addition, a copy of each new issue was also published to the Rightsnet website, where more than 1000 copies are downloaded each month

Specialist Support Project

Until March 2008, the Specialist Support Service (SSS) provided expert support and training for organisations with a LSC contract or a Quality Mark in welfare benefits based in England. As a result of a new tendering process from the Legal Services Commission, Lasa now provides Specialist Support Services to organisations in Wales if they meet certain specific criteria – hold a Unified contract or the Specialist Quality Mark. The contract is for three years.

We provide five telephone advice line sessions each week for advisers, 52 weeks of the year. Complex enquiries are then referred to our Casework and Appeals Team as required under the contract.

In 2007-8 the Lasa Specialist Support service –

- provided support and advice in over 1000 cases
- supported workers in over 10 cases that were taken to the Social Security Commissioners including an important test case that safeguarded seasonal workers' rights to benefits –RJSA(1)07
- designed 5 new training courses

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

- delivered 10 days of highly valued training around England
- summarised over 150 commissioners decisions for publication on www.rightsnet.org.uk

Staffing has had to be reduced to one dedicated post with support from the Casework and Appeals Team when required.

Welfare Benefits Training

The Advice and Training Team provided a comprehensive programme of affordable and accessible courses for organisations delivering welfare benefits advice. A new marketing campaign has successfully increased income from training courses to underpin the provision of the service.

In 2007-08 the team provided more than 150 courses in welfare benefits and tax credits ranging from the ever popular Welfare Benefits Overview course aimed at advisers new to welfare benefits, courses on individual topics/subjects (e.g. housing benefit) through to specialised (and highly respected) courses such as the Representation at Appeals Course.

Lasa was the first training organisation to provide courses in the new Employment and Support Allowance due to replace the current system for people claiming benefits who are incapable of work in October 2008. We have provided 11 Lasa ESA courses between January and March 2008 with more planned in the new financial year. These were delivered both at Lasa's offices and at the organisations own premises. Over 1000 people attended Lasa courses and 62 in-house courses were arranged. Courses are adapted/updated throughout the year – in line with changes in legislation and suggested changes/improvements. New courses have been developed and delivered: - Employment Support Allowance, DLA for children and NHS funding and continuing care, the last two courses have been developed as a result of a survey concerning advisers training needs.

Funding was received from HM Revenue and Customs to provide reduced price training on tax credits to VCS advisers.

Lasa courses are promoted through our training brochure printed twice yearly and distributed to over 2000 contacts. A "course news" item is published weekly on the Lasa website and distributed to our Training News Email Contact List (over 800 contacts). Information on courses is also advertised on the Rightsnet homepage, and the weekly Rightsnet email newsletter.

ICT Support Services

Advice, consultancy, information and support

The Information Systems Team provides advice, information and support to help organisations make effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). These services build the capacity of organisations to manage their ICT, and so enable them to deliver quality services.

Services include:

- telephone helpline
- consultancy and advice including ICT Healthchecks
- an on-line ICT information resource www.icthubknowledgebase.org.uk
- an online searchable directory of suppliers of ICT services to the voluntary and community sector: www.suppliersdirectory.org.uk
- bi-monthly magazine 'Computanews'
- 'Computanews guides' for in-depth coverage of key topics
- The promotion and development of the Circuit Rider model of voluntary sector ICT support

Computanews is Lasa's non-technical guide to ICT focussing on the needs of Voluntary and Community Organisations. It continues to be a popular source of ICT information for the sector receiving positive

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

feedback from our online readership surveys. 5 issues were published in 2006 circulated to approx. 2500 individuals and organisations.

Knowledgebase continues into its 9th year to provide a unique resource for small and medium-sized VCOs to access relevant information on ICT queries. Following the launch of the new website and discussion forums during 2006, continued funding from the ICT Hub during 2007/08 has enabled work to continue to develop and expand these resources.

330 articles are now published on the knowledgebase website including 80 new articles and 200 revised / updated articles. Average visits per month in 2007 were over 20,000. The Discussion Forums have average visits per month of over 1000.

During the same time we also redeveloped and relaunched the Suppliers Directory with greatly improved accessibility, usability and functionality. The directory now has over 100 entries with 205 services covering the whole of England. The directory has over 4000 visitors per month.

