



**Pro Bono
Awards
2020**

The LawWorks Annual Pro Bono Awards

Wednesday 2nd December 2020

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Welcome to the LawWorks Pro Bono Awards 2020



Alastair Douglas
Chair of Trustees

I am delighted to introduce you to the LawWorks virtual Annual Awards. The Awards are a highlight of the LawWorks' calendar, and provide the opportunity to come together and celebrate pro bono commitment and achievement over the past year.

This year there is a difference in that we are holding the Awards remotely, whilst not the same as meeting to celebrate in person, we hope you will find the event enjoyable and that you may be able to watch the live broadcast, hosted and presented by Matthew Stadlen and Christina Blacklaws. They will be speaking to the Award winners who will only hear of their achievements minutes before they are announced by the presenters.

We have again received many truly inspiring and high-calibre nominations, all are worthy of recognition. This has been an especially challenging year; individuals and organisations have demonstrated ingenuity and commitment to continue to deliver pro bono work. Their contribution benefits society, upholds values of the legal profession - including a commitment to the rule of law, and helps to extend access to justice where other legal support is not available. It also sends a message to policy-makers that access to justice should be a greater priority.

We know that the pro bono work recognised at these Awards is only a snapshot of the valuable and important work undertaken across England and Wales – pro bono which makes a difference to individuals, local communities and the charities and not-for-profit organisations supporting them. We hope that the Awards help to raise awareness of the commitment of our members and the profession to pro bono, and also the importance of partnerships and the contribution of law schools, law centres, charities and others.

On behalf of LawWorks, I would like to thank all those who took the time to submit a nomination, those who were nominated and all the shortlisted nominees. I would also like to extend our gratitude to the panel of Judges, who have given their time and consideration in order to agree on the winners. Thanks also to our sponsors, LexisNexis, and to Evy Agency who provided the production support for our first ever virtual Awards.

Most of all, my congratulations go to those shortlisted and to the winners; we hope that your achievements recognised and celebrated here tonight will encourage and inspire others.

If you would like to find out more about LawWorks, information about the charity and our work is included at the end of this programme.

Order of proceedings

Time	Event
6:00pm	Welcome and Introductions
6.17pm	Best contribution by a Small or Medium Firm
6.20pm	Best Contribution by a Large Firm
6.24pm	Best Contribution by an In-house Team or an In-house Solicitor
6.32pm	Junior Lawyers Division Pro Bono Award
6.35pm	Best Contribution by an Individual
6.38pm	LawWorks Cymru Award
6.42pm	Best Contribution by a Pro Bono Clinic
6.48pm	Best International Pro Bono Award - in partnership with A4ID
6.51pm	Best New Pro Bono Activity
6.56pm	Best Digital / Virtual Pro Bono Activity
7.00pm	Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership

Watch the [LawWorks Annual Pro Bono Awards on YouTube](#).

Our hosts

Christina Blacklaws

A former president of the Law Society of England and Wales, Christina has been a life-long campaigner for access to justice and diversity and inclusion and an innovator in the profession. She now holds a number of non-executive roles for law firms, chairs two government bodies in the lawtech space, holds a visiting fellowship at Manchester University and sits on the Councils of the International Bar Association, the World Jurist Association and the Law Society where she represents women lawyers.

 [@Blacklawslaw](https://twitter.com/Blacklawslaw)

Matthew Stadlen

Matthew Stadlen is a broadcaster, writer and regular How To Academy host. Previously he was an LBC presenter, wrote The Matthew Stadlen Interview for the Telegraph and presented the TV series Five Minutes With and On The Road With for the BBC. He is a birdwatcher and photographer, and his book How To See Birds is out now.

 [@matthewstadlen](https://twitter.com/matthewstadlen)

Judging Panel

Yasmin Batliwala, Chief Executive, Advocates for International Development

Yasmin Batliwala is the CEO of Advocates for International Development (A4ID), which sources lawyers to provide free legal advice and assistance to support organisations working in the international development sector and whose principle aim is the eradication of poverty by focusing on the 2030 Agenda.

She has held a number of significant leadership positions over the years within the Public and Third Sectors. Her portfolios have included HIV/Aids, Drug and Alcohol dependency, and Criminal Justice. She has undertaken work for the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime in this regard. She is Chair of WDP, the largest provider of drug and alcohol services in London. And is also the President of HACRO, a service which caters for the rehabilitation and resettlement of ex-offenders. Yasmin was a recipient of the City of London Woman of Achievement Awards in respect to her work in the Public Sector.

I. Stephanie Boyce, Deputy President of the Law Society

Stephanie Boyce is the Director of Stephanie Boyce Consulting Limited, a consultancy that advises on the management and governance of not-for-profit organisations. Stephanie was admitted as a solicitor in 2002 and has a wealth of experience in corporate governance, regulatory frameworks and professional regulation. Stephanie holds a Master of Laws in public law and global governance from King's College, University of London.

Stephanie has recently been elected as the Vice President of the Law Society and will become President in 2021. Stephanie will become the representative body's sixth woman president and its first ethnic minority President; amongst other roles at the Law Society, she has chaired the Council Members' Conduct Committee, and represented the Women Lawyers Division as a Council member. Stephanie has spent most of her career working in complex environments with challenging governance arrangements, from central and local government. Stephanie also sits as an Independent Person to the Standards Committee of her local authority and as a panel member to the Independent Educational Appeals Panel.

Ruth Daniel, Chief Executive, Access to Justice Foundation

Ruth Daniel is the Chief Executive of the Access to Justice Foundation, a grant making charity which aims to improve access to justice for the most vulnerable in society. She works closely with the advice and pro bono sectors to help improve access to legal advice for those who need it but cannot afford it.

Ruth has a background in law and finance, qualifying as a solicitor at Charles Russell

before working in-house. She volunteers at several charities and is a member of various legal advice sector advisory groups and committees.

Mark Evans, Chair Law Society Wales Committee & Law Society Council member for Cheshire & North Wales

Mark joined the high street law firm Allington Hughes in 1993 and has been part of the management since 2002. Mark is based in Llanrwst but has also worked in the Wrexham and Chester offices. He is a property Solicitor and Head of the Agricultural Department. His firm has a legal aid contract for family and crime.

Mark has been the Law Society Council Member for the constituency of Cheshire & North Wales since 2015 and the Chair of the Law Society Wales Committee since 2017. He was also elected to represent Council on the Law Society Board from 2018 to August 2020.

Chris Minnoch, Chief Executive, Legal Aid Practitioners Group

Chris is CEO of Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG), the representative body for legal aid lawyers in England and Wales. Chris qualified in New Zealand and then worked within the law centre movement as a youth advocate before moving to the UK in 2001. After a brief stint in the civil service he joined Greenwich Housing Rights, a specialist legal advice and policy charity. Chris has many years of legal practice, management and policy experience in the legal aid and advice sector and as a charity trustee supporting volunteering, student and pro bono initiatives. In 2016 Chris joined LAPG as Operations Director and became the CEO in 2018. Chris is currently leading LAPG's drive for a fair, accessible and sustainable legal aid scheme.

Paul Rogerson, Editor-in-chief, Law Society Gazette

Paul is a journalist who is currently the Editor-in-chief of The Law Society Gazette where he has worked since 2007; before that he was a business journalist on a variety of publications – most latterly as the City Editor of The Glasgow Herald.

Adam Tear, former Chair of the Solicitors' Association of Higher Court Advocates

Adam is currently a solicitor advocate with Scott Moncrieff & Associates Ltd, and a Deputy District Judge. He is a solicitor advocate, and regularly appears in the High Court and Court of Appeal dealing with some of the most complex and interesting public law cases. As an advocate he has appeared pro bono for the Court 37 and the Chancery duty judge rota.

He is a former Chair of the Solicitors Association of Higher Court Advocates. He is also the Chief Assessor of the immigration accreditation scheme and also a principle trainer for AMT Training solutions.

In 2014 Adam was recognised as solicitor advocate of the year at the Law Society Excellence awards, and in 2017 was highly commended. In 2018 he presented the award on behalf of SAHCA.

Heidi Sandy, Chair of the Law Society's Women Lawyers Division

Heidi Sandy is chair of the Women Lawyers Division.

