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Community-led solutions for a fairer society

# Public Legal Education Online: Fighting Discrimination in the Digital Age

Emily Lanham

[www.iars.org.uk](http://www.iars.org.uk)



## A brief background...

- Since 2000, legal services have been offered online: predominantly legal aid covered free face-to-face advice, or paid for legal services.
- 2001 Survey of Justiciable Problems: 4.1% civil justice problems were looked up online
- 2004 Civil and Social Justice Survey (CSJS): 10.4% problems
- 2006 CSJS: 14.1% problems
- 2007 CSJS: 15.6% problems
- 2008 CSJS: 17.7% problems
- Since 2010 and cuts to legal aid, an increased pressure has been put on the internet to provide a public legal education solution

# Who is it for?

Young people?

- Research suggests they are the least likely to access legal solutions online

Over 60s?

- Research suggests they are excluded from internet solutions, although increasingly technology reliant

Anyone in between?

- Research suggests that there are too many variables and exclusions to rules that it's hard to pin point who actually uses the internet for proactive PLE

# What are we looking up?

## The Legal Problem Resolution Survey

Who took part?

- 18+ adults
- No businesses
- No-one in prisons, care homes or outside household population

### **11 distinct problems:**

- Civil legal:
  - Purchasing goods and services
  - Neighbours and anti-social behaviour
  - Money problems
  - Personal debt
  - Accidents/negligence
  - Owning/buying residential property
- Administrative legal
  - Employment
  - State benefits
  - School education
- Family legal
  - Relationship breakdowns

## What does this look like in every day life?

### How do we think of these problems?

- 23% thought of their problems as a legal one from the outset
- 54% thought of it as “bad luck” or “part of life”
- Those who had neighbour issues, or anti-social behaviour were more likely to think of it as a criminal problem (23%)

### Discrimination

- 22% who experienced an administrative problem (employment, housing) felt they had suffered discrimination (age, race and disability the most)

### Solutions?

- Formal resolution process (17%)
- Legal or professional information (lawyers or CAB) (39%)
- Self-help (90%)
- Did not try to resolve (4%)

## Why we're bad at using the internet for solutions...

1. We're self taught – there's no rule book
2. We're impulsive and sporadic
3. Reduced vocabulary/impenetrable jargon?
4. Quick fix mentality
5. Reliance on search engines
6. Unwilling to invest
7. We're looking for an answer we want...

## How PLE could work better online

1. Reflect what people look for
2. Careful pathways
3. Mixed methodology
4. Personal experiences

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TO FORGE A SAFER, FAIRER AND  
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The IARS International Institute  
14 Dock Offices, Surrey Quays Road, Canada  
Water, SE16 2XU, UK  
T: +44(0)20 70644380  
M: +44(0) 7833224442  
E: [contact@iars.org.uk](mailto:contact@iars.org.uk)

**Thank you!**