Lasa Information Systems Team (IST) maintained its development of innovative support models to assist organisations in the management of their ICT. This included the continued promotion and development of the 'Circuit Rider Movement' in the UK - mobile ICT support workers ('Circuit Riders') who meet the needs of small to medium sized organisations. Work with NCVO, NAVCA and others to promote the movement continues. The e-mail discussion forum continues to grow with almost 400 participants to date. Lasa has widened the number and types of groups to whom we provide a Circuit Rider service as well as building the capacity of a larger number of organisations able to provide this service.

Following the end of our 06/07 Circuit Rider Project the project evaluation by ADP Consultancy was published and a successful Project wrap-up event was held. We also input into The City Bridge Trust's publication on Circuit Riding in their series The Knowledge - Learning Through London.

In the last year we published 5 issues of Roundup, a news digest for circuit riders. We also ran a highly successful conference attended by over 75 circuit riders and others interested in circuit riding.

We have secured funding for a 3 year project starting in 2008 to develop a training and accreditation framework to support and develop the skills of new and existing circuit riders in London.

We delivered circuit rider training to 28 participants from the refugee and asylum seeker community as part of our partnership with EASI and PRESTO. Feedback from participants was extremely positive. We are currently developing follow up workshops as a result of this significant piece of work with hard to reach groups.

The team, in particular the London Regional ICT Champion, has continued to engage with funders and policy makers in both central and local government to promote good practice in the use of ICT for the voluntary sector, and to develop models that deliver effective ICT support for the sector. This has included working with Capacity Builders, the Greater London Assembly (through London Connects) and the Government Office for London. We have been active participants in the consultation and development of the strategy to best meet the ICT infrastructure needs of the voluntary and community sector. Our role in this work has been recognized by the securing of further part funding for the role of ICT Champion for London and the strategy has been adopted by London Councils.

IST continues to provide one-to-one ICT advice service to voluntary organisations in London and nationally through our consultancy work and helpline. 60 telephone advice calls were delivered and we carried out significant pieces consultancy work with 10 organisations in London.

Although funding for the ICT Hub comes to an end in June 2008 we continue to liaise closely with partner organisations NCVO, NAVCA, IT4C and AbilityNet to promote the importance of ICT to the voluntary and community sector and to secure further income to maintain and develop the resources Lasa developed under the partnership.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

AIMS Software

The Advice & Information Management System (AIMS) is a contact management database that can be configured to meet the needs of a wide range of organisations. The database is available in two formats (Core & Extra) and operates on both SQL and Access platforms. AIMS is currently in use in 151 voluntary sector agencies and 19 metropolitan authorities and London boroughs.

The AIMS team brought out an improved version of the database that went free of charge to all subscribers. The improved functionality enabled groups to better deliver their service and provided for enhanced reporting on their work. The AIMS team delivered training courses to 106 trainees and ran 21 courses. A new course was also developed in the period focussing on how to use the advanced features available in AIMS Extra.

The team answered nearly 500 substantive telephone enquiries from agencies with the average contact time taking 19 minutes per enquiry. Agencies typically requested technical support, assistance with report design or wished to discuss configuration and usage issues. In the same time period approximately a thousand email and short enquiries were also dealt with.

As part of the marketing of AIMS we attended a number of conferences and workshops, presenting the software and discussing data collection issues in the voluntary sector. We also developed a downloadable demonstration version of the data base available from www.lasa.org.uk/aims/aims_demo.shtml

The Multikulti project

The Multikulti website provides information on social welfare law translated into 12 community languages available 24/7 at www.multikulti.org.uk. All content has now been reviewed with significant new content added to the site. Agency data sources have been updated. 15 new documents have been published on health, immigration, racism and discrimination. Multikulti delivered training courses for asylum seekers and refugees under the EASI and PRESTO projects. The course contents, sessions, documents and web resources for the courses are to be available on the site. The website received more than 15 million hits and over 2 million visitors during the year, an increase of more than 300,000 visitors compared to the previous year.

