

MIND THE GAP – LASA 25th ANNIVERSARY EVENT



Stephen Hawkins, Age Concern Hounslow's Chief Officer, was invited to join a panel of speakers at the 25th Anniversary Event of the London Advice Services Alliance on 4th November. Liz Sewell, Chair of Lasa, welcomed delegates including representatives from Charities Aid Foundation, LawWorks,

London Voluntary Service Council, Child Poverty Action Group, London Councils, Citizen's Advice Bureaux, Advice UK and many other stakeholders

Andy Gregg, Chief Executive of Lasa, called for the charity sector to work together since the numbers of those in need was rising as a result of the recession. Advice organisations needed expert and up-to-date advice and support more than ever, so that the role that second and third tier organisations play would become even more important in the tough times ahead. Lasa's survey revealed that over half (54%) of charity sector respondents rely on the support services provided by second and third tier organisations on a weekly basis. In early 2010 Lasa will be launching a new addition to its successful Rightsnet website, covering other areas of social welfare law, from debt to housing, employment to community care.

Addressing the theme of the Mind the Gap event, Stephen Hawkins said:

"If you are going to bridge the gap, don't pave the way with good intentions! We need to plan carefully and properly in the face of the transition from grants to contracts. Partnerships need to be meaningful, about fulfilling contracts and not simply preserving old ways of working. Age Concern Hounslow's history is a prime example of how second and third tier organisations can support voluntary sector providers through recession and our relationship with Lasa shows how successful collaboration can help organisations to weather the storm."