

# Barking and Dagenham Community Legal Advice Centre Needs Analysis

## 1 Introduction

The aim of a Community Legal Advice Centre is to ensure that clients are able to get help with their civil legal problems from one easily accessible source. Pivotal to the success of the concept is the intention to design the Centre's services around people's needs.

Quantifying the advice needs of local residents is a complex and difficult task given the breadth and depth of legal issues encountered by people and the often intertwined nature of legal problems. Added to this, different sections of the population experience different types of problems and respond to them in different ways.

This paper pulls together information from a variety of sources in order to build up a picture of the advice priorities for the residents of Barking and Dagenham. It utilises national statistical datasets, for example, from the 2001 Census, the Annual Population Survey 2006, Greater London Authority October 2007, Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Estimate 2006 amongst others. Relevant local information has been included where available.

### **BACKGROUND**

The concept of Community Legal Advice Centres and Networks was set out in the Legal Services Commission's strategy for the Community Legal Service, 'Making Legal Rights a Reality' (March 2006). The strategy advocates a new approach to the way civil legal advice services are funded, purchased and delivered. It sets out a vision for a civil legal aid system which is more focused on people in greatest need; more coordinated and cost-effective; and more able to tackle the causes of legal problems.

### **Legal Services Commission priorities**

The LSC's core objective in promoting the availability of legal advice services through the CLS, and in the LSC directly funding such help, is to protect and promote people's rights. Guided by the Lord Chancellor's Direction under section 6(1) of the Access to Justice Act 1999, the LSC's priorities are as follows:

- Those threatened with loss of liberty;
- Vulnerable children (particularly special Children Act proceedings);
- Parents whose children are the subject of care proceedings;
- Those threatened with domestic violence;
- Those suffering from maladministration or challengeable lack of service by public authorities; and
- Those who are socially excluded (e.g. the homeless or refugees) and who need both protection of the law and positive help to move forward.

The LSC's vision for the delivery of face-to-face advice in social welfare law, through Community Legal Advice Services, acknowledges the following as the core areas of law for the commissioning of services:

- Community care;
- Debt;
- Employment;
- Housing; and
- Welfare benefits.

The LSC's priorities also demonstrate the need to offer family services.

## **London Borough of Barking and Dagenham priorities**

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is committed to the establishment of Integrated advice services and this will be delivered in part by the Community Legal Advice Centre.

### 1. The Issue of Social Justice

*Legal Services Research Centre* studies highlight the early solving of civil legal problems can reduce demand on other public services. It identified a relationship between legal problems and deprivation and the valuable role of advice and legal services in the fight against social exclusion. The study found that people vulnerable to social exclusion are the most likely to experience clusters of civil justice problems, principally:

- People with long-term health problems or disabilities
- Lone parents
- Those living in rented or high density housing
- The unemployed and those on very low incomes
- People aged between 25 and 44.

Further the Charity, '*Revolving Doors*' has calculated there are tens of thousands of people in the UK facing multiple and complex issues that require specialised interventions and support. Though a minority of the population, they often lead chaotic lives damaging to themselves and in some cases to those around them. Sadly costing many thousands of pounds in service provision as they bounce from service to service, often not receiving the tailored help they need.

### 2. To Address the Borough's Position in the Index of Multiple Deprivations

The Index is based on the idea of distinct clusters of deprivation which can be recognised and measured namely:

- Income; Employment;
- Health, deprivation and disability;
- Education, skills and training;
- Barriers to housing and services;
- Crime; and Living environment.

LBBB is ranked 22nd most deprived of the 354 local authorities. (IMD 2007)

### 3. Because of the need to prioritise Social Cohesion

The Council believes that quality social welfare law advice can create and maintain community cohesion.

It will provide positive help and guidance to the community and counter mischievous and malevolent forces that seek to undermine our cohesion by preying on those vulnerable to social exclusion by whipping up fear and prejudice.

### 4. Because of the Need to tackle Ill-health

- Some 7.0% of people aged 16-74 in LBBB are permanently sick/disabled compared to 5.5% for England & Wales.
- This is the 2nd highest in the region.
- There is a clear connection between ill-health and need for advice services

### 5. Because of Low Income

- The Income Support Claimant Rate in LBBB is 33% compared to the average for the region at 28%.  
Source: Barking and Dagenham Primary Care Trust.

