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PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE USE

Birmingham Law Centre announces Lord Hunt as Patron

Birmingham Law Centre has announced that Lord Hunt of Kings Heath will be its Patron. Lord Hunt has a long and distinguished career in Government and the public sector and is Chair of Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust. He spent 10 years in the last Government and served in Department of Health, Department for Work and Pensions, DEFRA, DECC and the Ministry of Justice where he was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and Government spokesperson in the Ministry of Justice between 2007 and 2008. His final post was as Deputy Leader of the House of Lords and Minister for Energy.

Speaking of his appointment, Lord Hunt said: "The work that Birmingham Law Centre undertakes for our most vulnerable in society is vital. In challenging times, we must support those who need this help more than ever, and so I'm delighted to have been asked to become Patron to support their work and raise their profile across the City."

He continued: "Law Centres transform people's lives, helping them to stay in their homes, keep their families together and get into employment or education. The proposed Government cuts to Legal Aid will leave thousands more people with serious but everyday problems nowhere to turn to."

Elizabeth Hensel, Chair of Birmingham Law Centre commented: "Lord Hunt brings not only vast experience within the public and voluntary sector, but will also enable us to raise our profile with those who support our work. We are entirely dependent on donations, grants, charitable and legal aid funding to continue our work with those who cannot afford to pay for advice. As the only Law Centre in Birmingham it is important we are able to secure a sustainable future."

Ends

Notes for Editors:

Law Centres are not-for-profit legal practices providing free legal advice and representation to vulnerable and disadvantaged people. They are solicitor-led organisations that have rights of hearing and litigation in the highest courts and are members of the Law Centres Federation.

Birmingham Law Centre (BLC) is one of 55 Law Centres in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, staffed by solicitors, caseworkers and in some cases barristers who specialise in areas of civil law including debt, employment, housing, discrimination, welfare benefits, education and immigration.

BLC provides in-depth legal advice and representation, including judicial review, on social welfare areas of law such as: welfare benefits, debt, community care, housing and employment

discrimination. Last year, around 2,000 clients were helped and more than 3,500 hours of casework were undertaken.

For further information please call Pete Lowen, Chief Executive of the Birmingham Law Centre on 0121 766 7466 or email: pete.lowen@birminghamlawcentre.org.uk

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath was created a life peer in 1997. For further information please call 0207 219 2030 or email: huntp@parliament.uk