

## **Producing critical evidence to fight unsupportable cutbacks in legal aid funding**

LSE research helped document the serious social and economic consequences of reducing public access to legal aid

What was the problem?

In addition, they examined the revised pay structure for reimbursing legal aid work. All eligible cases were now divided into lower tier (less than four and a half hours billable work at a flat fee of £280) and higher tier cases (meriting extra time and paid at £765). Any cases falling between the two tiers lost money for the Law Centre and, additionally, complex cases had now become too expensive to pursue.

Subsequent research in the Southwark Law

implies either integration or removal within six months) rose from 29% to 58% in the final two quarters of the evaluation (compared to 34% in the control study in Leeds). Citizens Advice Bureau and *Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees* cited these legal outcomes as evidence of the economic value of personal interaction.

When financial difficulties threatened the South West London Law Centre with closure, the Ministry of Justice was prompted by LSE research to provide emergency interim funding. This was backed by private law firms and charities in recognition of the Centre's work.

After the Coalition Government proposed the LASPO bill, James and Forbess wrote a briefing