### 6. Because of Unmet need and Joined-Up Advice

- The Council believes that the need for joined-up advice services on Social Welfare Law has never been greater
- We see the benefits in greater integration of advice
- The Legal Services Commission's expertise make it an excellent partner Many people have a bundle of issues that need assistance for example loss of a job can lead to employment, housing and debt problems
- The establishment of an integrated service will prevent people falling between the "referral gap"

## 2 Statistical Indicators

The following provides a digest of information highlighting some of the key features of Barking and Dagenham that have a bearing on the need for advice services. Alongside each key statistic is a narrative highlighting some of the main implications for advice delivery arising from the indicator. The list is not exhaustive but serves to highlight the key challenges for advice providers in the district.

### 2.1 People, Places and Families

<b>Ethnicity, religion and migration</b>	<b>Implications for legal advice services</b>
<p>Historically, there has been a stable white, working-class population in many parts of the borough but in recent years there has been a rapid rise in the proportion of black and minority ethnic residents. The Black &amp; Minority Ethnic communities represent 21.8% of Barking and Dagenham's total population compared to 9% nationally.</p> <p>Abbey ward is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the borough with the highest number of Asian ethnic group than any other ward. Gascoigne has a similar profile and contains the highest number of Black ethnic group.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Ethnicity mid 2005 ONS Experimental Ethnic Estimates: Released Oct 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community access issues</i></li> <li>• <i>Communication barriers</i></li> <li>• <i>Dispersed settlement patterns</i></li> <li>• <i>General social welfare law issues</i></li> <li>• <i>Linkages to local immigration advice provision</i></li> </ul>
<p>The number of people stating their religion as Muslim is 4.4% of the population, compared to 2.9% nationally. The Hindu religion counts for 1.1% of Barking and Dagenham's population compared to 1% nationally and the Sikh religion is held by 1.1% of Barking and Dagenham residents compared to 0.63% nationally.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Census 2001</p>	
<p>According to the study "Estimating London's new migrant population" there are 5188 new migrants residing in the borough. Nevertheless it is estimated that these figures are far below the actual proportion of new migrants in the borough. Furthermore these figures are from 2005 and due to the rapid increase in migration to the borough currently it is anticipated that the actual figure is much higher.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence suggests a high demand for immigration and nationality advice within Barking and Dagenham. Advice providers within the borough have also indicated that demand far exceeds current supply.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Estimating London's new migrant population Stage I - methodology (<a href="http://www.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/refugees.jsp">http://www.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/refugees.jsp</a>)</p>	
<p><b>Transport</b></p> <p>Some 37.9% of households do not own a car/van. This compares to the national average of 26%.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Census 2001</p> <p>Although Barking and Dagenham is a relatively small borough, there are several areas of isolation and inaccessibility. The large council housing estate of Marks Gate is located in the northern most ward of the borough and can be seen as isolated from the rest of the borough due to the physical barrier of the A12 running directly below it. Significantly this area can be seen as one where a high proportion of residents are likely to have a justiciable problem (see map in section 4).</p> <p>Similarly in the Thames ward, the vast majority of the area is cut off from the rest of the borough by the A13 running across the north of the ward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Accessibility of services for those limited to public transport</i></li> <li>• <i>Access implications arising from geographic nature of Thames and Marks Gate Communities</i></li> </ul>

<p>The IMD index shows that 3 of the wards 6 lower super output areas fall within the top 10% most deprived in the country. This is also an area where a high proportion of residents are likely to have a justiciable problem (see map: Section 4).</p>	
<p><b>Population Projections</b></p>	
<p>Barking and Dagenham is one of the fastest growing boroughs in the country. The current population stands at 165 700 residents. It is estimated that the population of Barking and Dagenham will grow by approximately 100 000 people over the next 20 years. This will particularly affect areas such as Thames, which is predicted to grow by approximately 15000 people by 2028 due to Barking Reach, one of the largest redevelopment areas in England. The neighbouring ward of Gascoigne is also predicted to double in population over the next 20 years. There is also a predicted growth of 65% in Abbey ward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>General social welfare law issues</i></li> <li>• <i>Accessibility of services for younger people</i></li> <li>• <i>Accessibility of services for older people</i></li> <li>• <i>Issues of community care</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Source:</b> GLA Round 2006 Population Projections</p>	
<p>With an average age of 36 years, compared to the national average of 38.6, Barking and Dagenham has a relatively young population.</p>	
<p>At 10.9%, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest percentage of persons aged 18 years and under in the region. The borough also has a high percentage of residents under the age of 16. The figure for 2002 was 22%, which compares to 18% across London.</p>	
<p><b>Source:</b> Census 2001 and Department of Health 2002</p>	
<p>The borough has a higher proportion of older people than the London average, 19% are over the age of 60.</p>	
<p>Source: Community Cohesion Strategy</p>	
<p><b>Lone Parents</b></p>	
<p>The number of lone parent households in Barking and Dagenham is 15.6%, of which 10.4% have dependent children. This figure is comparatively high compared with the number of lone parent households with dependent children being 6.5% for England &amp; Wales as a whole.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Family law issues</i></li> <li>• <i>Family mediation issues</i></li> <li>• <i>General social welfare law issues</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Source:</b> Census 2001</p>	

