

Cost of Living Crisis Support & Recovery – Strategic Partnership with the GLA



London



1. Our Partnership with the GLA

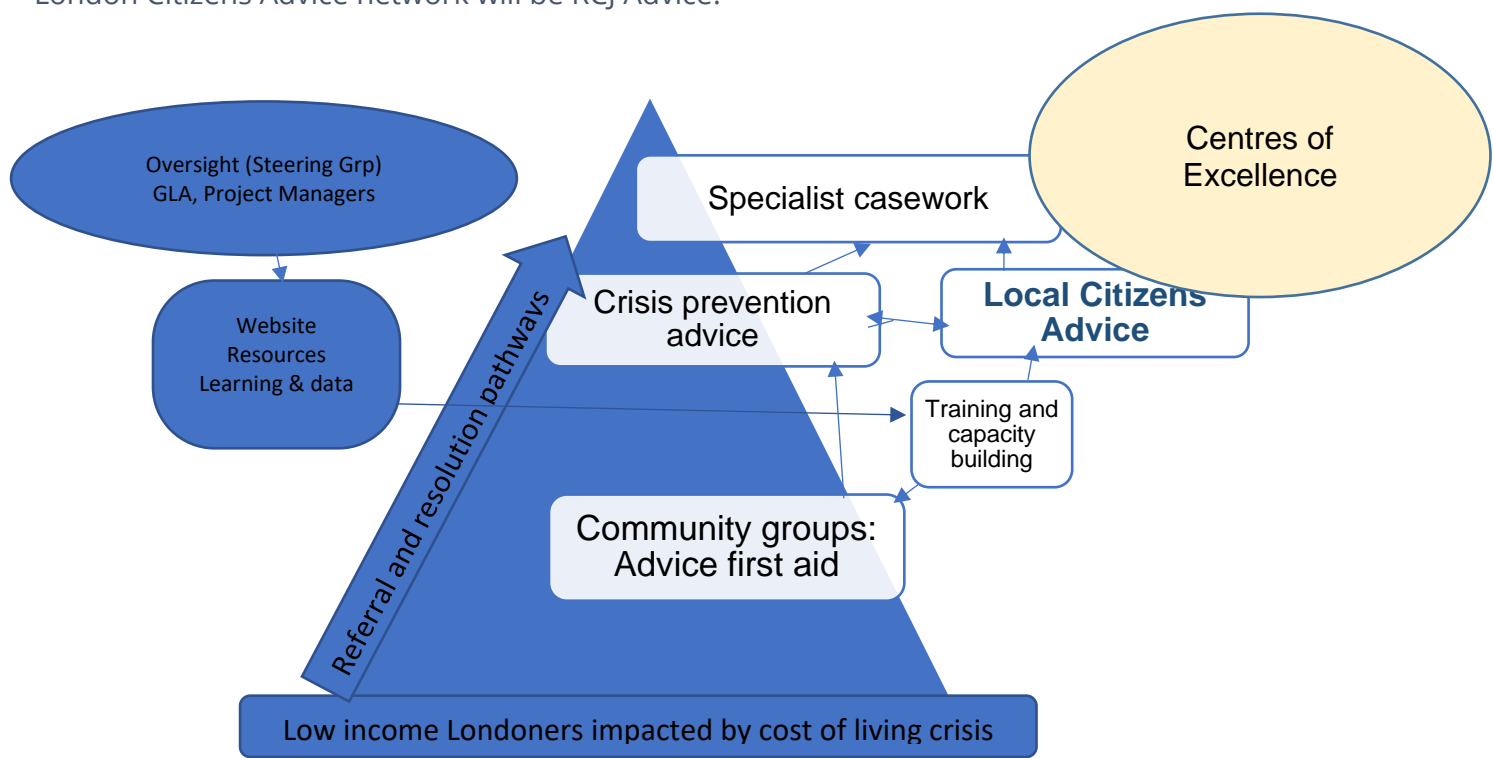
This is a new partnership between the Greater London Authority (GLA), London Citizens Advice network, and the London Legal Support Trust (LLST), developed in response to the cost-of-living crisis. The London Citizens Advice network will work alongside the network of London Legal Support Trust Centres of Excellence to enhance advice services in London. Funded by the GLA, this project will deploy the resources of London Advice agencies, increasing the availability of advisers, recruiting new posts, and working in partnership with the community sector to support Londoners who are facing hardship and crisis, and to build capacity through development of “Advice First Aid” and community partnerships.

