



The Unmet Legal Need in Lewisham

An analysis of residents' access to
timely and affordable legal advice

October 2018

Hogan
Lovells





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1. Executive summary

This report is a collaboration between international law firm Hogan Lovells and Southwark Law Centre. It examines the legal issues faced by the residents of the London Borough of Lewisham and the extent to which residents are able to access timely and affordable legal advice to resolve them. The first section analyses the results of observations of MPs' surgery appointments and the reported experience of caseworkers in Lewisham regarding legal issues faced by residents. The second section examines the extent of legal need in Lewisham through analysis of existing sets of publicly available data.

There is currently no law centre in Lewisham providing free legal advice to residents. Some private practices provide legal aid funded services, but are frequently at capacity and are limited in the areas they can support – legal aid is not available for the majority of immigration problems, for example. There are some services in neighbouring boroughs which are technically available to Lewisham residents, although these are often highly oversubscribed and more difficult to access. There is a strong third sector presence which provides some casework and advice in key areas, but demand for these services significantly outstrips supply. Southwark Law Centre, together with Citizens Advice Lewisham, aim to expand the legal services they currently provide, with the aim of eventually establishing an independent law centre for Lewisham.

Against the current background, a notable proportion of Lewisham residents who turn to MPs for help do so

in relation to legal problems. Caseworkers report that this happens because there is not enough timely and affordable legal advice available in the borough for residents to resolve their issues through consultation with a lawyer. Our observations of MPs' surgeries suggest there is a particular need in Lewisham for legal advice in the areas of asylum and immigration and housing, particularly rented accommodation.

Our analysis of existing publicly available data supports these conclusions. A number of socioeconomic features of the Lewisham population indicate a high demand for access to legal advice within the borough. The factors that suggest this in particular are the high proportions of young people, of people from black or ethnic minority backgrounds, of single parent households and of people living in rented accommodation.

As the focus of this report is on identifying the areas in which Lewisham residents' need for legal advice is currently going unmet, it does not consider usage data from the existing advice services available to residents mentioned above. Nevertheless, we would welcome an analysis of such usage data as it would likely provide a valuable additional perspective on the legal issues facing Lewisham residents.

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2. Legal issues presented at MPs' surgeries in Lewisham

2.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides an overview of issues presented to MPs for constituencies that fall within the borough of Lewisham at selected surgeries between November 2017 and February 2018, and analyses the various forms of legal need in the borough as evidenced by the issues raised.

To this end, we observed and recorded 115 issues

raised by constituents at 103 appointments across five MPs' surgeries.

The results of these surgery visits indicate that a high proportion of issues (62% of those observed) raised by Lewisham constituents at MPs' surgeries are legal problems. Asylum, immigration and housing related queries accounted for more than half of the legal issues raised, indicating particularly high demand for advice in these areas. These findings were supported by direct feedback from MPs' caseworkers, who also reported experiencing significant unmet demand for advice in relation to welfare and benefits.



2.2 Methodology

Hogan Lovells contacted the three MPs in the borough of Lewisham inviting them to take part in this project. We have worked with the offices of Heidi Alexander, Vicky Foxcroft and Ellie Reeves to observe surgeries and seek the MPs' views on access to legal advice in the borough.

Volunteers from Hogan Lovells attended one surgery with Vicky Foxcroft, one surgery with Ellie Reeves and three surgeries with Heidi Alexander. Vicky Foxcroft and Heidi Alexander, together with their caseworkers, would typically meet with around 25 constituents per surgery. Ellie Reeves runs surgeries by appointment and with a smaller number of constituents.

The Hogan Lovells volunteers were given training on how to identify "legal" and "non-legal" issues at the surgeries, and a guide as to the categories and sub-categories of legal problems they might face, to allow them to accurately categorise issues that arose. The findings of each volunteer were quality checked following the surgery to ensure issues had been correctly identified as legal or non-legal and the correct legal category had been selected from the description of the issue, to ensure a consistent approach across the board.

A further set of queries was circulated to the MPs and caseworkers to obtain qualitative data regarding their assessment of current legal provision and need. Qualitative data and anecdotal information is used in the context of this report to provide a wider picture of access to justice issues faced by constituent members and how MPs deal with legal issues that arise.

Each constituent signed a consent form allowing Hogan Lovells to use and report on their information on an anonymous basis and to develop and publish aggregate statistics.

The results obtained from observations of MPs' surgeries may differ from those obtained through analysis of usage at other advice services. This may be explained by several factors. In particular the supply of services in specific areas by an advice provider, for example welfare benefits advice, will affect the demand for that service recorded by the provider, and there will be different levels of awareness among different parts of the community in relation to specific providers, and the availability of support from MPs at surgeries.



2.3 Quantitative data

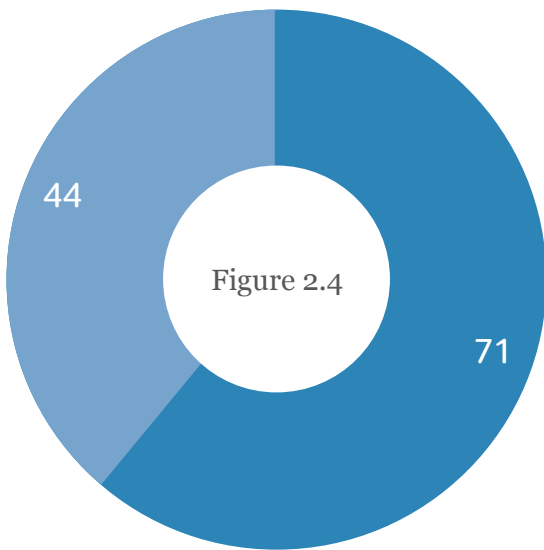
This section gives an overview of the data obtained at MPs' surgeries.

2.4 Legal and non-legal issues

From the five surgeries and 103 constituents' appointments, we observed 115 issues raised by constituents. For constituents who attended surgeries with more than one issue, each issue is identified separately. Of those issues, 71 (62%) were legal and 44 (38%) were non-legal.