Koser Shaheen, Council Member for the Ethnic Minorities Constituency and Chair of Law Society's Ethnic Minority Lawyers Division

Koser is a GLD working for HMT Treasury. She is an elected Law Society Council Member for the Ethnic Minorities Constituency. Her main role in this position is to represent and provide a voice for black and minority ethnic (BAME) solicitors in England & Wales. Koser is also Chair of the Law Society's Ethnic Minority Lawyers Division (EMLD). The EMLD supports BAME solicitors and their allies through guidance and support and career-enhancing events, information and networking opportunities. Koser is also a Law Society Social Mobility Ambassador. This initiative promotes role models from non-traditional backgrounds who have achieved their ambitions and are willing to share the challenges they faced and how they overcame them. Koser has had an unconventional journey into law. She left school aged 11 and had no GCSEs or A levels. She went on to work as a mushroom picker, cleaner and clothes packer. She did not give up and finally won a place at university as a 32-year-old single mother. In 2007, Koser was awarded a first class law degree and went on to complete her training contract at a prestigious law firm. Koser's achievements in Law have been widely recognised and she was included in the Debretts list of Most Influential Lawyers of 2017.

The Finalists

Award categories:

- Best contribution by a Small or Medium Firm
- Best Contribution by a Large Firm
- Best Contribution by an In-house Team or Solicitor
- Junior Lawyers Division Pro Bono Award
- Best Contribution by an Individual
- The LawWorks Cymru Award
- Best Contribution by a Pro Bono Clinic
- Best International Pro Bono Award
- Best New Pro Bono Activity
- Best Digital or Virtual Pro Bono Activity
- Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership

Best contribution by a Small or Medium Firm

AltraLaw

“...Nathan Vidini, who is leading the case, has been a life saver, showing real compassion and expertise in assisting the family through such a traumatic period of their lives.”

AltraLaw is the UK's first not-for-profit Law Firm established by Nathan Vidini. AltraLaw is committed to 'purpose over profits' (the 'AltraLaw way') whilst delivering outstanding client service. All profits are gifted to charities chosen by the firm's clients.

Instead of fee income targets, lawyers have pro bono targets (of a minimum of 100 hours per annum, equivalent to an average of £20,000 of free legal advice per fee earner). AltraLaw's lawyers are encouraged and supported to align themselves with organisations that flag cases (especially those in Wales) of people in need. Lawyers are given the resources they need to support their clients on a pro bono basis. AltraLaw support its professionals by permitting them autonomy in these decisions and the time and flexibility to achieve their individual passions, empowering them to challenge injustice and meet needs wherever they see them.

Goodman Derrick

“...Stephanie has also embedded philanthropy and giving within her private client practice. She is a powerhouse and an inspiration to many within the firm.”

Stephanie Brobbey leads and champions Goodman Derrick's approach to Corporate Social Responsibility and pro bono. In doing so she has been crucial to the firm's involvement with LawWorks, The Funding Network, Extend Ventures, and the Property Prize. Pro bono is now a staple at the firm where pro bono hours are recognised alongside fee earning hours. Pro Bono hours and projects are increasing year on year.

In 2020 Goodman Derrick's corporate partners worked for Extend Ventures on a pro bono basis, helping to increase access to early stage funding for diverse entrepreneurs, including venture capital funding and government funds.

In 2020 Goodman Derrick's entire property team have been engaged with the Property Prize, a charity which aims to improve social mobility for young ambitious people from less advantaged backgrounds, and focuses on providing opportunities to underprivileged young people who have an interest in the property industry.

Best Contribution by a Large Firm

DLA Piper

“Over the last year, DLA Piper’s pro bono practice has made significant strides in increasing access to justice for the most vulnerable, with a particular focus on bolstering the pro bono community in the North of England.”

DLA Piper runs 14 pro bono clinics across seven UK offices, nine of which are ‘end-to-end’ casework clinics. The firm has expanded its work with Kids in Need of Defense UK (KIND UK). Working with Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit and KIND UK, DLA Piper lawyers have taken on 64 new citizenship cases over the past year.

In response to COVID-19, the firm expanded its work with the National Deaf Children’s Society to support families who needed additional financial support to care for children with hearing difficulties and other complex needs. Through this clinic, DLA Piper lawyers represent these families to challenge the removal of Disability Living Allowance. At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the firm began working with the South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group and other NGOs in the North of England to support asylum seekers living in overcrowded accommodation with no means to shield. Lawyers assisted two asylum seekers with serious underlying health conditions (such as diabetes and epilepsy) through pre-action correspondence to the Home Office.

Howard Kennedy

“We would like to express our gratitude for your team for your assistance during this period. Your dedication and flexibility have enabled us to serve clients at a time when they need help the most.”

The Howard Kennedy pro bono programme was initially set up by a newly qualified solicitor, and a trainee has been successfully running it now for four years. During that time it has increased and developed to incorporate two main programmes and additional ad hoc assistance.

Through the LawWorks Unpaid Wage Project, trainee solicitors volunteer to run cases end-to-end to help employees secure unpaid wages and ease the suffering caused by so called “wage theft” particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Pro bono support is also provided to the charitable sector through the LawWorks Not-for-Profits Programme with over 20 fee earners working with ten different charities covering diverse areas within the community, including sporting and cultural activities, and those supporting health and wellbeing.

Other pro bono projects include advice to refugees and providing legal services at the Toynbee Hall Free Legal Advice Centre. This was a joint venture which was set up to run remotely before Covid-19 and was quickly adapted. It provides advice on housing and civil liberties.

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius UK

“...Our cases can be a matter of life or death, but at a minimum poor quality of life, and we truly need reliable law firm partners who we can depend on time and time again. We have found that partnership with Morgan Lewis...”

Morgan Lewis has an extensive pro bono programme which supports individuals, foundations and charities. The firm works closely with LawWorks and has responded to numerous opportunities.

There is a diverse range of support but there are a couple of notable areas. One is the firm’s work with the UK National Centre for Domestic Violence where 30 volunteer lawyers helped to advise 67 victims of domestic abuse in situations exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The other is the successful representation at appeal of the Save the Sutton Estate Limited to prevent a large developer pulling down a social housing estate. The impact ensures a continued source of affordable housing in London.

The firm has provided legal counsel to Hostage International, a charity that supports families during a kidnap of a loved one and to hostages who have returned home. It also supports clinics advising on welfare benefits and another working with entrepreneurial start up companies, as well as offering advice on immigration and human rights.

Reed Smith

“We consider ourselves lucky to have a good friend like Reed Smith, with an astute understanding of how best they can support us to continue providing legal advice and information to one of the most marginalised groups in society.”

Reed Smith has significantly grown its pro bono activity in recent years. The team supports three in-person clinics, four remote and letter-writing clinics, five projects delivering end-to-end casework, four international human rights projects and three environmental partnerships.

Pro bono efforts focus on access to justice, legal advice for charities and international human rights. Working in partnership with Kids In Need of Defense UK (KIND UK) the firm helps to ensure a regulated immigration status for undocumented children making a huge difference to their lives. The pro bono team also worked with the Prisoners Advice Service which helps to protect the human rights of adult prisoners throughout the UK.

Other projects support victims of domestic violence, and provide representation for disability benefits at tribunal. The team is expanding its reach to cover LGBT+ rights, race and gender equality and environmental concerns.

The firm has provided free commercial advice to over 250 charities including long term support under LawWorks’ Honorary Counsel scheme.

Best Contribution by an In-House Team or Solicitor

BPP University

“As a consequence of this team’s pro-active approach, [it] has not only continued to deliver its flagship services throughout lockdown, [but] has exceeded all previous levels of student and client engagement and introduced new services that directly respond to the pandemic.”

Against the backdrop of lockdown, the in-house pro bono team at BPP University proactively coordinated a package of support which fundamentally changed the ways in which students, professionals and clients engaged and accessed pro bono services at BPP. Creative approaches such as the use of virtual white boards, polls and emoji reactions helped transition Public Legal Education workshops into online events. A swift transition to a centralised phone system with remote access ensured the continuation of BPP’s Employment Law Telephone Advice Line. This work was backed up by updated volunteer guidelines to working safely and securely and the “Covid-19 FAQs”, which included a number of factsheets answering questions on key topics such as furlough, domestic abuse and child care disputes.

