London Cultural and Advice Centre
Sample Referrals Policy

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1. Introduction and Definitions
London Cultural and Advice Centre (LCAC) aims to provide the best quality service for all our clients. However, where clients require advice in a category of law that we do not cover or where another agency is able to provide a service more appropriate to the needs of a client we shall either signpost or refer the client to another agency.

The Co-ordinator shall ensure that our advisers work within their competence levels through the supervision procedures. Advisers must equally inform the Co-ordinator if they feel that a case is beyond their own level of competence.

Signposting
This is the term used when an adviser interviews a client, identifies what the query is about and decides with the client what alternative sources of help are the most appropriate.

The adviser may or may not make arrangements for an appointment there, depending on the situation (e.g. language, urgency).

Referral
This term is used when some work has been done on a particular case and the adviser identifies the need to hand over an aspect of it or the whole case to another advice centre. The adviser makes arrangements with the alternative agency for an appointment.

2. Services Offered
London Cultural and Advice Centre (LCAC) provides advice on immigration issues to people living or working in the London boroughs.

- We can assist in completing and submitting applications for, or for the variation of, entry clearance or leave to enter or remain in the UK.
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- We offer assistance in completing and submitting basic applications for registration as a British Citizen.
- We can help with applications for a European Union residence permit for clients resident in the UK and their spouse.
- We can also offer help with travel documents and translations; we will make basic phone calls to clarify a situation and can write covering letters on a client’s behalf.

LCAC is exempt under the Regulation of Immigration Advisers Code of Standards at level 1.

3. When to Signpost or Refer

LCAC will signpost clients to another provider in the following situations:

- The client does not live or work in London boroughs,
- Requires advice on areas of law other than immigration such as welfare benefits or housing
- Requires advice on asylum issues or
- Requires help that will involve on-going advice or casework
- Where there is a conflict of interest

LCAC will make a referral to another centre when an adviser identifies that any further work with a client will be beyond their competency or above the level of advice that LCAC is entitled to give. For example a client requires further advice because:

- An application for British citizenship has been refused
- An application for entry clearance or leave to remain has been refused
- There is a strong likelihood of ongoing casework or an appeal

LCAC will also make a referral where a client has special needs such as a disability or language requirements that would make it difficult for them to contact the next organisation.

4. What to Discuss with the Client

Advisers shall inform the client of the need to either make a referral or to be signposted to another organisation. Advisers shall give the client

- The reasons why it is necessary to signpost or refer
- A choice of agency (where available)
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- The contact name, address and telephone number (signposting)
- The date, time and venue for an appointment (referral)

Clients shall be

- Told what to do if there are any problems
- Reminded about any time limits
- Informed of any cost implications associated with the referral. If there is a potential for costs this shall be put in writing

5. Procedures for Signposting

Advisers shall

- Consider the needs of the client and the level of help required
- Discuss the need for signposting and which agency to direct him or her to (see selection criteria below)
- Ensure any cost implications are discussed
- Ensure the client has the name, address and telephone number of the organisation he or she is being signposted to, preferably along with details of opening times etc.

6. Procedures for Referrals

Advisers shall

- Consider the needs of the client and the level of help required
- Discuss the need for the referral with the client and which organisation is best suited to their needs
- Obtain the client’s consent on the referral form so that details of the client’s case can be transferred
- Telephone the new agency and make an appointment for the client – advisers must ensure any cost implications/access issues are discussed and clarified with the organisation if necessary.
- Inform the client of the appointment details, the name of the adviser he or she will be seeing and directions to the new agency.
- Ensure the client knows exactly what help the new agency will provide
- Inform and discuss with the client any cost implications – note this on the file and ensure the client has details of any cost implications in writing
- Complete the referral form and make 2 copies.
  - Give one to the client;
  - Place one in the central file marked ‘Referrals’
- Copy all relevant file notes/documents and sent to the new agency along with the fourth copy of the referral form
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- Ensure the client is informed that should he or she not receive the service expected from the new agency he or she should return to LCAC

7. **Selecting an Agency to Refer/ Signpost to**
   Agencies should hold an appropriate quality standard and/or be chosen from the CLS Directory

When selecting an agency for a referral (or signposting) the following should be taken into consideration in conjunction with any preferences the client may have:

- Geographical location of the client and the new agency
- The category of law and the level of advice required
- Cost implications
- Accessibility to public transport
- Disabled access
- Language or cultural considerations

LCAC uses its own referral list of previously used and approved advice centres and solicitors who are known to LCAC through experience to provide a quality service. Where no suitable agency is found, the CLS Directory should be used. If an organisation which does not have the Quality Mark is used, the reason for this should be recorded on the client’s case records.

8. **Recording the Referral**

All referrals must be recorded on the LCAC referrals form (see sample attached). The forms are distributed and form part of the central record as detailed in Section 6 'Procedure for Referrals’.

**No Suitable Provider Found**
Where no suitable advice agency can be found the ‘LCAC No Suitable Provider Found’ form should be completed. A note should be placed on the client’s file and an entry made in the central record marked ‘Referrals – No Suitable Provider Found’.

**Central Records**
The central records of referrals are kept in the front of the top (lockable) drawer of the filing cabinet where client case files are stored.
**Signposting Records**

Where the adviser feels it is necessary to make arrangements for an appointment when signposting a client, the referral form should also be used in the same way as for a full referral.

**9. Client Feedback**

Advisers should inform clients that should the agency they are referred or signposted to do not offer the service described or if there are any other problems with the referral they should return to LCAC.

- If LCAC have signposted or referred inappropriately because of incorrect information in the CLS Directory the CLS Complaints Form should be completed. The client should be re-signposted or re-referred.
- If the client is simply unhappy with the service provided they should be advised to use the receiving agency’s complaints procedure and should be re-referred or re-signposted.

**10. Monitoring and Review**

The Management Committee shall review the central records for signposting and referrals on an annual basis. The MC shall look for trends in the types of cases referred/signposted and the number of times where no suitable provider could be found. This information shall be fed into the annual review of the business plan.

The Co-ordinator shall review the central records of signposting/referrals to ensure that advisers are adopting a consistent approach within the procedure. The results of this review shall be fed back to advisers as part of supervision or appraisal.