

lasa

for a stronger third sector



Annual Review 2009/10

www.lasa.org.uk

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This year we have helped empower and support thousands of third sector organisations across the UK – from **Age UK** to **Shelter** and **Citizens Advice Bureaux**.

A stronger third sector for a better world

Chair's report

In such uncertain times, we believe that the knowledge, support and resources offered by Lasa is more important than ever.

Now, more than ever before, the third sector needs support from practical, high quality, trustworthy organisations like Lasa. So we have worked with thousands of organisations this year to help them give better advice to their clients. We've helped countless charities and government bodies use technology to meet the rising demand for their services. And we've campaigned on access to justice issues and better funding for third sector technology. Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year.

We know that we must communicate with you as clearly as possible about how we can help you. So in early 2010, we decided to review our brand, as many of you told us that:

- You thought that we only operated in London. Not many of you know that we work across the UK and have partners in Europe and the US.
- More organisations needed to know we can help them. Many of you were unaware that we work with everyone from small community charities to international charities and central government bodies.
- Our vision, values and beliefs were unclear.

We won't be changing our direction – but we know we must be clearer about who we can help and what we stand for. We must meet this challenge on a tight budget. I hope that you will like the refreshed brand; we've already had very positive feedback about it from many of you.



I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Chief Executive, Andy Gregg, for his most valuable contribution to Lasa over six wonderful years. We are delighted to welcome Terry Stokes as his successor. Terry has a wealth of experience of working with public and third sector organisations across the UK. He is an ideal leader for Lasa's vision of helping many more of these organisations access the support they urgently need.

In a year's time the third sector may look very different. But whatever happens, we are committed to working alongside you to make sure you get the support you need in challenging times. Get in touch with us to find out how we can help you.

Liz Sewell
Chair

Our impact 2009/10

- Rightsnet, the UK's No 1 website for welfare rights news and case law, received over **30 million** hits
- **9 out of 10** clients surveyed would recommend our technology services
- Knowledgebase, the UK's leading website for third sector technology information, received over a quarter of a million **(276,000)** visits
- **9 out of 10** advice workers surveyed told us that Rightsnet had improved their knowledge of welfare rights law
- The Suppliers' Directory – the only directory of trusted and vetted third sector technology suppliers – received over **48,000** visits
- Multikulti – our website of legal advice guides translated into **12** community languages – received over **15 million** hits.

The minimum income standards for Britain estimate that a person needs **£158 a week** in order to have the opportunities and choices necessary to participate in society.

A single adult receives **£65.45 in benefits.**¹



Millions of people in the UK urgently needed advice this year about benefits as they lost their jobs or homes.

Our Rightsnet website attracted more than 30 million hits this year and was used by over 4,000 organisations, including Citizens Advice Bureaux, the Child Poverty Action Group and the RNIB. The Work and Pensions Select Committee, parliamentary researchers and the BBC also relied on it.

Further evidence of Rightsnet's impact was revealed when 8 out of 10 of advice workers surveyed told us that it had helped them improve their clients' financial positions. Derek Stainsby, from Gallions Housing Association, told us how Rightsnet had helped him:

"I take on cases of increasing difficulty and the outcomes are often very positive. I have saved people from eviction, and clients' improved financial situation has led to improvements in their health. For some, the process of having someone stand up for them either with authorities such as the DWP or at Tribunal has resulted in a change in attitude with all sorts of knock on effects. I would not be nearly so good at what I do if it had not been for Rightsnet."

Over 2,000 organisations benefited from our publication Review, keeping up to date with changes in welfare benefits and tax credits.


1 Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/nov/25/benefits-cuts-welfare-reform-poverty>

We helped advice workers solve 662 welfare benefits problems through our advice lines and advice support project. In addition, over 500 organisations took up the offer of our AIMS Free database, our free and easy to use contact management database.


Our trainers, who are all leading welfare rights experts, trained over 1,200 advice workers.

As the numbers of people across the UK needing urgent legal advice grew, we campaigned successfully on access to justice issues, working closely with MPs, MEPs, councillors, the Mayor's Office and funders.


We have established a partnership with Citizens Advice Bureaux, Law Centres Federation, and Advice UK to highlight the growing need for access to justice. We also represented the interests of over 1,000 advice workers through our London Advice Forum initiative, which is regarded as a key body to consult on issues affecting access to advice across London.

 I am able to do a lot more for my clients without spending so long on each case, thanks to the training. My clients are all pleased with the additional benefit claims I've managed to advise them on, which altogether averages more than £40,000 per month.

John Butterworth, Welfare Rights Officer from Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

 (Rightsnet) is THE essential tool to keep up to date and to use as a reference source, with links to legislation, guidance etc. All my adviser staff use it to check relevant news items on a daily basis.

Gary Vaux, Hertfordshire County Council

 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

Helping the third sector use technology to meet urgent need

In 2009/2010 our technology services helped hundreds of organisations across the UK be more efficient, save money and deliver better services.