Policy Development

Six meetings of the London Advice Forum (LAF) were facilitated during the year, with the development of terms of reference and a work programme for the Forum. The profile of the Forum has been raised quite significantly over the last 12 months and is increasingly recognised as a key body to consult on issues affecting advice provision across London. Lasa's policy function allows us to maintain an influential role in London developments concerning the advice sector with policy makers, regional and central government and funders. Lasa continues to play a central role in the development of legal advice services within London, through its partnership work with the other major advice networks and organisations, via the London Advice Forum by developing relationships with London Region Legal Services Commission. We are also developing interaction and engagement with funders including London Councils, Big Lottery Fund, the Baring Foundation, City Parochial Foundation, and by way of involvement with the Voluntary Sector Forum, MPs, MEPs, GLA etc.

London Advice Forum is now also the London Regional ChangeUp Consortium's sub group on Advice. This necessitated substantial work in order to change the Terms of Reference and expand the membership of the Forum. We have organised meetings for LAF with London Funders, London MPs, the GLA and the Mayor's Office and have spoken at London Councils advice sector meetings. We contributed to the planning and presentation of London Council's legal advice sectoral forum on two occasions. Our Policy Development Officer managed important ChangeUp research on the infrastructure support needs of London advice agencies, in partnership with the advice networks. Lasa's Policy Officer responded to over 100 telephone and over 40 mail requests for information and advice around legal advice services.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

Lasa supports the London advice networks and frontline agencies in maintaining a policy influence. During the year we developed advice policy news, and a resources and discussion forum website area with funding from City Parochial Foundation. We maintain close links with new Advice UK policy and development staff, Age Concern London, Youth Access, Citizens Advice London and the Law Centres Federation. Lasa is involved in and aware of many of the developments around legal advice provision within London through dialogue with partner networks and associated initiatives and events. The new website area is proving to be a valuable resource in spreading information relevant to advice agencies in a timely and accessible format. In the year to February 2007 we published details of 20 social security government consultation documents on the 'rightsnet' website to facilitate responses from 1st tier agencies.

Lasa responds to all regional and central government consultations on issues affecting advice and legal services. In the year we coordinated responses to the following:
London Council's commissioning, London Councils and Big Lottery Fund consultations. We also attended a wide variety of meetings, seminars and presentations at GoL, LDA, Capacity Builders, Age Concern, LVSC, ACEVO and NCVO. We helped organise an adjournment debate called by Karen Buck MP to discuss the effects of the LSC's fixed fee on London's advice agencies. We have raised advice related issues with GoL, LDA, GLA, the London Mayors Office, London Funders, LSC, Law Society etc.

Lasa has had a considerable involvement in the Voluntary Sector Forum which allows us a real input into London Council's policies and procedures. In particular we have been closely involved in consultations on the London Council's new commissioning process which is now underway.

Financial review

The demand for Lasa's services by the voluntary sector generally and front line agencies in particular continues to grow and has been reflected by the development of the new projects and activities referred to earlier in this report. These developments have led to an increase in expenditure during the year of over 40%. With the aid of sound financial management and the support of staff Lasa has ended the year on a positive financial note.

Lasa had net incoming resources on unrestricted funds, a surplus, of £56,169 for the year. Together with the accumulated surplus brought forward from previous years, Lasa now has an accumulated surplus of £247,744 (2007 £191,575) on unrestricted funds.

Restricted funds carried forward at 31 March 2008 amounted to £562 (2007 £305,937). These are funds that have been received for restricted projects including MultiKulti and computer grants and is sufficient for those activities for which the funds were provided.

Principal funding sources

Lasa generates fee income from the services provided to front line advice organisations and from government organisations. These services are enhanced by the receipt of grants. Grants for the year, amounting to 59% (2007 66%) of the total income, were received from the Association of London Government, The Active Community Unit, The Big Lottery Fund, Bridge House Trust, the City Parochial Foundation, HM Revenue and Customs, the European Social Fund and HBOS Foundation.

Investment Policy

Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year most of the charity's funds are to be spent in the short term so there are no funds for long term investment. The policy of the Board of Trustees is to invest the amount that it has available and grants received in advance on the money market.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby funds used for core Lasa projects and not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be 3 months expenditure. This gives a target of around £230,000 in general funds. The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the Board of Trustees are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in core funding. The present level of reserves available to the charity of £144,634 therefore falls short of this target level. This figure is the unrestricted reserves £247,744 less the designated funds £100,000 less the unrestricted fixed assets £3,160.

