



PART OF THE HELEN BAMBER GROUP

## **Invitation to Tender: Asylum Aid – Learning Partner**

### **Increasing access to complex casework advice through training, supervision and peer support**

**February 2023**

#### **1. About Asylum Aid and the project**

Asylum Aid was set up in 1990 to deliver high-quality legal representation to people with particularly complex cases who are seeking asylum in the UK. For over 30 years, we have enabled Survivors of trafficking and torture, stateless people, unaccompanied children, and other vulnerable people seeking asylum to gain legal status in the UK and begin rebuilding their lives. In 2020, following the closure of our previous home at Consonant, we joined the [Helen Bamber Foundation Group](#), consolidating our commitment to deliver life-changing services for refugees and people seeking asylum. Together we share knowledge, develop best practice, and increase access to specialist services for those seeking asylum. Asylum Aid remains an independent charity with separate clients and our own strategic objectives.

Asylum Aid's vision is that all those who come to the UK in need of protection from persecution and other forms of human cruelty obtain it, and are treated fairly and with dignity. Asylum Aid's expert legal representation enables people in need of protection in the UK to obtain legal status. We take on some of the most complex cases: survivors of torture, trafficking and gender-based violence, unaccompanied children and young people, people with poor mental health or lacking mental capacity, stateless people. We take the time to listen to our clients, to understand their individual needs, and work in a trauma-informed way. We use our voice, drawing on our reputation, experience and expertise, to influence change through supporting policy advocacy and strategic legal work to make the asylum system fairer and improve access to effective quality legal representation. As a centre of excellence, we share best practice through training, supervision and the dissemination of guides and other resources. Our WASP project provides advice that enables those from refugee and migrant backgrounds to secure their rights to housing and financial support which enable them to build their lives in a dignified way.

In 2022 we adopted a 3-year strategy, one of the key objectives of which is to work in partnership with others to build capacity across the immigration advice sector to deliver expert advice and representation in complex cases. Given the decline of legal aid

provision across England and Wales, there is tremendous need to ensure the sustainability of access to advice for refugees and migrants.

As part of our response to this need, we are delighted to have been selected by the Justice Together Initiative as a grantee partner to deliver a 3-year pilot of a programme of training, supervision and peer support to immigration advisers working in advice deserts across England and Wales.

In partnership with the Justice Together Initiative, we aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increased access to high-quality, holistic and effective immigration legal advice and representation in areas that are advice deserts;
- A better resourced and resilient immigration advice system by creating a sustainable pipeline of highly trained professionals at OISC level 2;
- A strengthened, better coordinated, well-networked immigration advice system that has lived experience and anti-racist practices at its centre;

To do so, we will pilot a training and support programme for 12 participants in 3 cohorts that aims to create a pipeline of professionals qualified to deliver OISC Level 2 work in complex asylum, human rights and trafficking cases in advice desert areas. This will be based on the Refugee Legal Centre model that included training, shadowing and long-term supervision which previously led to the development of excellent advice providers, many of whom are still active today. The pilot training and supervision programme will be informed by the tried and tested approach to casework developed by Asylum Aid over 30 years of expertise, creating and supporting practices centred on:

- Delivering legal advice and representation that is timely and effective, enabling more people to resolve their immigration status and move on with their lives.
- Embedding a holistic and client-centred approach to providing immigration advice.
- Promoting a culture of well-being and peer-to-peer support for legal practitioners and advisers at OISC level 2, therefore improving recruitment and retention in organisations that provide free and low-cost legal advice and representation.

To ensure that the immigration sector is well-positioned to tackle systemic racism and to centre the voices of people with lived experience, we will prioritise recruitment of trainees from community-based, migrant-led organisations that operate in legal advice desert areas, and who are committed to embedding anti-racism in their work.

