Legal Needs Planning Guide

A data-informed approach for the community legal sector

Community Legal Centres Australia

Background

This Guide is based on material originally developed by Judith Stubbs and Associates (2010) for the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC), which since August 2019 operates under the name Community Legal Centres Australia (CLCs Australia). The original was extensively re-worked into a Toolkit of data extraction and analysis tools in 2012 by Justin Finighan, Finrea Pty Limited and Catherine Hastings, NACLC. Full day, face-to-face training was given to the 32 Centres responding to the invitation for training. The toolkit was updated in 2015 to incorporate updated Centrelink and 2011 Census In 2019, CLCs Australia released an adaptation of the Toolkit to account for the Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS) replacing the previous case management and funder reporting database used by community legal centres (CLCs) and family violence prevention and legal services (FVPLS) in Australia.

This version of the Guide was updated in 2021, in recognition that technology in the sector has changed since the original toolkit, including the move to CLASS.

Contents

Introduction

Increasingly governments and other funders are asking service providers to justify specific programs or activities and to use data or evidence to argue the need for their service. Centres are looking at strategies to manage demand management and triage services based on the evidence of both unmet legal need and service delivery outcomes or met legal need.

Using this Guide, you will be able to:

- Start to develop an understanding of legal need and what may be driving it within your service catchment
- Develop a better understanding of your own work and clients
- Conduct an initial gap analysis of met and unmet legal need in your service catchment
- Develop a data-informed strategic plan for your organisation, using the data analysis you have performed to inform your discussion and decision-making
- Know where to go for help if you need it

The approach suggested to strategic planning in this Guide is very flexible—both in its implementation and how it can be adapted to multiple purposes. It offers a structure for the collection and interpretation of data to predict the prevalence of unmet legal need, as well as a framework for assessing the service data of a Centre and therefore information about legal need being met. The Guide encourages Centres to consider the implications of evidence, in the context of a *legal needs assessment framework*, which can be adapted to any of the purposes mentioned above. The Guide incorporates elements of strategic planning, evaluation, and social research methodologies.

Data-informed planning

This Guide is written to assist Centres wishing to undertake a data-informed strategic planning project. However, smaller planning decisions can also be the short-term focus of a legal needs analysis data project, based on the methodology suggested in this Guide.

In this context, effective strategic planning starts with an analysis of the problem or need, and then develops goals and objectives for change, to bring about a resolution to the problem. Consequently, a vital part of the strategic planning process for Centres is to identify and analyse the geographic and demographic nature of predicted legal need in their community and consider what activities they are currently undertaking towards achieving their objectives. This allows for an informed and nuanced development of long-term goals and objectives, and guides decisions about how scarce resources will be allocated to undertake the advice, tasks, representation, community legal education, law reform and other activities that Centres do to serve their communities.

In this Guide, you will be steered through the extraction and analysis of data from several sources:

- An analysis of predicted legal need, using the indicators identified in the CLCs Australia *Legal Needs Assessment Framework* and freely available datasets such as Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data, the SIEFA (Socio-economic Indexes for Areas) Index of Relative Disadvantage, and Centrelink payments data from the Department of Social Security

- An analysis of your Centre's current service delivery as captured in CLASS or your own database

- Interviews with key stakeholders and informants who also know about the needs of your clients.

Strategic planning work driven by evidence can both confirm and challenge existing practice and assumptions, thereby improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and appropriateness of the service delivery of your Centre. Being able to clearly link the activities of your Centre to focused objectives, derived from data-informed analysis, is the key to compelling funding submissions and effective evaluation of service delivery.

Collaborative service planning

Under the 2020-2025 National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) Agreement, the Commonwealth, states and territories and the legal assistance sector, are required to continue developing systems for *collaborative service planning*. A component of collaborative service planning is to increase understanding of existing and emerging legal and other needs, to improve targeting of services to areas of greatest need, and to strengthen coordination between legal services and other legal providers in service delivery and referral. The approach to data analysis in this Guide will assist Centres to engage in local collaborative service planning, including to:

- Identify the level of legal need in the relevant geographic local
- Identify local level issues that affect legal assistance
- Develop an approach to service delivery in the local area
- Build partnerships across relevant stakeholders, and
- Consider opportunities for improved coordination and targeting of services[1].

The broader context

CLCs Australia recognises that this Guide, and the approach it offers to Centres wanting to inform their planning at the local level using legal needs analysis, is one piece in a larger body of data and planning work in which the sector is engaged. There are a number of directions in which this legal needs informed planning resource could be developed in the future, including:

- Data visualisation: a tool that allows Centres to see and manipulate their own service data and indicator data, e.g. from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Department of Social Services, within one accessible and convenient environment
- Integrating planning processes: An example would be a clearer connection to Collaborative Service Planning at the regional and/or state levels and a methodology for feeding into data-driven processes incorporating other legal assistance services

1 Attorney-General's Department (2019) National Legal Assistance Partnership: Overview Paper. Canberra: Australian Government

and within larger geographic catchments. There may be other planning processes outside the legal assistance worth considering.

- Research: a commitment to further research to develop understanding of the generation, nature and complexity of legal need in the context of populations experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation.
- Outcomes: Situating legal needs analysis firmly within discussions of the sector's articulation of its objectives and outcomes through Theory of Change and Outcomes frameworks.

Thinking about legal need

There are three foundational concepts on which this strategic planning guide is based:

- **Legal need**: The likelihood that a person will experience a legal problem or justiciable event, whether or not it was recognised as being 'legal' or any action was taken to deal with the problem.
- **Met or expressed legal need**: People who are already be seeking assistance for their legal problem through Centres.
- **Unmet, unexpressed or hidden legal need**: People who may not be seeking assistance for their legal problem and may be unaware they have a legal problem.

A guide for all Centres

The Legal Needs Planning Guide can be used by any Centre in Australia – no matter how large, small, metropolitan, regional/rural/remote, generalist, specialist, whether using CLASS or another database. Each Centre can use the Guide to develop their own data-informed planning which considers both met and unmet legal need in their geographic and/or specialist service catchment.

Centres have often focussed on responding to expressed need, literally the people who come through the door. This Guide is designed to provide Centres with a data-informed approach to better understand and consider how to address unmet need, that is the people with a legal problem who may not be aware that the law is relevant to their circumstances or know how to access legal services. It will also provide Centres will tools to better understand the met need by looking at the data collected about clients and their legal matters.

The Guide can also assist Centres to utilise their data to review how well they have done against previous strategic plans and provide useful information for funding submissions, law reform and advocacy work. This approach aims to ensure that Centres are providing services to meet the greatest need and more effectively targeting the most disadvantaged in the community.

> There are tips throughout this Guide to make it easier to use, contained in these 'idea' boxes.

Before getting started

Data-informed strategic planning is a powerful tool for program development, change and evaluation. Before getting started however there are a few things you need to know, to assess if your Centre is ready to undertake this strategic planning process, and resource it sufficiently.

Keep in mind, that you may find doing all the steps in the Guide is not what you have capacity to do or *need* to do at this time. Feel free to take ideas and information from the Guide about data analysis and strategic thinking—then adapt them to your own use according to your Centre's priorities.

Strategic planning takes time

If you want to follow the full data-informed strategic planning process outlined in this Guide, allocate at least six months to the task. Obviously, you will not be working on it every day! You will need time to work through the tasks, think about and discuss the results with your management team and test your conclusions. Allowing at least six months will give your Centre time to 'ruminate', follow new paths of inquiry and consider the implications of what the evidence reveals.

> You may need additional time to finalise your plan with your management committee.

Strategic planning works best with active participation from staff and management committee members

You will need to think about how to structure your project to encourage their commitment through engaging them in the process. At the same time, the project will need 'champions' – key people in management who will drive it and make it a priority within a busy Centre. One approach would be to convene a small project team to drive the project, undertake the data tasks and prepare the findings for use in the workshops.