This summer saw record student and client numbers across all areas of work all directly attributable to the efforts of the team. Their work ensures that BPP can continue to offer its vital advice provision and offer meaningful pro bono opportunities to students.

Deborah Smith (Goldman Sachs)

“Deborah was one of the leading founders of the In-House Pro Bono Group...The group, led by Deborah, is putting pro bono in the minds and hearts of the in-house legal community.”

Through the In-House Pro Bono Group, a volunteer group of in-house lawyers has set out on a mission to encourage other in-house lawyers to undertake pro bono work. Deborah has worked tirelessly, on top of her day job, to establish a website, brand, and communications on behalf of the Group, in order to inspire the in-house legal community to get involved in pro bono.

Collectively, the Group has assisted in helping draft and publicise the In-House Pro Bono Guidance, which was issued by the Law Society, in partnership with LawWorks, last year. It has also organised webinars, training seminars, and established roundtables for the in-house community to get more engaged in pro bono work, where there is a huge untapped potential. In 2020 it set out to establish an In-House Pro Bono Day, during Pro Bono Week, to encourage more in-house lawyers to undertake pro bono work.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

“DV Flag East offers free, confidential legal advice to anyone experiencing domestic abuse in the borough. Additional structures are built in to the structure to ensure that specialist support service connections are made such as immigration, housing and debt advice. This is the first project in the country with a local authority working with a Citizens Advice and local private practice solicitors.”

The boroughs of Barking and Dagenham have the highest known prevalence rate of domestic abuse in London in terms of reported incidence to the police. DV Flag East is a socially responsible project established through London Borough of Barking and Dagenham’s legal team, Citizens Advice Barking and Dagenham and local family law firms. It offers free independent and confidential advice on legal options to anyone experiencing domestic abuse in Barking and Dagenham and empowers people to make informed choices and have more confidence in the legal system.

Residents are triaged by Citizens Advice and for those who fall outside the scope of legal aid, Barking and Dagenham’s legal team volunteer as honorary legal advisors with Citizens Advice outside of their working office hours. The rate of referrals to the clinic increased significantly with the onset of Covid-19.

Visa

“The pro bono work that [the] team has undertaken has been broad and far reaching, fuelled by the individual passion of colleagues. Visa encourages [this] work by providing funds to the employees that volunteer which they can donate to charities.”

With a team speaking a number of languages and specialising in fields ranging from data privacy and employment to corporate governance and finance, the teams are able to work with organisations as varied as Breast Cancer UK, Latina American Women’s Aid, The Farad Foundation (which works with young migrants from deprived areas), Beard and Books (a charity which provides educational programmes to children in Sheffield) and The Cranfield Trust. Visa conducted an extensive Honorary Counsel project with Seable Limited (a social enterprise that organises accessible tailored holidays for blind and partially sighted people). The unique part of having a Visa team member serve as Honorary Counsel is that each organisation has the strength of the Visa legal team behind them to work on a variety of issues.

Additionally Visa continues to be an active participant in the UK In-House pro bono group helping to draft guidelines to be used by other to create their own in-house pro bono teams.

Junior Lawyers Division Pro Bono Award

Samuel Bass (Duncan Lewis Solicitors)

“By combining his excellent legal knowledge and experience with his commitment and dedication to providing pro bono services to vulnerable individuals...Samuel assists those who would otherwise be unable to access the essential legal facilities that they need. The selfless work he carries out for the service is done out of a true desire to help those in need.”

As a solicitor in Duncan Lewis Solicitors’ immigration department in Swansea, Samuel understands first-hand the need for vulnerable individuals to have access to high quality legal advice and assistance.

In addition to his full-time work, Samuel devotes his Monday evenings assisting every client that attends a drop-in session at Asylum Justice, the only charity in Wales that offers free legal advice and representation to asylum seekers, recognised refugees and vulnerable migrants. The impact of Samuel’s contributions is immeasurable and, for some clients, has been life-changing; his assistance has given countless vulnerable individuals, without any recourse, an injection of hope to their cases and has had an enormous positive impact on their lives. This dedication to pro bono work is second-to-none and is invaluable in a time where vulnerable individuals’ ability to access justice is severely hampered by cuts to legal aid and a shortage of immigration law provision.

Miriam Bandera (Reed Smith)

“Miriam and her team were able to create a comprehensive manual that not only included the substance we requested, but went beyond to respond to the changing dialogue landscape caused by the pandemic.”

Miriam leads the work at Reed Smith with Lawyers without Borders (LWB), with a focus on human trafficking in Tanzania, a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labour and sexual exploitation. Miriam coordinated a team of 31 lawyers worldwide to prepare a manual and foster a dialogue about human trafficking for local communities. The manual will be used directly on the ground in Tanzania with LWB’s local partners to equip local communities with the tools to recognise and prevent human trafficking, as well as reducing the stigma faced by survivors. The manual has the potential to inspire future projects across the globe.

Miriam has also introduced the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) to the Social Impact Finance Group at Reed Smith and she is coordinating the Group in advising AFFORD on blended finance products which will allow the organisation to scale-up their work and make a direct impact on the businesses and people they support.

Raphaella Gabrasadig (Travers Smith)

“Raphaella has an impact both with the substantive work which she delivers but also by the example she sets to those that look up to her within our firm and beyond.”

Five years ago Raphaella worked on the incorporation of Refugees at Home which provided a critical step in the structural support available to the refugee community in this country. It is now an established charity which connects those with a spare room in their home to refugees and has been responsible for placing over 2,200 guests for over 172,000 nights. Raphaella has also worked on the Chancery Lane Project (CLP), a collaborative effort of UK lawyers to develop new contracts and model laws to help fight climate change and achieve net zero carbon emissions. Raphaella drafted “Bella’s clause” for the second edition of CLP’s Climate Contract Playbook that incentivises management teams by reference to environmental, as opposed to solely economic, targets. The Climate Contract Playbook has been downloaded over 20,000 times in 75 countries.

Raphaella not only finds time for a range of pro bono commitments, she also sits on her department’s pro bono committee and encourages others to do so which has a longer lasting and multiplying effect.

Katrina Thomson (Baker McKenzie)

“Katrina’s commitment to pro bono is impressive and should serve as an inspiration to her peers, both junior and senior to her.”

It is not only the amount of pro bono work that Katrina has undertaken since she started work at Baker McKenzie as a trainee in 2015 that is impressive, but also the breadth of projects.

Katrina provides free legal services to children at Coram Children’s Legal Centre to enable them to apply for British Citizenship. She has also assisted the Consortium for Street Children with a review of the ‘Legal Atlas for Street Children’; a comprehensive guide that provides an overview of laws affecting street children including truancy, vagrancy and running away from home.

Katrina’s practice is intellectual property law and she has provided specialist IP training to Macmillan, in order to help their team to identify and avoid potential IP issues. She has also supported a team of lawyers at Amicus to identify and integrate potential plea mitigation factors in a death row prisoner’s case.

Katrina balances her pro bono work with her day-to-day billable matters in an extremely busy team, always finding time to assist the firm’s pro bono clients and support a wide range of important causes.

Best Contribution by an Individual

Priscilla Addo-Quaye (Addleshaw Goddard)

“At all times Priscilla has acted with complete empathy and understanding, she has provided support and assistance while gently taking us by the hand and leading us through the absolute minefield of legal jargon and protocol”.

Priscilla acted as Addleshaw Goddard’s lead Associate responsible for the co-ordination and management of its pro bono representation of three families bereaved in the Manchester Arena bombing. Addleshaw Goddard represented the families on a pro bono basis for 18 months until the inquests converted to a public inquiry. They sought to ensure the families’ participation in a full investigation into the attack to establish what happened to their loved ones, whether everything was done to protect and safeguard their lives, and identify whether there were any failings.

Priscilla played a pivotal role in advising the families, co-ordinating and managing the firm’s team, taking strategy decisions at hearings, addressing procedural issues, co-ordinating the disclosure review and liaising with pro bono counsel (a QC and two junior counsel). She is described as demonstrating “unwavering commitment, dedication and passion”, with her empathy, sensitivity, compassion and attention to client care particularly highlighted. Priscilla contributed almost half of the firm’s total pro bono hours on this matter.

Anne Collins (Clifford Chance)

“I am committed to pro bono work with a focus on gender parity and sexual and domestic violence. As lawyers, I believe we must use our skills in order to make positive changes on issues, such as these, which may not directly affect us professionally or personally, but which we are uniquely equipped to advance.”