Frequency of legal and non-legal issues

Unweighted base: 115 issues



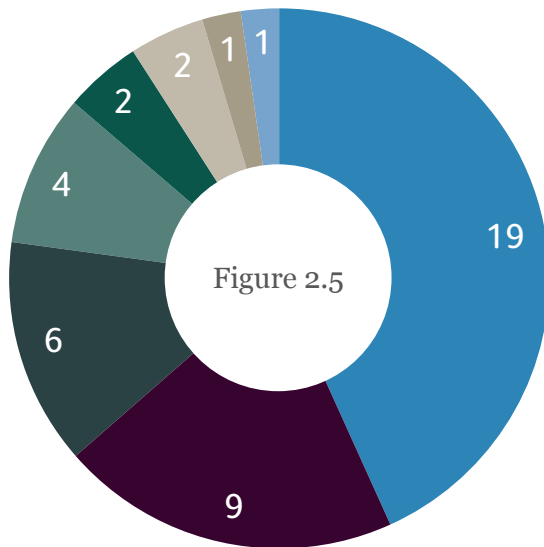
■ Legal
■ Non-legal

2.5 Non-legal issues

While the focus of this report is on the legal problems raised at MPs' surgeries, we recorded the types of non-legal problems which arose. Of the non-legal problems encountered, the most common area of complaint was in housing (19 issues, 43%). Issues with allocation, unaffordability and overcrowding, sometimes while in temporary accommodation, were the most frequently reported issues within housing which were not legal problems at the time of the surgery appointment. The next most prevalent was immigration (9 issues, 20%), often in relation to waiting for a Home Office response where there was no alleged or apparent breach of procedure or legal advice required in relation to an application.

Frequency of categories of non-legal issues

Unweighted base: 44 issues



■ Housing
■ Asylum/Immigration
■ Education
■ Health
■ Other
■ Benefits
■ Consumer
■ Discrimination



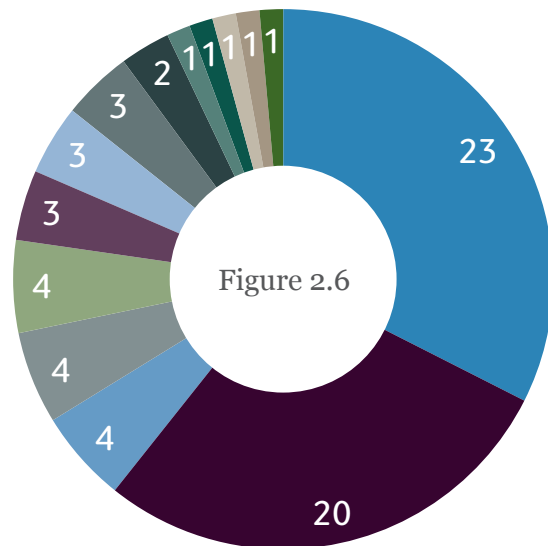
2.6 Legal issues

The most prevalent legal issue was asylum and immigration, accounting for (23 issues, 32%) of problems raised at the MPs’ surgeries. Housing was a close second (20 issues, 28%). There was a relatively even distribution of the remaining problems, as illustrated in the chart below. This highlights the extent of relative demand among Lewisham residents for housing and asylum / immigration advice across legal and non-legal issues.



Frequencies of categories of legal issues

Unweighted base: 71 issues



2.7 Housing

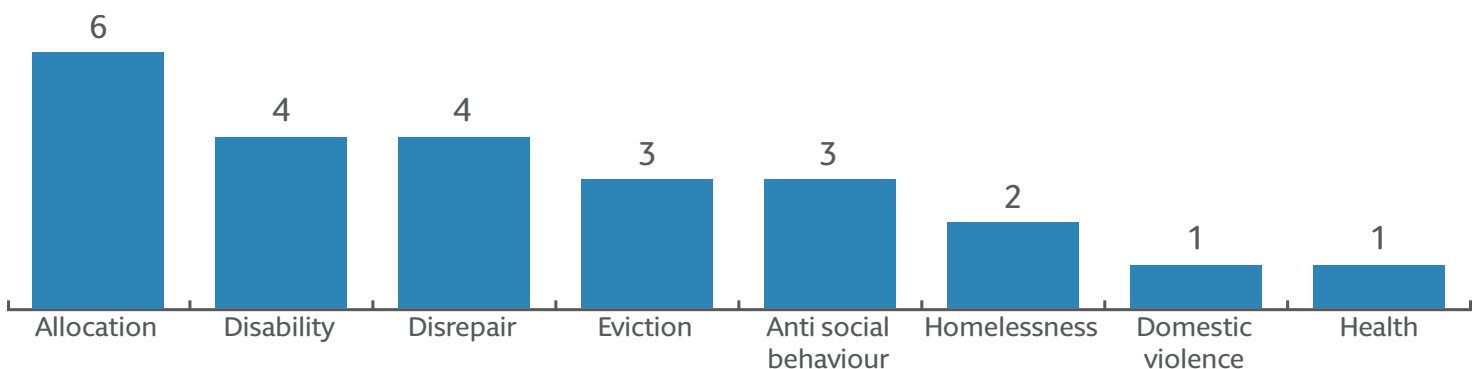
Legal problems raised in housing often had multiple overlapping elements, for example a housing allocation decision made by the council being challenged on the grounds of a tenant’s disability. As such, they are better presented on a multiple frequency basis, as in the chart below showing

incidence of each category among the 20 issues recorded. As illustrated in the chart, issues arising were fairly evenly spread between the categories reported, with allocation of rental accommodation by councils and housing associations, disability and disrepair the most common.

