

**Press release 16 May 2016**

## **Award-winning charity targets would-be lawyers with legal equivalent of 'Teach First' graduate scheme.**

**Just for Kids Law is recruiting would-be lawyers to work as community-based trainee 'youth advocates' for a year.**

Just for Kids Law is today (Monday 16 May) launching its groundbreaking 'Advocacy First' scheme, thanks to funding from the Big Lottery. Under the scheme, graduate recruits will receive a month's intensive training, before working alongside the charity's outreach team for 10 months.

The posts will be open to all graduates, but the advocacy and negotiation skills learned are likely to be of particular appeal to anyone seeking a legal career. Advocates will be given basic training in the law relating to education, community care, youth justice, immigration and welfare benefits. They will be paid a stipend for the year equivalent to the London living wage.

**Just for Kids Law director Shauneen Lambe says:**

*'The legal field is becoming increasingly competitive and we believe Advocacy First will appeal to graduates who want to stand out to future employers. Law firms and chambers want applicants who can show they are good at thinking on their feet and responding well in different situations. These skills are equally vital for our youth advocates. They have strong communication skills, which means that as well as supporting intensely vulnerable young people, advocates are equipped to negotiate successfully with hard-pressed professionals, such as head teachers and school governors, or social workers.'*

The pilot has already received support from within the legal profession.

**Michael Bowes QC, joint head of Outer Temple Chambers, says:**

*“Advocacy First is a brilliant opportunity for graduates who are considering becoming lawyers to learn practical advocacy skills by helping young people in need. Being selected to be on Advocacy First would be a definite plus point on anyone’s CV.”*

Advocacy First has been two years in the planning and is being run initially as a three-year pilot. If the pilot is successful, it is hoped to roll the model out to other areas of the UK. During the pilot phase, Advocacy First trainees will be based in Just for Kids Law's new office in Canning Town - in space provided by Community Links - an area known for having high levels of poverty and deprivation.

Advocacy First is supported by an advisory board which will monitor and review the scheme as it progresses. Inaugural board members include Daniel Klier, Global Head of Strategy at HSBC, who first developed the idea along with Shauneen Lambe, as a way of increasing the number of disadvantaged young people to benefit from Just for Kids Law's support.

**Shauneen Lambe says:**

*'The work of our existing team of youth advocates is at the heart of everything that Just for Kids Law stands for. They help some of the most desperate and disadvantaged young people get their lives back on track. However, our resources are always at full stretch and we have to turn away many young people who would benefit from our support. The Advocacy First scheme will enable us to make Just for Kids Law's resources go further, and to support an additional 1,000 young, vulnerable people over the life of the pilot.'*

The deadline for applications for the three initial Advocacy First posts is 10 June; interviews will be held on 28 June Three further advocates will be recruited each year in 2017 and in 2018.

For more information about Advocacy First, contact Fiona Bawdon, Just for Kids Law communications co-director, [fionabawdon@justforkidslaw.org](mailto:fionabawdon@justforkidslaw.org); 020 3174 2279; 07740 644474.

Notes for editors:

1. Just for Kids Law is a charity that provides advocacy and legal support to disadvantaged young people. [www.justforkidslaw.org](http://www.justforkidslaw.org)
2. Advocacy First applications can be made here:

<http://www.justforkidslaw.org/support-our-work/vacancies>

3. Shauneen Lambe was chosen as an Ashoka fellow in 2012, one of 31 Ashoka social entrepreneurs in the UK. Ashoka is the largest network of social entrepreneurs worldwide, with nearly 3,000 Ashoka Fellows in 70 countries putting their system-changing ideas into practice on a global scale. In 2014, Just for Kids Law went through the Ashoka Globalizer programme to develop a scaling strategy, with the support of business advisors and consultants from McKinsey. [www.ashoka.org](http://www.ashoka.org)

4. Daniel Klier and Shauneen Lambe are both World Economic Forum Young Global Leaders, which was set up as an integral part of the World Economic Forum Young Global Leaders project.

5. For details of Big Lottery support for Advocacy First, see:  
<https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/search-past-grants/project-details?appid=298362>

6. Community Links is an innovative east London charity running a variety of community projects.