

Summary of substantive policy discussions
at Liberty Council meeting
March 2008

Legal Aid

The meeting discussed the Government's proposed legal aid reforms. Comments focused on the Government's presentation of the reforms as being about money-saving and their emphasis on how much more the UK spends on legal aid than other countries.

The meeting discussed: the importance of legal aid in making rights effective and enforceable; the difficulties in engaging the wider public in campaigns about legal aid because people either think they will never need to rely on legal aid or have the unjustified image of "fat-cat legal aid lawyers"; the dangers that the proposals will lead to advice deserts, making it very difficult for some people or groups to obtain legal advice; the risk that the standards of legal advice will fall leading to more miscarriages of justice.