Anne is a Senior Associate at Clifford Chance and the London pro bono and community and outreach representative on the firm’s gender parity committee Accelerate. Her pro bono activity has included acting on behalf of Christie Elan-Cane to challenge the lack of a non-gender specific option on UK passports before the Court of Appeal; co-ordinating multi-jurisdictional research related to workplace violence and harassment and providing the UK analysis, which formed part of Human Rights Watch’s global campaign; and involvement in an ongoing investigation by a major sporting body into allegations of systemic sexual abuse of female players by top-ranking officials.

In addition, Anne successfully lobbied Clifford Chance to provide a financial grant to the London Black Women’s Project to enable it to open a refuge in Newham, which staff donated household items to equip.

Eddie Coppinger (Legal Advice Centre (University House))

“In June 2020, we went “live” with our Advice Portal in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham. Our experience at providing remote advice was at the heart of its development...From 6 October 2020, we are now providing access to the Portal to every relevant advice and advocacy organisation in Cornwall and Devon.”

Eddie is the Director of Legal Advice Centre (University House) (LAC) and has had an extraordinary impact on its development. He has developed an advocacy project based around law students and pro bono lawyers to support appointed ‘advocates’ to undertake disability appeal casework and to provide advocacy at Welfare Tribunal appeals for clients with long-term health problems/disabilities. He has established a weekly family law clinic in collaboration with six international law firms and a housing clinic, set up to help with the growing housing crisis in London. The West Country ‘Webcam’ Clinics includes a webcam ‘family law duty desk’ at Truro Combined Courts and at Bodmin Combined Courts, providing assistance with section 8 private child arrangement cases.

In partnership with Charles Russell Speechlys LLP and Plymouth Citizens Advice, family and employment webcam clinics have also been launched in Plymouth. LAC has also launched an Advice Portal aimed at supporting generalist advice agencies in East London to undertake specialist legal casework, and access to the portal has now been extended to advocacy organisations in Cornwall and Devon.

Sam Cottman (Travers Smith)

“I would like to thank you for inviting me to your office yesterday and for taking your time to listen to me. I was in tears every day for the past weeks until I met you yesterday. I did not know that in this world, there still are genuine people like you.”

Sam became the first Director of Pro Bono at Travers Smith but two weeks into his new role the country went into lockdown and he had to pivot his practice to working remotely. He restructured the firm’s pro bono programme around four pillars namely: climate, environment and sustainability; diversity, inclusion and social mobility; vulnerable groups, and the Rule of Law. Since March 2020, Sam has held over 200 meetings developing the infrastructure to sustain the new partnerships and has spoken at a diverse range of external events, including as a panellist alongside David Lammy MP. He leads the firm’s work as corporate partner for JUSTICE’s expert panel investigation into the over-representation of BAME youth in the criminal youth justice system. He has also run the firm’s domestic violence clinic in East London for nearly five years, and established a specialist advocacy team to take on clients referred by the National Centre for Domestic Violence. Finally, Sam set up a partnership with Justice and Care to represent victims of human trafficking.

Naga Kandiah (MTC Solicitors)

“Aside from his solid practice of refugee and asylum law, Naga acts and advises on an international level, including most recently in relation to a vulnerable adult in the Manus Island detention centre which was publicised by international media outlets.”

Naga has been described by colleagues as a “rising star” when it comes to his pro bono work, successfully representing the first of many victims of the Windrush Scandal and supporting a client who was falsely accused of being a criminal in order to deport them. He also brought to public attention the Home Office’s ‘copy and paste’ culture in the case of a man caring for his terminally ill partner who was told he was going to be deported to Jamaica because officials had concluded that he “failed to demonstrate that his life would be at risk in Iraq”, (a county to which he had never been).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Naga remotely assisted over 300 clients on a pro bono basis, helping them with furlough applications; applying for benefits; guiding them to GPs; and engaging with employers and schools. Naga also arranged for free mobile phone credit for asylum seekers, who have been particularly isolated during this time; and sent food parcels to over 100 vulnerable people.

Elle Todd (Reed Smith)

“Elle leads from the front in terms of pro bono hours and opportunity uptake. Without Elle’s commitment to environmental causes, it is unlikely that Reed Smith’s environmentally-focused pro bono would have been as successful as it has been.”

Elle is a Partner at Reed Smith who leads by example, having taken part in over a dozen pro bono matters in the year to date and supervising 33 lawyers across various projects. This is in addition to having established, and now leading, Reed Smith’s Environmental Working Group, which has had a global impact, establishing relationships with and providing support to charities across the UK, Europe, Asia and Africa.

Elle also works with Kids in Need of Defense UK (KIND UK), focusing on regularising the immigration status of undocumented children living in precarious conditions. This year, Elle advised a family applying for leave to remain in the UK, securing a positive decision from the Home Office.

Separately, Elle is leading on developing client documentation for Reed Smith’s KIND UK pro bono clients, collaborating with KIND UK in order to produce documents in a child-friendly format.

The LawWorks Cymru Award

Aberystwyth University Family Law Clinic

“Fantastic service, highly knowledgeable, nothing is too much trouble, superb support throughout.”

The Aberystwyth University Family Law Clinic, run in conjunction with Emma Williams Family Law, is non means-tested and is available to any member of the public. However, the clinic’s service users almost exclusively fall under the Joseph Rowntree Foundation minimum income standard. The users predominantly come from Aberystwyth and Ceredigion, a rural area at the centre of an ‘advice desert’.

The clinic usually offers appointments on a monthly basis, but as a result of increased demand at the start of the pandemic the clinic organised weekly appointments and has provided more than 100 free advice sessions in the last year. The clinic offers support including completion of legal documents, preparation of position statements, advice upon complex expert reports and advice on how to deal with court hearings. The clinic has risen to the challenge presented by travel restrictions and now offers advice by telephone and via online ‘virtual’ consultations. The flexibility of those running and supporting the clinic has meant that service users have been able to receive advice urgently in response to their family arrangements at a confusing time.

Citizens Advice Rhondda Cynon Taff

“Citizens Advice Rhondda Cynon Taff supported over 200 people with advice and support during the floods crises in February, working in collaboration with the Local Authority, community groups and volunteers to provide assistance with accessing emergency funding grants, furniture, food and clothing.”

Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) is an area of multiple deprivation, with high levels of poverty, indebtedness, low incomes and poor health and housing. People in RCT have experienced two crises in 2020 – Storm Dennis and Covid-19, in response to which the Citizens Advice Rhondda Cynon Taff (CARCT) team have worked diligently to offer support.

In February, Storm Dennis caused widespread flooding across RCT, damaging over 600 homes. CARCT supported over 200 households, 32% of whom were disabled or had other health conditions, to access advice - undertaking casework in 45% of cases. This was achieved by working in partnership with the council and local community by establishing pop-up advice outreaches. The Council and volunteers co-ordinated the response by organising food, clothing, furniture and cleaning supplies to support affected households. Additionally, CARCT staff have advised 4,000 clients on over 30,000 Covid-19 related social-welfare issues. This includes advice and casework on government guidance, employment, financial capability and accessing community crisis support.

Duncan Lewis Solicitors

“The essential pro bono work that is being carried out by our teams in Wales continues to bring invaluable support to communities that would otherwise be out of reach of much needed legal advice. The teams routinely go above and beyond in order to best serve those in need of high-quality legal advice.”

Handling a wide range of immigration, asylum, and human right matters, the Duncan Lewis Wales-based immigration team represents the most vulnerable clients in society, including those who are victims of trafficking or modern slavery and those who have suffered domestic violence.

Vinita Templeton and Samuel Bass understand first-hand the need for individuals to have access to high quality legal advice and have devoted much of their time to pro bono activities. Vinita and Samuel work to assist Asylum Justice, the only charitable organisation in Wales that offers free legal advice and representation to asylum seekers, recognised refugees, and vulnerable migrants. Both Vinita and Samuel give their time to provide pro bono immigration clinics.

In addition, the team has routinely undertaken complex casework in relation to Commonwealth nationals, providing advice to those who have been unfairly let down in the Windrush scandal and prioritising cases of Commonwealth veterans who have experienced significant historical injustices.