Frequencies of categories of housing issues

Unweighted base: 20 housing issues

Figure 2.7

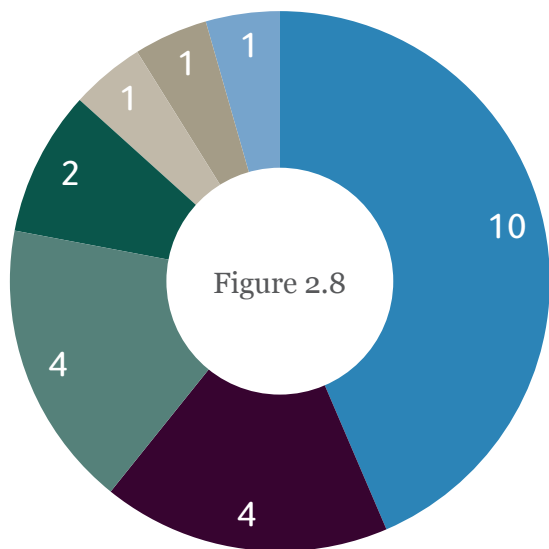


2.8 Asylum / Immigration

The asylum and immigration issues presented were generally within a discrete category. The most common category was constituents seeking legal advice on their applications for various forms of immigration status. Issues with the Home Office were the next most frequent, which were classified as legal due to the nature or extent of delay, or involvement of court orders. Over one quarter of the asylum and immigration issues raised related to the impact of the constituent’s immigration status on their right to various welfare benefits (i.e., challenges to a ‘no recourse to public funds’ decision, or regarding their right to tax credits).

Frequencies of categories of asylum/immigration issues

Unweighted base: 23 asylum/immigration issues



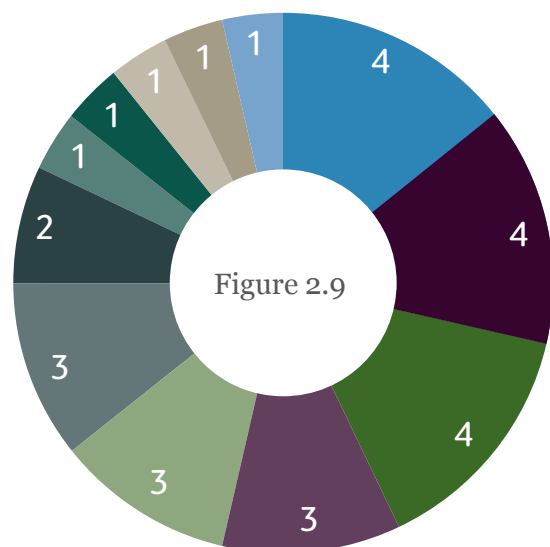
- Applications
- Home Office
- Challenging 'no recourse to public funds'
- Right to tax credits
- Deportation
- Passports
- Immigration status

2.9 Other legal problems

There was a wide variety of other legal problems observed in the MPs’ surgeries, as shown in the chart below. Of these, the most common were crime and education. The issues with crime were all raised by constituents who reported being a victim of a crime, either personally or on behalf of a family member.

Frequencies of categories of legal issues excluding housing and asylum/immigration issues

Unweighted base: 28 issues



- Crime
- Family
- Education
- Community care
- Other
- Consumer dispute
- Debt
- Discrimination
- Tax
- Employment
- Welfare
- Health

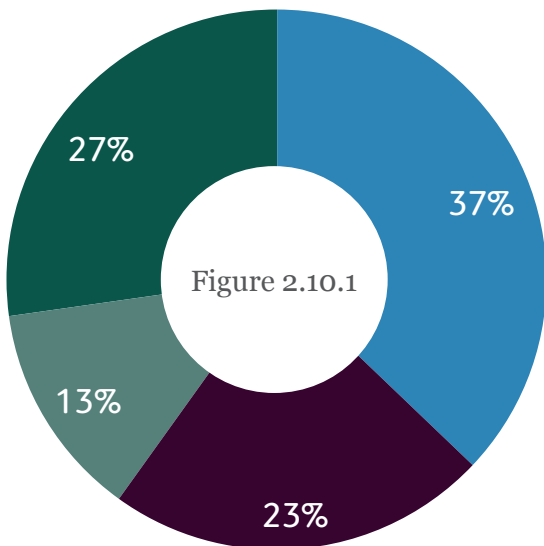
2.10 Relative need in Lewisham

We compared the results from the Lewisham MPs' surgeries to the results collated from across London in the Mind the Gap report, for which Hogan Lovells volunteers observed 325 appointments across 40 MPs' surgeries in 2016. While the context in 2017 and 2018 is different from that in 2016, the proportionally

larger presentation of asylum and immigration issues in the Lewisham results suggests a particular need for legal advice on immigration in Lewisham. The high prevalence of housing issues in both surveys underscores the strong need for legal advice on housing, which is supported by the qualitative evidence we gathered.

2.10.1 London: Categories of legal issues

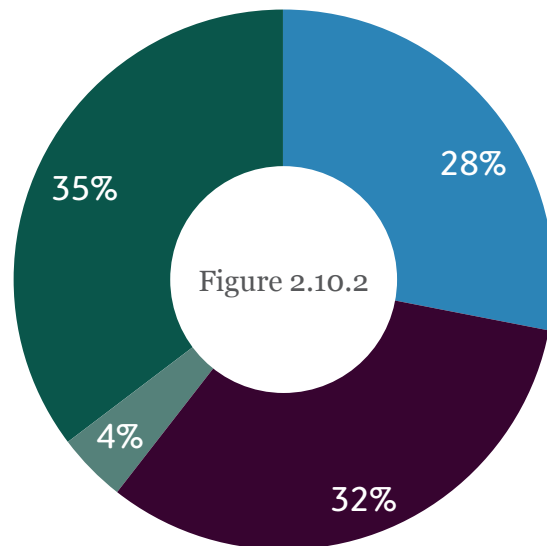
Unweighted base: 325 issues



■ Housing ■ Asylum/Immigration
 ■ Welfare Benefits ■ Other

2.10.2 Lewisham: Categories of legal issues

Unweighted base: 71 issues



■ Housing ■ Asylum/Immigration
 ■ Welfare Benefits ■ Other





“

There's not nearly enough access to legal advice in Lewisham. There's no law centre, there's nowhere near enough legal aid, so if someone presents as a new case there is little we can do in terms of legal advice. More access to legal advice is desperately needed. For some constituents, coming to the surgery is the first time someone has listened to their issues, and if necessary with an interpreter, so that they can properly articulate their issues.

