



Ministry
of Justice

Legal Support for Litigants in Person Grant (LSLIP)

Mid-Grant Review

Summary of Key Findings

December 2021

Legal Support Analysis Team

This summary pack is informed by the LSLIP mid grant report, based on quantitative and qualitative data gathered from grantees

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

The Legal Support for Litigants in Person Grant (LSLIP) is delivering on the commitments within the MoJ Legal Support Action Plan

In February 2019, the MoJ published the Legal Support Action Plan. Among the commitments was the pledge to increase MoJ funding for the Litigants in Person Support Strategy to £3 million for two years.

To deliver this funding, the MoJ has partnered with the Access to Justice Foundation, an organisation with significant experience managing grants to the advice sector*. The two organisations have worked closely together to develop the LSLIP programme, which was formally launched in April 2020 with three central objectives:

- 1 Enhance services that support the **earliest possible interventions** for litigants in person, reducing the risk of their problems escalating.
- 2 Develop our understanding of **how and when litigants in person access different services**, to help ensure that services are designed around the people who need to use them.
- 3 **Build an evidence base** of what works and what doesn't, by evaluating the effectiveness of the support delivered by the new grant to litigants in person.

Evaluation is therefore a key element of the grant and each grantee has made significant efforts towards evidence gathering by collecting a range of quantitative and qualitative data. The mid-grant review draws all the data together, to report on progress towards the three objectives of the grant. This pack provides a summary of the key findings.

*The Access to Justice Foundation manages the Litigants in Person Support Strategy, which the MoJ has provided with £1.45m funding a year since 2015, and the Community Justice Fund, which the MoJ recently provided with £4.4m to support the advice sector throughout the pandemic.

The mid-grant review is not necessarily an accurate indicator of performance, but an indication of progress

For all grantees, the period covered by the mid-grant review includes the initial set up period for their projects and so will reflect early implementation, including the initial set-up of services, recruitment of advisers, promotion of services and familiarisation with the data collection and reporting. This means that the figures within this report may not be reflective of services at full capacity and there may be issues associated with counting anomalies and the bedding in of services and data collection.

The Ministry of Justice and the Access to Justice Foundation provided grantees with written and verbal guidance and held monitoring and reporting workshops and troubleshooting sessions, to support grantees and seek consistency. However, **there is the possibility that organisations within each partnership have interpreted and operationalised the data collection slightly differently**, which may have some bearing on differences in outcomes

It was not proportionate or feasible to undertake an experimental or quasi-experimental approach or collect data on a comparison group in order to establish causation, due to the complexity associated with these methodologies and the need to prioritise delivery during Covid-19. **Further evidence is therefore needed in order to confidently attribute these outcomes to the advice and generalise these findings.**

These findings are based on **varying sample sizes** and more data is required to support these conclusions. Further data will be collected throughout the remaining lifetime of LSLIP and these trends will be monitored.

LSLIP is funding a range of services across England and Wales that deliver advice on a national, regional and local scale

Five local grants, which scale up the provision of organisations already working with litigants in person in multiple areas of civil and family law.

19 organisations are involved in delivering the services funded by these five grants

Suffolk and Norfolk	Mid and North Yorkshire	Greater Manchester and Lancashire	East and West Midlands	Dorset and South Somerset
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Three regional grants, which build up coordinated networks across a region and in geographic areas.

29 organisations are involved in the delivery of services funded by these three grants.