Swansea Law Clinic, Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law, Swansea University/ Clinig y Gyfraith, Ysgol y Gyfraith Hillary Rodham Clinton, Prifysgol Abertawe

“Many thanks to staff and students for their professionalism and efficiency from my first email of enquiry to the end of the meeting. A wonderful service which made me feel valued and listened to.”

The Swansea Law Clinic’s main activity is providing clients from the Swansea Bay area initial advice on housing, family, employment, equality and consumer issues. The clinic also has an ever-expanding list of other outreach and advice projects, working in partnership with charities such as Inside Justice, the Prison Advice and Care Trust and Maggie’s Care. On top of this, the clinic also has a research function, participates in multi-agency networks, and holds engagement events with local stakeholders.

When faced with lockdown restrictions, the clinic worked tirelessly to adapt drop-in clinics and ensured client meetings could still take place over Zoom - evidence of the impact of the clinic’s response to Covid-19 was referenced in HRH the Prince of Wales’ and Hillary Clinton’s speeches at Swansea University’s centenary celebrations. Additionally, in collaboration with Swansea Neath Port Talbot Citizens Advice and the Legal Innovation Lab Wales, the clinic developed an app for clients to self-diagnose their eligibility for parental leave – which student advisors then translated into Welsh for accessibility.

University of South Wales Legal Advice Clinic

"I can see that you have put in a lot of effort into this and I cannot express my gratitude enough to you and your team. It gives me that little bit of extra confidence now to go in and represent myself with confidence."

Established in 2013, the University of South Wales Legal Advice Clinic provides a collaborative community legal service, offering free legal advice on employment, family, consumer litigation, housing and business law. In addition, the clinic offers every law student at the University of South Wales a chance to put their legal education into practice, and provides invaluable experiences for the next generation of legal professionals.

Central to the clinic's success (last year working with over 200 law students and over 220 clients) is its focus on collaboration with the local community. The clinic has actively developed its community partnerships over the last two years, resulting in three diverse new projects: working in partnership with Cardiff Lawyers Care, it helped to establish a new clinic providing focused advice for those experiencing homelessness, a litigant in person helpdesk in Child Law proceedings in collaboration with Pontypridd Family Court, and a business law advice service alongside leading Welsh law firm Capital Law.

Best Contribution by a Pro Bono Clinic

Aberystwyth University Family Law Clinic

“Fantastic service, highly knowledgeable, nothing is too much trouble, superb support throughout.”

The Aberystwyth University Family Law Clinic, run in conjunction with Emma Williams Family Law, is non means-tested and is available to any member of the public. However, the clinic’s service users almost exclusively fall under the Joseph Rowntree Foundation minimum income standard. The users predominantly come from Aberystwyth and Ceredigion, a rural area at the centre of an ‘advice desert’.

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Dracaena Webcam Advice Project: Dracaena Community Centre, Legal Advice Centre (University House), Charles Russell Speechlys and White & Case

“The Dracaena Webcam Advice Project is more than just another advice project! Right from the beginning, it was important to us that our local partners took ownership of discrete components of the project as it developed.”

The Dracaena Webcam Advice Project is a partnership between the Legal Advice Centre (University House), the Dracaena Community Centre in Falmouth, Cornwall and originally three international law firms, which piloted on 8 October 2017. The legal advice provided to users in Falmouth is delivered by lawyers at the Legal Advice Centre (University House) in Bethnal Green via a bespoke webcam platform. Given capacity, funding and the will, the model developed is one that can be replicated elsewhere.

In 2018, the project expanded to the Truro Combined Court where a family law ‘duty desk’ was set up and staffed remotely by lawyers using the webcam platform, which also rolled out to the Bodmin Combined Court in 2019. The project aims to expand further, as one of the key challenges is making use of the pro bono resource that is housed in metropolitan areas so it can help to provide access to justice for those that live outside of those areas.

Islington Legal Advice Centre

“Having been a well-impressed client of the Centre, I do wish that [it] keeps its very noble objective and makes numerous years of progress, by successors as dynamic as your goodself and volunteers of unwavering commitment.”

For 50 years the Islington Legal Advice Centre (ILAC), which is located in the crypt of St Mary’s Church on Upper Street, has been providing weekly free legal advice to the residents of Islington and surrounding boroughs on issues such as civil litigation, consumer, employment, family, housing and personal injury law. Throughout those years, the clinic has provided support to almost 15.000 vulnerable people who are often in desperate legal situations.

The volunteers involved do not limit their dedication to the time they spend at the clinic during a session, but routinely draft letters and statements in their spare time on behalf of those seeking help and, wherever possible, instruct barristers to represent those with court hearings, also without charge. The clinic, which operates a drop-in service, was forced to close its doors for the first time since 1971 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic but has been able to re-open in accordance with government guidelines.

The Online Legal Clinic, Brixton Advice Clinic

“The clinic makes it easier for volunteer solicitors and barristers to offer their services pro bono, without the need to attend a central office in person at pre-set times. As all services are delivered remotely, they are able help at a time to suit them, whatever their location.”

Brixton Advice Centre launched the Online Legal Clinic in May 2020 to enable people in legal need to access remotely pro bono legal advice during, and in response to, the Covid-19 pandemic. Since opening they have helped more than 300 clients.

Clients access the service by completing a form on the Brixton Advice Centre website. Enquiries are checked and categorised by a coordinator, enabling volunteers to select matters according to their specialism, or to be allocated. The clinic uses Google cloud-based services to reduce the administrative burden, automating tasks, enabling staff and volunteer lawyers to work efficiently.

The use of cloud-based technology allows lawyers to volunteer at a time and from a location that suits them. This has meant that, at any given time, there are normally eight or nine volunteer lawyers delivering pro bono advice through the service.

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Best International Pro Bono Award - in partnership with Advocates for International Development

Last year Advocates for International Development (A4ID) and LawWorks launched this joint Award to recognise lawyers' growing contributions to work in the arena of international pro bono and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The FGM Model Law: Clearly Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, Latham & Watkins and Reed Smith

"The significance and potential impact of this project is huge for the international network working to end FGM as it will provide a tool against which current laws can be evaluated with simple, easy-to-use guidance and examples of how legislation can be effectively changed and tightened to protect women and girls from the practice."

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) affects over 200 million women and girls across the globe. Existing legislation is often inadequate and under-enforced. The FGM Model law (published in March 2020) is a template legal framework prohibiting FGM. It can be used by Parliamentarians, NGOs and activists to update or introduce new laws preventing FGM.

From 2019 to 2020, 23 lawyers from Clearly Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, Latham & Watkins and Reed Smith collaborated to research, draft and publish the FGM Model Law from scratch, innovatively addressing the fundamental and emerging issues related to FGM. Since publication of the Model Law, 28 Too Many (a charity which campaigns to end FGM globally), has been able to distribute the content to its global network which has been welcomed by Sudan, Somaliland, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Liberia, countries which are all introducing new legislation on FGM.

Greece Pro Bono Collaborative Project: Allen & Overy, Ashurst, Charles Russell Speechlys, Dentons, Orrick and White & Case, together with European Lawyers in Lesvos (ELIL)

"The project is committed to increasing access to justice by giving asylum seekers a fair hearing"

The Greece Pro Bono Collaborative is a collaboration between six law firms and the NGO European Lawyers in Lesvos (ELIL). The project, which began in August 2019, was formed in response to the overwhelming need for legal assistance for asylum seekers on the Greek islands, and to date has advised over 1,400 asylum seekers.

The arrival of tens of thousands of refugees, fleeing war or persecution, have resulted in a crisis in Greece's overcrowded refugee camps. With no legal aid available under the Greek system before their first asylum interview, asylum seekers refugees are deprived of critical legal advice regarding their rights and obligations, a serious impediment to a fair asylum process.

More than 55 law firm volunteers to date have been seconded to work with ELIL for

two weeks at a time, advising approximately 15 to 20 asylum seekers per week. The firms involved have also supported the project by donating substantial amounts to fund essential training and services. As Covid-19 swept across Europe, volunteers adapted and began to support ELIL remotely, helping asylum seekers with preparation for initial asylum interviews and family reunification applications, to ensure they continue to receive the advice they need.

The Human Dignity Trust (HDT) Team at Debevoise & Plimpton

“The contribution, all pro bono, of Lord Goldsmith and his team, particularly Conway Blake and former associates Jessica Gladstone and Nicola Leslie has been immense.”