Ellie Reeves MP

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2.11 Qualitative information

This section of the report highlights some of the qualitative information we gathered, either through our direct observations at the surgeries or from information we were given by MPs or their caseworkers.

2.12 Legal issues arising at MPs' surgeries

In many appointments dealing with legal issues, the support of an MP was valuable to the constituent for reasons such as bolstering an application or appeal, speeding up a decision or utilising the MP's network of contacts. However, for a significant number of constituents, the solution they ultimately sought was a legal one, which required the provision of legal advice which was affordable and timely. None of the caseworkers or MPs from whom we obtained qualitative feedback felt that there was currently adequate capacity in Lewisham for the provision of legal advice to their constituents.

2.13 Immigration and asylum

Immigration and asylum cases accounted for 32% of the legal issues presented to the Lewisham MPs. One caseworker in Lewisham commented that immigration is one of the most pressing areas of legal need in the borough, which is reflected in the data we collected, and that this is an area that has seen changes in policy and environment leading to greater need. He noted more aggressive Home Office tactics, reforms in welfare connected to immigration and the need for representation at tribunals as among the issues giving rise to key legal needs of the constituents he encountered. Further, while in some cases an intervention by an MP may provide additional useful support to a constituent's application or problem, it should be noted that immigration cases frequently require long-term support which MPs may be unable to provide; in such cases, adequate and sustained legal assistance is especially important.

Most constituents who presented legal issues relating to immigration and asylum to their MP in Lewisham did so in relation to requests for assistance with applications for leave to remain, indefinite or otherwise. One such example was a constituent who lost indefinite leave to remain as the individual left the country for an extended period of time to care for ill relatives. The constituent made another application but this was refused on the

basis that there were held to be no insurmountable obstacles preventing returning home. The MP intervened by writing to the Home Office explaining the constituent's reasons for leaving the country; but this was a case which could have been supported by a legal practitioner able to advise on whether the correct procedure had been followed and to appeal on behalf of the constituent.

2.14 Housing

Housing accounted for 28% of the legal issues raised at MPs' surgeries. One caseworker stated that a lack of housing and disrepair are among the major legal issues arising at surgeries, and that this is connected to a squeeze on affordable housing in the area. The lack of readily accessible advice can mean that constituents lack information about their housing rights and struggle to challenge decisions that rank them low on the housing register, and to enforce their rights in relation to a landlord's obligation to repair.

As an example of a disrepair case raised at the surgeries, one constituent who was renting from a housing association reported having experienced problems relating to the state of repair for eight years. These problems involved a faulty boiler, leaking pipes, recurrent black mould and a failure to refurbish the kitchen as promised. A number of complaints had been filed and surveyors sent round, but no action had been taken. The state of repair, particularly the mould, was thought to have had an impact on the health of the constituent's child. In this case the family had not sought any legal advice, and no legal referral was made by the MP, who intervened by writing to the chief executive of the housing association to demand action.

While interventions by an elected official are a powerful means of change, with proper enforcement of the constituent's legal rights the case need not have progressed to the stage where such an intervention was necessary, and equally could have been referred to a legal practitioner. The provision of legal advice in high volume areas such as housing and immigration has the scope to reduce the current burden on elected officials, who are often the first point of contact regarding legal problems where there is inadequate provision of services and low awareness of the availability of affordable legal advice in the community.

2.15 Welfare benefits

While we did not observe a high frequency of issues with welfare benefits at the surgeries we visited, the caseworkers across the MPs' offices recounted significant demand for legal advice on welfare benefits, particularly in relation to PIP and ESA appeals. One such case we observed involved a constituent who qualified for the DLA immobility allowance for a vehicle, but had lost it when the benefit changed to PIP. The constituent had appealed the decision without legal representation but lost the appeal, and now spends approximately £70 per week on taxis. The MP referred the constituent in question to Z2K, a charity that works across London connecting constituents to legal advice; but did not make a direct referral to a local provider of legal services, and did not have the resources to trace the outcome of the referral.

2.16 Referrals and resources

One caseworker noted that the majority of constituents who approached their MP do not have the means to pay for legal services. For those constituents, she said that there are limited choices for free advice and they are often at capacity. However, they reported using the LawWorks website, OISC website, Free Representation Unit, Bar Pro Bono Unit and Z2K, as well as more recently starting to make referrals to London-wide university clinics. Another caseworker reported referrals to Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network and Advice Lewisham. None of the MPs' offices had capacity to keep and maintain records of the outcomes of referrals made, due to the volume of their overall caseload.



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I am seeing more and more people coming to my surgeries and approaching my office for legal help. There is simply not the legal support we see in other boroughs in Lewisham, when someone needs specialist advice there is just nowhere to signpost constituents. Something desperately needs to change to give my constituents the effective legal representation they need.

Vicky Foxcroft MP

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3. Existing data on the extent of legal need in Lewisham

3.1 Summary

Our aim in this section of the report is to examine the extent of legal need in Lewisham through the analysis of existing data sets. We have achieved this by comparing existing data relating to the coincidence of certain socioeconomic features with demand for legal advice, with data relating to the prevalence of those socioeconomic features within the population of Lewisham and the population of England and Wales.