<b>Teenage Conception</b>																	
<p>The teenage conception rate for Barking and Dagenham (per 1000 population) in 2006 is 59.6 compared to 45.4 for the region and 40.7 for England &amp; Wales</p> <p><b>Source:</b> DfES Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2006  <a href="http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/7B7AFCA99ED76A4CAD119216A80C98AF.xls">http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/7B7AFCA99ED76A4CAD119216A80C98AF.xls</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family law issues</li> <li>• Family mediation issues</li> <li>• General social welfare law issues</li> </ul>																
<b>Family Breakdown</b>																	
<p>As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 there were 340 children in care in Barking and Dagenham. For the period between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 174 children entered care and 185 children left care.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> LBBD Policy and management services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family law issues</li> </ul>																
<p>Domestic violence incidents reported to Barking and Dagenham Police have risen by 76% since 2001. In 2004/05 Barking and Dagenham received 3414 reported incidents of domestic violence, which is a 4% increase from 2002/03.</p> <p>In 2004 – 2005 domestic violence incidents counted for 32% of all violence against the person (VAP) offences in Barking and Dagenham, this is double (16%) the England and Wales total in the same year</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ethnicity</th> <th>Victims</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White European</td> <td>74%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dark European</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>African / Caribbean</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>India / Pakistani</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chinese / Japanese</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Arabic / Egyptian</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Source:</b> Local Domestic Violence Forum and Crime in England and Wales 2004/2005 report</p>	Ethnicity	Victims	White European	74%	Dark European	3%	African / Caribbean	16%	India / Pakistani	6%	Chinese / Japanese	0%	Arabic / Egyptian	0%	Unknown	1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family law issues</li> <li>• Possible general social welfare law issues</li> </ul>
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## 2.2 Health Inequalities

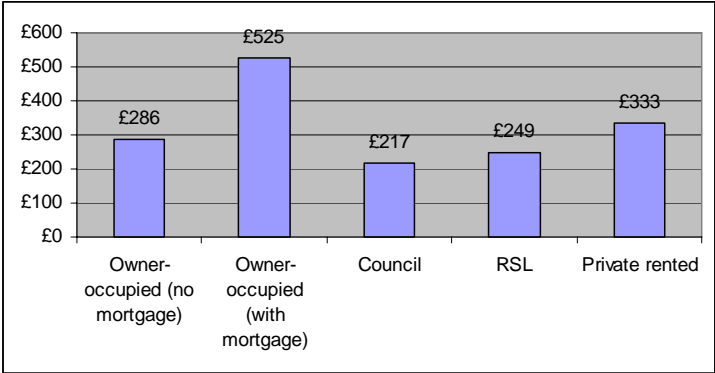
<b>Mortality</b>	<b>Implications for legal advice services</b>
<p>Health and social care is a major issue in the borough. Life expectancy is significantly below the national and London average for both men and women.</p> <p>Men living in Barking and Dagenham can expect to live to 75.3 years, around 2 years less than the London average. Women living in Barking and Dagenham have a life expectancy of 79.4 years (2003-2005), which is 2 years less than the London average.</p> <p>Health statistics show that Village residents have one of the lowest life expectancies in the borough at 75.8 years old.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> ONS 2003/2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General social welfare law issues</li> <li>• Issues of community care</li> </ul>
<p>Particular health problems in the borough relate to cancer and coronary heart disease. The Compendium of Clinical and Health Indicators states that per 100 000 deaths in Barking and Dagenham 138.80 died from cancer compared to the London average of 116.93. With regard to Coronary Heart Disease; 73.92 died compared with 53.1 in London.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Compendium of Clinical and Health Indicators July 2007</p>	
<b>Health</b>	