> Gather a small project team including both Centre staff and management committee members to drive the project. Depending on the size and management structure of your Centre, this project team may include the principal solicitor, coordinator and two key people from the management committee. One member of the team should take primary responsibility for the data tasks and another should take responsibility for leading the project team.

A strategic planning project needs a project plan

You will need to allocate time and resources to the project. A timeline detailing when you expect each of the toolkit tasks to be completed, allocating specific jobs to members of the project team will help to keep the project focussed and on track for completion in the agreed time frame.

Needs good data

Data inputs for this data-informed process come from a range of sources including your Centre's database, which may be CLASS or your own system.

Your ability to retrieve robust information about the activities of your service and the characteristics of your clients can be compromised by missing data (incomplete information), incorrect recording of work due to misunderstandings about the definitions of fields in the dataset, or mistakes introduced in the process of collecting data at the point of client intake.

> There is a DIY report recipe which helps Centres using CLASS to investigate the amount of missing or black data in their records

If you are using the CLASS database, you can contact CLCs Australia for advice and options for diagnosing problems to improve your Centre's data collection and, consequently, data quality.

The link above will connect you to an email address for the ICT Help Desk, as well as the CLASS Portal, through which you can efficiently access support and request training.

> If your Centre *does not use CLASS*, you will need to use your own record/client information management system to explore trends in your Centre's activities, clients and problem types. Depending on your system and the data that you keep, you may need to adapt some of the tasks outlined in this Guide to suit your situation and activities.
>
> Identify any problems that may exist with your Centre's data early. Data entry methods may have changed at your service over time and it may not be useful or possible to investigate trends over time if data from one year is not comparable to the next. This sort of issue is not a roadblock to developing your data-informed strategic plan, but it is better to be aware of any issues early in the process.

Some basic technical skills

Experience with your Centre's database or CLASS and Microsoft Excel will be essential to further explore your data.

> There may be a knowledgeable staff member, such as a Finance Officer, or willing management committee member with Microsoft Excel skills who can assist with completing desktop data tasks and subsequent analysis of your data.
>
> YouTube is full of well-made tutorials for using Excel. Use the search function in YouTube to find something at the level and with the content you need—maybe starting with videos that have had many views. In addition to basic data manipulation in Excel, it would be valuable to increase your ability to generate charts/figures and use pivot tables to analyse datasets with multiple variables.
>
> If your Centre is lucky enough to have them, savvy student volunteers can also help staff complete desktop data tasks or even take them on as a project of their own. Keep in mind that the person doing the role will be developing skills that you may wish to keep with the Centre.

A new way of looking at need and service delivery

It is likely that reviewing your data and thinking about demographic indicators of potential areas of legal need will encourage debate and discussion about how your service operates now and what sort of changes may be practical, desirable, and possible for the future. You may consider engaging an external facilitator to guide workshop discussions.

At the end of the day, decisions about the future strategic direction of your service will be made by your service. The Guide is designed to help you make informed decisions.

Data-informed planning activities

This Guide presents a step-by-step program of activities to develop to information to inform a data-informed planning for your service.

The guide is separated into three sections with desktop and workshop activities. While there is a logical order to the activities, how the activities are undertaken can be individualised to suit your service.

Depending on the size of your service, geography of your catchment area, complexity of service delivery and level of engagement and availability of management committee members, some workshops could be combined, or tasks streamlined, to suit your Centre's objectives.

Section 1: Your service met need

- Desktop Task 1 – Describe your service and its objectives
- Desktop Task 2 – Use your Centre's data to understand met need
- Workshop 1 – Explore the alignment between your current service activities and your stated objectives

Section 2: Your service and met and unmet need (gap analysis)

- Desktop Task 3 – Apply the *legal needs assessment framework* to your catchment to better understand unmet need
- Desktop Task 4 – Interview key stakeholders to better understand met and unmet need in your catchment
- Workshop 2 – Explore the alignment between your service with met and unmet need

Section 3: Your service's data-informed strategic plan

- Workshop 3 – Lessons learned through the gap analysis; re-visit and clarify your vision, mission and objectives; and develop your data-informed strategic plan for the next 1 to 3 years.

Section 1: Your service and met need

It is important to clearly describe where your service's resources are currently being used, and the level and type of need that is currently being met.

Desktop task 1 – Describe your service

Clearly describing your service as it now operates is an important first step in data-informed strategic planning and may take some time.

1. 1. Describe your service catchment

- You may offer some services targeted to specific Local Government Areas (LGA). For each LGA in your catchment, describe which services you currently provide and how often those services are provided.
- Describe services offered by the Centre. Here you will include details about telephone advice, outreaches, representation, community legal education and non-casework services. You may discuss how you offer these services, for example, drop-in versus appointment services, telephone advice model (call back, specific session times, or ad-hoc), night service using volunteers, community legal education targeted to other service providers or specific client demographics, participation in law reform agencies or direct action, and so on.
- Make sure you are aware of the other community legal services (or similar legal assistance services, or community organisations) operating in or adjacent to your catchment, so that you can describe how the work you do fits geographically. Apart from being important to know for your own planning, this relates to the objectives of collaborative service planning, as discussed in the introduction.

2. 2. Describe your current staffing arrangements

- Compile a list of current staff including positions, funding arrangements and any regular service activities (such as outreaches) attributed to each position.
    - Staff positions are likely to include principal solicitor, outreach solicitors, generalist solicitors, financial counsellors, field officers, coordinator, CLE or community development workers, policy and law reform, and administration.

3. 3. Describe your current vision, mission and objectives

- Compile your service's current stated vision, mission and objectives from your existing strategic plans etc.
    - How was your strategic documentation developed and by whom?
    - Include any key target or priority groups, geographic areas and areas of law.

4. 4. Share findings and gather initial feedback

- Circulate your findings from steps 1, 2 and 3 with your Project Team for their initial feedback and reflections prior to Workshop 1.

Desktop task 2 – Your Centre's data and met need

An analysis of your service's data (from CLASS or your own database for non-CLASS Centres) is necessary to understand the level of need currently being met by the service. To understand how your service's activity and client profile may have changed over time, it is useful to look at results for a selection of recent years—for example for the three-year period preceding the current financial year.

In this section you will use your own database or CLASS to review the activities undertaken by your service for the time periods you have selected. This will include clients, information and advice activities, casework, and non-casework projects. You will track your Centre's trends over time for each of the three years you have selected.

You may choose to gather data for the Centre as a whole and (if relevant and possible) consider gathering data for specific services, programs, or funding sources within your Centre (such as tenancy) that you may be interested in looking at separately.

We then suggest that you use Microsoft Excel or a similar program to put your data together and create some basic charts and figures to display your Centre's activity trends over time. You can use this data to compile a summary of how your service activity and client profiles have changed over time. Finally, make sure to note any reasons, such as changes to staffing, funding, policy or social changes which may have occurred during the years investigated that may explain large variations (high spikes or deep troughs) in your data.

See **Appendix 1** for information about visualisation of data in Excel, interpretation of charts and communication of figures to an audience.

Centre-level analysis of CLASS data

The most relevant CLASS reports to this Guide are:

- S01 – Services for individuals
- C03 – Clients by priority group (and by each demographic) by administrative boundary type
- N03.1 – NPA Services by Law Type (and by high-level problem types)

To follow the analysis suggestions in the Guide or follow your own lines of inquiry in response to the data and your own Centre's needs and context, you will need to develop **CLASS DIY Reports**. Guidance for how to build and generate DIY Reports can be found on the CLCs Australia website.

As always, if you need additional assistance or training in this aspect of using CLASS, please contact the ICT Help Desk via the CLASS Portal for help with DIY reports.

Let us know if you are planning a project using the Guide and we will provide technical support and other advice where we can.