Our analysis suggests that a number of socioeconomic features of the Lewisham population are indicative of a particularly high demand for access to legal advice within the borough. There are four areas in which this is most notably applicable to Lewisham. These are as follows:

- Younger people tend to experience a greater number of legal problems than older people, especially issues relating to rented accommodation. Lewisham's population is proportionately younger than that of England and Wales as a whole.
- Adults from black or minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to experience legal issues than white adults. Lewisham has a higher proportion of adults from these backgrounds as compared to England and Wales.
- Single parent households are more likely to experience civil legal issues relating to money, debt and rented accommodation. There are significantly more single parent households in Lewisham than England and Wales more generally.
- Adults living in rented accommodation experience more legal problems, particularly relating to the rented accommodation itself, personal debt and anti-social behaviour, than those who own their homes. Lewisham has a significantly higher proportion of residents living in rented accommodation when compared to England and Wales.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Introduction

Our approach has been informed by a review of existing studies in the area. There is no publicly available comprehensive survey data for legal services usage or self-reported need in Lewisham. Further, attempts in England and Wales to devise multifactorial statistical models which predict legal need, based on socioeconomic data, have been largely unsuccessful. There appears to be no 'one-size-fits-all' solution. The drivers of legal need are often highly context-dependent.

Nevertheless, national studies into predictors of legal need have identified certain specific socioeconomic factors as relatively good proxies for certain legal needs, especially when considered with other qualitative indicators of legal need.

In this report, we have therefore adopted the approach of examining each of these socioeconomic factors in turn and comparing the prevalence of such factors in Lewisham to their prevalence in the population of England and Wales, predominantly using data from the 2011 Census.

3.2.2 Statistical modelling

In the years prior to 2000, the Community Legal Service ("CLS") attempted to develop a series of models which could predict legal need in a small geographical region based on socio-economic data for that area (the Small Area Models of Legal Need, or "SAMLN"). Local studies typically employed SAMLNs alongside data indicating local supply of legal services, to produce a 'gap analysis' indicating the disparity between legal need (demand) and local legal services (supply)¹.

In December 2002, the Legal Services Research Centre ("LSRC") in collaboration with the University of Oxford evaluated the predictive value of the SAMLNs.² The study compared LSRC survey results of actual legal need, with the legal need predicted by the SAMLNs. Based on this study, the LSRC found that the SAMLNs had weak predictive value; though they might be used as a "starting point for discussion". Crucially, the study recommended that quantitative analyses based on SAMLNs be considered only alongside other available evidence as to legal needs.

¹ Pleasance et al, "Needs assessment and the Community Legal Service in England and Wales"

² Legal Services Research Centre, Summary Report on the LSC's Small Area Models of Legal Need

3.2.3 Indicative factors

When considering alternative statistical models to the SAMLNs, the LSRC noted that the following single factors were “*potentially useful indicators*” of legal need in certain areas:

- Housing benefit proved to be a relatively good indicator of debt problems;
- JSA uptake proved to be a relatively good indicator of welfare benefit problems;
- The proportion of persons of working age proved to be a relatively good indicator of employment problems.

More recent large scale studies in England and Wales have adopted this approach of measuring specific socioeconomic factors against legal need in order to identify potentially useful indicators to be considered alongside other evidence. These factors provide a starting point for identifying gaps in provision.

The Ministry of Justice’s Legal Problem Resolution Survey 2014 – 2015 (“**LPRS**”) is the latest national legal needs survey in this tradition.³ It evidences the prevalence of particular problems experienced by people in England and Wales which may have a legal solution, and analyses correlations between key socioeconomic factors and the incidence of these problems.

An analysis of these socioeconomic factors in Lewisham can provide a useful base for indicating legal need, in tandem with the qualitative evidence obtained from our survey of the Lewisham MPs. This follows the recommended approach of considering the best available quantitative evidence as to drivers of legal need alongside qualitative research.

This section of the report uses the findings of the LPRS together with data from the 2011 Census and other Office for National Statistics data sets which are publicly available to explore the characteristics of the Lewisham population which indicate areas of demand for legal advice. Where the 2011 Census did not contain relevant comparative data, we have used other relevant data sets, namely the Annual Population Survey January 2017 to December 2017, the Annual Summary of Earnings 2017 and the DWP Benefits Claimants - Working Age Group 2016.

This approach is limited by the fact that 2011 Census data is now relatively old. However, as a comprehensive and recognised data set, we consider it to be the most useful comparative data set for our purposes.

3.2.4 Statistical significance

Asterisks have been used below to denote statistical significance. *denotes a data point that is statistically significantly greater as compared to one or more responses to the same question within the LPRS study. **denotes a data point that is statistically significantly greater as compared to one or more of the other data points in the data set being used for the comparison between Lewisham and England and Wales.

3.3 Socioeconomic factors indicating legal need in Lewisham

3.3.1 Gender

Gender was found in the LPRS to have no discernible impact on legal need: 32% of both males and females reported experiencing one or more of the legal problems measured in the LPRS in the 18 months prior to the survey.⁴ Consequently, this factor has not been considered in relation to the Lewisham population.

3.3.2 Age

In the LPRS, the most likely age group to experience legal problems was the 25-44 age group, followed by the 18-24 group. Those least likely to experience a problem were those aged 65 and over.⁵ The LPRS found that those in the younger age groups – 18-24 and 25-44 – were more likely to experience certain kinds of legal problems than those in older age groups. In the study, those aged 25 to 44 were more likely to experience four or more legal problems (28%) than those aged 45 or over (between 11% and 17%).⁶ Young adults aged 18 to 24 were also particularly likely to report experiencing problems with rented accommodation (12% had done so, compared with 1%-3% for groups aged 45+).⁷

³ Franklyn et al, Findings from the Legal Problem and Resolution Survey, 2014-15.

⁴ LPRS, Table C5, p. 128.

⁵ LPRS, Table C2, p. 122.

⁶ LPRS, Table C5, p. 128.

⁷ LPRS, Table C4, p. 126.

Lewisham has a significantly higher proportion of 25-44 year olds than England and Wales: 37% compared to 27%. Similarly, Lewisham has a higher proportion of 18-24 year olds than England and Wales: 23% compared to 21%. This therefore suggests that, due to its relatively young population, Lewisham residents are more likely experience multiple legal problems and problems relating to rented accommodation than England and Wales as a whole.

