



13 October 2016

For Immediate Release

A record breaking year for the Bristol Legal Walk

Bristol Legal Walk raises over £11,200 for free local legal help

On Monday 26th September, just over 250 lawyers, advisors and other legal professionals joined forces for a sponsored walk across the wonderful sights of Bristol to raise over £11,200 to support free legal advice in Bristol and throughout the South West.

Under the banner 'Supporting access to justice in the South West' 51 teams of walkers from law firms, barristers' chambers as well as the voluntary and advice sector came together to raise funds for the South West Legal Support Trust (SWLST) and other local free legal advice charities. Walkers were joined by the Law Society of England and Wales's Vice President, Robert Bourns.

The 10km route meandered along the river and through the city's sights, giving many walkers the chance to see a new side of the city. The weather was fine and breezy; a perfect autumn evening to stride out and raise money for a vital cause.

South West Legal Support Trust
020 7092 3973 www.swlst.org.uk enquiries@swlst.org.uk

The South West Legal Support Trust is a company limited by guarantee and registered in England & Wales with Company No. 07539121 and is also a registered charity with Charity No. 1141830. The registered Office is care of Dutton Gregory, 48-50 Parkstone Road, Poole BH15 2PG.



Walkers taking part fundraised for the cause by seeking sponsorship. The event was also supported by sponsors; Irwin Mitchell and bSquared costs law, who provided water and snacks before the walkers set off. The SWLST sponsored the finishing line reception at Bordeaux Quay which was 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 sector and the vulnerable individuals who rely on such services.

The event is run by the South West Legal Support Trust (SWLST). Formed in 2010, SWLST raises and distributes funds to support the provision of free legal advice in Bristol and throughout the South West to those who otherwise would not be able to afford it. It is part of a network of Legal Support Trusts, working with the Access to Justice Foundation, which facilitate 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.

Bristol CAB is a local charity which provides a range of free legal advice and support in and around Bristol, helping some of the city's most vulnerable citizens who often seek out their services as a

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desperate last resort. In addition to using the Bristol Legal Walk to fundraise directly to support their work, Bristol also benefit from grant funding from the SWLST and with services as stretched and under resourced as they are in the advice sector, every little bit of funding really can have a huge impact.

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. Other organisations have ceased to provide services altogether.

More information about the SWLST and Bristol Legal Walk, including all the pictures from the event can be found on the SWLST website at <http://www.swlst.org.uk/bristol-legal-walk.html>.

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

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Notes

- The South West 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.

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- The Bristol 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.swlst.org.uk/bristol-legal-walk.html>
- For more information about the Access to Justice Foundation see its website at <http://www.atjf.org.uk/> or contact Laura Cassidy by email lauracassidy@atjf.org.uk or phone 020 7092 3973.
- For more information about the South West Legal Support Trust see its website at <http://www.swlst.org.uk> or contact the Trust by email enquiries@swlst.org.uk

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