



**Pro Bono  
Awards  
2023**

## **The LawWorks Pro Bono Awards**

**Tuesday 5th December 2023**

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# Welcome to the LawWorks Pro Bono Awards 2023

I am delighted to welcome you to the Annual LawWorks Pro Bono Awards. The Awards are a high point in the LawWorks' calendar, and provide the opportunity to come together and celebrate pro bono commitment and achievement over the past year.

We are very grateful to Richard Atkinson the Vice President of The Law Society of England & Wales for joining us this evening to present the awards, and to Samira Ahmed for hosting the evening.

We have received many truly inspiring and high-calibre nominations, all are worthy of recognition. 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 and internationally – 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 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 thanks and gratitude to the panel of Judges, who have given their time and consideration to agree on the winners. Thanks also to our sponsor, LexisNexis for their continued support, and to the Law Society for hosting the event this evening.

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, including how to support us, it is included at the end of this programme.



**Alastair Douglas**  
Chair of Trustees

# Order of proceedings

Time	Event
6:30pm	Welcome by Samira Ahmed
6.35pm	Welcome from Richard Atkinson, Vice President of The Law Society of England and Wales
6.40pm	A word from James Harper, Lexis Nexis
6.45pm	Awards presentations
8:15pm	Drinks and canapés in the Reading Room

The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1P

## Host

### Samira Ahmed

Award winning journalist and broadcaster Samira Ahmed presents Front Row on Radio 4 and Newswatch on BBC1. She was named British Broadcasting Press Guild audio presenter of the year in 2020, the same year she won a landmark sex discrimination employment tribunal against the BBC for equal pay.

Her documentaries include BBC4's Art of Persia (2020) – filmed on location in Iran - and Radio 4's Disgusted, Mary Whitehouse (2022), for which she spent months studying the diaries of the famous morality campaigner.

She was previously a news anchor and correspondent for Channel 4 News, where she won the Stonewall Broadcast of the Year award for her film about the so-called “corrective” rape of lesbian women in South Africa; and for BBC News, where she covered the OJ Simpson case while LA Correspondent. In April 2023 Samira made headlines around the world after uncovering the earliest complete concert recording of the Beatles in Britain, made at Stowe School in 1963.

Samira is a trustee of the Centre for Women's Justice, Humanists UK, on the advisory board of the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford and the editorial review board of Doctor Who Magazine. She is an honorary fellow of St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford



## Judging Panel

### **Richard Atkinson, Vice President of The Law Society of England and Wales**

Richard Atkinson is the vice president of the Law Society. He will become the 180th president in October 2024.

Richard specialises in serious and complex criminal cases. He is a higher court advocate who has appeared in a number of high-profile cases including murders, serious sex offences, fraud and high-value drug cases.

He has over 30 years of experience and was elected Law Society Council member for Kent in 2016. Richard was a member of the Law Society Criminal Law Committee, and served as chair for six years, he was also a member of the Policy and Regulatory Affairs Committee. He currently serves as a member of the Board of the Law Society.

He is a member of the Home Office's Police and Criminal Evidence advisory board, the National Disclosure Forum and the Crown Court Improvement Group.

### **Yasmin Batliwala MBE, 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. She has undertaken work for the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime in this regard. She chairs VIA, (formerly WDP - Westminster Drug Project), the largest provider of drug and alcohol services in London.

Yasmin was a recipient of the City of London Woman of Achievement Awards in respect to her work in the Public Sector. Last year she was recognised in the Queen's New Years' Honours List for her work in Human Rights, Rule of Law and International Development for which she received an MBE.

### **Julie Bishop, Director, Law Centres Network**

Julie is director of the Law Centres Federation, the representative body for the national network of community based law centres. Prior to this, Julie was director of the National Association of Community Legal Centres in Australia

and has worked in the legal aid sector in Australia at community level for almost 20 years.

### **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 which campaigns for a fair, accessible and sustainable legal aid system. Chris has many years of legal practice, management and policy experience in the legal aid and advice sector and as a charity trustee. Chris is a member of the Ministry of Justice's Legal Support Advisory Group, the Advice Sector Panel of the Administrative Justice Council and the Review of Civil Legal Aid's Stakeholder Advisory Group.

### **Professor Richard Owen, Chair of the Law Society's Access to Justice Committee**

Richard Owen is a Professor of Law and Director of Swansea Law Clinic, a pro bono clinic, at the Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law at Swansea University. He is currently the Chair of the Law Society's Access to Justice Committee and has been appointed by the Welsh Government as the Independent Chair of the Swansea Neath Port Talbot Regional Advice Network. Previously, he has been Chair of the Association of Law Teachers and was a Visiting Professor at Fudan University in the People's Republic of China.

