

## UK LEGAL SECTOR JOINS FORCES TO LAUNCH NEW FUND FOR ASPIRING SOCIAL WELFARE SOLICITORS

**The UK faces an overwhelming need for junior social welfare solicitors. Launched today, the Social Welfare Solicitors Qualification Fund tackles this deficit and will make a lasting difference in the field of social welfare law.**

This cross-sector and nationwide fund targets dedicated social welfare legal workers by providing them with the funding to train and qualify as social welfare solicitors. It addresses the persistent shortage of social welfare lawyers by directly tackling barriers to qualification, such as debt or low wages.

The Social Welfare Solicitors Qualification Fund (SWSQF) increases access to justice for users of social welfare services, at the same time as broadening entry to the legal profession. The fund covers the full training and assessment costs of successful applicants, each of whom once qualified will deliver approximately 1,500 social welfare law hours annually.

**Ellie Reeves MP, Shadow Solicitor General**, said: *'The Social Welfare Solicitors Qualification Fund is an excellent initiative that will help aspiring solicitors from all backgrounds to qualify as social welfare lawyers, ensuring that people who care deeply about public welfare will be able to begin their legal careers without worrying about costs. I am proud to offer the Fund my support and I encourage as many firms as possible to get involved.'*

The SWSQF is led by the City of London Law Society in partnership with training provider BARBRI, the Young Legal Aid Lawyers Group, the Legal Aid Practitioners Group, and the Law Centres Network, with financial support from over a dozen City law firms and the Charitable Fund of the City of London Solicitors' Company.

Together, these organisations believe that talented social welfare lawyers of the future, whatever their income or background, must have every opportunity to qualify into the profession. Applications to the SWSQF are now open until 17 January 2022.

**Richard Miller, Head of Justice at The Law Society of England and Wales**, said: *'This initiative will help rebalance a small part of the access to justice challenge – by ensuring people stay in social welfare legal work, and helping them gain the education and qualifications they need to act effectively as social welfare solicitors. This is a really good addition to efforts being made by many to ensure those in need have adequate legal representation when they most need it.'*

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### NOTE TO EDITORS

The City of London Law Society is the professional representative body for the largest national and international law firms in the City of London. Its membership includes almost 60 firms practising in the City and employing 17,000 solicitors in London, the UK and overseas.