5. 1. Describe your services – analysis suggestions

Discrete Services by Financial Year

Here, you want to see a summary of the *services* you are providing each *financial year.*

Class Report: *S01 – Services for individuals* provides a helpful starting point

- Develop a table that shows counts of all advices your Centre has provided per financial year.
- Develop tables like this (by financial year and funding category) for each of the other service types that are most relevant to the work of your Centre. These may include: legal tasks, referrals, duty lawyer, discrete non-legal support service etc.
- Use Excel to develop line charts showing the trends over time for each service. Creating a chart that displays the data in a pivot table will allow you to look at different service type and year combinations more efficiently. See below for information on pivot tables.

Ongoing Services Analysis by Financial Year

To see a summary of your Centre's workload on *ongoing services*:

- Develop tables that show statistics about different types of ongoing services over several financial years. You could count each of 1) cases open at the start of each financial year, 2) cases opened and closed in each year, and 3) and the number of active cases in each financial year. This latter statistic is probably the best indication of your Centre's workload (as long as you have been closing your cases at the same rate as you are opening them), while the funding category statistics can give you some insight as to what is influencing the workload trend.
- Use Excel to develop line charts showing opening, closing and active trends over time for different types of ongoing services. Once again, developing a pivot table as the data source for the chart will make it easier to look at different combinations of ongoing services and years.

Community Project Services

Develop tables that shows your *community project services*. The first could be a summary report that shows numbers of services by *funding category*, and the second a more detailed report, that shows different types of community services by *financial year*. Here, you are looking, for example, at your CLE activities and resources, community (non-legal) education, law reform and stakeholder activities.

6. 2. Describe your client profile – Analysis suggestions

Use your own database or CLASS to better understand your client demographics and how their characteristics may have changed over time.

CLASS Report: *C03 – Clients by priority group and by demographics* provides a helpful starting point

> You will use this data later to compare the profile of your clients with some of the key indicators of legal need.

Client Profile

You may choose to focus on different aspects of your clients' profile including:

- Age Group
- Disability
- Indigenous Status
- Gender
- Family type
- Financial disadvantage
- Income Level
- Income Source
- Rural/Regional/Remote
- Homelessness
- Family/Domestic violence
- Client in custody
- Main language spoken at home
- Interpreter/translator required
- Any other indicators which you understand as associated with generating legal need for your clients

Develop a table that allows you to chart the breakdowns of various client demographics by different family, civil, criminal, and legal system/legal help *law types* over time.

Use this data to compile a description of your current client profile and a summary of how your service's client profile has changed over time.

> For all these analyses you may also find a pivot table helpful. Pivot tables allow you to analyse large spread sheets with lots of data very easily.
>
> If you want more information about how to 'drive' a pivot table, jump on the internet. There are many wikis, web pages and free YouTube videos dedicated to pivot tables as they are a very useful and extremely powerful tool for analysing datasets with multiple variables.
>
> Some demographic data is not collected as well as others within the Centre sector. What are your rates of data collection on these indicators?

7. 3. Describe the geographic distribution of services – analysis suggestions

It is very useful to understand where your clients, who drive your work, are living within your service catchment. To do this, look at each of the *services* undertaken by your Centre by the *geographic location of the clients that required the service,* by *financial year*.

For this analysis you will need to build a DYI Report

For Centres not using CLASS, your database may include records of your clients' addresses, including suburb or postcode information. It is possible to use 'correspondences' published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to reassign address information to other standard geographies[2].

> As you are doing your analysis, use the process to make decisions about which level of geography to use for the discussion to come in Workshop 2. You may cover a large area and find that LGAs are a manageable number of regions to consider in the discussion of service priorities for your Centre. Although you may need to focus more closely on a part of your catchment with more diversity, by preparing your analysis summary at SA2 level for that region. Likewise, if your catchment is smaller, preparing your analysis at the SA2 level may be manageable, with some more diverse areas analysed at SA1 level for greater detail.

Suburb and address data in CLASS is automatically coded to local government areas (LGA) and other ABS geography structures—such as Remoteness Areas (RA) and the 'main' Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) structures from mesh blocks, Statistical Areas (SA1 to SA4), to states/territories and Australia. A chart mapping the hierarchy and relations of these structures and their definitions can be found on the ABS website[3].

> Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1) are the smallest geographic regions on which the 2016 Census of Population and Housing data is provided to the public. SA1s generally have a population of 200 to 800 persons, and an average population of about 400 persons. Maps of the SA1 boundaries can be found on the ABS website for download and opening in GIS software.

Using smaller geographies, such as at the SA1 or SA2 level, will give you a more detailed understanding of where your clients live, compared with a larger geographic area such as LGA. However, if you have a very large catchment area, the list of SA2s that are contained in it may be so long that analysis is difficult. If you need to look at data at the granularity offered by SA1s, keep in mind that SA1s are 'unnamed', that is, they have an identifying number only. Using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping in this context will be even more important to be able to interpret the data.

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[2] ABS (n.d.) *Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Correspondences*. https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Correspondences

[3] https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/australian+statistical+geography+standard+(asgs)

You will need to decide at what level to look at your data, depending on your Centre's catchment, its diversity, and your analysis needs. Part of this thinking could be to look at the geographies at which other data (such as Centrelink, SEIFA or Census data) is available, and this will help you enable comparisons to the indicator data you collect in Desktop Task 3 of the project.

> You will use this data to compare the location of your clients with the areas of likely high legal need predicted by demographic and other indicators.

Services by Geographic areas

Develop a spreadsheet that shows the number of key services for your Centre over time, as well as the percentage of matters by SA2 (or Suburb or LGA or whichever geography makes most sense for your service). For example, when looking at advices, you could highlight the percentage cells in different colours depending on whether the number of advices, for example, has increased by 10% or decreased by 10% compared with the previous year (see image below from a previous version of the Guide, based on the CLSIS database and older 'matters' naming).

State	LGA Name	Matters 10-11	Matters 11-12	Matters 12-13	Matters 13-14	Matters 14-15	Matters 15-16	Matters 16-17	Matters 17-18	% of total Matters 10-11	% of total Matters 11-12	% of total Matters 12-13	% of total Matters 13-14	% of total Matters 14-15	% of total Matters 16-17	% of total Matters 17-18
ACT	Unincorporated ACT	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.07%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Albury (C)	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0.00%	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Armidale Dumaresq (A)	1	0	2	0	4	1	2	0	0.05%	0.00%	0.07%	0.00%	0.09%	0.05%	0.00%
NSW	Ashfield (A)	90	158	205	192	172	119	20	0	4.55%	6.78%	7.52%	5.78%	4.13%	0.47%	0.00%
NSW	Auburn (A)	15	21	26	26	38	25	1	0	0.76%	0.90%	0.95%	0.77%	0.91%	0.03%	0.00%
NSW	Ballina (A)	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.06%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Balranald (A)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Bankstown (C)	62	41	50	56	82	104	13	0	3.11%	1.75%	1.82%	1.70%	1.96%	0.31%	0.00%
NSW	Bathurst Regional (A)	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Bega Valley (A)	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.07%	0.03%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%
NSW	Bellingen (A)	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0.00%	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Berrigan (A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Blacktown (C)	7	9	32	26	39	22	1	0	0.34%	0.41%	1.18%	0.78%	0.95%	0.02%	0.00%
NSW	Bland (A)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Blayney (A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Blue Mountains (C)	1	3	1	0	9	4	0	0	0.05%	0.13%	0.04%	0.00%	0.22%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Bogan (A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Bombala (A)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Boorowa (A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Botany Bay (C)	5	6	2	8	13	10	1	0	0.26%	0.28%	0.09%	0.23%	0.31%	0.03%	0.00%
NSW	Bourke (A)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%
NSW	Brewarrina (A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

You could use the 'sort' function in Excel to look at the name of your LGAs, Suburbs or SA2s in alphabetical order, or you could sort by one of the 'percentage of total services' columns to show which areas are generating the highest proportion of advices.