<p>Some 10.71% of people describe their health as 'Not good'. This is the second highest borough in London while the average for England and Wales is 9.03%.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Census 2001</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>General social welfare law issues</i></li> <li>• <i>Issues of community care</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability and Limiting Illness</b></p>	
<p>In Barking and Dagenham there are 25 988 households; equivalent to 38.6% of total households with one or more persons suffering a limiting long term illness compared with the London average of 29.65%.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Census 2001</p> <p>The 2005 Housing Needs Analysis shows 68,710 households in Barking and Dagenham contain someone with a disability, representing 17.2% of households.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Barking and Dagenham Housing Needs Analysis 2005</p> <p>6.98% of people aged 16-74 are permanently sick/disabled compared to 5.3% for England &amp; Wales</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Census 2001</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ensuring services are accessible to people with disabilities</i></li> <li>• <i>General social welfare law issues including community care</i></li> </ul>

## 2.3 Housing/Accommodation

<p><b>Overcrowding</b></p> <p>7% of households in Barking and Dagenham have a space deficit of one or more rooms. This is the same figure for England &amp; Wales. 21% of households in Barking and Dagenham are under occupied.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Barking and Dagenham Housing Needs Analysis 2005</p>	<p><b>Implications for legal advice services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Housing advice needs</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Tenure</b></p>	
<p>The proportion of households accommodated in Council housing is 34.4% compared to 13.2% for England &amp; Wales. Housing Associations accommodate 2.65% compared to a national average of 5.95% and 5.19% of households rent privately compared to 8.8% nationally.</p> <p>The borough also has a high proportion of its residents living in medical and care establishments; 22.4% compared to 14.6% for England and Wales.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Census 2001</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Housing advice needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Possibly community care issues</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing Needs</b></p>	
<p>It is estimated that a total of 11,571 households are living in unsuitable housing in Barking and Dagenham. This represents 16.8% of all households in the Borough. The main reasons for this are due to overcrowding and mobility/health problems.</p> <p>Further analysis shows some 29.0% of households in RSL accommodation and 30.0% of households in private rented accommodation are in unsuitable housing.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Barking and Dagenham Housing Needs Analysis 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Housing advice need</i></li> <li>• <i>Possible community care issues</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Homelessness</b></p>	
<p>According to the Barking and Dagenham Housing Needs Analysis 2005 the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in Barking and Dagenham is 801. This shows a marked increase compared with the 2001 Census figure of 234.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Barking and Dagenham Housing Needs Analysis 2005 Census 2001</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Housing and homelessness advice needs</i></li> </ul>

## 2.4 Work & Economic Activity

<b>Income</b>	<b>Implications for legal advice services</b>
<p>At £478.30 per week, residents in Barking and Dagenham have the lowest average income level in the capital, the London average being £540.80.</p> <p>There is significant variation in the average levels of household incomes depending on the types of housing tenure held, as demonstrated below:</p>  <p>As 34.4% of all households in the borough live in Council housing, it is clear that there are significant problems related to low income and low wages and that these are concentrated in those areas of the borough with high levels of Council housing stock.</p> <p>According to the 2001 Census, 49% of households in Thames ward were 'rented from the Local Authority'. In Gascoigne ward this figure reaches 60%.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Barking and Dagenham Housing Needs Analysis 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Employment rights and conditions</i></li> <li>• <i>General social welfare law issues</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Welfare Benefits</b></p> <p>The Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Rate in Barking and Dagenham is 3.3%: this is significantly above the average for Great Britain of 2.1%</p> <p>The male claimant rate is higher at 4.6%, compared to 3.0% nationally.</p> <p>In some areas of the borough the Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Rate is almost twice as high as the national average. For example in Gascoigne ward, the unemployment claimant rate reaches 5.8%. Heath ward has the second highest number of benefit claimants in the borough.</p> <p>18-24 year olds make up nearly a third of benefit claimants within Barking and Dagenham (30.4). The London average is slightly lower at 25.4%.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> DWP, May 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Welfare Benefits advice need</i></li> <li>• <i>Back-to-work welfare benefits and 'better-off' calculations</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensuring services are accessible to people with disabilities</i></li> <li>• <i>Older persons' welfare benefits</i></li> </ul>

