



The Access to Justice Foundation

Helping the most vulnerable in society gain access to justice

The Access to Justice Foundation is promoting its new “It’s Not Just Peanuts” campaign.

The campaign raises money by receiving donations of unclaimed client account balances. To date the Foundation has raised over £213,000. With the help and support of local law societies like Kent Law Society and their members we aim to make 2014 an even better year for fundraising!

What is the Access to Justice Foundation?

The Access to Justice Foundation works with the network of Legal Support Trusts across England and Wales in order to raise funds and distribute them to organisations which support those in the community who are in need of legal assistance.

The money raised is distributed to national advice organisations which support and provide free legal advice to the most vulnerable and most disadvantaged members of society. The Foundation also supports a network of Legal Support Trusts which cover England and Wales. The Trusts receive grants from the Foundation and additionally organise their own fundraising events such as Legal Walks. The money raised from these events is distributed to local advice supporters and providers.

Who the Foundation Supports

In the past year, with the support of the Access to Justice Foundation, the Legal Support Trusts have made grants to over 37 advice services including 13 Law Centres and 14 Citizens Advice Bureaux across the country.

Advice Services offer legal advice, casework and representation to individuals and groups who can’t afford to pay for the specialist advice they need. They are vital for providing services in areas of law which are not often catered for in private practice such as Welfare Benefits and Housing. Such services are also perfectly placed to recognise and identify trends and issues within local communities and provide additional help and support by training and supporting local groups and educating the public about the law and their legal rights.

Without the funding support of the Access to Justice Foundation and the Legal Support Trusts, many of these vital advice services would be forced to limit their services or even to close altogether. By supporting the “It’s not just Peanuts” campaign, donors are helping the most vulnerable people in society gain access to justice.

How you can help

The best way that you can support the Foundation is to support the ‘Its Not Just Peanuts’ campaign by donating your firm’s unclaimed client account funds. There are an estimated 500,000 unclaimed client accounts worth approximately £500m. These accounts range from being £0.01 to thousands of pounds but as you can see from we have raised so far, it all adds up – its not just peanuts!

Unclaimed balances put a burden on small firms as they must be analysed and explained to auditors annually. So, in addition to helping those in need of free legal advice, do your firm a favour and feel assured that the money is going to a great cause!

Donating amounts under £50 is a very simple process. The SRA recommend that if a client cannot be traced, any funds in these accounts which are under £50 can be donated to charity. Reasonable attempts must be made to contact the money’s owner – helpful guidance for this and template letters to send to clients can be found on our website at www.atjf.org.uk. Donations can then be sent by cheque made out to the Foundation or by bank transfer. For any firms wishing to donate amounts over £50 we provide lots of useful guidance on how this can be done in order to comply with the SRA account rules. The Foundation will also provide firms with a written indemnity as required by the SRA.

We have raised a fantastic amount of money already but there are still so many legal organisations that need financial support. If you would like to get involved raising money for the foundation and the Legal Support Trusts we have several exciting events to get involved with this year. Check out our calendar on the Foundation’s website to find out how you can run, walk and bake your way to raise valuable funds for your local legal advice centres.