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

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

### **Rebecca Wilkie, Chief Executive, Advocate**

Rebecca is Chief Executive of Advocate, the Bar's national pro bono charity. Prior to this Rebecca was the programme director for the Litigant in Person Support Strategy at the Access to Justice Foundation. Rebecca originally qualified as a solicitor at Hogan Lovells and she is currently Vice Chair of Money Advice Trust, having previously held a number of non-executive director roles including at the Advice Services Alliance and Blackfriars Settlement. Rebecca holds a number of government and professional advisory roles including sitting on the HMCTS Strategic Engagement Group.





# 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 In-house Solicitor
- Best Contribution by a Junior Lawyer
- 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
- Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership

## Best contribution by a Small or Medium Firm

### Crowell & Moring U.K. LLP

*"The personal touch and a commitment to embedding strong connections in all of our work is reflected in our approach to pro bono activities."*

The Crowell & Moring pro bono practice was properly established in 2020 to 2021, following a rapid expansion in its London office headcount. The firm is strongly committed to pro bono work and has established good relationships with both LawWorks and TrustLaw with which it engages in pro bono projects. One particular client, referred from TrustLaw, is a non-profit organisation that promotes social cohesion and empowers girls and women through the arts and has developed a close connection with the firm.

The firm's lawyers proactively seek to enact change and drive impact in their local communities. Lawyers put forward prospective pro bono clients whom they have met in their personal lives, as well as encouraging suggestions from non-pro bono clients. As a result, the firm is providing ongoing legal advice to a lawyer's local church and, through a current client, has advised a charity that runs a children's playground on its rights relating to a dispute.

### Pallas Partners LLP

*"Working with Pallas has been a really empowering and affirming experience and their legal expertise, combined with their compassion and understanding of the issues faced by the trans community, has been crucial to ensuring that our charity can continue to provide essential services and support to those in need."*

Pallas Partners LLP ("Pallas") is creating a new blueprint for legal firms – from day one it has pledged to increase community support, by 2025, up to 5% of its resources to deliver a positive impact. For example, in a matter sourced through LawWorks, it has been representing Trans Pride Brighton & Hove in a dispute with a card payment provider in order to obtain financial compensation.

Pallas is also currently representing ClientEarth, a UK-based legal advocacy organisation which uses the law to create change to protect the natural environment. Through its shareholding in Shell, ClientEarth is alleging that the board of Shell has breached its statutory duties, for example in respect of its energy transition strategy to reach its net-zero emissions targets. This claim is seen as ground-breaking as it is the first time a shareholder has sought to hold a board accountable for failing to properly prepare for net zero transition.

## Best contribution by a Large Firm

### Baker McKenzie

*"The positive outcome that we have achieved thus far hinged in large part to the exceptional work of Ms Ludlam and her colleagues at Baker & McKenzie."*

In April 2022, the UK Government signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Rwanda, seeking to establish an asylum transfer scheme to disincentivise asylum seekers crossing the Channel on small boats.

A team of Baker McKenzie lawyers was instructed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) seven days before the first plane was scheduled to leave the UK on 14 June 2022. The team sought an injunction to prevent the plane from taking off, which they were successful in achieving domestically. One asylum seeker then successfully applied to the European Court of Human Rights to have the plane grounded. Judicial review proceedings were then issued against the UK Government. The UK High Court found in the Government's favour but the decision to hold that the policy of transferring asylum seekers was lawful was appealed by ten asylum seekers. The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal in June 2023 and the Supreme Court went on to rule the Government's policy unlawful in November 2023.

These legal interventions are an important reminder that no country sits outside of the international legal framework and that lawyers advising on these cases are more important now than ever.

### Covington & Burling

*"[The Covington team] have demonstrated enthusiasm, commitment and compassion in their work.... the quality of [which] has changed the lives of those they have assisted forever."*

In addition to international pro bono work for Public International Law and Policy Group and the Clooney Foundation for Justice, the Covington & Burlington team has been involved in assisting children and their families to apply for Leave to Remain and UK citizenship in collaboration with Islington Law Centre and Kids in Need of Defense.

Through the LawWorks Not for Profits Programme, they have advised the death penalty charity, Reprieve, on data protection obligations and helped charities such as Glynebourne Productions, TAP Social Movement and DASH recover losses for business interruption arising out of Covid-19. They have

also supported local charities with real estate work, for example advising Community Led Action and Savings Support (CLASS) on a renovation and lease project at a church building in the Manchester area.

The team also delivers workshops to children and young adults on sexual consent and provides significant casework and document review support to Amicus ALJ, a UK charity which supports those on death row in the US.