LRPS ⁸		Table 3.3.2
	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem
18-24	181	37%*
25-44	1,040	42%*
45-64	1,199	31%
65-74	389	18%
75+	149	11%

2011 Census		
	England and Wales usual residents	Lewisham residents usual residents
Unweighted base	56,075,912	275,885
0-18	21%	23%**
18-24	9%	10%**
25-44	27%	37%**
45-64	25%**	21%
65-74	9%**	5%
75+	17%	9%**

3.3.3 Ethnicity

The LPRS reported that black and minority ethnic adults (“**BME**”) were more likely to experience legal problems than white adults. In particular, BME adults were slightly more likely to report a civil problem than white adults (34% compared with 27%).⁹

Lewisham has significantly more residents stating that they are from BME groups as compared to England and Wales. This therefore suggests that the population of Lewisham has a higher demand for legal advice than the rest of England and Wales in this respect.

LRPS ¹⁰		Table 3.3.3
	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem
BME	276	38%*
White	2,671	31%

2011 Census		
	England and Wales usual residents	Lewisham residents usual residents
Unweighted base	56,075,912	275,885
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups, Asian/Asian British, Black/African/ Caribbean/Black British	13%	44%**
White	86%**	54%
Other ethnic group	1%	3%**



⁷ LPRS, Table C4, p. 126.

⁸ LPRS, Table C2, p. 122.

⁹ LPRS, Table C3, p. 124.

¹⁰ LPRS, Table C2, p. 122.

3.3.4 Health and disability

The LPRS study found that adults with a long-standing illness or disability that limited their activities were more likely to experience problems than adults without any long-standing illness or disability, or whose illness or disability was not limiting.¹¹ This group was more likely to have experienced legal problems relating to injury or ill-health arising from an accident or negligence and problems relating to state benefits than non-disabled adults.¹² Further, adults with a limiting illness or disability were more likely to experience four or more legal problems (32%) than those with no disability or illness (19%) or a non-limiting disability or illness (18%).¹³

As compared to the population of England and Wales, Lewisham has fewer residents with disabilities that limit their day-to-day activities either a lot or a little. Nonetheless, considering the high proportion of such individuals experiencing legal issues, and in particular multiple legal issues, this still represents a significant area of demand for legal advice within Lewisham.

LRPS ¹⁴		Table 3.3.4	
	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem	
Long-standing illness or disability, limits activities	767	40%*	
Illness or disability, does not limit activities	395	27%	
No long-standing illness or disability	1,777	31%	
65-74	389	18%	
75+	149	11%	

3.3.5 Education

In the LPRS, adults with higher levels of educational qualifications were more likely to experience a problem than those with only lower-level qualifications.¹⁵ However, the report notes that this is related to age, as the results show that the older respondents – a group notable for being less likely to experience legal problems – are also less likely to have qualifications.¹⁶

The population of Lewisham is significantly more likely to have ‘Level 4’ qualifications or above (this is defined broadly as having a degree or degree equivalent or above) than England and Wales. This therefore suggests greater demand for legal advice among the Lewisham population as compared to that of England and Wales.

LRPS ¹⁷		Table 3.3.5	
	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem	
No educational qualifications	1,133	20%	
Lower-level qualifications	589	28%	
A-level or equivalent	766	37%*	
Degree equivalent or above	437	39%*	

2011 Census		
	England and Wales usual residents aged 16 and over	Lewisham residents usual residents aged 16 and over
Unweighted base	45,496,780	218,749
No qualifications	23%**	18%
Level 1 or Level 2 qualifications or apprenticeship	32%**	25%
Level 3 qualifications	12%**	11%
Level 4 qualifications and above	27%	38%**
Other qualifications	6%	9%**

¹¹ LPRS, Table C2, p.122.

¹² LPRS, Table C4, p.126.

¹³ LPRS, Table C5, p.128.

¹⁴ LPRS, Table C2, p.122.

¹⁵ LPRS, Table C2, p.122.

¹⁶ LPRS, p.12

¹⁷ LPRS, Table C2, p.122.

3.3.6 Marital status

The LPRS study found that adults who were married or in a civil partnership or widowed were less likely to experience a problem than those in other marital status groups.¹⁸ They were also less likely to have experienced four or more problems than those in other marital groups: 14% of those widowed and 17% of those married as compared to 26%-37% in other marital groups.¹⁹ Perhaps as expected, those who were separated or divorced/legally dissolved civil partnership were more likely to report a legal problem relating to relationship breakdown.²⁰

Lewisham has a significantly lower proportion of residents who are married or in a civil partnership or widowed as compared to England and Wales and higher proportions of residents who are within the groups more likely to experience legal problems, and multiple problems. It is therefore likely that this leads to a greater demand of legal advice within Lewisham than in England and Wales.

2011 Census		
	England and Wales usual residents aged 16 and over	Lewisham usual residents aged 16 and over
	45,496,780	218,749
Married/in a civil partnership	47%**	33%
Single (never married)	37%	50%**
Separated	3%	4%**
Divorced/legally dissolved civil partnership	9%**	8%
Widowed	7%**	5%

LRPS ²¹		Table 3.3.6
	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem
Married/in a civil partnership	1,396	29%
Cohabiting	372	38%*
Single	655	39%*
Separated	80	47%*
Divorced/legally dissolved civil partnership	314	35%*
Widowed	140	14%



¹⁸ LPRS, Table C2, p.122

¹⁹ LPRS, Table C5, p.128

²⁰ LPRS, Table C4, p.126

²¹ LPRS, Table C2, p.122

3.3.7 Single parent households

In the LPRS, over a half of single parents said they had experienced at least one problem, compared with 40% of adults in a household comprising a couple with dependent children, and 28% of those in adult-only households.²² Single parents were more likely to experience a range of civil problems than adults in other household types, such as problems with personal debt, other money-related issues, rented accommodation and anti-social behaviour by neighbours. Single parents were also more likely than adults with dependent children living as part of a couple to experience problems relating to state benefits.²³

Lewisham has significantly more single parent households than England and Wales. This therefore is potentially indicative of there being a greater demand for legal advice relating to civil issues such as money and debt, rented accommodation and anti-social behaviour by neighbours from Lewisham households than households in England and Wales more generally.

