Press Release

New thinking on an old problem

‘Closing the Justice Gap’ collection published

Closing the Justice Gap: some new thinking about an old problem, a collection of essays about improving access to justice, is available to download at www.jures.co.uk.

Contributors include leading lawyers such as Michael Mansfield QC and Geoffrey Bindman, politicians such as shadow justice minister Henry Bellingham MP, as well as campaigning lawyers such as Roger Smith of JUSTICE, Steve Hynes of the Legal Action Group and Laura Janes of the Young Legal Aid Lawyers.

Essayists were charged with the task of coming up with fresh ideas to improve access to justice for the poor and vulnerable in our society. They were asked to sign up to ground rules (‘no point scoring, no complaining about the fees...’).

‘We hope this collection of essays is a radically different contribution to a debate that often appears stuck in a rut between government intransigence, as lawyers and those working in the advice sector might see it, and professional self interest as non-lawyers and ministers might see it,’ comments editor Jon Robins.’

‘As we face wide ranging cuts to public services across the board, access to justice for all citizens is increasingly essential to ensure a fair society,’ comments YLAL chair Laura Janes. ‘Five years on from setting up Young Legal Aid Lawyers, lawyers are struggling more than ever to use the law to achieve social justice. While YLAL firmly believes that access to justice is an inalienable right, we hope this book will encourage law makers to prioritise the guarantee of meaningful justice for all.’
What others say about *Closing the Justice Gap*:

Jon Snow: ‘An excellent publication ... a genuinely imaginative collection of essays about how radical, exciting and innovative ways to reform and improve legal aid... And, my God, they are needed’

Michael Zander QC. ‘We need all the constructive ideas we can get. The book makes a valuable contribution.’

You can also view a podcast of the book’s launch debate at Norton Rose chaired by Jon Snow and featuring the legal aid minister Lord Bach and shadow justice minister Henry Bellingham at www.jures.co.uk.

Notes

*Closing the Justice Gap* is a 30,000 word collection of essays. It was produced by the legal research company Jures, published by *Solicitors Journal* in association with the Young Legal Aid Lawyers. It is edited by Jon Robins, co-author of *The Justice Gap: whatever happened to legal aid* (published by the Legal Action Group) with a foreword by Michael Zander QC, Emeritus professor of Law, LSE

The full list of contributors is as follows:

- Michael Mansfield QC, founder of Tooks Chambers
- Henry Bellingham MP, shadow minister for the Ministry of Justice
- Roger Smith OBE, director of JUSTICE
- Sir Geoffrey Bindman, founder of Bindmans LLP
- Crispin Passmore, head of strategy at the Legal Services Board (writing in a personal capacity)
- Laura Janes, Young Legal Aid Lawyers
- David Harker, chief executive at Citizens Advice
- Neil Kinsella, chief executive at Russell Jones & Walker
- Tony Edwards, senior partner at TV Edwards
- Jon Trigg, strategy director at A4e
- Nick Green QC, chairman of the Bar Council 2010 and Paul Mendelle QC, chair of the Criminal Bar Association 2010
- Steve Hynes, director of LAG and co-author of The Justice Gap, and Jon Robins, legal journalist and co-author of The Justice Gap.