## **Herbert Smith Freehills**

*"The aim is not only to obtain justice for individuals but to force reforms within criminal justice systems that continue to fall well short of fundamental human rights standards."*

For over 30 years Herbert Smith Freehill's London office has represented prisoners in the Caribbean who have faced miscarriages of justice. The project has focused on prisoners sentenced to death under controversial laws imposing a mandatory death sentence for any murder conviction regardless of circumstance.

In 2022 one such case came to fruition when, after a decade of procedural delays, four cases lodged on behalf of prisoners in Trinidad and Tobago were finally listed for hearing. The team at Herbert Smith Freehills worked tirelessly to a tight deadline and the judge ruled in favour of all four prisoners. Not only this, but the court's orders included confirmation that the prisoners' treatment violated the American Convention on Human Rights and directed the State to take steps to remedy the systemic human rights issues identified. This has benefitted many prisoners across the region and has prompted sentencing reviews, implementation of safeguarding measures, review of the mandatory death sentence and much more to protect the constitutional rights of prisoners on death row.

## **Reed Smith**

*"I am personally very grateful to the amazing pro bono team at Reed Smith who, time and time again, come out fighting for those living on the margins."*

With a long history of pro bono involvement, Reed Smith continued to have a significant impact on the sector in 2022 by supporting 18 long-term access to justice projects, providing commercial legal advice to over 200 charities and non-profit organisations, supporting seven long-term human rights projects and working on 12 pieces of human rights research.

Volunteers from Reed Smith have worked on many pro bono cases including

successfully challenging the Home Secretary's push back policy for migrants crossing the channel on behalf of Channel Rescue, providing end-to-end representation for survivors of domestic abuse through the Domestic Abuse Response Alliance, supporting the NGOs Safe Passage and Refugee Legal Support to help Afghan and Ukrainians in dire need of immigration assistance and developing new partnerships with charities through its Racial Justice Working Group. Reed Smith also sent five lawyers to Warsaw for two weeks to provide legal support to Ukrainians fleeing the conflict and looking to settle in the UK.

## **Sidley Austin**

*"I can't say thank you enough for everything [Sidley Austin] has done for me. Finally having a team working on my side, standing by me, standing up for me...means so much to me."*

In 2022, Sidley Austin's pro bono work assisted 100 vulnerable individuals and 70 not-for-profit organisations. A Sidley Austin team represented the African Union and the Union of the Comoros in advisory proceedings before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in relation to the impact of climate change on the world's oceans. These nations are home to people most vulnerable to climate change. They are also representing Antigua & Barbuda in advisory proceedings before the International Court of Justice on legal obligations under international law generally stemming from climate change.

Through the Free Family Representation & Advocacy Project, Sidley Austin lawyers support families and children as pro bono advocates for parents, who would otherwise be left to navigate the complex family court system alone. The firm also works with Not Beyond Redemption, providing free family law advice and representation to mothers in prison to help them reestablish and maintain contact with their children. In 2022, a new pro bono scheme was launched to provide startups in the digital healthcare and Femtech sectors with high quality legal services.

## Travers Smith

*"I have been so scared for a long time. Yet, no-one seemed to care. Thank you for making me feel safe and for restoring our faith in humanity."*

In 2021, Travers Smith built a multi-firm advocacy alliance with the goal of representing survivors of domestic abuse who are ineligible for legal aid but who cannot afford to pay for private representation: the Domestic Abuse Response Alliance (DARA). DARA launched in February 2022, with seven leading law firms taking referrals from the NCDV. DARA is now supported by ten law firms, a large pool of barristers and over 350 volunteer lawyers who have acted for over 120 survivors across England and Wales.

At the end of Year 1, DARA expanded into Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle and began taking on referrals from FLOWS. Now, DARA is taking on cases in Birmingham and offers paperwork only services across the country.

It is the largest pro bono project assembled to provide end-to-end representation and, crucially, advocacy for survivors seeking protective orders against their abusers.

Travers Smith has also worked with Justice and Care since 2020, supporting multiple survivors of human trafficking where their work has included representing a key witness to the prosecution of an organised criminal gang accused of sex trafficking over 100 women.

## **Best Contribution by an In-house Team or Solicitor**

### **Condé Nast Legal Team, Conde Nast**

*"The opportunity to give back via pro bono advice has been so rewarding for the team."*

Condé Nast's London legal team joined LawWorks in July 2022, created a pro bono group, and has taken on four matters since then, supporting charitable organisations across a wide variety of legal issues.

Lawyers with different levels of experience and specialisms have worked together on these issues and have prioritised this pro bono work, despite having busy schedules and working across different time zones.

An example of one of the pro bono clients with which the team has worked is Think Tenacity, a non-profit organisation which supports black entrepreneurs who struggle with mental health whilst running a business. The team attended a community webinar session which was an invaluable experience and enabled them to get a sense of how the work they were doing would protect this charity's future endeavours.