Since 2011, Debevoise & Plimpton has partnered with Human Dignity Trust (HDT), an international NGO whose principal aim is to challenge, through litigation, the legality of laws criminalising homosexuality.

For nine years, with HDT, the firm has worked alongside local lawyers in Belize by drafting legal submissions and presenting oral submissions for a case which reached the Belize Court of Appeal. The case challenged the constitutionality of section 53 of the Criminal Code of Belize, which effectively criminalized homosexuality. In December 2019, the Court of Appeal ruled that LGBT people are protected by non-discrimination laws, that Belize’s Constitutional prohibition on “sex discrimination” includes “sexual orientation discrimination” and that sexual expression is protected by the right of freedom of expression. The impact of such a landmark victory on the lives of the LGBT+ community in Belize and beyond cannot be overstated - this case has the potential to be a significant landmark in battling anti-homosexuality laws across the globe.

Human Rights Watch and Clifford Chance

“Clifford Chance’s longstanding pro bono support and partnership has enabled Human Rights Watch to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all. We are deeply grateful for the foundation’s dedicated support and for providing staff across our organization with valuable expertise and advice..”

Since 2016, Clifford Chance has focused its pro bono strategy on contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, they work with Human Rights Watch (HRW) on a number of elements, including: attendance and analysis in a prosecution against an alleged war criminal; monitoring, providing analysis and advocacy at an ongoing jurisdiction prosecution in Germany against two alleged war criminals; and analysis for a report and advocacy campaign against gender-based violence and harassment. In addition, the Clifford Chance Foundation funds the HRW’s International Justice Mission, which has been advancing the understanding and adoption of universal jurisdictions across Europe, to enable the prosecution of war criminals from failed states. The evidence of their impact from long term engagement in pro bono has driven increased participation in pro bono work across their firm, globally.

Best New Pro Bono Activity

Dads House Legal Advice Clinic, Dads House

“Facing my ex-husband’s lawyers and court alone I was subdued and left feeling completely overwhelmed with fear and hopelessness in respect of protecting the children...Thanks to [Dads House’s] expertise and dedication to our case we received the best outcome in relation to the children’s welfare in the future.”

Dads House is a charity which provides a holistic service for mothers, fathers and children. Most people attending Dads House do so because of the food bank or hair and blood testing. It is open to anybody to call for a chat or coffee, and its goal is to help families function again.

This unique holistic service includes ongoing support through its weekly legal advice clinic which opened in May 2020. Clients are seen regularly, and can receive ongoing legal advice including representation at court hearings, negotiating with lawyers on the other side, and corresponding directly with social services. During the early stages of the pandemic it maintained valuable (guideline-compliant) in-person appointments – the only one of its kind of which Dads House is aware. Clients highlight the genuine friendliness, patience and kindness showed by Dads House to clients alongside legal advice, with recent successes including prevention of abduction out of the jurisdiction.

Domestic Violence Advocacy Unit, Travers Smith

“The court for me was so stressful but I felt calmer knowing you were there for me. After living with this hanging over me I can now get my life back to normal and not have to fear who is at the door or what is coming in the post.”

Shortly after lockdown in March 2020 when the ‘shadow pandemic’ of domestic abuse began, Travers Smith launched its Domestic Violence Advocacy Unit (DVAU) led by Sam Cottman, Director of Pro Bono, and a small group of senior associates. This work is an integral part of the firm’s significant pro bono commitment to serve victims of domestic abuse, which includes running a family law clinic in East London.

Around 40 volunteer lawyers have been trained in domestic abuse related legislation, case law and advocacy by external family law specialists and the National Centre for Domestic Violence, which also refers clients to the DVAU. The Travers Smith team guides its vulnerable clients through every stage of the process, including advocacy at hearings. During lockdown these cases have largely been conducted remotely through a combination of phone, messaging and video conferencing.

The impact of this activity on DVAU clients is completely life-changing.

The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network (TERN) and Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton

"...The project was therefore a lifeline to many. But more than that it also brought great joy and happiness."

One of the most significant challenges for aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly those who do not speak English as a first language, is negotiating the legal complexities of creating a new business. In 2019 Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton established a partnership with The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network (TERN) to overcome these obstacles.

A team of lawyers worked with TERN to develop a Legal Tool-Kit, a comprehensive and accessible guide for refugee entrepreneurs taking the first steps of their business journey in a new jurisdiction and culture. The Legal Tool-Kit has since been given to over 60 entrepreneurs. A monthly free legal advice clinic was launched in 2019, designed to support refugees in the process of setting up and establishing small businesses and to provide advice on a broad range of commercial and corporate legal topics. Following the lockdown in March 2020 the clinic moved online and continues to operate.

The collaboration with TERN has developed into a hugely successful pro bono project, in less than two years with more than 850 pro bono hours having been devoted to TERN matters.

Hertfordshire Law Clinic, University of Hertfordshire

"I really have not got enough good things to say about my experience at the Law Clinic...For women (and men) in my position, where all of this is just so scary and access so limited by financial implications and access to services so hard. It has changed mine and my children's lives for the better –and you have given me what I need to enable me to escape from the horrors of domestic abuse with legal support."

The clinic gives legal advice to both individuals and organisations in the local community, meeting a range of unmet needs. For example, the clinic has provided employment and family law advice, in addition to intellectual property and commercial advice to SMEs and start-ups. Uniquely, it also drafts Powers of Attorney. Advice at the clinic is provided by a combination of students and supervising qualified solicitors from a range of other organisations, including a local patent attorney and a solicitor from Shelter.

In response to the pandemic the clinic moved online, which improved accessibility, and even managed to add housing law advice to its services. It has also teamed up with a local charity Future Living Hertfordshire, and with HMP The Mount, to provide family law advice to those recovering from domestic abuse and, in addition, to prisoners.

The Online Legal Clinic, Brixton Advice Centre

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Brixton Advice Centre launched the Online Legal Clinic in May 2020 to enable people in legal need to access remotely pro bono legal advice during and in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Since opening they have helped more than 300 clients.

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The use of cloud-based technology allows lawyers to volunteer at a time and from location that suits them. This has meant that, at any given time, there are normally eight or nine volunteer lawyers delivering pro bono advice through the service.

Shoosmiths and Solent Mind

“[T]he money we have saved has gone directly to offering support and advice to those that most need it. Without [Shoosmiths], their hard work and dedication, none of this would have been possible...All of us at Solent Mind are indebted to Lauren and Emily at Shoosmiths.”

Solent Mind and Shoosmiths have a broad partnership which, in addition to pro bono legal advice, has included fundraising, staff training, and Solent Mind attending a Shoosmiths’ panel on mental health and working from home.

Pro bono advice has included drafting a lease for a new property, and work on a Covid-19 wellbeing mobile app. The property advice was in respect of Positive Minds, which works collaboratively with two other organisations providing specialist support to the local community, including for ex-military personnel. The advice means that Positive Minds will remain viable and affordable during the pandemic, as pressures on the charity and the individuals it helps increase.

An app allows Solent Mind to connect with and support thousands of individuals in innovative ways, all the more important given the pandemic, and Solent Mind is looking to license and expand it. Shoosmith’s work on both the development and licensing phases has required cross-departmental work on commercial, technology, media and communications, and intellectual property.

Best Digital or Virtual Pro Bono Activity

Justice Hub Covid-19 Virtual Vacation Scheme, University of Manchester

“This collaborative scheme created a supportive and interactive environment, where students could learn important skills and knowledge while supporting the most marginalised, vulnerable and disadvantaged people in society.”

The Covid-19 Virtual Vacation Scheme adapted Manchester University’s traditional vacation scheme to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, allowing 40 undergraduates to participate online, with guidance from the University’s Law School staff and practising solicitors and barristers. Utilising the digital services of the company Video Cake, students recorded and edited online written and video guides in five areas of law particularly impacted by the virus – carers, family, employment, consumer and housing. Students also used Zoom to interact with one another and to exhibit their group presentation to staff, before uploading the digital content to the University’s website and social media platforms, in order to educate the public as to their legal rights during the pandemic.

This adaptive digital approach created a bridge between legal theory and practice, bringing together academics from within the Law School and practising lawyers in the local area. The collegiate nature of the project enabled students to have a more rounded experience, while forging greater links between the University’s Justice Hub and local firms and chambers.