- Consider how the matters are distributed across your catchment and beyond. Is the spread of matters what you expected?

- As an optional next step, the matters by LGA results can be imported into a Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping program, such as ArcGIS, to illustrate the geographic distribution of your matters. Some services may have the skills and resources in-house to complete this task, while others may choose to engage a specialist.

> Maps of your Centre's advices are a great way to represent the spread of services across your catchment. Maps help bring your data to life in reports and presentations and make great tools for workshop discussions about service delivery with staff and management committee members.

8. 4. Describe the profile of problem types of clients – analysis suggestions

CLASS Report: *N03.1 – NPA Services by Law Type (and by high-level problem types)* provides a helpful starting point.

It is useful to understand the profile of problem types that your clients approach the Centre with, and how this profile may have changed over time.

> You will use this data to compare your clients' problem type profile with your Centre's objectives, key target groups and staffing profile.

If possible, use your database to gather data by *high-level problem type* (within law types) for your advices, and other important service types to your Centre, for each of the three years you have selected.

Develop spreadsheets of each of activities by high-level problem type over time. Use this data to compile a description of the high-level problem type profile of your clients and how this profile may have changed over time.

9. Additional analysis suggestions and analysis options in CLASS

The four strands of analysis suggested above are some ideas to get you started. When you commence the process of analysing your service and client data, you will probably find that other questions flow as you interpret your data tables, visualisations, and summary documents.

You may want to develop CLASS DIY Reports to look at:

- how high-level problem types are distributed geographically in your catchment (using the address information of clients with each problem type)
- how different client characteristics (demographics) are more or less likely to be associated with each high-level problem type, or
- how clients came to your service (referral) and is this pathway dependant on client characteristics or legal problem.

What else do you want to know about your clients?

What else you want to know about your services?

> Make sure you take excellent and well organised notes in Word, to track your analysis, interpretations, and other thinking. You could, for example, annotate a sequence of screenshots taken of your work in Excel. You will find investing in good recording keeping of your analysis work, extremely useful later!

10. Prepare a summary of each of the above desktop activities for discussion at Workshop 1.

- ☐ Staffing arrangements
- ☐ Current vision, mission and objectives
- ☐ Service activities
- ☐ Client profile
- ☐ Geographic distribution of clients' service types.
- ☐ Profile of problem types by service activities

Remember that this task is all about gathering data and providing a summary of the facts about your service delivery (based on your system of records) to your staff and management committee for discussion. Note exceptions or discuss reasons you think explain what your data are reflecting. Resist the urge to disregard the statistics if you are uncertain or uncomfortable with the results.

Workshop 1 – Explore alignment between your Centre's current service activities and stated objectives

It is important that everyone involved in the strategic planning process, including staff and management, has a clear understanding and agreement of how your service operates.

The information obtained from the **Desktop Tasks 1 and 2** will provide an excellent starting point for discussion about the way your service is currently operating, the amount and type of need that is currently met, and initial perceptions from staff and management committee members about 'gaps' in service and unmet need that may exist in the catchment area.

What you will need for Workshop 1:

- A mix of staff and management committee members
- Description of your service from Desktop Task 1 including:
  - Geographic service catchment (list of LGAs, suburbs or SA2s)
  - Type, location and frequency of services provided across catchment
  - Staffing arrangements
  - Stated mission, vision and objectives
  - Any initial feedback gathered from Project Team
- Summaries from Desktop Task 2 using CLASS or your Centre's own database to describe recent trends for your service in terms of:
  - Service activities
  - Geographic distribution of matters
  - Client profile
  - Profile of problem types for your activities

Think carefully about who would be the best person to facilitate this discussion. There may be someone on your management committee or a local business person with appropriate skills who could assist pro bono. There is nothing worse than a badly facilitated planning meeting! Make sure your facilitator understands the Legal Needs Strategic Planning Guide process so they can run the sessions using this framework. You want each of these workshop sessions to be productive and fuel enthusiasm and commitment to the work of the Centre, not sap participants' energy!

Plan for the workshop. Ensure that participants get lots of notice and receive anything you want them to read in advance. Have an agenda and be clear about the outcomes you want from the workshop.

Aim of Workshop 1:

- To use the information gathered from Desktop Tasks 1 and 2 to review how your service activities currently align with your organisation's stated vision, mission and strategic objectives.
- To discuss staff and management committee member perceptions of met need within your service catchment in terms of target groups, geography, and legal matter types.

11. Key questions for discussion

1. How do your service's activities currently align with your stated objectives?
Consider the list of services by LGA.

- Are you surprised by the spread of services?
- Can you see the effect of your targeting or outreach activities? And/or the effects of not targeting or conducting outreach in certain areas?
- Where do you think there are gaps?
- Are there things you cannot explain?

2. In an ideal world, without funding or other constraints, what would your service priorities be in terms of target groups, geography, legal service types?

- Back in the real world, what are your service priorities in terms of target groups, geography, and legal matter types?
- If there is a mismatch between the ideal and real worlds, why?
- Identify issues that you can do something about and those that are outside your control.
- Is it possible to allocate time and resources in the strategic plan to work on addressing some of the constraints you have identified?

3. What are your perceptions of current gaps in service and unmet need in the catchment area in terms of target groups, geography and legal matter type?

Make a list of the gaps and unmet needs identified by workshop participants. You will use it later.

Section 2: Your service – Met and unmet need

Understanding the levels of met and unmet need that exist in your catchment area is essential for developing a data-informed strategic plan for service delivery. Section 1 of this Guide presented a methodology for analysing the level of need met by your service. Section 2 aims to explore the level of unmet need in your catchment, which may not be readily ‘expressed’ by people and does not show up in your service’s statistics. We will do this by using indicators to predict the prevalence, location and types of legal need in your catchment.

It may be that you recognise the instructions, information, and analysis ideas in this section are repetitive, or keep circling back on themselves. This is a normal feature of the data analysis process. As you both approach a dataset to pull out elements of the data on which to focus, and then as you work that data looking for patterns and interpreting meaning, it is *completely normal* to experience that you a re-doing extraction of data with a small change, re-analysing, changing the interpretation story, coming up with new questions, then re-doing extraction of the data with a small change etc… The process **is iterative and somewhat circular**. However, each time you re-approach the analysis in a new way, your knowledge is strengthened, your understanding of complexity is deepened, at the same time as the number of questions you still want answers to grows!

Some hints for the people doing the technical analysis of met and unmet legal need in this section:

- Take good notes of what you are doing—a research log—in a word document. Use dates to track the sequence of your work, hyperlinks to other documents to track outputs (such as Excel files with analysis and charts) or data extraction files. Use screenshots of work from Excel, or another data visualisation source, and annotate this image in your research log. When you have a thought about your data, what it may mean, its implications… write it down straight away. Otherwise, these insights are likely to get lost.
- Whoever is doing the data extraction and analysis should attempt to work on the project in large enough units of time. If you do a half hour here or there, it is very difficult to maintain the thread of your thoughts and generate the kind of momentum that improves efficiency and creativity in your thinking. Each time you pick up an analysis project again after a break, especially if that break is weeks, it takes time to work out what you did last time and ‘get back to speed’.
- Talk through what you are finding with others in your project team as you make observations and discoveries. The perspectives and questions of others are very helpful to add to the mix of what you explore.

Desktop task 3 – Assess legal need in your catchment to better understand unmet need

There is, unfortunately, no magic ‘button’ to press that provides a perfect estimation of legal need. Nor is there a perfect and comprehensive understanding of how, when, for whom and in what context legal need is expressed in the lives of the marginalised and disadvantaged clients whose access to justice is central to the sector’s mission. This Guide gives you an introduction to what is currently known about legal need and resources to inform further reading. It profiles three approaches to using indicators to quantitatively predict legal need and suggests other avenues of data collection and analysis to develop a richer knowledge of legal need in your local area.