LRPS ²⁴ Table 3.3.7		
	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem
Single adult with dependent children	209	55%*
Couple with dependent children	715	40%*
Adult-only householders	2,035	28%

2011 Census		
	England and Wales households	Lewisham residents households
Unweighted base	23,366,044	116,091
Single adult with dependent children	7%	12%**
Couple with dependent children	19%**	16%
Adult-only householders	74%**	73%

3.3.8 Employment status

The LPRS results showed that unemployed adults were more likely to experience a legal problem than adults who were in employment or were economically inactive.²⁵ In particular, this group was more likely to report problems with personal debt, rented accommodation, anti-social neighbours and state benefits.²⁶

Lewisham has no higher a proportion of unemployed people than the rest of England and Wales. However, as 46% of unemployed people in the LPRS study reported experiencing a legal problem, this group represents a significant source of demand for legal advice in general, both in Lewisham specifically and England and Wales more generally.

LRPS ²⁷ Table 3.3.8		
	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem
Unemployed	457	46%*
In employment	5,324	36%
Economically inactive	4,267	22%

Annual Population Survey January 2017 to December 2017		
	England and Wales aged 16-64	Lewisham aged 16-64
Base	210,800	36,562,700
Employment rate	75%	83%**
Unemployment rate	4%	4%
Economically inactive	22%**	13%

²² LPRS, Table C2, p.123.

²³ LPRS, Table C4, p.127.

²⁴ LPRS, Table C2, p.123.

²⁵ LPRS, Table C2, p.122.

²⁶ LPRS, Table C4, p.127.

3.3.9 Household income

In the LPRS, there was no significant difference in the proportion of adults experiencing problems by household income.²⁸ However, the type of problems experienced did vary. Adults in the least affluent householders were more likely to have experienced personal debt problems (9%) than those in the most affluent households (1%). Adults in the least affluent households were more likely to have experienced issues associated with rented accommodation (9%) and anti-social neighbours (11%) while those in the most affluent households were more likely to have reported problems associated with the purchase of goods or services (12%).²⁹

In Lewisham, while the mean weekly gross pay and mean annual pay are higher than in England and Wales as a whole, households in the borough are more likely to be living in rented accommodation than in England and Wales in general (see paragraph 3.3.11). This suggests that, despite the relatively higher weekly gross pay and mean annual pay, experiencing issues associated with rented accommodation is still likely to be higher in Lewisham than in England and Wales.

	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem
Less than £15,000	761	34%
£15,000–£31,999	758	32%
£32,000–£59,999	803	33%
£60,000 or above	424	36%
Income unknown	213	20%

Area	Mean Weekly Gross Pay	Mean Annual Pay
UK	£543.50	£29,336.00
London	£684.80	£39,476.00
Lewisham	£628.90	£33,629.00

3.3.10 Means tested state benefits

The LPRS study found that those who received means-tested state benefit, such as income support, were more likely to experience a legal problem than those who did not. This group was more likely to experience a range of civil and administrative problems than those who were not receiving state benefits, such as neighbours' anti-social behaviour, personal debt, rented accommodation, accidents and negligence, state benefits and education.

While the proportion of Lewisham residents receiving any benefits is in line with that of England and Wales more generally, the fact that this group is highly likely to experience at least one legal problem still indicates that this group within Lewisham has a high demand for legal advice.

	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem
Receiving means tested state benefits	389	46%*
Not receiving means tested state benefits	2,570	30%

	England and Wales	Lewisham
Base: population aged 16-64 available for 2003 CAS wards, local authorities, constituencies, regions and certain other areas.		
Claiming any benefits as a proportion of the population	11%	11%

²⁷ LPRS, Table C2, p.122.

²⁸ LPRS, Table C2, p.123.

²⁹ LPRS, Table C4, p.127.

³⁰ LPRS, Table C2, p.123.

3.3.11 Tenure

In the LPRS, adults who owned their homes outright were less likely to experience a problem than adults who owned their homes with a mortgage or those who rented from a social or private landlord.³⁴ Those in rented accommodation were likely to have experienced problems relating to the home they rent, personal debt and anti-social behaviour by neighbours. People renting from a social landlord were more likely compared to people renting from a private landlord to experience anti-social behaviour by neighbours (15% compared to 12%) and personal debt problems (14% compared to 10%). By comparison, people renting from a private landlord were more likely compared to people renting from a social landlord to experience issues with their rented accommodation (18% compared to 15%).³⁵ Lewisham has a significantly higher proportion of households living in rented accommodation (either social or private) and a significant lower proportion of households owning homes with or without a mortgage. This suggests that the borough has a significantly higher demand for legal advice relating to rented accommodation, personal debt and anti-social behaviours.