This year we were honoured to receive a prestigious NTEN (Non Profit Technology Enterprise Network) award for our team's outstanding contribution to global third sector technology.

In the UK, we worked closely with government body the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to provide technology advice, support and resources to their Get Connected project, which aims to help social care providers get online by distributing £12 million of grants. We played a significant role when advising SCIE in shaping the project.



We also shared our technology expertise with the world's leading social entrepreneurs at the 2010 Skoll World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship, chaired by former eBay President and philanthropist Jeff Skoll.

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 400 funding bids.

We worked closely with Capacity Builders and other leading funders, central government and the Government Office for London to highlight the urgency of the third sector's technology needs.

9 out of 10 clients surveyed told us that they would use our technology services again, and would recommend us to their colleagues and contacts.

Over 276,000 visits were made to the Knowledge base, the UK's leading website for technology advice, information and resources for the third sector. We also helped 60 people with their organisations' technology problems via telephone advice.

Over 2,500 individuals and organisations benefited from Computanews, our popular and accessible guide to third sector technology issues.

“ I've turned to Lasa for years and you've never let me down! ... your knowledge and resources related to IT are invaluable.

SHARE Community Ltd.

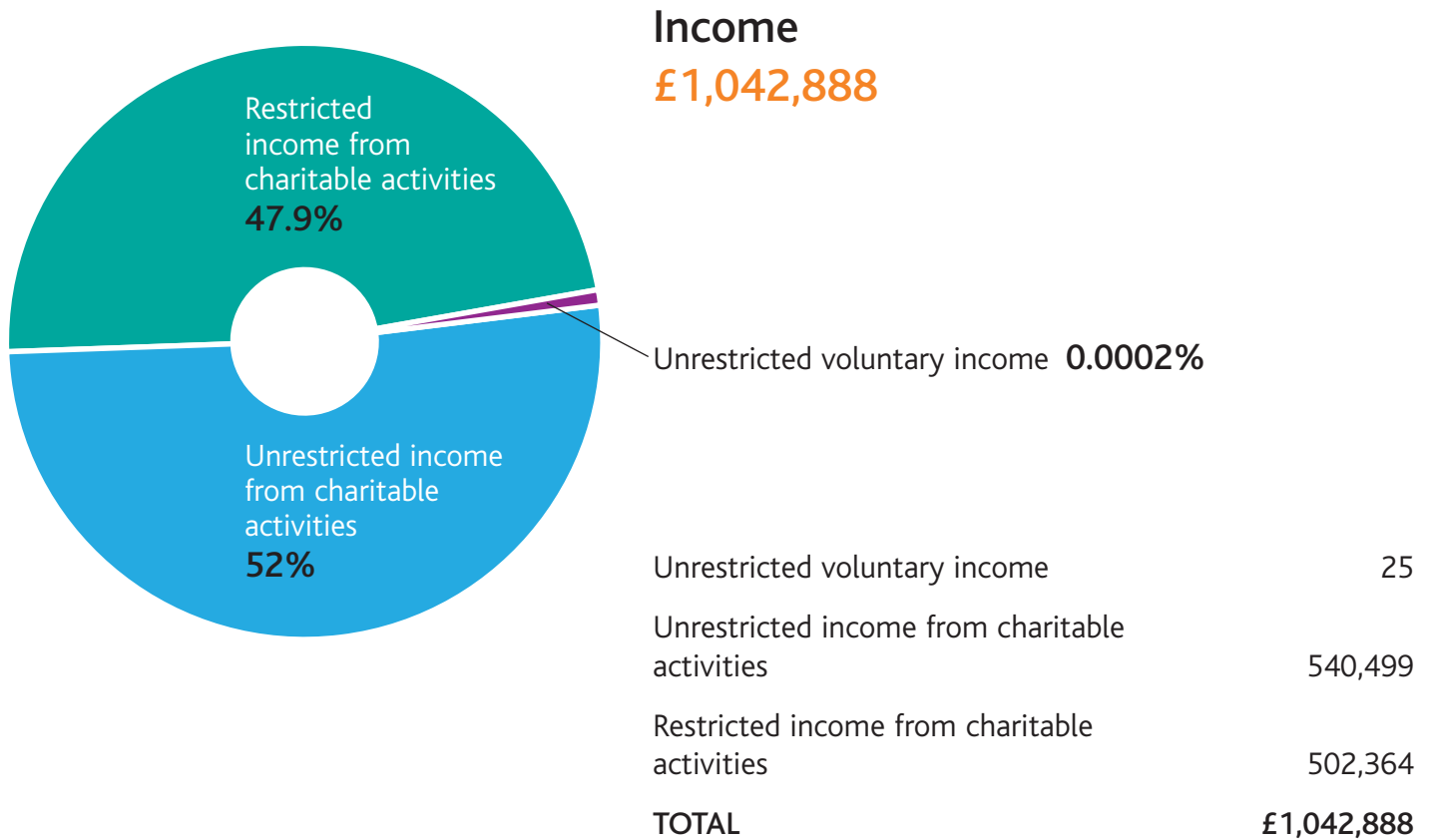
“ ... firmly associated with quality advice and guidance on technology matters. Knowledgebase hugely valuable.

