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Turn Back Jack!

As part of their continuing campaign against legal aid changes, Law Centres are holding open days across the country next Friday (13th July) to discuss with politicians and members of the public how the proposed reforms of legal aid will impact on local communities.

Law Centres mainly specialise in providing legal services in Housing, Immigration, Employment, Benefits and Public Law. There are 60 Law Centres located around the country and they all receive funding for cases from the Legal Services Commission, many also receive grants from local authorities and others. The Government is planning to introduce a system of fixed fees in October and competitive tendering for legal services over the next two years. LCF believes that the fixed fee system will mean a reduction in the time they can spend on cases and that competitive tendering for such services will not work.

Law Centres including North Kensington, Southwark, Greenwich, Bury and Warrington, have invited members of the public as well as MPs and local councillors to their open days. For example Liberal Democrat MP Sarah Teather is visiting Brent Law Centre which is also holding a street protest against the legal aid changes. A number of Labour MPs will be visiting their local Law Centres for example Kelvin Hopkins will be attending Luton Law Centres open day.

“The public must be told what these changes will mean. Everyone should be equal before the law, but without legal advice and representation they are not. We are calling on Jack Straw, the new Secretary of State for Justice, to think again before implementing these reforms as we believe they will deny justice to those who need it most,” says LCF Chair John Fitzpatrick.

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