Although the strategy is to continue to build reserves through planned operating surpluses, the Board of Trustees is well aware that it is unlikely that the target range can be reached for at least five years. In the short term the Board of Trustees has also considered the extent to which existing activities and expenditure could be curtailed, should such circumstances arise.

Risk assessment

In June 2002 the Board of Trustees agreed a risk management strategy which comprises:

- an annual review of the risks which the charity may face
- the establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate against risks identified; and
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

A review of the plan is carried out annually.

Company status

London Advice Services Alliance Company Limited (Lasa) is a company limited by guarantee governed by its memorandum and articles of association. It is registered at Companies House under the number 1794098. The Charity Commissioners have registered the company as a charity under the number 800140. Membership of the company is open to national advice networks.

Board of Trustees

The Members of the board perform the role of directors in company law and are the trustees in charity law. Those who served during the year, except where indicated, were :

Sebastian Bacon (resigned 9/8/2007)	Paul Lowenberg (appointed 4/9/07)
John Blandford (appointed 4/9/07)	Hugh Lyon
Nadine Clarkson Palomares (appointed 4/9/07)	Samantha Mauger
Annette Figueiredo	Bobbie Pote (resigned 27/9/07)
Jenny Keohane (appointed 4/9/07)	Elizabeth Sewell

Membership of Lasa is open to:

- a) any organisation which supports and accepts the objects of the company and that its own objects and activities are consistent with the Companies objects
- b) not less than four or more than 18 persons nominated or coopted to serve on the Board of Directors by virtue of their particular skills, experience or other such qualification (up to 10 persons), their direct experience of advice work (up to 6 persons) and up to 2 people coopted by the Board of Directors.

Organisations who are members are asked to confirm or replace their representatives every two years. Co-opted members retire at the Annual General Meeting following their co-option and may be co-opted again.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

The ten other board members retire after two years service with two members retiring each year. Each Board member has one vote and the Chair has a second casting vote.

Statement of the Board of Trustees responsibilities

Company law requires the Board of Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Board of Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Board of Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In determining how amounts are presented within items in the Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet the Board of Trustees have had regard to the substance of the reported transaction or arrangement, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles or practice.

So far as the Board of Trustees are aware at the time the report is approved:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware, and
- the Board of Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Independent auditors

The independent auditors, Gotham Erskine LLP, will be proposed for reappointment in accordance with section 385 of the Companies Act 1985.

Small company exemptions

The board of directors have taken advantage of the exemptions conferred by the special provisions of Part V11 of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies.

This report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 12 August 2008 and signed by order of the Board of Trustees by:

Liz Sewell
Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF LONDON ADVICE SERVICES ALLIANCE COMPANY LIMITED

We have audited the financial statements of London Advice Services Alliance Company Limited for the year ended 31 March 2008 set out on pages 13 to 23. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities issued in February 2005, the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Enterprises (FRSSE) effective January 2007 and the accounting policies set out on pages 15 to 16.

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 235 of the Companies Act 1985. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and independent auditors

As described in the Statement of Trustees Responsibilities the company's Board of Trustees is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom generally accepted accounting practice.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the trustees report is not consistent with the financial statements, the company has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if information specified by law regarding trustees remuneration and transactions with the company is not disclosed.

We read the Trustees' Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies within the financial statements.

Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Board of Trustees in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF LONDON ADVICE SERVICES ALLIANCE
COMPANY LIMITED

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2008 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985. The information given in the trustees report is consistent with the financial statements.

Gotham Erskine LLP

Chartered Accountants
and Registered Auditors
Friendly House
52-58 Tabernacle Street
London EC2A 4NJ

12 August 2008

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
For the year ended 31 March 2008

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2008 £	Total Funds 2007 £
Incoming Resources					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Investment income		15,271	-	15,271	9,432
Incoming resources from charitable activities	2	974,233	709,921	1,684,154	2,040,310
Total Incoming Resources		989,504	709,921	1,699,425	2,049,742
Resources Expended					
Charitable activities	4	886,770	1,040,696	1,927,466	1,856,835
Governance	6	21,165	-	21,165	24,114
Total Resources Expended		907,935	1,040,696	1,948,631	1,880,949
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources before transfers		81,569	(330,775)	(249,206)	168,793
Transfers between funds	1,15	(25,400)	25,400	-	-
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources		56,169	(305,375)	(249,206)	168,793
Net income for the year		56,169	(305,375)	(249,206)	168,793
Total fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2007		191,575	305,937	497,512	328,719
Total fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2008		£ 247,744	£ 562	£ 248,306	£ 497,512

The balance on restricted funds represents the amount of funds available for specific projects or activities which were not finished at the year end. These funds are therefore necessary to complete the project or activity in the next year and are not a surplus available to the charity for other purposes. A condition of funding these projects or activities is that if the project was not completed for any reason the remaining funds are required to be repaid to the donor or grantor.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 15 to 23 form part of these financial statements.