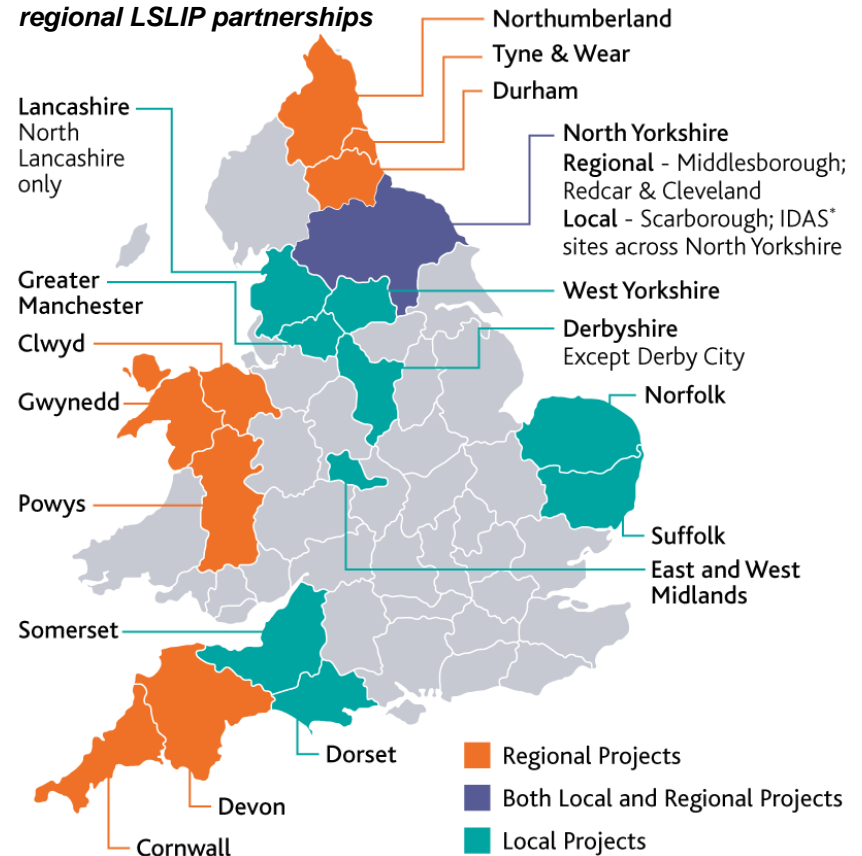
North East	North and Mid Wales	Devon and Cornwall
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Three national grants, that deliver information, guidance and/or advice across England and Wales.

4 organisations are involved in the delivery of services funded by these three grants.

Support Through Court and RCJ Advice	LawWorks	Law For Life
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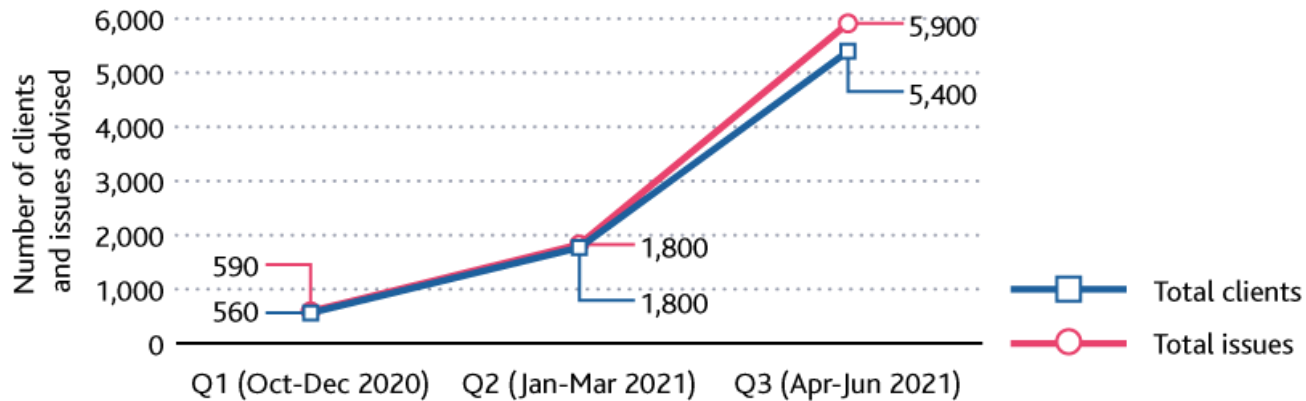
A map of the geographical coverage of the local and regional LSLIP partnerships



*IDAS - Independent Domestic Abuse Service

Between October 2020 and June 2021, the local and regional grantees have advised 7,700 clients with 8,300 issues* (1/2)

A client is defined as a single person and an issue is defined as a problem in one area of law, such as a problem with a welfare benefits appeal.



Quarter 1: During the first quarter, grantees were establishing their projects, recruiting advisers and setting up data collection processes, which meant that most services did not start delivering advice until November 2020. The first quarter also coincided with the holiday period, the November and Winter lockdowns and a range of other policy changes in response to the pandemic, which had an impact on service delivery.