One quantitative approach is to use indicators. However, each legal need assessment indicator approach relies on best available assumptions—based on the evidence we currently have—about what drives legal need in the context of disadvantage. It is important to use these indicators as one element of your legal needs assessment work, alongside other sources of data.

Evidence can include your own knowledge of your clients; understanding of your service and the geographic or specialist area in which you provide support; and other research about legal need, priority groups and disadvantage. In this Guide we introduce several different approaches which you can combine to reflect on and assess legal need in your local area.

12. Using *indicators* to assess the prevalence, geographic distribution, and type of predicted legal need

Indicators are specific, observable and measurable characteristics that can be used to provide information about an underlying concept. In this case, 'legal need', or the likelihood that a person will experience a legal problem or justiciable event, whether it was recognised as being 'legal' or any action was taken to deal with the problem. Remember, the usefulness of indicators is limited by their ability to faithfully represent the 'real' thing it stands for.

There are a few approaches to using indicators to assess the likely prevalence of legal need in your local area. We are recommending two approaches in this Guide:

1. CLCs Australia ***Legal Needs Assessment Framework***
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics **SEIFA (Socio-Economic Index for Areas)** ***Index of Relative Disadvantage***

See **Appendix 2** for information about two other approaches by:
Community Legal Centres QLD
Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

After introducing the two recommended indicator frameworks, and how to access the data that enables their use, the Guide will talk through approaches to their use.

1. *Legal Needs Assessment Framework* Indicators – CLCs Australia

The approach in this Guide uses the Legal Australia-wide Survey on legal need in Australia[4] to develop a set of key indicators of legal need—the *Legal Needs Assessment Framework—to* predict problem types for different demographic groups. It can therefore be

[4] Coumarelos, C., Macourt, D., People, J., McDonald, H.M., Wei, Z., Iriana, R & Ramsey, S. (2012). *Legal Australia-wide Survey: Legal Need in Australia*. Sydney: Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

used to predict underlying legal need in a geographic area. The indicators provide a set of benchmarks against which to review your service's activities.

The table below lists the key indicators of legal need, a basic definition based on the data used in this study and the types of legal matters that a young person or adult (age 15+ years) with each characteristic is more likely to experience than the average.

Table 1: Definition Key Problem Types for Indicators of Legal Need

INDICATOR	BASIC DEFINITION	HIGH RELATIVE INCIDENCE OF KEY PROBLEM TYPES
Lone parent	Family with one parent caring for children living at home.	- Money/debt - Welfare problems - Housing (tenancy, homelessness) - Family (all types) - Domestic violence
Disability/chronic ill health	1. Disability from the Census 2. Adults receiving the Disability Support Pension from Centrelink.	- Money/debt - Employment - Discrimination/human rights - General crime - Accident/injury - Consumer problems - Neighbour problems - Tenancy
Indigenous	Adults who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.	- Money/debt - Employment - Family law - Discrimination/human rights - Unfair police treatment - Domestic violence
On benefits	Adults receiving a range of Centrelink pensions and benefits.	- Welfare problems - Housing (tenancy, homelessness) - Family (all types) - Domestic violence - Neighbour problems - Money/debt
Social renter	People renting their home from a Government, Community, Church or other Housing Cooperative landlord.	- Neighbour problems - Welfare problems - Housing (tenancy, homelessness) - Family (relationship breakdown, children problems) - Domestic violence
Private renter	People renting their home from a real estate agent or other private individual.	- Money/debt - Welfare problems - Housing (tenancy, homelessness) - Immigration - Employment - Family
Age: 35-44 years Age group most likely to report legal problem of any type	People aged between 35 and 44 years.	- Family (all types) - Consumer - Money/debt
Age: 25-34 years Age group second most likely to report legal problem of any type	People aged between 25 and 34 years.	- Money/debt - Traffic offences - Accident/injury

INDICATOR	BASIC DEFINITION	HIGH RELATIVE INCIDENCE OF KEY PROBLEM TYPES
Age: 15-24 years	People aged between 15 and 24 years.	- Housing (tenancy, homelessness) - Unfair police treatment - General crime - Traffic offences - Accident/injury
Age: 45-54 years	People aged between 45 and 54 years.	- Employment problems
Ethnicity (non-English Speaking background)	1. Speaking a language other than English at home 2. People who were born in all countries except Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdome and the United States of America.	- Employment problems - Discrimination - Immigration

Data sources for analysis of indicators

ABS Census of Population and Housing

Data for each of most of these indicators can be obtained from the *ABS Census of Population and Housing*, collected every five years, with 2016 data the most recently available. There are multiple ways to access Census data depending on your data analysis skills and the software you have available.

- 'QuickStats' will provide you with easily accessible basic information
- 'TableBuilder' or the 'DataPacks' and 'GeoPackages' options enable you to do more detailed and powerful analysis

The ABS provides an overview of, and access to these methods.

DSS Payment Demographic Data

Data for the 'on benefits' and 'disability/chronic ill-health' indicators (for LGA and SA2 geographies) are available quarterly for download in Excel via the *DSS Payment Demographic Data* page. When using the Centrelink/DSS payment data, pay close attention to the definitions of different payments – a person may be eligible for more than one benefit, and not all benefits are necessarily relevant. You may want to focus on a sub-set of payments such as Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Family Tax Benefit Part A and JobSeeker. Due to the potential for duplication of benefits per person, it may be helpful to use 'number of *benefits* per 1000 population' rather than the number of people on benefits as your indicator. It will give you a better sense of the concentration of reliance on social service benefits in your catchment.

2. ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Disadvantage

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes indexes, based on Census data, which can be used to explore socio-economic conditions by geographic areas. The **Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)** is derived from a weighted combination of Census variables such as low income, unemployed, and low education. The full list is detailed below.

The Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) allows ranking of geographic areas across Australian in terms of their relative socio-economic disadvantage. The SEIFA score for each geographic area in Australia gives a measure of how relatively disadvantaged that area is compared to others in Australia. A low score on this index indicates a high level of disadvantage in that LGA or suburb, while a high score indicates a low level of disadvantage[5].

SEIFA is a useful indicator when predicting 'general' or non-specific types of legal need in a disadvantaged community. Knowing where socio-economic disadvantage is most concentrated in your catchment is a useful proxy for the likely location of increased legal need in the context of disadvantage.

Have a look at the types of variables included in the index. How does each factor relate to an aspect of how you understand disadvantage?

The variables used in the index are listed below. All variables in this index are indicators of disadvantage. INC_LOW is the strongest indicator of disadvantage.

- INC_LOW: % of people with stated household equivalised income between $1 and $25,999 per year
- CHILDJOBLESS: % of families with children under 15 years of age who live with jobless parents
- NONET: % of occupied private dwellings with no internet connection
- NOYEAR12ORHIGHER: % of people aged 15 years and over whose highest level of education is Year 11 or lower
- UNEMPLOYED: % of people (in the labour force) who are unemployed
- OCC_LABOUR: % of employed people classified as Labourers
- LOWRENT: % of occupied private dwellings paying rent less than $215 per week (excluding $0 per week)
- ONEPARENT: % of one parent families with dependent offspring only
- DISABILITYU70: % of people under the age of 70 who have a long-term health condition or disability and need assistance with core activities
- SEPDIVORCED: % of people aged 15 years and over who are separated or divorced
- OCC_DRIVERS: % of employed people classified as Machinery Operators and Drivers
- OCC_SERVICE_L: % of employed people classified as low skill Community and Personal Service workers
- NOCAR: % of occupied private dwellings with no cars
- OVERCROWD: % of occupied private dwellings requiring one or more extra bedrooms
- NOEDU: % of people aged 15 years and over who have no educational attainment
- ENGLISHPOOR: % of people who do not speak English well

You can explore SEIFA (IRSD) indicators for your area through interactive maps on the ABS website.

