

# Islington Strategic Advice Partnership Research Brief

**June 2025**

## Introduction

Islington-based funders Cloudesley and the Cripplegate Foundation are looking to commission research using data from local advice agencies to explore whether there are system issues in local social housing assessment, allocation and maintenance systems and to provide evidence for possible system improvements. The work will involve analysing case work data from Islington advice agencies as well as interviews with advice agencies and possibly local social landlords.

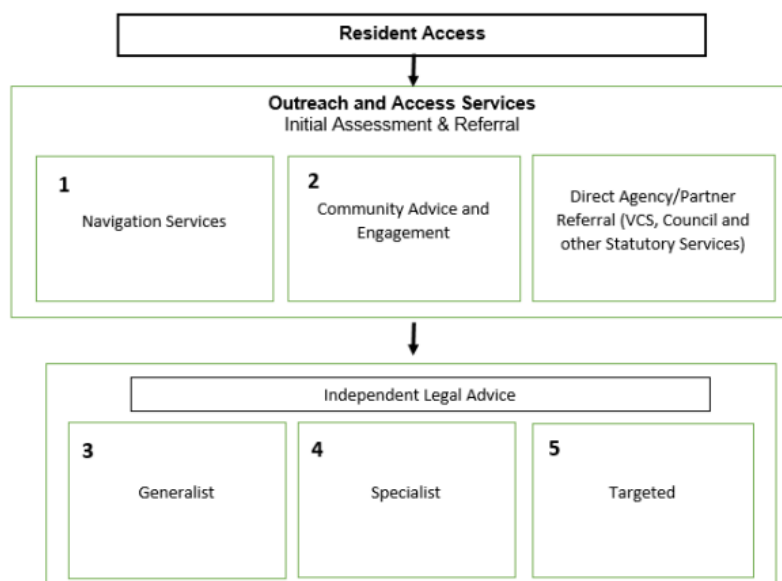
## Background to the research - The local context

In Islington there is a well-developed advice system in place. This is due to a long standing effective and strong voluntary sector offer combined with committed local funders, including Islington Council, Cloudesley and Cripplegate.

There is an Islington Strategic Advice Partnership (ISAP) that meets four times a year and aims to provide strategic oversight of the borough advice offer and encourage partners to work together. The current draft Terms of Reference can be found in Appendix 1. The Council, funded organisations, Cloudesley and Cripplegate are members (see Appendix 2).

The Council has worked with key partners and stakeholders to establish an advice model for Islington. The model seeks to ensure that independent advice services are able to work in a complementary and coordinated way, to meet the different needs of residents in an efficient and effective manner; from initial access through to case resolution and preventative interventions.

### *Islington Advice Model*



Cloudesley currently fund activity across all five areas of the Islington Advice Model, providing £170,000 of advice funding to Islington Law Centre, Citizens Advice Islington, Islington BAMER Advice Alliance and Islington Peoples Rights. Cloudesley also fund £42,500 for Navigation to Help on Your Doorstep. This is a total of £211,500.

The Cripplegate Foundation provide £158,000 of advice funding to Islington Law Centre, Citizens Advice Islington and Islington BAMER Advice Alliance. They also fund £120,000 of Navigation to Help on Your Doorstep via Islington Giving. This is a total of £278,000 per year. Cripplegate also administers Islington Council's Community Chest fund, which supports grassroots organisations, many of which are providing advice within specific communities.

Islington Council fund six organisations providing navigation and advice. This totals £1,415,000 per annum and is 53% of the overall available voluntary sector core grant programme. The organisations are:

1. Arachne Greek Cypriot Women's Group – Community Advice
2. Islington BAMER Advice Alliance (IBAA) – Community Advice
3. Islington People's Rights – Targeted Advice
4. Citizens Advice Islington (CAI) - Generalist Advice
5. Islington Law Centre (ILC) – Specialist Advice
6. Help on Your Doorstep (HOYD) – Navigation, Outreach and Advocacy

Islington Council provides signposting to advice provision on its website. This can be found at: [Free independent advice | Islington Council](#)

Cripplegate have produced a directory of advice services in the borough that lists 40 organisations providing some kind of advice. This can be found here: [4.1 Islington-Advice-Directory-Jan-2024-update.pdf](#)

## **Rationale for the research**

As outlined above, there is considerable investment in Navigation and Advice in the borough. Despite this investment the advice system is constantly oversubscribed. Alongside this, it appears that there are patterns of case work appearing that could indicate there are systems issues. These systems include welfare benefits, employment and housing.