Quarters 2 and 3: Client volumes increased in the second and third quarter, as services started to bed in and reach full capacity. Grantees are anticipating that this demand will continue to increase over the coming months as face to face appointments resume, as pandemic restrictions and emergency support put in place throughout the pandemic appear to have delayed the rise in legal issues and the demand for advice.

*These clients may have been advised on other issues as part of grantees wider service provision not funded by LSLIP, which won't be captured in this data. These figures therefore shouldn't be interpreted as suggesting that each client was experiencing 1.1 issues on average.

Between October 2020 and June 2021, the local and regional grantees have advised 7,700 clients with 8,300 issues (2/2)

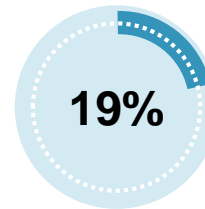
The majority of issues advised by LSLIP services have been family, employment, housing or welfare benefits problems.



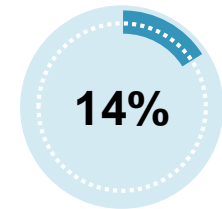
Employment



Family



Housing



Welfare Benefits

These are areas that many grantees sought funding for, as they were identified as areas where organisations had a gap in their service offering and/or areas where it was expected that there would be an increase in demand for advice increase as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The remaining issues have been small numbers of debt, discrimination, domestic violence, community care, public law and other issues.

Most advice provided by local and regional grantees on these issues has been initial generalist advice (1/2)

The LSLIP grant is funding advice at different stages of the problem resolution journey. To capture this consistently, grantees have reported their activities in each area of law in four key stages.

The majority of advice provided by the local and regional grantees has been at the initial generalist advice stage (stage 1), with a considerable volume of advice provided at the casework (stage 2) and pre-court advice (stage 3a) stages.

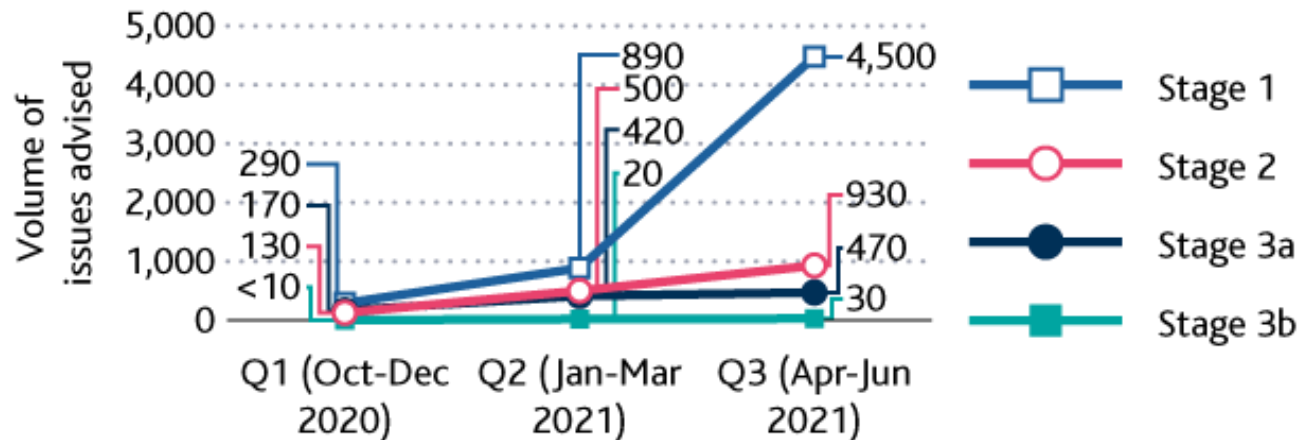
	Stage	Support provided	Total volume of issues advised	Proportion of all issues
Before engagement with the formal justice system	Stage 1	Initial generalist advice and triage	5,700	68%
	Stage 2	Casework	1,600	19%
During engagement with the formal justice system	Stage 3a	Pre-court advice, guidance and support	1,100	13%
	Stage 3b	Legal advice and representation at court	60	<1%

Most advice provided by local and regional grantees on these issues has been initial generalist advice (2/2)

There is some variation in the types of advice at different areas of law, which is partly reflective of the different nature of problems, the people experiencing them and the action required to resolve them.