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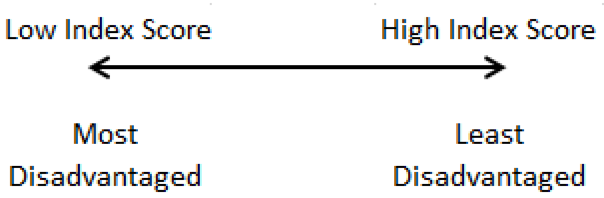
[5] ABS (2016) *Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), Australia, 2016*. Accessed on 19 May 2021 at https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2016~Main%20Features~SOCIO-ECONOMIC%20INDEXES%20FOR%20AREAS%20(SEIFA)%202016~1

Alternatively, Excel tables (data cubes) of SEIFA (IRSD) scores, as counts or population percentages, and for different geographies, are available for download, along with the Technical Paper explaining the methodology in more detail.

Interpreting the SEIFA data in downloaded Excel Data Cubes

- **SEIFA Score.** The index *score* reflects responses by individuals at the Census aggregated and weighted, and applied to a geography (i.e. SA1-4, State, LGA, postcode). The score allows geography areas to be ranked relative to each other by their level of disadvantage. **A low score indicates higher disadvantage**.



Interpretation of Index Scores (IRSD)

- **SEIFA Decile.** A decile number shows which 10% (decile) the geographic region falls, once all are ranked in terms of their SEIFA(IRSD) index. A '10' means they are in the 'top' 10% (least disadvantaged); a '1' means they are in the bottom 10% (highest levels of relative disadvantage). Deciles are available relative to the State or relative to the Nation.
- **Distributions of SA1 SEIFA deciles within an SA2.** Larger geographies such as LGAs, SA3s and SA4s, have a diversity of social and economic disadvantage within their boundaries. For example, a relatively wealthy LGA may have pockets of social housing, low income or other indicators that impact on levels of disadvantage. By using the tables that show the distribution of SA1 SEIFA decile rankings within an SA2, it is possible to better understand the degree to which diversity is hiding behind the score.

13. Legal Needs Dashboard

The Law and Justice Foundation of NSW have developed an interactive Tableau Dashboard to help facilitate analysis of ABS Census, Centrelink (social services benefits) and some limited criminal offence data (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR]).

Frequency (or counts data) for a number of indicators can be broken down by demographic characteristics and geographic regions and displayed either on a map or as bar charts for analysis.

14. Finding the gap: Using indicators of unmet legal need and what you know about the legal need met by your service

How you proceed in this part of the task will depend on what indicators of potential legal need you have chosen to focus on. The sequencing of analysis suggested below is one option.

1. SEIFA

a) Start by looking at the ABS SEIFA(IRSD) data—get to know how disadvantage is distributed in your local area.

- Are there pockets of disadvantage within areas that are otherwise relatively less disadvantaged?
- How does the geographic distribution of your clients, map to the geographic distribution of disadvantage that SEIFA (IRSD) has helped you identify?

2. Legal Needs Assessment Framework

a) Look at the problem types and client demographics of your service data. Consider these in relation to the set of Legal Needs Assessment Framework indicators.

- What patterns can you see in your own data when you look at your clients' and services' geographic distribution and types of legal problems they have?

b) Look at the data you have collected about the distribution of indicators in your catchment.

- What patterns can you see in the distribution of disadvantage indicated by SEIFA(IRSD) in your catchment?
- What patterns can you see in the distribution of the Legal Needs Assessment Framework Indicators in your catchment?

c) Compare your service data analysis results with the data on distribution and density of Legal Needs Assessment Framework indicators within your local area.

- Can you see discrepancies between the proportion of your clients and the proportion of the population of the catchment that share each characteristic?
- What about when you look at smaller geographic areas?
- What patterns can you see when you look at the list of indicators of legal need, their definitions and associated key problem types?
- Are these patterns reflected in your data?

> This task may raise some interesting questions that you'd like to address with the other public interest legal services in your catchment as part of the Stakeholder Interviews in Desktop Task 4.

Some of the indicators may be more relevant to predicting the legal need which defines your clients of interest than others, especially if you offer specialist services.

Work through the following questions:

- First, what are attributes of groups or individuals that make them more likely to develop legal need (of the type your service targets) than the general population?
- Second, is there data available that describes how these groups or individuals are distributed 'geographically' in your catchment? Think in terms of government

departments collecting data on housing or crime (for example) or NGOs collecting data in your area of interest.

Consider the following questions –

- How do we define our clients – what is the nature of their legal problem?
- What are the drivers/triggers of legal need for your clients? You may know this from your experience and knowledge, or you may wish to do some additional reading in the research literature.
- Which of the indicators of legal need in this Guide are also associated with legal need for your clients? You will be able to use the data sources suggested in the Guide to investigate the distribution of these characteristics predicting legal need in your catchment.
- How does disadvantage interact with the drivers of legal need for your clients? You will be able to use SEIFA(IRSD) analysis to investigate the relative levels of disadvantage in your catchment.
- Is there other data available which will help you to better understand the distribution of other drivers of legal need relevant to our clients? This may be Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, data from other Government departments, or other research data.
- Are there other Centres, legal assistance, or community/social service organisations whose clients are like yours who you can consult with?

> The clients of specialist Centres may have other 'triggers' or indicators that drive their legal need. You may need to look for additional research to understand how this legal need is generated and you may need different data to investigate the distribution of legal need in your catchment. Sourcing the data could be a good project for a volunteer who has developed research skills at university, for example.

15. Using research to understand legal need, to inform your choice of indicators and to aid their interpretation

As discussed at the beginning of this section of the Guide, there is no magic shortcut to enable simple and carefree unmet legal needs analysis—the research is not complete and the context of your Centre matters.

To do legal needs analysis, you will need to think about how you define *who* your clients should be, what you know about them, the characteristics they have which are increasing the likelihood they will experience legal need (and whether these characteristics can be constructed as indicators), barriers to accessing legal assistance and anything else that you decide may have bearing on 'unmet' legal need in your local area.

Each of the activities in the Guide have brought you closer towards this understanding.

There is additional research that you may find helpful as resources. Here are some examples:

Survey on legal need

Coumarelos, C., Macourt, D., People, J., McDonald, H. M., Wei, Z., Iriana, R., & Ramsey, S. (2012). *Legal Australia-Wide Survey: Legal Need in Australia*. Sydney: Law and Justice Foundation

Indigenous legal need

Allison, F., & Cunnen, C. (2020). *Access to Justice in the Barkly.* Sydney: Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, UTS

Allison, F., Cunneen, C., Schwartz, M., & Behrendt, L. (2012). *Indigenous Legal Needs Project.* Cairns: James Cook University

Reshaping legal assistance services

Pleasence, P., Coumarelos, C., Forell, S., & McDonald, H. M. (2014). *Reshaping legal assistance services: building on the evidence base*. Sydney: Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

Collaborative service planning

Coumarelos, C., McDonald, H. H., Forell, S., & Zhigang, W. (2015). *Collaborative Planning Resource – Service Planning.* Sydney: Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

How people's perception of the law impacts their access to justice

Balmer, N., Pleasence, P., Hagland, T., & McRaw, C. (2019). *Law... What is it good for? How people see the Law, Lawyers and Courts in Australia*. Melbourne: Victorian Law Foundation

16. Prepare a summary of each of the above desktop activities for discussion at Workshop 2 and tick when complete.

- ☐ Comparison of your service's **problem types** (from Desktop Task 2) with the matters more likely to be experienced by the key indicators of legal need
- ☐ Comparison of the distribution of your own client demographics with the distribution of **key indicators of legal need**
- ☐ Comparison of the LGAs, suburbs or SA2s in your service catchment with the **SEIFA Index of Disadvantage**

Producing a summary report from these tasks that can be circulated to staff and management committee members prior to the workshop is a great way to jump start your discussion and introduce the key concepts involved in this approach. Include definitions of key terms like SEIFA Disadvantage and each indicator of legal need (plus the justification for its inclusion) in your summary.