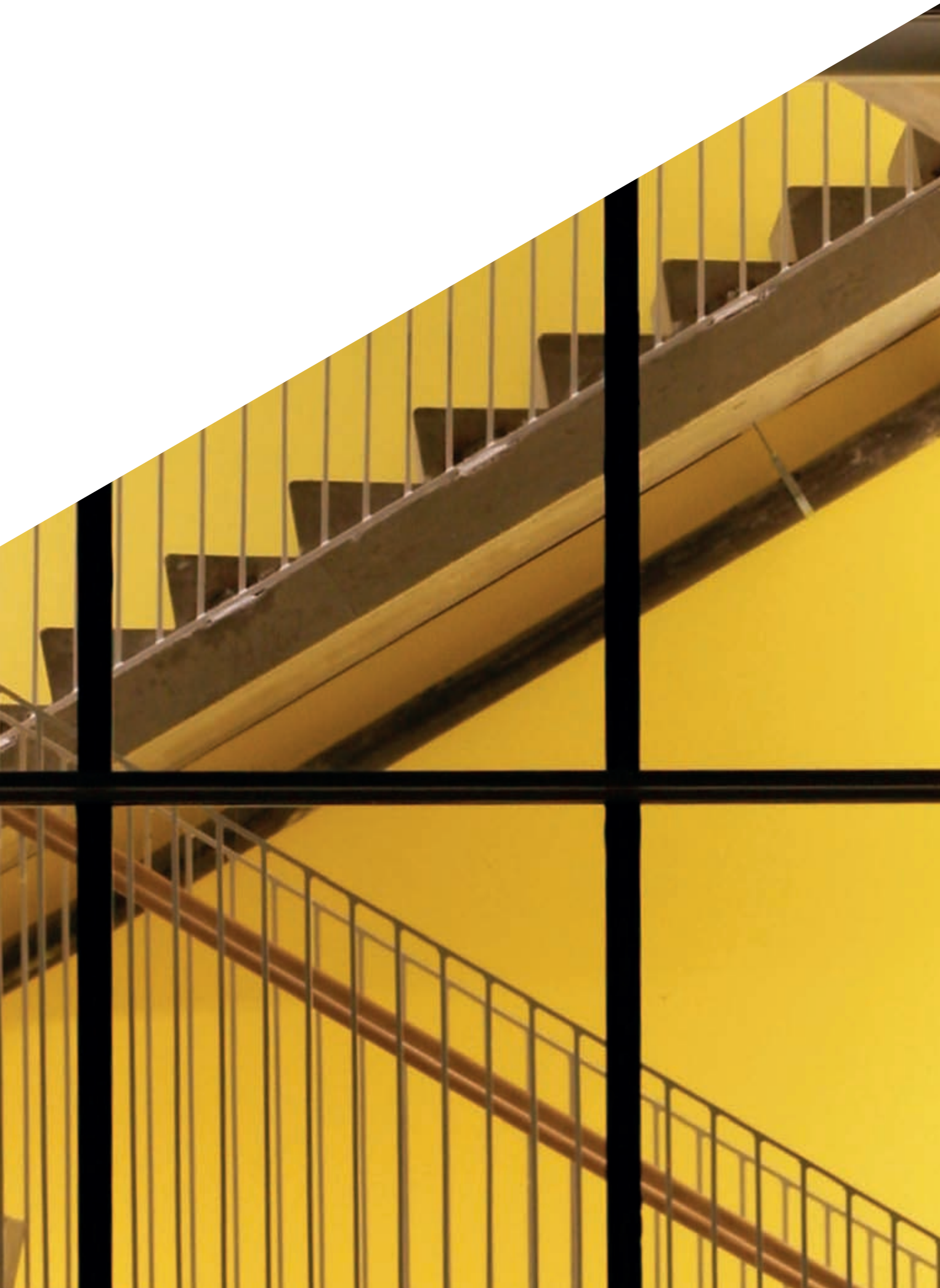
2011 Census		
	England and Wales households	Lewisham households
Unweighted base	23,366,044	116,091
Owned their homes outright	31%	15%**
Owned homes with mortgage	33%	28%**
Rented from a social landlord	28%	31%**
Rented from a private landlord	17%	24%**
Other	2%	2%

LRPS ³⁶		Table 3.3.11
	Unweighted base	Experienced a problem
Owned their homes outright	4,136	20%
Owned homes with mortgage	2,866	36%*
Rented from a social landlord	1,297	40%*
Other	603	31%

³⁵ LPRS, Table C4, p.127.

³⁶ LPRS, Table C2, p.123.





Appendix 1

Definitions

This section of the report details key definitions adopted in this report.

Legal and non-legal

A fundamental aspect of our research was measuring the extent to which “legal” problems arose at the MPs’ surgeries we observed. We adopted the following definitions:

- A “legal” problem is one for which there might be a legal remedy. We had no regard to the merits of the legal issue.
- A “non-legal” problem is one for which there is no legal remedy.

This definition is consistent with other reports which have been carried out in relation to access to justice.

Disability

We have adopted a definition of “disability” consistent with that in section 6 of the Equality Act 2010. The Act provides that a person has a disability if they have “a physical or mental impairment” and “the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [that person’s] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

Housing

- “Allocation” – commonly also known as rehousing. This is how a housing authority allocates, selects or nominates who should be given accommodation as secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by that authority. An example is how a housing authority structures its ‘Waiting List’ for accommodation.
- “Disrepair” – when some part of a tenant’s home is in need of repair and there may be a legal obligation on the landlord to make such repairs.
- “Homelessness” – if someone is homeless, at risk of homelessness (for instance they are due to be evicted from their property), or should be treated as if they are homeless.

Immigration and asylum

- “Asylum” – where a person is potentially legally regarded as a refugee, e.g. unable to return because of the fear of persecution.
- “Leave to remain” – relating to people who are applying for leave to remain in the UK.
- “No recourse to public funds” – if a person’s immigration status allows them to live in the UK, it may include a condition that they have no recourse to public funds. This means they will be unable to claim most benefits, tax credits or housing assistance that are paid by the state. While these claims may be associated with other problems, for example in relation to housing and housing benefit, they are classed as immigration issues for the purpose of this report.

Appendix 2

Sources

The following primary sources were used in the preparation of this report:

- 2011 Census data, accessible at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> (“2011 Census”)
- Annual Population Survey January 2017 to December 2017, accessible at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>
- Annual Summary of Earnings 2017, accessible at <https://beta.ons.gov.uk/datasets/ashe-table-8-earnings/editions>
- DWP Benefits Claimants - Working Age Group 2016, accessible at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

The following secondary sources were used in the preparation of this report:

- Ramona Frankly, Tracey Budd, Rose Verrill and Maria Willoughby, Findings from the Legal Problem and Resolution Survey 2014-15, accessible at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596490/legal-problem-resolution-survey-2014-to-2015-findings.pdf
- Pascoe Pleasance, Alexy Buck, Marisol Smith, Nigel Balmer and Ashish Patel, “Needs assessment and the Community Legal Service in England and Wales”, International Journal of the Legal Profession, Vol 11, No 3, November 2004
- Legal Services Research Centre, Summary Report on the LSC’s Small Area Models of Legal Need, December 2002, accessible at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20091016082215>
<http://www.lsrc.org.uk/publications/Small%20Area%20Models%20Report.pdf>



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