

Written evidence submitted by Law for Chance CIC (ATJ0133)

About Law for Change

Law for Change funds legal actions in the public interest supporting under-represented people and communities with limited access to justice.

Our model combines philanthropic funding and legal expertise to hold powerful organisations to account, challenge manifest injustices, and get legal claims over the line. We draw on the advice of a panel of 100+ legal experts acting pro bono helping us make strategic decisions on the most promising cases and the best possible use of resources.

Since our founding, Law for Change has backed precedent setting cases across a wide range of areas. These include housing and planning, immigration and asylum, human rights and civil liberties, discrimination, children and vulnerable adults, actions against police, employment, climate change and data rights.

Law for Change was established in 2022 by Stephen Kinsella, David Graham and Charles Keidan. Stephen Kinsella is an EU anti-trust lawyer, founder of the campaigning group Clean Up The Internet and a board member of Hacked Off and Reprieve. David Graham is a philanthropist and founder of Changing Ideas which backs ideas to achieve social change. Charles Keidan is a philanthropy expert and successful claimant in the UK Supreme Court paving the way for the introduction of civil partnerships to all couples.

Law for Change submission

Our submission to the Justice Committee's Call for Evidence focuses on Question 4: **'Without impacting the public purse, what potential funding options would increase access to justice?'**

Our work at Law for Change has identified a demonstrable need and opportunity to, on the one hand, 'crowd in' philanthropic funding to support legal actions in the public interest and on the other, to engage the legal community in acting for the public good.

From the point of view of an individual claimant, challenging an injustice so through legal action is daunting. From a financial point of view, it is prohibitive if you are not very rich or very poor (through the increasingly restrictive eligibility for state funded legal aid provision).

Law for Change has responded to this need.

We support cases with clear social value, particularly those that benefit communities with limited access to justice and can give rise to benefits for a significant number of

people – in the form of a change or clarification to the law, or the policies of public bodies. To date, we have supported 76 cases, many of which would otherwise not have been heard without finite backing

Example 1: Challenging the Government's Rwanda Deportation Policy: Law for Change successfully backed one of the key challenges by Asylum Aid to the Home Secretary's policy of removing asylum seekers from the UK to Rwanda.

Example 2: Supreme Court ruling in June 2024 on Surrey Hills fracking: A landmark challenge backed by Law for Change, found that Surrey County Council should have considered the full climate impact of burning oil from new wells which now have to be taken into account when granting licenses for other developments.

Example 3: Kristina O'Connor's Court of Appeal Success in January 2025: The Court of Appeal ruled that a police misconduct panel failed to properly assess the seriousness of the DCI's actions and the harm caused ordering a new panel hearing. The renewed police misconduct panel dismissed the officer who was found guilty of misconduct against Kristina O'Connor.

Example 4: Stalling Shein's London Stock Exchange Bid. Following pre-litigation research funding from Law for Change, Stop Uyghur Genocide and Leigh Day are credited with stalling Shein's bid to list on the London Stock Exchange.

What we observe:

The process of funding legal actions is unlike typical grantmaking in the philanthropy field. The process of understanding the costs of legal actions can be complex, convoluted and multi-staged. Specific legal and technical expertise can be required to understand the merits and possible consequences of legal claims, and the wider public benefit arising from them.

Against that, we have observed that a relatively small amount of funding stacked on the side of a victim, which Law for Change provides through adverse costs cover and support for legal fees, can dramatically turn the tables, giving vulnerable people and communities a voice and visibility through the legal process. This makes philanthropic capital directed to legal actions some of the most impactful out there. It is unique model for some of the highest social impact at low cost if deployed correctly.

We have also noted an appetite for the legal community to contribute to, something reflected in our 100+ strong pro bono legal panel – all legal experts who give up their time pro bono to help us assess the merits of cases we consider for funding.

What we recommend:

1. Increase the volume of legally focused philanthropy by recognising its value:

Funding legal action can be complex and challenging. Organisations such as

Law for Change are creating new routes for funders to pool and deploy resources strategically, effectively and charitably drawing on sound legal expertise. This is a promising avenue for the positive role of philanthropy in society – as society’s risk capital – but it is one which is insufficiently appreciated. Greater awareness and appreciation of robust models to engage in this area could lead to more philanthropic resources directed towards access to justice as well as more positive examples of philanthropic action for the public good.

- 2. Greater use of cost caps:** One side can deter the other from seeking justice by holding out the risk of unbearable adverse costs. We therefore recommend a greater use of cost caps to reduce all sides liabilities. Cost caps of £25,000 are sometimes agreed through judicial review challenges of public bodies. These caps should be applied as routine.
- 3. Extend use of cost caps against private companies as well as public bodies:** Standard cost caps should be extended to apply to claims against private corporations as well as public bodies. This would be a significant step towards holding companies to account when they abuse their power. It would bring access to justice in sight for ordinary people. £25,000 is a good level for costs capping orders and appropriate threshold to be reached. It is high enough to reduce weak or un-meritorious claims while allowing contributions from the claimant alongside crowd funding and philanthropic backing to demonstrate the wider interest to the community and public.
- 4. Promote efficiency through reducing oral hearing:** To make access to justice less expensive, we suggest reducing the amount of evidence delivered orally where it simply reads out what already exists in documents.

Law for Change is happy to provide further oral or written evidence as requested by the committee.

For further information:

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