For example, welfare benefits have a higher degree of later stage advice as many clients have already unsuccessfully made a claim against the decision and now need support with the appeals process. The appeals process involves casework and support with a Tribunal hearing, and therefore require more intensive, later stage support.

The large increase in the number of issues advised on in the most recent quarter is partly due to a significant increase in advice at stage 1.



Broadly speaking, local and regional grantees appear to be reaching a similar cohort of users to Citizens Advice

Many clients do not disclose this information out of concern that it may hinder their access to services, so this sample may be skewed towards certain groups and not be representative of all clients.

Gender

80% of clients disclosed their gender. Removing those that prefer not to say, around two thirds of clients are female.

There is a little variation amongst the areas of law, but more than half of all clients in every problem area are female.

	Male	Female	Non-binary
% of clients	38%	62%	<1%

Race

61% of clients disclosed their race. Removing those that prefer not to say, the majority of clients are white.

This is less diverse than Citizens Advice users and the 2011 Census, however there may be greater diversity amongst clients than this implies, as a high proportion of clients did not disclose this information.

	White	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
% of clients	91%	4%	2%	1%	1%

Age

79% of clients disclosed their age. Removing those that prefer not to say, around two thirds of local and regional clients are between 25 and 55.

There is a little variation amongst the areas of law, with a younger cohort of clients with family problems, than other areas of law.

	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
% of clients	8%	22%	22%	21%	17%	7%	4%

Disability and vulnerability

The data suggests that at least a quarter of clients have a disability, but client case studies, interviews with grantees and existing evidence on the incidence of legal problems suggests that 26% is likely an underestimation.

Grantees also report regularly engaging with client groups whose circumstances put them at an increased level of risk and vulnerability. This includes poor physical health, mental ill-health, domestic abuse, low income, digital exclusion, English as a second language and rural isolation.

Early evidence suggests that the advice and support is improving client outcomes (1 of 2)

These findings are based on interim data with varying sample sizes, so more data is required to support these conclusions. Further data will be collected throughout the lifetime of LSLIP and these trends will be monitored.

Client case studies throughout the report illustrate how improvements in these outcomes have helped clients to resolve their problems, bringing improvements to their situations.

Enhanced legal capability

Although Citizens do not need to be legal experts, they need to have a basic level of legal capability, to recognise that their problem could have a legal resolution, and have the skills, ability and emotional readiness to take action to resolve their problem.

Grantees have measured three indicators relating to improvements in their client’s legal capability, as a result of the support given.

93%	Clients understand their problem and that it might have a legal resolution
81%	Clients have an understanding of the legally possible outcomes of their problem
83%	Stage 3a/3b clients have an increased understanding of court processes and what to expect when self-representing in court

Identifying and pursuing a problem resolution strategy with confidence

Once an individual has an understanding of their problem and awareness that it might have a legal remedy, they must be able to identify and pursue an appropriate course of action to resolve it.

Grantees have measured two indicators related to identifying a course of action and having the confidence to pursue it.

76%	Clients are aware of any action they must take to prepare for the next step of their problem resolution journey, including any preparation required before court
66%	Clients have increased confidence and ability to deal with their problems

Early evidence suggests that the advice and support is improving client outcomes (2 of 2)

These findings are based on interim data with varying sample sizes, so more data is required to support these conclusions. Further data will be collected throughout the lifetime of LSLIP and these trends will be monitored.

Client case studies throughout the report illustrate how improvements in these outcomes have helped clients to resolve their problems, bringing improvements to their situations.

Problem resolution before court or Tribunal

LSLIP is providing a range of advice along the problem resolution journey, including early advice and support through to representation at court or Tribunal. The goal is to encourage earlier resolution, whilst providing a holistic range of support that meets client needs.

Grantees have captured data on whether the advice led to problems resolved before a court or Tribunal hearing was required, to the best of their knowledge.

This data therefore should be interpreted with some care, as there may be instances where the client's problem escalates or re-emerges unbeknownst to the adviser.

62%

Clients who resolved their problems with the support of generalist advice, casework and early specialist legal assistance, avoiding the need to go to court.