Paul Webster, National Association of Voluntary and Community Action

“ Very useful for signposting to. Also personal contacts which are useful for partnership working and peer support within ICT in the voluntary sector. Basically if the Lasa technology team didn't exist I'd want someone to create it!

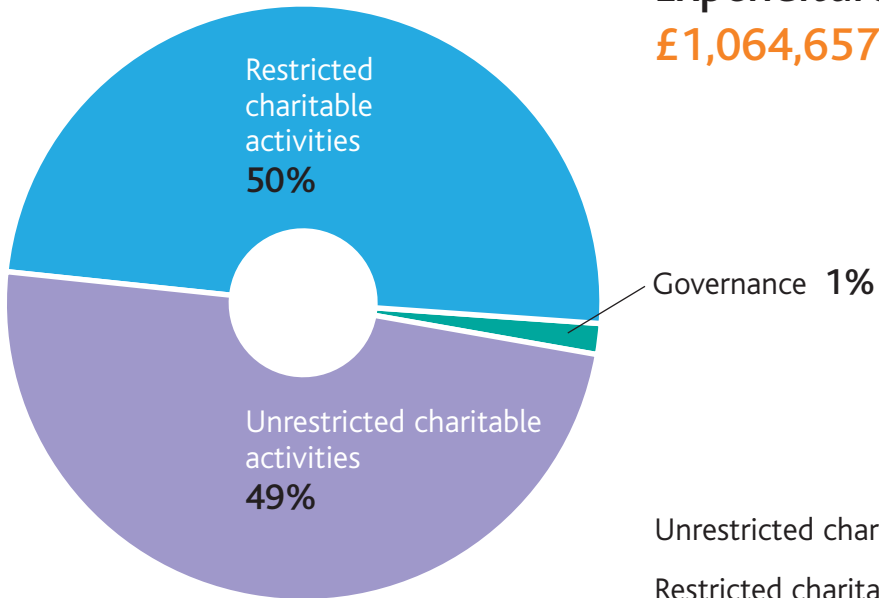
Alyson Moore, ICT Manager, LVSC

Income and expenditure



Expenditure

£1,064,657



Unrestricted charitable activities	520,813
Restricted charitable activities	528,420
Governance	15,424
TOTAL	£1,064,657

If you would like a full copy of Lasa's Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010 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 2009/10.

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

Capacitybuilders

The City Bridge Trust

Cripplegate Foundation

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

European Commission, Information Society and Media Directorate – General

Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

The Law Society Charity

Legal Services Commission

NAVCA

Trust for London

Wates Foundation



Cripplegate Foundation Helping since 1500



Pro bono help

We are very grateful to **IBM** and **appiChar** for their support, and to City law firm **Mayer Brown LLP**, and to the **City Bridge Trust**, for kindly donating their meeting rooms to us for a number of events.



Our board

Chair

Liz Sewell is former Chief Executive of lone 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 third, 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.

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.

Trustees – continued

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.

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.

Lasa – working with you to create a stronger third sector

I'm delighted to be the new Chief Executive of Lasa.

This year we helped thousands of organisations across the UK meet the urgent need for their services. We are incredibly grateful to the funders, third sector organisations and government bodies who have supported us.

I've worked in third sector and government for many years. I know how many of these bodies are unaware of the help and resources available to them. In times of uncertainty, it's vital that we recognise the significance and availability of support from our own sector.

I am excited about the challenge of helping more organisations across the UK access the support they need. I believe that it is only by working together that the third sector will survive the current funding cuts.

It's hard to predict what the sector will look like this time next year. But one thing's for certain: my staff and trustees are passionate about – and determined that – the third sector gets the support it needs. We've worked with thousands of

organisations nationwide this year to empower and strengthen them through our services. And we believe that there are many more who need our help.

I believe that the role that third sector and government organisations play will become even more important in the tough times ahead. So please 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. 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. 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 10.30–12.30 and Thursday 2–4pm

Specialist Support Advice Line – We offer LSC funded advice agencies based in Wales free welfare rights advice over the phone or by email, provided they hold one of the following:

- The LSC unified contract
- The Specialist Quality Mark
- The General Help Quality Mark
- A General Criminal Law contract (for mental health public 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 becoming more efficient. 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. <http://ukriders.lasa.org.uk>

Multikulti

Multikulti provides legal advice guides translated into 12 community languages, including common problems such as debt, employment, and health. www.multikulti.org.uk

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/policynews



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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Lasa, 3rd Floor, Universal House, 88–94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA

Email: info@lasa.org.uk Tel: 020 7377 2748 Fax: 020 7247 4725

www.lasa.org.uk

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