

The Law Society Charity – **Appeal for Support**

Set up in 1974 the Law Society Charity supports a wide range of organisations and individuals with a view to directly furthering law and justice, both at home and overseas.

Good causes could benefit from law firms' unclaimed client funds

Law firms in England & Wales could be putting thousands of pounds of unclaimed client money to a good cause by donating to charity. The Law Society Charity is calling on solicitors to not let unclaimed funds gather dust but to donate them to the Charity instead.

The Charity has provided essential financial support to a number of initiatives, including being a major supporter of LawCare, the International Lawyers for Africa programme and the Diversity Access Scheme to name a few. Donations of unclaimed client funds will provide much needed funds to allow the charity to continue its support for these and many other good causes.

Law Society Charity Chairman Nigel Dodds says:

"As many law firms tighten their belts in the current downturn, the philanthropic endeavours of the profession risk a decline. Donating unclaimed client funds allows firms who want to continue to donate to charity to carry on doing so. The money cannot be used for anything else."

Solicitors are only permitted to dispose of unclaimed client funds to charity and the Law Society Charity is urging the profession to follow in the footsteps of other firms and put the money to good use.

The Solicitors Regulation Authority approved an amendment to the Solicitors Account Rules last year, allowing balances of £50 or less of unclaimed funds per client to be released to charity without SRA approval. Once all efforts to reimburse the client with the funds have been exhausted solicitors can donate them to charity.

To find out more about the amended SRA rules which came into force on 14 July 2008 go to the following SRA website page.

<http://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/code-of-conduct/accounts-rules>

Where the donation amounts to over £50 of a client's unclaimed funds, the Law Society Charity will provide an indemnity for that amount subject to the donor firm having prior SRA approval to make the donation.

Visit the Law Societies Media centre to read the press release entitled "Good causes could benefit from unclaimed client money" 16 February 2009 www.lawsocietymedia.org.uk