Advice Portal, Legal Advice Centre (University House)

“Our work focus is on the most vulnerable, and a great deal of our casework is on behalf of people who have complex health and social needs. It is therefore important to us that the technology we use does not add to the barriers they face.”

Legal Advice Centre (University House) (LAC) has created an Advice Portal linked to its webcam platform which, in part, includes an electronic booking system aimed at targeted community advice agencies. The Advice Portal went live in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham on 22 June 2020 and each week offers advice slots to local advice networks. Places can either be booked for appointments by the advice agency in order to progress a case or referrals can be made to advise clients directly. Appointments offered through the Advice Portal target four critical support areas: welfare benefits (appeals), Covid-19 related employment law matters, domestic violence and possession proceedings/homelessness.

From 6 October 2020, LAC has extended the reach of the Advice Portal, with Lottery funding, to every relevant advice and advocacy organisation in Cornwall and Devon in order to provide access to justice for as many people as possible in the advice deserts of the South West.

RCJ Advice and Advocate

“Both organisations are to be commended on having maintained a near full-service provision throughout the pandemic, adapting with aplomb to post-COVID logistical challenges.”

Every year, RCJ Advice and Advocate together help thousands of litigants in person across England and Wales. RCJ Advice gives free legal advice on procedure to anyone representing themselves in a civil court case, while Advocate matches members of the public with barristers willing to donate their time and expertise for those unable to obtain legal aid.

The two organisations, while separate, work hand-in-hand. RCJ Advice gives advice on legal process and procedure but cannot advise clients on the strength of their case and nor do they typically carry out advocacy. Where a client needs advice on the merits of their case or needs a barrister to represent them at an upcoming hearing, Advocate takes the lead.

The litigants in person who approach RCH Advice and Advocate often struggle with physical and mental unwellness and other extenuating circumstances such as post traumatic stress disorder. Stakes are often high – including eviction, family separation and prison. RCJ Advice and Advocate’s impact goes beyond the provision of legal assistance to the restoration of basic human dignity.

South Westminster Legal Advice Centre

“Without the initiative of Elaine [Vignoli], the many people who would ordinarily rely on advice from [South Westminster Legal Advice Centre] would have been unable to access the legal support they need.”

Before the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, South Westminster Legal Advice Centre (SWLAC) operated on an entirely face-to-face basis. In a matter of weeks, Elaine Vignoli (CEO of SWLAC) developed and coordinated an entirely virtual method of administering the advice, including the adoption of a new virtual case management system (Intralinks) and created a new system of working for the volunteers lawyers which is now entirely paperless.

Despite working at a full-time job elsewhere, Elaine manned the SWLAC email account daily in order to triage requests from new clients (often as many as 10 per day) and then allocated them to an appropriate lawyer, whom she would supervise if needed. Elaine has shared her knowledge on this experience with the pro bono community (including a blog for the Law Society), which has enabled other centres to deliver similar services, and allowed hundreds of people to access legal support through a very difficult time which they would not have otherwise received.

Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership

DV Flag East and London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

“This is the first such project in the country with a local authority working with the Citizens Advice and local private practice solicitors.”

DV Flag East’s pioneering project was launched on 1 June 2019. It provides free legal advice for residents of Barking and Dagenham who suffer domestic abuse (Barking and Dagenham has the highest known prevalence rate for domestic abuse in London). DV Flag East was established through the London Borough Barking and Dagenham’s Legal Team, Citizens Advice Barking and Dagenham and local family law firms. Related legal advice services, such as immigration, housing and debt have also been built into the project in order to provide a holistic approach.

For those who are outside the scope of legal aid, a pro bono offer has been developed using members of Barking and Dagenham’s in-house legal team. 95% of clients reported that they understood their legal options enough to make informed decisions and take timely action and 95% of clients reported that they felt confident after receiving legal advice from the DV Flag East solicitor volunteer.

Innocence Project London and Weil, Gotshal & Manges

“Weil has enabled the IPL to double their case work in the past three years.”

The Innocence Project London (IPL) was established in 2010 and is based at the University of Greenwich. IPL investigates alleged wrongful convictions of individuals who have maintained their innocence and have already exhausted the appeals process. Since 2017, 18 Weil partners have supervised 99 lawyers reviewing approximately 50 cases involving potential miscarriages of justice. Of these case assessments, 12 have been deemed eligible to be worked on with a view to making an application to the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC). A typical case assessment process can take between 4 to 6 weeks.

The partnership provides IPL with trained lawyers and case assessors and provides Weil with specialist training and critical insights into the cases. Student participation is an integral part of the partnership. Benefits of the partnership include engaging the lawyers of tomorrow; increasing the number of cases presented to the CCRC; and the broadening of legal experience for Weil lawyers. BBC3 has developed an interest, commissioning a programme about an IPL case due to air in Spring 2021.

National Centre for Domestic Violence, Dentons and NatWest Legal

“Working with NCDV means we can directly help people suffering from domestic abuse without having to refer them to other organisations, which ultimately results in a much faster legal service.”

One in four women and one in six men will experience domestic violence and it is the single largest category of violent crime in England and Wales. Since the Covid-19 pandemic began, there has been a spike in reports of such cases in the UK with Refuge reporting a surge of 700% to its helpline on a single day in April.

Dentons has been working since 2016 with the National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV), a nationwide not-for-profit organisation which provides free advice to victims of domestic violence.

The firm wanted to find a way to handle more matters for NCDV and, since January 2018, it has been collaborating with NatWest Legal to provide pro bono support to the charity. Over 100 Dentons and NatWest Legal lawyers and trainees have signed up to the NCDV rota and to date they have supported over 180 victims of domestic violence in need of urgent assistance by obtaining emergency protection. This collaboration presents a great opportunity for the firm to support vulnerable individuals in local communities.

RCJ Advice and Advocate

“As a volunteer, I know that RCJ Advice and Advocate’s impact goes beyond provision of legal assistance to the restoration of basic human dignity. Both organisations are to be commended on having maintained near full-service provision throughout the pandemic, adapting with aplomb to post-Covid logistical challenges.”

RCJ Advice provides free legal advice on the court process to anyone with a civil court case in the County Court, High Court or Court of Appeal. It does not provide advice on the merits. Advocate matches members of the public with barristers willing to donate their time and expertise, including providing advice on the merits, for those unable to obtain legal aid. Post-traumatic stress disorder and other issues present regularly.

The stakes are often high: eviction and family separation can be the outcome. RCJ Advice and Advocate have joined forces on an informal basis to ensure that unrepresented clients are identified and assisted through to the culmination of their legal dispute, regardless of the basis of financial means or other personal circumstances.

Shoosmiths and The Manuel Bravo Project

“Thanks to this partnership ... sixteen individuals and families so far have secured Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK, with a chance to build safe and happy lives.”

The Settlement Partnership Project between Shoosmiths and the Leeds based Manuel Bravo Project, which provides free legal representation to asylum seekers, has been established for almost two years. The project provides legal support in the preparation and submission of settlement protection applications on behalf of refugees nearing the end of their initial five years leave to remain. If successful, the refugee is granted indefinite leave to remain.

The Manuel Bravo Project provides training, and specialist supervision and guidance on cases referred to Shoosmiths under the project. Shoosmiths lawyers take the matter forward by preparing the applications, including meeting the clients, undertaking legal research and drafting supporting evidence. To date, 100% of the decided applications have been successful.

The partnership allows the Manuel Bravo Project to dedicate their capacity to fresh asylum claims and appeals, whilst enabling Shoosmiths fee earners at all levels to experience a different area of law and use their skills to provide legal assistance to some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

Toynbee Hall and Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton

“The long-term commitment of the partnership has meant that some of the most deprived communities in London have been able to access expert legal advice which would otherwise likely be beyond their means.”

This year marks the fifth anniversary of this partnership, which created the pioneering Women-Only Clinic at the Free Legal Advice Centre. The need for this service has grown during Covid-19 and both partners have committed to providing additional sessions for a further three years. The clinic provides a safe and welcoming environment for women at Toynbee Hall to receive expert legal support on issues such as domestic violence, housing and immigration. It is staffed exclusively by women, including many volunteers from Cleary Gottlieb.

