

## **FURTHER PARTICULARS**

### **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

EMLC provides a range of information, legal advice, and representation services to BME communities across Scotland. The organisation operates as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is recognised as a Charity with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. The organisation was established in 1991, working predominately within Glasgow. However, over the last five years the organisation has expanded its service activity across a number of local authority areas in Scotland.

#### ***Aims & Objectives***

EMLC was established primarily to address unmet legal needs for those individuals within BME communities across Scotland. This remains the cornerstone of the organisations vision of *‘a socially inclusive and culturally sensitive Scotland, in which all BME communities have equality of access to justice, rights, services and information through the provision of legal services and access to legal remedies.’*

EMLC provides a range of services that offer individuals and communities ‘Access To Justice’, ‘Access to Rights’, ‘Access to Services’, and ‘Access to Information’ for all. Through these services, EMLC seeks to tackle disadvantage by tailoring services to meet the needs of individuals and communities.

### **DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING SERVICE ACTIVITY**

EMLC operates as a culturally sensitive bilingual resource that seeks to assist people within BME communities who maybe experiencing a range of issues which are adversely affecting them. The provision of service activity by EMLC can be broadly categorised under two main themes:

- Information, Legal Advice, & Representation – Delivering Direct Client Support Services;
- Capacity Building (Mainstream) – Building the Capacity of Local Advice Agencies.

EMLC recognises that many individuals within BME communities do not necessarily have access to support services or legal representation that maybe afforded to other members of the community. EMLC is committed to meeting the unmet legal needs of these members of ethnic minority communities and raising awareness of changes in legislation affecting the areas of laws in which the organisation specialises. Through the information, legal advice, and representation services, individuals have the opportunity to utilise the expertise and knowledge of EMLC in areas of asylum / human rights law, employment law including discrimination, immigration law, family law, and race discrimination law. In taking forward its service activity and providing support to BME communities, the organisation has developed a number of project activities including.

PROJECT	TYPE OF SERVICES	DESCRIPTION
CORE PROJECT	Active Information, Signposting; Casework; Representation & Advocacy	Assist people from ethnic minority backgrounds residing in Glasgow requiring legal representation. The project provides advice, assistance and representation in relation to EMLC's legal areas of expertise noted above, whilst providing information to local authorities, and providing training to CABx and other agencies;
OUTREACH PROJECT	Active Information, Signposting; Representation & Advocacy	Providing legal advice and guidance across a number of local areas across Scotland including the three Ayrshires, and East Renfrewshire. The project seeks to raise awareness of issues experienced by ethnic minority communities.
PAN LANARKSHIRE PROJECT	Active Information, Signposting; Casework; Representation & Advocacy	Dedicated legal services to ethnic minority residents within Lanarkshire. Working in partnership with other agencies including Citizens Advice Bureau to ensure residents have opportunity to access services provided by EMLC, this includes representation in employment matters, and with benefit issues.
YOUTH DISCRIMINATION PROJECT	Active Information, Signposting	Providing free legal advice to young people in Glasgow's BME communities and raising awareness of young people's rights and responsibilities.
EDINBURGH PROJECT	Active Information, Signposting; Casework; Representation & Advocacy	Dedicated legal services to BME communities across the Edinburgh. Working in partnership with other agencies including Citizens Advice Bureau to ensure residents have opportunity to access services provided by EMLC, this includes representation in employment matters, immigration issues, and with benefit issues.
HIGHLAND PROJECT	Active Information, Signposting; Casework; Representation & Advocacy	Dedicated legal services to BME communities across the Highlands. Working in partnership with other agencies including Citizens Advice Bureau to ensure residents have opportunity to access services provided by EMLC, this includes representation in employment matters, immigration issues, and with benefit issues.
PERTH & KINROSS PROJECT	Active Information, Signposting; Casework; Representation & Advocacy	Dedicated legal services to BME communities across Perth & Kinross. Working in partnership with other agencies including Citizens Advice Bureau to ensure residents have opportunity to access services provided by EMLC, this includes representation in employment matters, immigration issues, and with benefit issues.
FEMALE SUPPORT PROJECT	Active Information, Signposting; Advocacy	Support to female clients from ethnic minority communities who experience or maybe experiencing domestic abuse.

### **Capacity Building (Mainstream) – Building the Capacity of Local Advice Agencies.**

In addition to the information/advice, legal, and representation services provided by EMLC, the organisation also seeks to raise awareness of issues affecting members of BME communities. The capacity building programme delivered by the organisations supports the ongoing development and internal capacity of a range of advice agencies to assist BME communities. The organisation offers a range of training opportunities designed to support staff and volunteers within local advice agencies to be able to expand and develop the range of activity that they deliver. The capacity building programme provides advice agencies with updated information on issues affecting BME communities, including changes in legislation.

### **Access to Advice and Legal Services for People from the BME Communities Project.**

The aim of the project is to embed the partnership and joint working arrangements developed through the Capacity Building, and support a programme of work to develop a sustainable infrastructure of advice and legal representation services for people from BME communities across Scotland. This will include:

- Undertaking a programme of work within designated regions to form a structured service partnership that will be able to effectively support people from BME communities to access information, legal advice and representation. This will include the development of local partnership agreements covering joint working arrangements including referral procedures and protocols.
- Provision of 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier Support Service that will support local advice agencies to deliver effective information, legal advice and representation for people from BME communities. This will include telephone advice to local agencies and undertaking casework on an outreach basis by the project for more complex cases.
- Developing the use of information technology for improving access to legal services for people from outlying and remote communities. This will include the development of a “Virtual Office” that will be to offer appointments and undertake casework through the use of Skype; Video Conferencing; Telephone; and using other emerging technologies.
- Provide a structured rolling programme of training to continue to build the capacity of local advice agencies in response to the changing nature of legislation covering key areas such as cultural awareness; welfare reform; employment and discrimination; asylum and human rights; and immigration.

## **MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

A voluntary Board of Directors is responsible for overall strategy and direction of the Law Centre. The Board of Directors is comprised of twelve elected directors, who are nominated and elected to represent local community organisations based in Glasgow and the outlining areas. There are also special directors, who are appointed by Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities. There are currently a further three co-opted directors, including representatives from local authorities and other local community organisations.

The Board of Directors of EMLC seek to take forward service activity and achieves its targets and outcomes by focusing activity on a number of core values. These core values include the following

SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE	The service shall be available to all minority ethnic communities in Scotland; we are dedicated to facilitating social inclusion through access to justice.
CULTURALLY SENSITIVE	The organisation shall be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences amongst those with whom we work; we shall respect diversity.
EQUALITY	EMLC believes that everyone has an equal right to justice; we shall endeavour to secure equal access to law and justice for all those we work for.
CLIENT FOCUSED	The needs and interests of our clients will be placed at the heart of all of our decisions and will inform the provision of our legal advice and services.
INTEGRITY	EMLC shall undertake our work with independence, honesty and integrity, and be fair and impartial in our dealings with everyone; we shall respect the confidentiality of information given to us; we will not raise expectations that cannot be met; we will not take reckless risks with those with whom we work.
PROFESSIONALISM	EMLC will be professional in all our dealings with clients; we shall encourage the continuous professional development of our staff; we shall strive to be the best in our field; we will take pride in our work
COLLABORATION / PARTNERSHIP	The EMLC recognises that we must work together with others to achieve our mission; we will be enthusiastic, responsive and proactive in developing a partnership approach in our work with clients and stakeholders.