## **2. Learning through the pilot**

We believe this programme can function as a pilot that demonstrates the long-term value and cost-effectiveness of investing in training a sustainable pipeline of expert immigration advisers who are well-networked, supported to provide advice in complex cases and who are prepared to train and support new advisers moving into the field. We have designed this project to include a robust evaluation and learning component, so that we can refine the project during its implementation, as well as share our learnings upon completion with

the wider sector, therefore creating the model of a structure into which additional funding can be invested.

We are therefore looking to recruit a learning partner to work with us throughout the 3 years of the project. The learning partner will:

- Work with us to refine our theory of change and create a learning plan
- Carry out initial interviews with the project supervisor and the first cohort of trainees to establish baseline data at the outset of the training
- Work with the project supervisor and partners to capture learnings and feedback from the 6-month pilot phase during which the first cohort of four trainees will receive in-depth training and supervision and support an in-depth evaluation making recommendations for roll out of the programme to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cohorts
- Support capture of data and learnings throughout the programme and lead a full review and evaluation of the project at the end of the 3 year period.

The Learning Partner will also need to work collaboratively with the Learning Partner of the Justice Together Initiative and will be supported by the Legal Education Foundation’s Justice Lab, who have a focus on supporting organisations to better utilise their data for outcomes.

### 3. Responsibilities, Activities and Outputs

The role of the Learning Partner is to act as a supporter, guide and ‘critical friend’, with a key responsibility of working with the Director of Asylum Aid and project supervisor to develop a plan for the achievement of the learning aims which complements the work of the project.

We anticipate that activities and outputs would include, but not be limited to:

Activity	Output	timeframe
Work with Asylum Aid team to refine theory of change, agree baseline data and establish learning plan	Refined theory of change Learning plan	April-May 2023
Conduct initial interviews with project supervisor(s) and cohort 1 trainees to establish baseline (a cohort of 4 trainees; it might also involve interviewing their organisations about their experience of training, supervision and retention of specialist advisers	Baseline data gathered to inform learning and reflection	June-July 2023
Gather data, learnings and feedback from cohort 1 to inform evaluation of pilot phase	Feedback and data from cohort 1 trainees, supervisor and others	Mainly October-December 2023
Produce review and evaluation of pilot phase with recommendations	Evaluation with recommendations	January – March 2024

for any adaptations for cohorts 2 and 3.		
Gather data, learnings and feedback from all 3 cohorts to support final evaluation	Feedback and data from all participants	April 2024- October 2025, in line with learning plan
Produce final review and evaluation with recommendations and learnings	Final evaluation of project	October- December 2025

While this is the basic structure we are interested in creative ideas about the best way to learn from this pilot across the 3 years and working with 3 cohorts of trainees from different organisations across the country.

#### 4. Budget

We have a budget of £22,067 (inclusive of VAT) for this work across the three years.

#### 5. Qualities, Experiences and Skills

In assessing applications we will look for:

- Professional research, monitoring and evaluation experience
- Experience of working with organisations to produce theories of change or similar
- Experience of working with organisations to develop learning plans
- Experience of writing reports for a voluntary sector audience
- Experience of gathering and collating feedback using diverse methods
- Experience of working with partnership collaborations in the production of learning and evaluation work
- Understanding of the implications of learning in a complex and changing environment
- Understanding and interpretation of the brief and its objectives

#### 6. Application Process

Applications will be assessed by an internal commissioning panel.

Please submit a written proposal in a word format no longer than three sides of A4 to by email to [alison.pickup@asylumaid.org.uk](mailto:alison.pickup@asylumaid.org.uk) detailing:

- Your experience
- Approach to the work;
- Key risks to be considered;
- Budget which includes: Staffing costs (e.g. evaluator's time), travel expenses, administrative costs. Include VAT, or if VAT is not chargeable specify this. Please exclude report publication and dissemination costs.
- Two referees.

Proposals should be submitted by 9am on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023.

Interviews will be held online on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 where shortlisted applicants will be invited to present their approach to delivering the evaluation.

Please contact Alison Pickup [alison.pickup@asylumaid.org.uk](mailto:alison.pickup@asylumaid.org.uk) if you have any questions.