<p>At a national level the claimant rate for Incapacity Benefit stands at 7.2%. In London the figure stands at 6.1% Barking and Dagenham has a considerably higher rate than this with an average claimant rate for of 8.1% (8265 claimants).</p> <p>In certain wards the figure is even higher. For example the incapacity claimant rate in Gascoigne stands at 11.4% and in Heath ward 10.2% of the local population claim Incapacity benefit. Thames and Village ward also have higher rates at 9.7 and 8.6% respectively.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> DWP Benefits Claimants – May 2007, NOMIS Jan 2008</p>	
<p>Some 34.4% of LBBD pensioners made Pension Credit Claims in 2005</p> <p>Source: LBBD</p>	
<p><b>Economic Activity &amp; Unemployment</b></p>	
<p>Barking and Dagenham’s unemployment rate is 9.4% for the borough as a whole compared to 7.6% for the whole of London.</p> <p>Economic activity figures show that 30.1% of the borough’s working age population is inactive; compared to London at 25.2% and Great Britain at 21.4%</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Annual Population Survey 2006 and Greater London Authority Oct 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Back-to-work welfare benefits and ‘better-off’ calculations</i></li> </ul>
<p>Almost one quarter of the working age population of Barking and Dagenham (24.6%) have no qualifications. This is the highest in London and significantly greater than the London average of 13.9%. Levels of adult basic skills are also very low.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> NOMIS 2005</p>	
<p><b>Summary</b></p>	
<p>To summarise, the above indicators clearly identify a number of key trends and priorities for Barking and Dagenham. It identifies some key geographical areas that should be targeted to reach priority clients – for example, Gascoigne and Heath for unemployment and welfare benefits and Village for health inequalities. Thames and Gascoigne are areas of particular focus with regard to housing issues, Marks gate (Chadwell Heath) and Thames for isolation and Gascoigne and Abbey wards should be focused on for issues relating to immigration.</p> <p>The analysis has also identified specific trends in terms of client groups, for example, the high levels of unemployed residents and people on low incomes. The striking health inequalities the high levels of mortality and those with a disability or a limiting long term illness. The borough also has high numbers of both the younger and older population and a rapidly increasing BME community.</p>	

### 3 Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007

#### 3.1 Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (IMD 2007)

The IMD 2007 is a measure of multiple deprivation at the small area level. The IMD 2007 is based on the idea of distinct dimensions of deprivation that can be recognised and measured separately. These are then combined into a single overall measure. The Index is made up of seven of these dimensions called ‘Domain Indices’. These relate to:

- Income;
- Employment;
- Health, deprivation and disability;
- Education, skills and training;
- Barriers to housing and services;
- Crime; and
- Living environment.

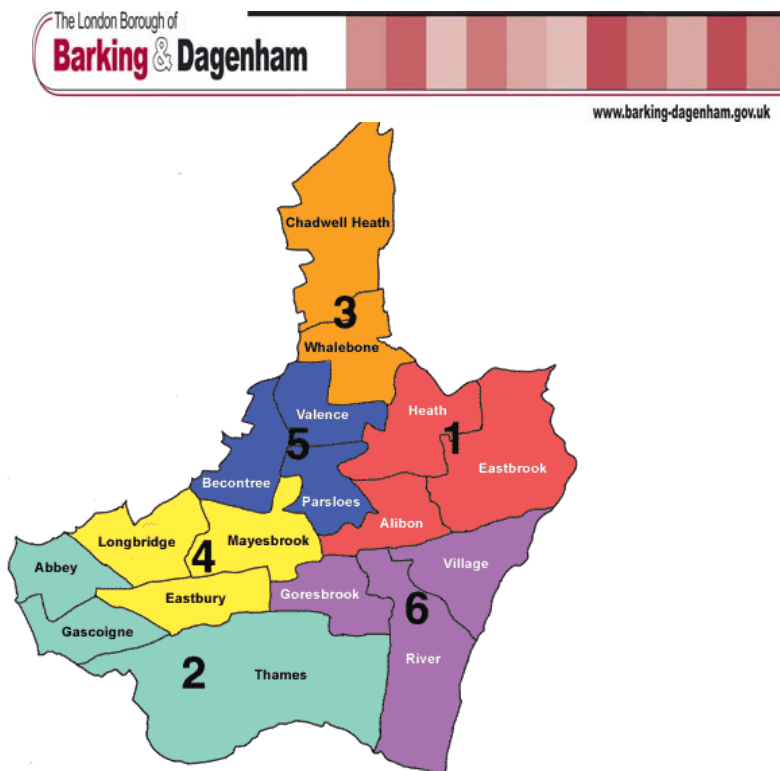
Based on IMD2007 average deprivation scores, Barking and Dagenham is ranked 22 out of the 354 local authorities in England & Wales thus falling within the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of deprived authorities. The borough is 7<sup>th</sup> most deprived in London out of 33 boroughs.

The remainder of this section provides further information on the geographic distribution of deprivation in the borough.