In response to Covid-19, the clinic has been able to increase the number of advice appointments, moving quickly to a telephone and online service. The funding and volunteer support provided by Cleary has helped to create around 450 additional advice appointments over five years, with over 90 alone in the last year. The partnership has also launched the Champions Project this year which will support people of colour who aspire to become lawyers or many of the other professions within an international law firm.

About Advocates for International Development (A4ID)

A4ID is the leading, international charity that believes the law can, and should, be used more effectively to advance fair and sustainable development. A4ID aims to inspire and enable lawyers to join the global fight to eradicate poverty through advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)/Global Goals. A4ID wants to see the law used to its full potential to achieve the SDGs. With access to over 50,000 lawyers and more than 800 development organisations, A4ID has facilitated projects with far reaching impact in over 130 countries.

A4ID works with leading global law firms to align their pro bono practice with the SDGs. Through practical training courses, pro bono broker services and contributions to global policy, A4ID ensures that lawyers and development organisations have the skills and knowledge to use the law as an effective development tool. Supported by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, A4ID has also collaborated with UK government, judiciary and lawyers to strengthen the rule of law in developing countries.

SDG Legal Initiative

Since there is less than a decade remaining to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the legal community has a crucial role in realising these SDGs. By adopting responsible business practices that align with the SDG agenda and by providing SDG integrated advice to clients, lawyers can take concrete steps to achieve the SDGs. The work to realise SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) that focuses on promoting the Rule of Law, addressing corruption, participation in global governance, and developing transparent institutions, squarely rests on the competence of the legal community. A4ID is committed to support the legal community in adopting the SDG Agenda. As part of its SDG Legal Initiative, A4ID is publishing a Legal Guide, comprising 17 chapters, that highlight how the law can be applied to promote implementation of the SDGs. Chapters on SDG 2, 3, 4, and 5 are now available on the A4ID website.

A4ID's work has inspired and enabled lawyers and development organisations to use the law as an effective development tool. A4ID supports its Legal and Development Partners to use their expertise and apply the law to ensure no one is left behind on the path towards sustainable development.

Partner with A4ID

Join A4ID's network of top international law firms, barristers' chambers and law associations to gain access to pro bono opportunities to work with the vast array of A4ID's Development Partners and use your expertise to successfully contribute to the sustainable development agenda.

More information about becoming a Legal Partner of A4ID can be found at www.a4id.org. Alternatively, you can contact the Pro Bono Legal Services team at probono@a4id.org.

If you are interested to become involved in the SDG Legal Initiative or in knowing more about it, please email us at SDG.Legal.Initiative@a4id.org

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About LawWorks

Supporting and celebrating pro bono

LawWorks (the Solicitors Pro Bono Group) aims to promote, support and facilitate pro bono legal services that extend access to the law for individuals and communities in need and the organisations that support them.

We champion pro bono because of the positive contribution and difference it makes for individuals, communities and society.

We work (in England and Wales) with the solicitors' profession and our members, the Law Society, law schools and law students, law centres, advice agencies and others to develop and support pro bono legal services, and to promote access to justice for all.

While pro bono is not, and should not be, an alternative to legal aid - it makes an important contribution to accessing legal information, advice and representation.

We enable the provision of pro bono through:

Supporting a growing network of over 300 independent pro bono clinics. We work with lawyers, advice agencies, charities and others to establish or develop new clinics, and provide on-going support, information, training and webinars and legal resources (including the online legal research tools Lexis®Library and Lexis®PSL);

- Our Not-for-Profits Programme facilitates the provision of free legal advice for smaller charities and not-for-profit organisations, supported by volunteer solicitors from among LawWorks members. We also provide free online training videos for charities, covering many of the common legal issues they face;
- We support more in-depth pro bono ('secondary specialisation'), in areas of social welfare law. This includes supporting solicitors to provide representation at First-tier social security tribunals, an unpaid wages project and, working with the charity Together for Short Lives, to provide legal advice and case-work for the parents and carers of children with life-limiting conditions;
- Connecting barristers and solicitors to jointly litigate civil cases on a pro bono basis through the Pro Bono Connect Scheme;
- Piloting an online platform (Free Legal Answers) to enable individuals to ask and volunteers to answer discrete legal questions.

Supporting litigants in person

LawWorks is a partner organisation for the Litigant in Person Support Strategy, working with Law for Life, Support Through Court, RCJ Advice, Advocate and the Access to Justice Foundation. Funded by the Ministry of Justice, the Strategy works to improve the experience of people involved in legal proceedings who do not have a lawyer.

Addressing barriers to justice: a 'policy voice' for pro bono

We work to remove barriers to pro bono and use evidence from the work of local clinics, our members and others to advocate for positive policy change to better enable access to free legal advice and to justice.

In building a 'policy voice' for LawWorks and pro bono, we have engaged with the Government's review of LASPO (the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012) and subsequent Legal Support Action Plan, as well as other strategic policy reviews and consultations such as the Taylor review of modern working practices, and on court and tribunal modernisation.

We have supported various fora for policy engagement including the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Pro Bono and Public Legal Education, which has developed a public legal education vision and strategy with the support of the Law Officers. During COVID, we have facilitated a new advice sector roundtable with a range of legal and access to justice organisations to address issues, challenges and legal needs raised by the crisis.

Student pro bono

The pro bono contribution of law schools and students is significant and growing. LawWorks encourages and supports student pro bono (many law school clinics are part of the LawWorks clinics network), and the important contribution students make is recognised and celebrated through the annual LawWorks & Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards. Student teams help raise awareness and fundraise through an annual Law School Challenge, to support the work of LawWorks and Advocate.

Membership of LawWorks

The support of our members is vital to our work. Membership of LawWorks makes an important contribution towards the achievement of our charitable objectives and supporting our work in enabling and celebrating pro bono and the importance of access to justice. We have around 130 members, including some of the largest City and International firms, national, regional and local firms, and in-house teams, law schools and charities.

We support our members in a number of ways, including by providing information, guidance and advice (for example, in setting up or developing a pro bono project), and facilitating pro bono activity and connections through our Not-For-Profits Programme.

Members have the opportunity to nominate for our annual awards and have access to our training, online resources, newsletters and networking opportunities (including a quarterly pro bono forum and regional events), and have the opportunity to contribute to our growing policy work.

By joining LawWorks you will be supporting our charitable work to encourage, support and celebrate pro bono, and also our work to highlight - and address - barriers to accessing justice.

The fee depends upon the size of the firm or in-house legal team - with other categories also for charities and other organisations.

For more information about membership of LawWorks and the difference your membership can make, please get in touch with Avnita Bhandal, Administration (Casework) & Membership Officer, avnita.bhandal@lawworks.org.uk or visit our website www.lawworks.org.uk.

Other ways to support LawWorks

The need for our work has increased as legal aid has been cut and some law centres closed. Covid-19 has exacerbated the problems faced by disadvantaged individuals and the economic downturn will affect many lives for years to come. As a charity we are almost entirely dependent on grants and other philanthropic funding and this determines the scope and reach of our work.

We welcome both one-off donations and long-term support for our programmes. There are also opportunities to take part in fundraising challenges or to sponsor events. If you would like to discuss supporting LawWorks financially, please contact Sarah Taylor, Head of Fundraising sarah.taylor@lawworks.org.uk, or visit our website www.lawworks.org.uk.

Our special thanks to:

James Harper and LexisNexis UK for their continued support sponsoring these awards; the staff of A4ID; Christina Blacklaws and Matthew Stadlen for hosting the ceremony; our judges - Yasmin Batliwala, Stephanie Boyce, Ruth Daniel, Mark Evans, Chris Minnoch, Paul Rogerson, Heidi Sandy, Koser Shaheen and Adam Tear for generously giving their time, and Clive Stafford-Smith, Carol Storer, Leslie Thomas QC and Fiona Woolf for their messages of support.

Finally, thank you to everyone who made time to submit a nomination and share the inspiring and tireless activity of the pro bono volunteers and champions in our community.

See you in 2021.

LawWorks

LawWorks is a charity working in England and Wales to connect volunteer lawyers with people in need of legal advice, who are not eligible for legal aid and cannot afford to pay and with the not-for-profit organisations that support them.

www.lawworks.org.uk

 @Law_Works

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**Pro Bono
Awards
2020**