The ISA partnership would like to more effectively use the data, case studies and evidence each of the partners collects to influence improvements to services and systems. It has been agreed that an area of research that may be effective relates to local housing maintenance/repairs systems. This would relate to local social landlords including Islington Council.

The resulting report would be shared with the Islington Strategic Advice Partnership and presented to local social landlords to open a discussion about improved maintenance/repairs processes and outcomes, which should lead to less housing casework

being needed to be undertaken by advice agencies. This would increase advice capacity in the borough and improve outcomes for residents.

### **Outcomes of research**

It is hoped that the research project will result in recommendations that will improve the effectiveness of social housing maintenance/repairs, to reduce the case work burden of advice partners.

This will hopefully be achieved by the collation of the rich data and knowledge held within advice partners combined with interviews with key stakeholders. This is likely to include:

- A clear breakdown of the approach taken by local social landlords in relation to maintenance/repairs.
- A summary of the most frequent repeated issues residents raise with advice partners
- A summary of possible system issues that could be addressed
- Recommendations for system improvements, either for social landlords or in the partnership between social landlords and advice partners.

### **Method**

The research should include:

- The development of key questions and data needed to achieve the aims of the research project
- Review of current, available and requested data from advice partners and social landlords on maintenance/repairs
- Interviews with key stakeholders. This will include advice partners and social landlords
- A draft report by an agreed date for review
- A final report with recommendations for local advice agencies, statutory services and funders around future work and improvements

### **Timeframe**

Ideally this research will be undertaken over a three-month period from an agreed start date. The final report will be presented at the next available Islington Strategic Advice Partnership meeting.

### **Budget**

There is a budget of up to £5,000 for this project.

### **Next Steps**

If this project is interesting to you, please contact us for an initial discussion.

Following this we may invite you to email us a submission of interest of no more than four sides of A4. This should include:

- Methodology - a short description of how you would plan to conduct the work set out under 'Method' above
- Some examples of how you have worked with other clients, including details of two referees
- A brief description of why this project is of interest
- A budget proposal.

Deadline for submission of interest: Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup> at 5pm

Please contact: Kevin Turner, Grants Manager, Cloudesley, [kevin.turner@cloudesley.org.uk](mailto:kevin.turner@cloudesley.org.uk)  
or Anne Shewring, Programme Director, Cripplegate, [anne.shewring@cripplegate.org.uk](mailto:anne.shewring@cripplegate.org.uk)

### **About the Funders**

This research project is being jointly funded by Cloudesley and the Cripplegate Foundation.

Cloudesley is an independent charitable trust that makes grants to people, organisations and churches within the London Borough of Islington. The current annual grants budget is £2.6 million. The Health Grants programme addresses physical and mental health issues and financial hardship. The programme supports Islington residents who have health problems or who are disabled, and in financial need. The Church Grants programme supports Church of England churches in Islington. Cloudesley works closely with other local funders and is one of the founding partners of Islington Giving.

Cripplegate Foundation is a local grant-making foundation supporting residents and groups working in the London Borough of Islington and a small area of the City of London. Its vision is of a society where everyone has the opportunity to live a rewarding and fulfilled life, free from poverty and inequality. Across Cripplegate Foundation and Islington Giving grants of £1.7m a year are given from the income from the foundation's endowment and on behalf of others.

### **Key Stakeholders**

- Citizens Advice Islington
- Help On Your Doorstep
- Islington BAMER Advice Alliance
- Islington Law Centre
- Islington People's Rights
- Arachne Women's Support
- London Borough of Islington
- Peabody
- Hyde
- Clarion
- Peter Bedford