### 3.2 Ward and Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) Information

The map below provides details of the electoral wards in Barking and Dagenham. Individual ward profiles are available from the council's website at [http://arcims/website/Ward\\_Profiles/Ward\\_Profiles.html](http://arcims/website/Ward_Profiles/Ward_Profiles.html) and prospective applicants for the Community Legal Advice Centre contract are advised to view the general ward information that is available prior to making an application.

Figure 1: Electoral Wards in Barking and Dagenham



Source: Barking and Dagenham Council

The following map provides the overall deprivation scores (IMD 2007) for Barking and Dagenham:

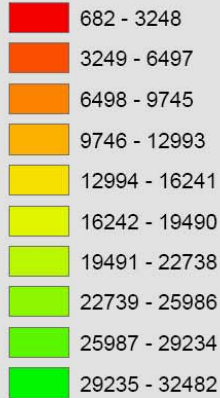
# Indices of Deprivation 2007 Lower Super Output Area Rankings

## Lower Super Output Areas

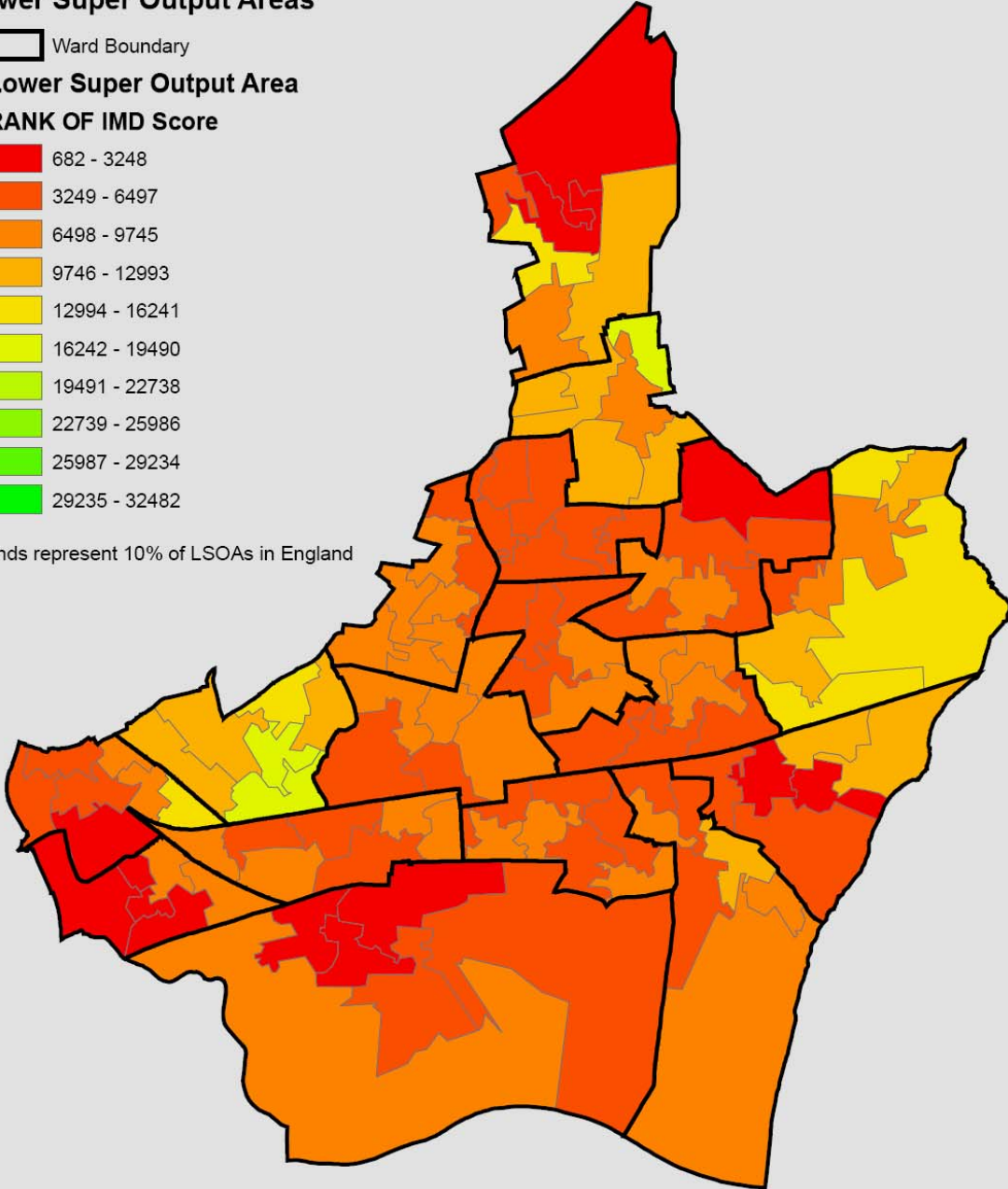
Ward Boundary

### Lower Super Output Area

#### RANK OF IMD Score



Bands represent 10% of LSOAs in England



Ward and Lower Super Output Area data are produced from Ordnance Survey Material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (c) Crown Copyright. London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Licence No. 1000192800-2007