Client satisfaction with service and outcome

To measure overall client satisfaction with the LSLIP services, local and regional grantees have reported the percentage of clients that are satisfied with the support received and the outcome of their issue.

This may be influenced by whether the client achieved the outcome they had hoped for, and so this may not be an accurate reflection of the quality of the service.

A general finding from client surveys conducted by advice organisations is that most recipients of advice report high satisfaction rates with services. For example, Citizens Advice reported that client satisfaction was 98% throughout 2019/20.

81%

Clients make a positive self-assessment of quality of services and satisfaction with outcomes.

National grantees have provided a blend of legal advice, practical support and procedural information to people across England and Wales (1/3)

Law for Life

ACTIVITIES

1. Enhancing the information available on Advicenow
2. Expanding access to Affordable Advice
3. Conducting research into legal capability and digital capability

CLIENTS

Over **750,000 Advicenow visitors***, including significant numbers of users of the PIP tool, Section 21 Guide and child arrangements and financial order guides.

250 individuals accessed solicitor appointments at a lower than average fixed fee via the **Affordable Advice service***.

OUTCOMES

A survey of 70 Advicenow users found: 51% said it helped them understand what to do and how to do it and 48% said it helped them feel more confident about what they had to do.

A survey of 60 Affordable Advice users found: 93% said the appointment helped them feel more confident and 85% said it helped them to better make their case. A case study from an Affordable Advice client is contained in the full report.

*For some national services it is not possible to reliably attribute the volume of users reached as a direct result of the LSLIP grant as they are funded by several sources, but LSLIP funding has supported the delivery of Law for Life's Advicenow website and Affordable Advice service.

National grantees have provided a blend of legal advice, practical support and procedural information to people across England and Wales (2/3)

LawWorks

ACTIVITIES

LSLIP funded LawWorks to scale-up their Free Legal Answers website, which enables users to ask a legal question and receive advice from a participating pro bono lawyer.

CLIENTS

Free Legal Answers provided **120 clients with legal advice** from participating pro bono lawyers.

Free Legal Answers have mostly supported individuals with family (22%), housing (23%) and employment (11%) problems.

OUTCOMES

LawWorks have not been able to capture quantitative outcome data thus far, however they have recently integrated a client survey into the Free Legal Answers platform, which should provide more data for the final evaluation.

National grantees have provided a blend of legal advice, practical support and procedural information to people across England and Wales (3/3)

Support Through Court (STC) and RCJ Advice (RCJA)

ACTIVITIES

1. Expand the STC National Helpline
2. Recruit a family solicitors to provide specialist legal advice
3. Piloting remote 'Safe Space' pods. This was reformed due to Covid-19.

CLIENTS

The STC National Helpline has given information and guidance to around **4,000 clients***.

STC have supported **2,700 clients with divorce and child arrangements** at several courts.

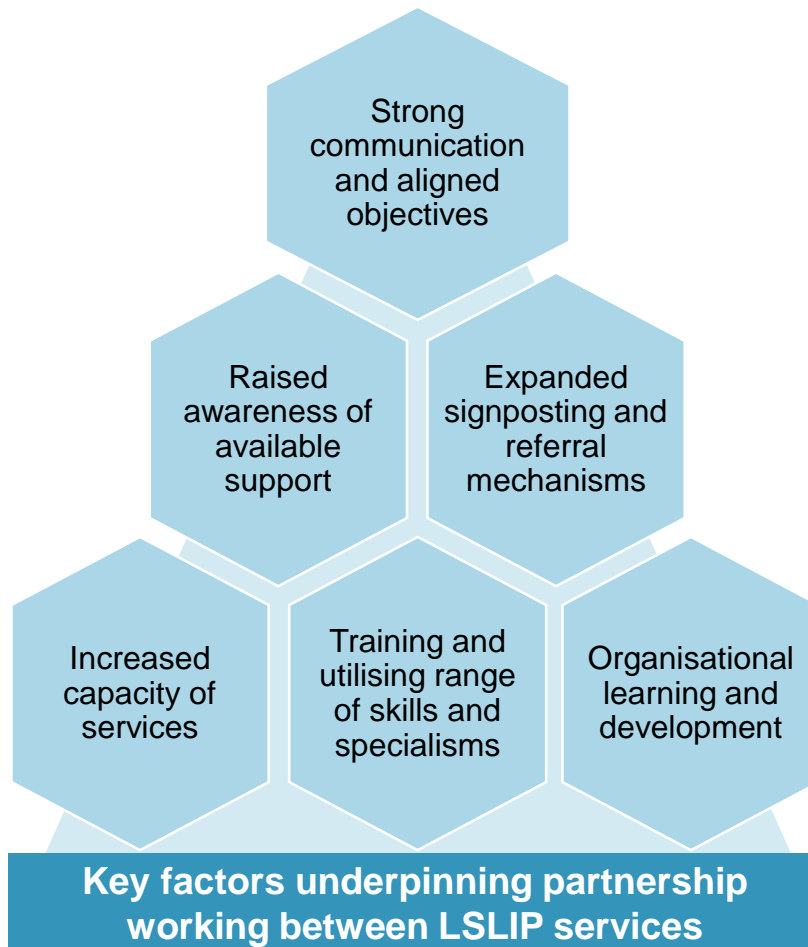
290 clients have received specialist **family legal advice** from the RCJA lawyer.

