



7 June 2016

For Immediate Release

A record breaking year for the Norwich Legal Walk

4th sponsored Norwich Legal Walk raises over £5,600 for free local legal help

On Monday 18 April, just under 200 lawyers, advisors and other legal professionals joined forces for a sponsored walk around the riverfront sights of Norwich to raise over £5,600 to support free legal advice in Norwich and throughout East Anglia.

Under the banner 'Supporting access to justice in the East' 22 teams of walkers from law firms, barristers' chambers as well as the voluntary and advice sector came together to raise funds for the Eastern Legal Support Trust (ELST) and other local free legal advice charities. Walkers were joined by the Law Society of England and Wales's Vice President, Robert Bourns; President of the Norwich & Norfolk Law Society, James Hunter and President of the Norwich & Norfolk JLD, Leon Head.

Eastern Legal Support Trust
020 7092 3973 www.elst.org.uk enquiries@elst.org.uk

The Eastern Legal Support Trust is a company limited by guarantee (No. 1140991) and a registered charity (No. 1140991), registered office Botanic House, 100 Hills Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB2 1PH



The 10km route took in the lovely river sights the city had to offer, with many walkers remarking they saw a side to the city they hadn't seen before. The weather was fine and breezy; a perfect spring day to stride out and raise money for a vital cause.

Walkers taking part fundraised for the cause by seeking sponsorship and in addition to this the event was supported by sponsors; Olsen Recruitment and Norfolk and Norwich Law Society who, along with Aviva sponsored the welcoming finishing line reception, at the Marble Hall, gratefully received by thirsty walkers.

Alongside some well-deserved refreshments walkers were welcomed back by the lead walkers who spoke about the growing importance of continuing free legal advice and support for the free legal advice sector and individuals who rely on their services.

Congratulating the walkers on their achievements, Robert Bourns, Vice President of the Law Society of England and Wales said "People have been holding walks for charity in towns and cities right across the country just as they have here in Norwich. It's just part of the contribution solicitors and our sector make to society – just as we provide advice services, sit on the boards of charities. All these things demonstrate our professional values. Values that show our commitment to our communities, our common interest in ensuring our fellow citizens are advised and represented."

The event is run by the Eastern Legal Support Trust (ELST). The ELST was formed in 2010 to raise and distribute funds to support the provision of free legal advice in Norwich and throughout East Anglia to those who otherwise would not be able to afford it. It is part of a network of Legal Support Trusts,

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working with the Access to Justice Foundation, to facilitate the access to specialist legal advice for the poorest and most vulnerable people in the community.

The organisations supported by the event make a huge difference in the lives of many people. The recent cuts to civil legal aid have not only affected the legal profession, but have also drastically impacted the services provided to members of the public.

Norfolk Community Law Service (NCLS) is a local charity which provides a range of free legal advice and support in and around Norwich so some of the city's most vulnerable citizens who often seek their services as a desperate last resort. In addition to using the Norwich Legal Walk to fundraise directly to support their work, NCLS also benefit from grant funding from the ELST and when services are as stretched and under resourced as they are in the advice sector, every little bit does make a huge difference.

Cuts to legal aid and local government funding of advice services means charities such as these are fighting to survive. Some organisations have merged, meaning already tight resources are being stretched over greater distances, but more frequently, others have ceased to provide services altogether.

A representative from the ELST said "We are truly delighted that the Norwich Legal Walk has had a record breaking year with more people coming out to support access to justice for the most vulnerable and more funds being raised to support the vital services when help these people in their time of need.

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Thanks to all our walkers, supporters and sponsors the ELST will be able to make more and larger grants than ever before, ensuring local services benefit from local support.

More information about the ELST and Norwich Legal Walk, including all the pictures from the event can be found on the ELST website at <http://www.elst.org.uk/norwich-legal-walk>.

You can find the event on Facebook (<http://tinyurl.com/ELSTFB>) or by using the hashtag #legalwalk, you can also follow the Trust on Twitter [@EasternLegal](https://twitter.com/EasternLegal).

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Notes

- The Eastern Legal Support Trust (the Trust) is part of a nationwide group of 8 other Regional Legal Support Trusts set up under the guidance of the Access to Justice Foundation across England and Wales to support the provision of pro bono legal advice through grants, fund raising and other help.
- The Norwich Legal Walk is a sponsored event which engages the local legal profession, advice sector and public in promoting access to justice. More information can be found at <http://www.elst.org.uk/norwich-legal-walk>
- For more information about the Access to Justice Foundation see its website at <http://www.atjf.org.uk/> or contact Martha de la Roche by email marthadelaroch@atjf.org.uk or phone 020 7092 3973.
- For more information about the Eastern Legal Support Trust see its website at <http://www.elst.org.uk> or contact the Trust by email enquiries@elst.org.uk.

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