Desktop Task 4 – Interviews with key stakeholders in your service catchment

No matter where your service is located, there are likely to be several other services and organisations that have insight into met and unmet legal need in your catchment. To find out what they think, all you need to do is ask.

You will need to personalise this task to suit your Centre depending on the catchment size and scope of service delivery.

The desktop tasks and workshop so far, may have thrown up questions that you would like to discuss with other experts in your catchment.

Make a list of the relevant services and organisations that you believe are key stakeholders for your service and will have an insight on met and unmet need in terms of geography, client groups and legal matters in your catchment. You may already work closely or partner with them on service delivery and/or CLE activities. Identify your main referral sources, plus places you would expect to refer to or receive referrals from but often don't. Key stakeholders may include:

- Local offices of Legal Aid, Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS), Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS)
- Specialist public interest legal services related to key target groups or matter types (eg. Disability Discrimination Legal Centre)
- Pro Bono partners and other private legal practitioners
- Local Courts registrar or deputy registrar
- Local community services directly related to key target groups (eg. financial counsellors, workers with local Indigenous groups, youth workers, Family Relationship Centres, Migrant Resource Centres, etc)
- Peak bodies for services directly related to key target groups (eg. People With Disability, Homelessness Australia, etc)

Refine your list of interviewees based on relevance and the amount of time and resources you can devote to this task. Generally, 6 to 8 interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders will provide a sufficient overview of service gaps in your catchment. For small Centres, you may have fewer key stakeholders that you would like to interview.

Prepare interview questions for key stakeholders. Some questions are suggested below.

> Adapt and personalise interview questions to suit your Centre, your catchment and the organisation being interviewed to get the most applicable and useful information.

- What services does your organisation provide?
- What is your service's geographic catchment area (by LGA if possible)?
- Where are your services provided? (e.g. offices, outreaches, how often, what is the focus)
- How are your services provided? (e.g. face to face, phone, appointment, drop in)
- Does the type of service provided vary by geographic area within your catchment? (e.g. phone coverage only from some areas)
- Does the type of service provided vary by client demographics? (e.g. CALD, single mums)

- Do you have any partnerships with other organisations for service provision?
- Who are your clients? Do you have any key target groups? Are there predominant demographic characteristics and/or special need groups in your catchment area?
- How dispersed through your catchment area are your clients?
- What are the main types of legal issues experienced by clients in your catchment area that you are aware of?
- In your opinion, are there currently gaps in service provision to help your clients solve their legal problems? (By geography, client group, special needs or legal problem type).
- In your opinion, which geographic areas of your catchment appear to be well serviced?
- In your opinion, are there certain client groups who appear to be well serviced by your organisation or others in your catchment area?
- In your opinion, are there certain legal problems that appear to be well serviced by your organisation or others in your catchment area?

Conduct interviews over the telephone or face-to-face, each should take around 30 to 45 minutes.

Interview hints

- Let the interview subject know ahead of time the questions you will ask so that they can prepare.
- Avoid questions where the answer is yes/no – ask ‘open’ questions
- Probe for detail – ask Who? Where? What? When? How? In what context?
- Seek clarification if you need more information “You said the service is ‘not up to scratch’. Can you tell me what you mean by ‘not up to scratch’?”
- Give feedback during the interview which lets the interviewee know that you value the information they are providing thank them at the end
- Strongly consider having a scribe to take notes so that you can concentrate on listening to what is being said and framing your next question.
- Always ask permission if you want to record the interview, but still have a scribe. Recordings can fail.
- Let the interviewee do most of the talking! An interview is not a conversation, and the more time you are talking about your own Centre, the less time you will have to hear about their knowledge of your clients and catchment. If you need to network – make a separate meeting time for after the interview.

Compile a summary of findings, particularly perceptions of current service ‘gaps’ by geography, client type, and legal matter type for discussion at Workshop 2.

Workshop 2 – Exploring the alignment between your service, met and unmet need in your catchment

The information obtained from the Desktop Tasks 3 and 4 will provide an excellent starting point for discussion about service 'gaps' and unmet need in your catchment area.

What you will need for Workshop 2:

- A mix of staff and management committee (board) members
- Summary of findings from Desktop Task 3 to compare the geographic regions in your catchment (at the level of detail that is both manageable in number and necessary to capture diversity) in terms of:
- Key Indicators of Legal Need (whichever you have decided to use)
- SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)
- Summary of findings from stakeholder interviews (Desktop Task 4) regarding current service gaps by geography, client type, and legal matter types.
- List of your service's matters by geographic regions (Desktop Task 2)
- The list of service 'gaps' and unmet needs identified by staff and management committee members at Workshop 1.

Aims of Workshop 2:

- To discuss the level of unmet need that may exist in your service catchment based on the application of the Legal Needs Assessment Framework.
- To discuss how your service aligns with the services being provided by others in your catchment.
- To highlight the 'gaps' in service in your catchment in terms of geography, client type and legal matter types.
- To discuss to what extent this gap analysis has prompted ideas for changes to current service provision.

17. Key questions for discussion

Consider the list of your service's activities by geographic areas, alongside your chosen indicators and SEIFA(IRSD) Index at the same geographic level.

- What do the data and maps show about your catchment? How well does this match what you previously understood about your catchment?
- How are your services, including outreaches, located and how appropriately do they reach areas of disadvantage and likely legal need within your catchment?
- Where are the areas of alignment?
- How effective are any current targeted and/or outreach activities?
- Where are the gaps/areas that could be strengthened?
- Are their characteristics of clients, or geographic areas in your catchment that could be the focus of new programs or outreach?
- Are there any areas that seem 'over-serviced' relative to those 'under-serviced' in terms of the ratio of met legal need to your understanding of potential unmet legal need?

Section 3: Your service's data-informed strategic plan

Up to this point, you have been collecting, visualising, and interpreting data—developing the stories that the data tells you and thinking about what implications your new knowledge may have for the service.

At this point you are now ready for the important question: **So What?**

It is time to make some decisions based on your new knowledge.

Workshop 3 – Developing your data-informed strategic plan

The process from here will be different for each Centre. You are working towards Workshop 3 – a workshop to develop your Centre's new strategic plan, but each Centre may have additional steps to complete before they are ready.

These may include:

- Additional focussed investigations to answer key questions that have been raised by not effectively answered through this process
- Examination of other service models
- Validation of 'evidence' by checking results of investigations against other data sources
- Pre-planning and additional discussion to decide the focus of Workshop 3

What you will need for Workshop 3:

- A mix of staff and management committee (board) members
- Your service's current strategic plan
- Summaries from Desktop Tasks 1 - 4
- Summaries from Workshops 1 and 2

Aims of Workshop 3:

Considering the data analysis and assessment that you have undertaken, the aims of this workshop are to:

- Reassess your current stated vision, mission and objectives.
- Reassess your current model of service delivery and deployment of staff and resources across the geographic catchment considering the gap analysis that you have undertaken.

> Outcomes may be changes in service models, changes in triage practice (demand management), new programs, new outreach, new CLE, new funding, different funders….
>
> It may be confronting—or liberating—to discuss whether the resources you are currently spending in a particular area (and have been for a while) should instead be used to target legal need in a different way or different area.