LONDON ADVICE SERVICES ALLIANCE COMPANY LIMITED

BALANCE SHEET
As at 31 March 2008

	Note	£	2008 £	£	2007 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible fixed assets	11		3,160		44,017
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	176,752		256,488	
Cash at bank and in hand		285,004		418,193	
		<u>461,756</u>		<u>674,681</u>	
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	13	(137,848)		(136,991)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>323,908</u>		<u>537,690</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<u>327,068</u>		<u>581,707</u>
DEFERRED INCOME	14		<u>(78,762)</u>		<u>(84,195)</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>£ 248,306</u>		<u>£ 497,512</u>
FUNDS					
Unrestricted funds					
General			147,744		157,092
Designated			100,000		34,483
			<u>247,744</u>		<u>191,575</u>
Restricted funds			<u>562</u>		<u>305,937</u>
	15, 16		<u>£ 248,306</u>		<u>£ 497,512</u>

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2007).

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on 12 August 2008 and signed on its behalf by:

Liz Sewell
Chair

Hugh Lyon
Vice Chair

The notes on pages 15 to 23 form part of these financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2008

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

A summary of the principal accounting policies, all of which have been applied consistently throughout the year and with the preceding year, is set out below.

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) issued in February 2005, the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Enterprises (FRSSE) effective January 2007 and the Companies Act 1985. The financial statements include the results of the company's operations which are described in the Annual Report and all of which are continuing.

The company has taken advantage of the exemption in Financial Reporting Standard No.1 from the requirement to produce a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is a small company.

1.2 Incoming resources

Voluntary income including grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature are recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods:
or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

Income from commercial trading activities is recognised as earned as the related goods and services are provided.

Investment income is recognised on a receivable basis.

Income from charitable activities includes income received under contract or where entitlement to grant funding is subject to specific performance conditions is recognised as earned (as the related goods or services are provided). Grant income included in this category provides funding to support advice activities and is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Income is deferred when:

- Training and subscription income is received in advance of the training taking place or the subscription being used.

1.3 Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements and performance related grants are recognised as goods or services are supplied.

- Charitable activities include expenditure associated with specialised advice, advocacy, training and ICT support services and include both the direct and support costs relating to these activities.
- Governance costs include the cost of the preparation and audit/examination of the statutory accounts, the costs of trustees meetings and the cost of any legal advice to trustees on governance or constitutional matters.
- Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on the basis of staff involved in the activity.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2008

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES\continued

1.4 Irrecoverable VAT

All resources expended are classified under activity headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the category of resources expended for which it was incurred.

1.5 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets with a value of £1,500 or more are capitalised at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment	-	33%	Straight line
Fixtures & fittings	-	33%	Straight line

1.6 Operating leases

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged to Statement of Financial Activities as incurred on a straight line basis.

1.7 Funds structure

The charity has a number of restricted income funds to account for situations where a donor requires that a donation must be spent on a particular purpose or where funds have been raised for a specific purpose.

All other funds are unrestricted income funds. The trustees intend to use part of the unrestricted funds to cover redundancy, maternity and long-term staff sickness and have set up a designated fund to reflect this. The funds held in each of these categories are disclosed in note 16.

1.8 Pensions

The company has a defined contribution pension scheme. The company contributes 3% of gross salary to the scheme or to the employee's personal pension scheme. The charge to the Statement of Financial Activities represents the amounts payable to the funds during the year.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2008

2. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Grants	Other income	Total Funds 2008	<i>Total Funds 2007</i>
	£	£	£	£
Welfare rights support services	246,755	424,723	671,478	<i>800,129</i>
Policy and development	79,566	118,553	198,119	<i>42,553</i>
ICT services	684,577	129,980	814,557	<i>1,197,628</i>
	<u>£1,010,898</u>	<u>£ 673,256</u>	<u>£ 1,684,154</u>	<u>£ 2,040,310</u>

Incoming resources above and total resources expended in note 4 include both restricted and unrestricted income and expenditure. Incoming and outgoing resources for restricted funds in note 15 only includes restricted income and expenditure.