## 4 'Causes of Action: Civil Law and Social Justice'

### Background

Developed by the Legal Services Research Centre (LSRC), The English and Welsh Civil and Social Justice Survey is a large scale, representative household survey of peoples' experience of civil justice problems, the strategies adopted to deal with them, barriers to advice and representation, the impact of problems and the impact of advice. Comprehensive details of the survey are set out in the LSRC's publication 'Causes of Action'<sup>1</sup>

The publication presents a unique insight into the relationship between justiciable problems and deprivation and demonstrates the important role of advice and legal services in the fight against social exclusion. The study found that people who are vulnerable to social exclusion are the most likely to experience civil justice problems, principally:

- People with long-term health problems or disabilities
- Lone parents
- Those living in rented or high density accommodation
- The unemployed and those on very low incomes
- People aged between 25 and 44.

The analysis also revealed connections between problem types. Termed problem "clusters", these connections can arise from a legal problem causing another or following on from another. Connections can also stem from coinciding characteristics of vulnerability to problem types, or coinciding defining circumstances of problem types. The analysis found the following three main problem clusters.

Problem clusters:	Covering
Family problem	divorce, ancillary to relationship breakdown, domestic violence, children
Welfare problems	welfare benefits, rented housing, homelessness, discrimination or employment problems.
Money problems	consumer, money/debt, employment or neighbours problems.

Data from the second survey has been used to develop small area models that predict the incidence of civil and social justice problems. The models provide estimates of problem incidence (any problem type and problems within various categories) for every lower super output area (LSOA) in England and Wales.

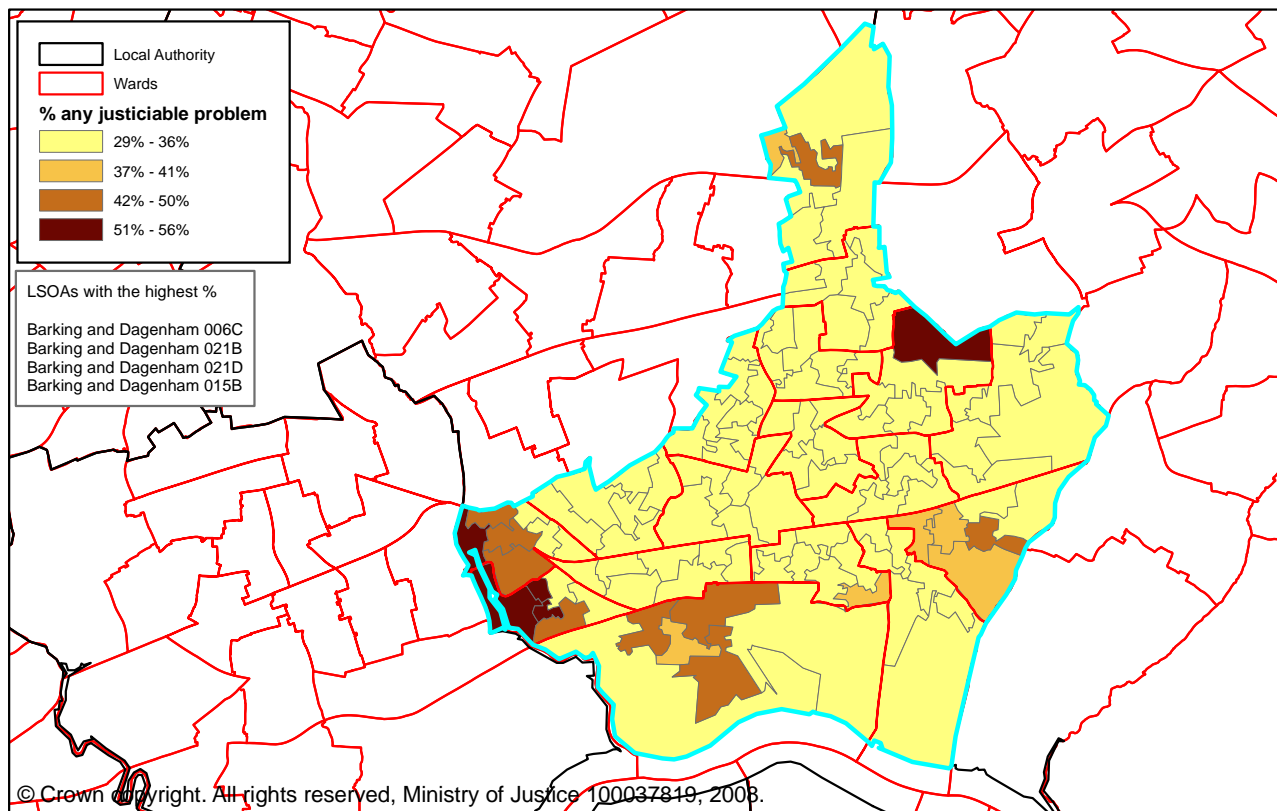
It should be noted that:

- The models provide estimates of problems incidence over a three and a half year period
- The models main use is to compare incidence in areas. They are not well suited to establishing absolute numbers of problems.

<sup>1</sup> Pleasence, P. (2006). Cause of Action: Civil Law and Social Justice (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Norwich: TSO.

## Likely problem incidence in Barking and Dagenham

The map below shows the overall proportion of people likely to have any justiciable problem in Barking and Dagenham:



This suggests that there is a relatively high need for legal advice across the whole of the borough; however the wards of Abbey, Gascoigne, Thames, Village, Heath and Chadwell Heath are the locations where the need for advice is likely to be highest.

## 5 Current demand for Legal Advice Services

### 5.1 Legal Aid provision and usage

At present the Legal Services Commission funds the following social welfare law contracts in Barking and Dagenham: 2 contracts for Debt and 1 contract for Housing. There is currently no Welfare Benefits, Community Care or Employment LSC funded contracts in the Borough. There are also 4 family contracts in Barking and Dagenham.

An initial analysis of the way in which clients access these services shows the following trends:

- All clients from Barking and Dagenham with problems in Welfare Benefits, Community Care and Employment have to travel outside of the borough for advice. Clients largely access services in the neighbouring boroughs of Newham, Redbridge and Havering; however clients with advice needs in Community Care are also travelling to Hackney and Lambeth.
- Main most clients with a Debt problem are accessing services within the Borough.
- Only half of clients from Barking and Dagenham with a Housing problem are accessing services within the Borough, the other half are travelling to services in other London Boroughs, largely the neighbouring boroughs of Newham, Redbridge and Havering.
- Of the 1162 family clients seen by firms in Barking and Dagenham in 2006/2007, 72.9% (847) were borough residents.

## 5.2 Other legal provision and usage

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham currently funds 19 organisations that provide advice either as a primary service or as part of their overall service. However, there are many more organisations providing advice to the residents of Barking and Dagenham. It is estimated that these organisations currently provide advice services to approximately 60 000 people per year. A further 10 500 people are assisted via telephone advice. These services cover everything from signposting and general advice through to representation at tribunal.

## 6 Conclusions

### 6.1 Areas of Law

Given the foregoing analysis, the areas of law that will form priorities for the development of the Centre are as follows:

- Welfare benefits
- Debt
- Housing
- Community care
- Employment
- Family
- Immigration (at general help level)

### 6.2 Client Groups

The Centre will aim to serve all residents of the local population but particularly those who are socially excluded and who need both protection of the law and help to move forward. The foregoing analysis means that the following client groups will represent particular priorities for the delivery of services:

- The workless and people on low incomes;
- People with long-term illness or disability;
- Young people (including those leaving care);
- Older people;
- Asylum seekers, refugees and new arrivals to the borough
- Black and Minority Ethnic communities;
- People with problems relating to accommodation (including those in temporary accommodation);
- Victims of violence, including domestic violence;
- Parents whose children are the subject of care proceedings
- Carers

### 6.3 Geographical Priorities

The Centre will aim to help all residents of Barking and Dagenham. Given the foregoing analysis, however, it is clear that some geographic areas within the borough are likely to have particularly elevated needs for advice services or particular difficulties in accessing services and it will be a priority to ensure that advice reaches these communities. The priority wards are:

- Gascoigne
- Abbey
- Thames (Thames view estate)
- Chadwell Heath (Marks gate area)
- Village
- Heath