Key themes for discussion:

- How relevant are your service's current vision, mission and objectives?
- How should your service best direct its efforts through its geographic catchment?
- What changes might your service make over the next 1 to 3 years to better align services with legal need?
- How could services be strengthened in geographic areas of relatively higher probable legal need?
- Does your catchment include dispersed and/or isolated areas with lower calculated legal need but significant issues related to disadvantage and access? What are the best ways to reach these communities?
- Consider how your current service model is set up to generate matters (met need) in certain areas versus others. Is the current service model appropriate for reaching unmet need in your catchment?
- Does your service currently have the right mix of target groups and legal matter types compared with legal needs and gaps?
- What opportunities are there to realign service delivery methods?
- Advice/casework balance
- Outreaches
- Appointment vs. drop-in vs. telephone services
- Are there opportunities to meet your aims through expanded or strengthened partnerships with other services?
- What infrastructure may be required to maximise your strategic goals? (location, technology, travel, staffing)

The challenge here is to move beyond making a list of new 'good ideas' that would fill gaps in legal need in your catchment. You also need to think about your current programs and service delivery – just because you have always done it, does not mean you are meeting the highest priority need. Maybe in addition to doing something new, you need to think about making changes to current programs or even dropping one of them?

Appendix 1

Data visualisation

18. Reading and talking about graphs

It is important to orientate yourself to the graph before you start interpreting its shapes. For example, ask yourself:

- What is the relationship or distribution the graph is describing?
- What are the units of measurement on both the horizontal *(x)* and vertical *(y)* axes? What is the range on each axes (small changes between 80% and 81% look huge if the range is 79-82% compared to 0-100%)
- Look at the legend (key). What do each of the lines or the bars in the graph actually describe? What does each colour stand for? Ask yourself, “Am I looking at proportions of a total (percentages) or numbers (frequencies)?”
- Is this chart providing a snapshot in time, or displaying trends (or changes) over time?
- Are the changes I see actually very big, very fast – look at the measurement scale again and the number of cases (matters, clients etc) that the data in the graph refers to.

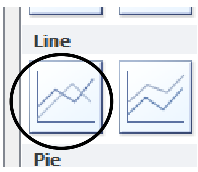
When you are presenting data (in charts or tables or within text), don’t forget that your audience also needs time to orientate themselves to what the graph represents. Tell them what it shows, what each axis measures and what each line, or section of the bar chart or pie graph represents BEFORE you start interpreting and explaining the results to them.

19. But which chart should I use?

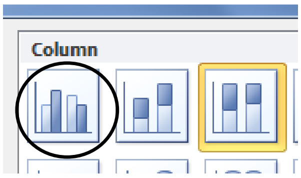
You can change the type of chart to present your data in different ways.

Some charts are appropriate for specific types of data, so your chart type should match your data. For example:

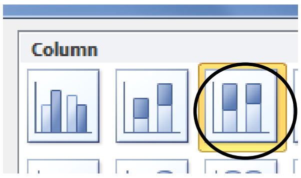
- Line charts are good for showing trends and comparisons between results (e.g. what have been the total number of matters in each of Civil, Family and Criminal law types over the last 5 years). The right-hand option here stacks the results, so you can see the cumulative impact of each variable.



- Frequency distribution charts (listed under ‘Column’ in Excel) are good for comparing the distribution of results (e.g. how **many** of your clients are male or female).



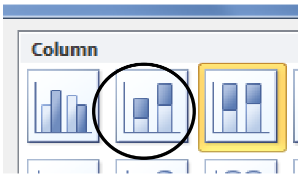
- “Stacked Column” or bar charts are good for looking at compositions, that is, percentages of a total. (e.g. for each law type, what proportion of your clients are male or female). It is important to remember with proportions that 20% of 200 cases and 20% of 5,000 case are two very different **numbers** of cases!



- There is another type of column chart that enables you to consider both composition and distribution in your data. Using the example above of ‘for each law type, what proportion of your clients are male or female’ you can look at

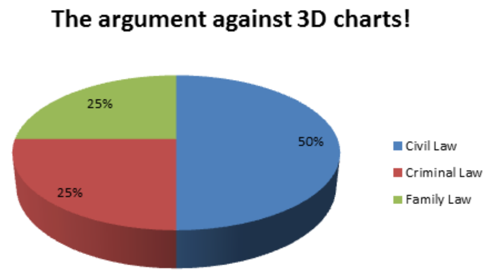
    - how each single column is divided to see the proportion of male and female clients for that law type;

    - AND by looking at the height of each column, see the total number of clients for each law type



- Pie charts are good for looking at the composition of ONE variable, that is, percentages of one total. (e.g. what proportion of total matters are civil, family or criminal).

In general, do not use 3D charts as they are harder to understand. The 3D perspective adds more ‘volume’ to some values over others distorting your perception of which value is larger. Look at how much more prominent criminal law is than family law in the chart below, yet they both represent 25% of the total matters.



Once again, the internet is full of places where you can get inspiration for how to present your data and as well as assistance in using Excel and its Chart Tools. Jump in! Visual data representation – when done well – will help you to communicate your results powerfully and persuade your management boards, funders and other stakeholders or your arguments.

Once you have made your chart, check it by asking a colleague to interpret it. Is the data meaning clear?

Appendix 2

Other approaches to legal needs indicators

20. Priority client groups – Community Legal Centres Queensland

In 2019, Community Legal Centres Queensland was funded by the Queensland Government to update their guide for *Evidence and Analysis of Legal Need*[6] to support Centres to develop evidence for their procurement applications. The guide shows how indicators, in this case the prevalence and distribution of people belonging to the Priority Client Groups of the (then current) National Partnership Agreement, can be employed to generate evidence for the probable distribution of legal need. For each group, the guide brings together a range of evidence about the distribution of people with the characteristics that define the Priority Client Group (in the Queensland context); research for example, about the social, health or financial needs of each group; the types of legal problems likely to be experienced more often; how risk factors may intersect; barriers to accessing services; and suggestions for appropriate service delivery models.

Evidence and Analysis of Legal Need is an excellent example of how different sources of evidence can aid in the development of frameworks for interpreting indicators, that is telling the best, and most data-informed story about what the numbers represent.

The national priority groups under the current NALP are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Children and young people (up to 24 years)
- Older people (aged over 65 years)
- People in custody and/or prisoners
- People experiencing, or at risk of, family violence
- People experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness
- People residing in rural or remote areas
- People who are culturally and linguistically diverse
- People with a disability or mental illness
- People with low education levels, and
- Single parents

6 Community Legal Centres Queensland (2019) Evidence and Analysis of Legal Need accessed 12 May 2021 from: https://apo.org.au/node/253551

21. Need for Legal Assistance Service (NLAS) – Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

Based on their *Access to Justice and Legal Needs Program* research, the Law and Justice Foundation have developed a suite of indicators to facilitate legal need prediction.

- NLAS(Capability), a count of residents aged 15 to 64 with a level of personal income likely to qualify them for the more intensive legal assistance services ($26K), who also had a relatively low level of educational attainment.
- NLAS(ATSI) includes residents aged 15 and over with a low personal income who were likely to require culturally appropriate services as they had an Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander background. It has no educational attainment requirement.
- NLAS(CALD) counts residents aged 15 and over with a low personal income from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. It has no educational attainment requirement.
- NLAS($52K) uses the same criteria as NLAS(Capability) but with an increased income level which aligns with the mean disposable income in Australia and the level above which it is currently unlikely clients would qualify for any bespoke support.
- NLAS(65+) allows residents over the age of 64 to be included in the total NLAS(Capability) count.
- NLAS(CLC) builds of the NLAS(Capability) indicator but:
    - using a financial qualifying criteria equivalent to a $52,000 per year
    - referencing household rather than personal income
    - including residents aged 15 and over
    - having a wider definition of low educational attainment, and
    - incorporating a correction for potential undercounts in more disadvantaged areas[7]

More information about the indicators, as well as an interactive online tool – *National Legal Needs Dashboard –* can be found at the Law and Justice Foundation website.

7 Mirrlees-Black, C (2019) An indicator of need for community legal centres: introducing NLAS(CLC) Paper 29. Sydney: Law and Justice Foundation of NSW