Other income includes income from commissions, training courses, publications, the sales of software licences.

LONDON ADVICE SERVICES ALLIANCE COMPANY LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2008

3. GRANTS

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2008	Total Funds 2007
	£	£	£	£
<u>Receivable in year</u>				
Association of London Government				
Revenue	321,000	-	321,000	321,000
Big Lottery Fund				
Circuit Rider project	-	-	-	52,500
MultiKulti	-	79,785	79,785	137,811
Active Community Unit				
Capacity builders	-	26,011	26,011	29,937
ChangeUp programme	-	-	-	41,780
ICT Hub	-	368,989	368,989	544,780
European Social Fund				
EASI	-	81,301	81,301	5,906
PRESTO	-	87,612	87,612	74,234
Bridge House Trust	-	-	-	41,000
City Parochial Foundation	-	-	-	12,000
HBOS Foundation	-	2,000	2,000	-
HM Revenue and Customs	-	30,000	30,000	39,395
Other	-	5,600	5,600	-
	<u>£ 321,000</u>	<u>£ 681,298</u>	<u>£ 1,002,298</u>	<u>£ 1,300,343</u>
<u>Deferred grants</u>				
Brought forward from previous year				
Home Office	-	3,000	3,000	
Mercer's Company	-	4,000	4,000	-
Other	-	1,600	1,600	-
	<u>£ -</u>	<u>£ 8,600</u>	<u>£ 8,600</u>	<u>£ -</u>
Total for the year	<u><u>£ 321,000</u></u>	<u><u>£ 689,898</u></u>	<u><u>£ 1,010,898</u></u>	<u><u>£ 1,300,343</u></u>

4. RESOURCES EXPENDED ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Fees and staff costs	Other direct costs	Support costs	Total Funds 2008	Total Funds 2007
	£	£	£	£	£
Welfare rights					
support services	422,559	56,014	156,593	635,166	775,277
Policy and development	134,993	9,066	46,359	190,418	54,470
ICT services	776,713	84,435	240,734	1,101,882	1,051,202
	<u><u>£1,334,265</u></u>	<u><u>£ 149,515</u></u>	<u><u>£ 443,686</u></u>	<u><u>£ 1,927,466</u></u>	<u><u>£ 1,880,949</u></u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2008

5. SUPPORT COSTS

	Staffing costs	IT, administration and premises	Total Funds 2008	Total Funds 2007
	£	£	£	£
Welfare rights support services	101,849	54,744	156,593	186,700
Policy and development	30,152	16,207	46,359	12,356
ICT services	156,576	84,158	240,734	226,268
	<u>£ 288,577</u>	<u>£ 155,109</u>	<u>£ 443,686</u>	<u>£ 425,324</u>

Support costs are allocated to the projects or activity on the basis of staff and consultants involved in the projects or activity.

6. GOVERNANCE OF THE CHARITY

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2008	Total Funds 2007
	£	£	£	£
Salaries and other staffing costs	8,395	-	8,395	8,151
Auditors' remuneration	4,750	-	4,750	4,600
Accountancy	7,750	-	7,750	11,101
Subsistence	206	-	206	200
Postage	64	-	64	62
	<u>£ 21,165</u>	<u>£ -</u>	<u>£ 21,165</u>	<u>£ 24,114</u>

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989

The company received financial assistance from the Association of London Government, now London Councils. As required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the following information is given.

£80,250 was received from a grant for the nine months to 30 June 2007 and £240,750 was received from a grant for the nine months to 31 March 2008 as a contribution towards Lasa's range of services to advice agencies. These grants totalled £321,000 and have been fully expended.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2008

8. NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources is stated after charging:

	2008	<i>2007</i>
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets		
- owned by the company	40,857	12,489
Auditors' remuneration		
- for audit services	4,750	(6,501)
- for other services	7,750	22,202
Operating lease rentals		
- land and buildings	92,385	84,504
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

No member of the Board of Trustees received any emoluments. Out of pocket expenses reimbursed were less than £100 (2007 - £100). No employee received emoluments of £60,000 per annum or more.

9. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs were as follows:

	2008	<i>2007</i>
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,059,520	958,509
Social security costs	113,125	100,896
Pension costs	28,355	25,707
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	£ 1,201,000	<i>£ 1,085,112</i>
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The average monthly number of full-time equivalent employees during the year was as follows:

	2008	<i>2007</i>
Service delivery	26	24
Administration	4	4
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

10. TAXATION

As a charity, the London Advice Services Alliance Company Limited is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2008

11. TANGIBLE ASSETS

	Office Equipment £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2007	179,988	2,835	182,823
At 31 March 2008	179,988	2,835	182,823
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2007	135,971	2,835	138,806
Charge for year	40,857	-	40,857
At 31 March 2008	176,828	2,835	179,663
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2008	£ 3,160	£ -	£ 3,160
At 31 March 2007	£ 44,017	£ -	£ 44,017

12. DEBTORS

	2008 £	2007 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	58,315	51,563
Other debtors	13,874	15,706
Prepayments	12,239	25,815
Grants in arrears	92,324	163,404
	£ 176,752	£ 256,488

13. CREDITORS:

Amounts falling due within one year

	2008 £	2007 £
Trade creditors	116,696	120,401
Other creditors	6,377	6,073
Accruals	14,775	10,517
	£ 137,848	£ 136,991

Included in other creditors is an amount of £143 in respect of pension contributions. (2007 £406).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2008

14. DEFERRED INCOME

	2008	2007
	£	£
At 1 April 2007	84,195	73,881
Less amount released to incoming resources	(84,195)	(73,881)
Plus amount deferred in the year	78,762	84,195
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 March 2008	£ 78,762	£ 84,195
	<hr/>	<hr/>

15. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2007	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	At 31 March 2008
	£	£	£	£	£
General funds	91,575	989,504	(907,935)	(25,400)	147,744
Designated funds					
Business development	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
Staff costs	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total unrestricted funds	191,575	989,504	(907,935)	(25,400)	247,744
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Restricted funds					
Welfare rights support services	-	36,000	(35,438)	-	562
ICT support services	302,086	673,921	(1,001,407)	25,400	-
Policy and development	3,851	-	(3,851)	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total restricted funds	305,937	709,921	(1,040,696)	25,400	562
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total funds	497,512	1,699,425	(1,948,631)	-	248,306
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Incoming resources for restricted funds in note 15 only includes restricted income. Incoming resources in note 2 and total resources expended in note 4 include both restricted and unrestricted income and expenditure.

Designated funds

Staff costs

£50,000 has been designated for unexpected staff costs such as redundancy, maternity and long term sickness.

Business development

£50,000 has been designated for business development. This fund was originally set up to provide development funds for the AIMS project. However the Trustees now consider it appropriate for Lasa as a whole to undertake business development and this fund is intended to underpin this.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2008

15. STATEMENT OF FUNDS\continued

Restricted funds

Welfare Rights Support Services

Restricted funds are received for particular activities within the Rightsnet project, tax credits training and to run the Appeals Forum.

ICT support Services

Undertakes specific projects and activities which receive restrictive funding. These include activities within the Circuit Rider project, the ICT hub, ICT champion, MultiKulti projects and EASI and PRESTO funding streams.

Policy and development

Restricted funds are received towards the policy officer's salary and investigating the infrastructure support needs of London advice agencies.

16. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2008 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2008 are represented by			
Tangible fixed assets	3,160	-	3,160
Current assets	386,375	75,381	461,756
Current liabilities	(63,029)	(74,819)	(137,848)
Deferred income	(78,762)	-	(78,762)
	<u>£ 247,744</u>	<u>£ 562</u>	<u>£ 248,306</u>

17. OTHER COMMITMENTS

At 31 March 2008 the company had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings 2008 £	2007 £	Other 2008 £	2007 £
Expiry date:				
Within 1 year	-	84,500	440	440
Between 2 and 5 years	<u>96,600</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

18. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

At the end of the year there were no other capital commitments, contingent liabilities or other financial commitments for which full provision has not been made in these financial statements (2007 £Nil).