



Duncan Lewis

Giving people a voice

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MINISTRY OF JUSTICE REPORT SHOWS DUNCAN LEWIS GIVES MORE PEOPLE A VOICE THAN ANY OTHER LAW FIRM

REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH PROVIDES HIGH QUALITY COST-EFFECTIVE LEGAL SERVICES TO OVER 20,000 PEOPLE A YEAR

This week's report from the Ministry of Justice shows that Duncan Lewis is providing more legal aid services than any other UK firm. In the year ending March 2009, Duncan Lewis received £9.9m from the Community Legal Service's annual budget of £900m – almost twice as much as the second-placed firm.

The firm is very proud of its vital role giving over 20,000 people a year a voice in the legal system. Indeed the firm plays a key role in holding Government and other public bodies to account with over 300 Judicial Review cases currently lodged in the High Court – more than any other firm in the country. And last year, it had twenty House of Lords and Court of Appeal reported cases.

Established in 1998 by three people, Duncan Lewis has grown rapidly and now employs over 400 people in six sites across London. Its staff come from and represent over 60 ethnic groups, and more than 60% of them are women. It is particularly strong in the provision of law in areas such as Immigration, Public Law, Crime, Family & Child Care, Housing, Social Welfare and Mental Health.

The firm takes a keen interest in training a new generation of socially aware lawyers. At a time when the number of training contracts offered by the profession fell by 32% in 2009, the firm now has 68 such contracts – four times that held by any other legal aid firm. And whilst it retains a high number of those who qualify – 41 of the company's solicitors trained in-house as well as seven of the partners – it also makes an enormous contribution to the supplier base of legal aid lawyers for the future. Every year 150 graduates also benefit from its work placement scheme.

In a week when the Justice Secretary Jack Straw MP also announced significant changes to the procedure for tendering for legal aid services, Duncan Lewis is already able to demonstrate that it is providing the highest quality of legal aid services on the most cost-effective basis. It does this through its unique approach to case management and resource provision which it believes is revolutionising the provision of legal aid services. The success of this approach in delivering quality legal services is evidenced by the fact that the firm holds a variety of accreditations including since 1999, Lexcel and Investors in People, with a Gold Standard being awarded this year. It also has 10 franchises awarded by the Legal Services Commission.

Duncan Lewis Chief Executive Shany Gupta says, *“Duncan Lewis is very proud of the leading role it plays in giving so many, often disadvantaged individuals, a voice in the legal system. We believe that this is a vital social welfare function and are grateful for the enthusiasm with which our staff seek to ensure the best protection of rights for all our clients.”*

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