OUTCOMES

STC and RCJA have not been able to capture quantitative outcome data thus far, however they report that generally across all their services, 99% of clients felt more confident and more prepared, 97% felt they received a better hearing and 74% felt less anxious. A case study for a client of STC and RCJA is contained in the full report.

*For some national services it is not possible to reliably attribute the volume of users reached as a direct result of the LSLIP grant as they are funded by several sources, but LSLIP funding has supported the delivery of STC's National Helpline.

Partnership working and earlier intervention has been key to the LSLIP programme and enhanced the support available



Strong communication, trust, rapport and shared information processes have been key to facilitate successful partnership working, particularly for partnerships with a range of advice networks with different cultures and ways of working.

The **promotion of services raised awareness** of the support available and increase reach amongst both the public and other support organisations.

By **formalising signposting and referral pathways** between services and sharing specialist resources, grantees have been able to expand the advice available across wider geographical areas and areas of law, to broaden the scope of advice available and address a client's problem.

The **increased capacity** of services enabled organisations to provide a holistic approach to their service delivery, resolving clusters of problems, and reaching clients at an earlier stage.

The **training of advisers and volunteers** supported services to utilise a range of skills to identify suitable and timely referral opportunities, particularly as the partnerships and networks grew.

Sharing best practice within the partnerships and wider LSLIP network supported organisational development and learning.

The remaining grant period will be focused on continued collaboration between the MoJ, Access to Justice Foundation and LSLIP grantees

Continue to promote collaboration between the Access to Justice Foundation, the Ministry of Justice and the LSLIP grantees.

This partnership working has supported grantees to embed new processes, whilst maintaining open lines of communication to adapt to emerging issues, establish common goals and maximise the impact of the funding.

Continue to maintain the flexibility of the LSLIP programme as this was hugely valued to enable organisations to focus on development.

The project set-up, implementation and monitoring has been complex and involved challenges with adapting to the evolving Covid-19 environment. Grantees have expressed their appreciation for the flexibility of the grant, to enable them to be responsive to the changing demand patterns and adapt to temporary policies.

Ensure that LSLIP data, evidence and learning continues to be gathered and disseminated with wider audiences.

Over the next year, data and evidence will continue to be collected with the end of grant evaluation prepared in Autumn 2022. A key focus will be to ensure that LSLIP data, evidence and learning is disseminated with wider audiences.

Grantee Feedback

“ATFJ have been supportive, engaging, understanding of the constraints, and provided walkthrough support of the problems encountered. It has been a well-run and effectively managed grant.”

Access to Justice Foundation

“...This pilot project will help us get that information to find out what's working and if partnerships working locally, regionally, which means less service hopping for end users and that end users get to where they need to be sooner, so their matters are resolved sooner.”

The Legal Support Action Plan committed to increasing the MoJ funding for two years, so the current LSLIP programme will end in June 2022. Many grantees have spoken of the desire to sustain their partnerships, and to continue to be able to address the complex problems in their communities, including to expand their delivery models to other areas of law and/or geographical areas. The majority of grantees reiterated that stable, longer-term funding was needed in order to provide skilled advisers the longer-term job stability and security needed to retain them when the grant ends.



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