2. How will this support Advice Networks across London

The GLA commissioned [Advising Londoners](#) Report noted the many challenges that advice agencies face in sustaining their funding and capacity set against rising demand. This funding will support both networks to increase the reach and impact of social welfare advice in London, respond to the cost of living crisis, and to work in partnership.

London Citizens Advice

London Citizens Advice is a network of 28 local Citizens Advice charities (LCAs). The London LCA network recognise that we can achieve more if we work collaboratively, including partnership work with the GLA and other key Pan-London Stakeholders, building on the strengths of different LCAs, and the links that we have with communities. Through this funding we will deploy up to new crisis prevention advisers working closely with fail and community groups. The crisis prevention advice workers will supported by a team of specialist caseworkers, and a training programme providing Citizens Advice training to frontline workers in other local partner organisations, faith and community groups to become “Advice First Aiders” to enhance the skills they need to support service users and triage for advice. The project lead for the London Citizens Advice network will be RCJ Advice.



London Legal Support Trust and Centres of Excellence

The London Legal Support Trust is an independent charity that raises funds for free legal advice services in London and the South-East. The trust supports free legal advice centres across London and the South East, through provision of grant funding, supporting infrastructure of the sector, and helping agencies reduce their costs and save money via pro bono or discounted schemes. The majority of LLST's funding is directed through the Centres of Excellence (COEx) program; the COEx agencies provide a wide range of free legal advice services in housing, welfare rights, immigration and employment. Through this GLA partnership, LLST will support 16 Centres of excellence developing their capacity to the equivalent of 13 specialist advisers based in COEx, and 7 Crisis Navigation Advisers based in community organisations that will support this service.

2. Delivery challenges, resources and referrals - building our capacity

This is a new approach, predicated on collaboration rather competitive bidding for funding, and piloting models to bring advice closer to the community, respond to unmet needs and develop new referral pathways. There will be learning along this route, so collecting data is key; there will also be challenges to overcome, especially upskilling the advice workforce and enhancing ecosystems of support. The table below captures our shared approach through which we hope to extend support to 35,000 Londoners.

Nature of customer 'need'	Practical support Triage and referral	Entry-level advice or crisis support Triage and onward referral	Specialist legal advice (inc. casework and potentially representation)
Nature of organisation or setting meeting that need	Smaller grassroots organisations serving specific communities (e.g. faith or food settings; community centres)	Larger community organisations/anchors offering crisis support (e.g. LCAs; some LLST CoEs; others?)	Larger community organisations/anchors offering specialist legal advice (e.g. LLST CoEs; some LCAs; Debt-Free London?)
Needs of those organisations or settings	Onward referral routes Training (e.g. advice first aid) Practical resources	Capacity to receive referrals Knowledge of surrounding community organisations	Capacity to meet demand Supply of future advisers
How GLA funding can meet that need	Local directories of support A training package Creation of resources	Salaries of crisis support workers; entry-level advisers; supervisory capacity	Salaries of specialist advisers

Community Engagement

We can increase engagement with people who need advice through working with local groups and developing networks across London. There is no 'one size fits all' model for this; London's communities and boroughs are diverse. It comes back to effective local capacity building; we hope our "Advice First Aid" training offer can support this: below is one Borough example (Citizens Advice Wandsworth project).