### **The Financial Conduct Authority Pro Bono Group, Financial Conduct Authority**

*"Reading the final determination is a true testament to your hard work and how generously you have given your time to this case... We are so thankful to you!"*

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) Pro Bono Group was launched in July 2022, and has since grown to include around one third of the FCA's 300 lawyers.

Finding suitable opportunities and overcoming insurance issues can make undertaking pro bono matters challenging for public sector in-house lawyers. With the support of the charities LawWorks and Advocate, solicitors from the group participate in LawWorks' unpaid wages and not-for-profits programmes, FCA barristers have undertaken pro bono hearings through Advocate, and a growing number of lawyers from the group are volunteering each week at the Waterloo Legal Advice Centre.

The range of pro bono matters taken on is broad. They include assisting a litigant in person to apply for a judicial review, giving advice to non-profit organisations on the use of outdoor spaces, data protection issues and appealing to the Company Names Tribunal. They are also acting as Honorary

Counsel to a youth charity.

The FCA Pro Bono Group demonstrates that there is an untapped resource of public sector lawyers with the skills and willingness to undertake pro bono.

### **Inmarsat London legal team, Inmarsat**

*"It is a great comfort to know that the appropriate frameworks are in place to protect the charity and its stakeholders."*

The in-house legal team at Inmarsat joined LawWorks in April this year. Since then, the London team has taken on several pro bono casework matters, including an Honorary Counsel role with the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust (BGNRT), a charity that uses a former bomb site as a community space. The Inmarsat team has begun to review BGNRT's suite of policies, a project that is in its early days, but the team has already identified gaps, and clarifications that will improve the charity's policies and de-risk operations.

One of the casework matters was for a non-profit provider of literacy resources and facilities for children. The charity had moved from an in-person to an online model during the pandemic but had been charged over a year's rent by its landlord following confusion over the termination of its licence to the premises.

Inmarsat team was able to negotiate a 50% refund. This made a significant difference to the charity's finances, which has minimal financial resources and one of the trustees had been forced to pay the rent from his personal savings.



## Best Contribution by a Junior Lawyer

### Alessandro Angelico, Covington & Burling

*"It is the maturity and sensitivity with which he approaches his pro bono work that impresses me."*

Alessandro assisted an Afghan judge's refugee application for settlement in the UK. The judge was at risk of capture, imprisonment or murder by the Taliban as a consequence of their judicial role. Covington & Burling were instructed to apply for resettlement for the judge and family. Alessandro researched evidence of threats against the individual in support of the application. He took the lead, under supervision, liaising with lawyers, diplomats and UN officials to pursue the refugee application, including in other jurisdictions more favourable to refugee applications.

Another client, a retired leaseholder, had been living in a property that had fallen into serious disrepair, with persistent roof leaks and mice infestations. Alessandro led the day-to-day running of the claim against the council landlord. The client had been self-represented which had become a great burden, particularly at a difficult County Court hearing where costs were awarded against them. Having previously denied that works were needed, the council has now agreed to carry out the repairs identified in the expert report that Alessandro arranged and those works have commenced.

### Frances Beddow, Allen & Overy

*"Frances... is a junior litigator with an unwavering commitment to access to justice and protecting the rights of some of the most vulnerable people in our society."*

Over the past year Frances has been a pivotal member of the team of lawyers representing the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking, in an intervention before the UK Court of Appeal in *R (Asylum Aid) v SSHD* (which formed part of the Rwanda challenges).

Frances has also carried out pro bono work as a central member of the team advising the family of Harry Dunn, a young man who was killed in a car collision with the wife of a U.S. diplomat. As the Allen & Overy (A&O) project lead on the Family Reunion from Europe+ project with RLS and Coram, Frances manages the project, including mobilising lawyers from across A&O's London office to help Refugee Legal Support and Coram reunite families in the UK with family members abroad.

Frances has also assisted clients of the project herself over the past year. Providing representation to those who are seeking justice is the overriding aim of Frances's work.

## **Voirrey Blount, Reed Smith**

*"It is not an overstatement when I say that the work Voirrey has done and the help she has organised has contributed to saving the lives of many vulnerable people in distress at sea."*

Voirrey is the co-Champion of Reed Smith's work with the Prisoner's Advice Service which provides free legal advice and advocacy on prison law matters for adult prisoners in England and Wales. Thanks to Voirrey's efforts, more than 50 lawyers have signed up for this project.

As an experienced Admiralty Manager, she also introduced the charity Human Rights at Sea to the firm. This is an organisation which raises international awareness of human rights abuses at sea and delivers social justice through legal and policy development. As a result of this link, a cross-practice team of lawyers helped to launch the Geneva Declaration on Human Rights at Sea. Voirrey also introduced and is leading on the firm's relationship with Refugee Rescue, which carries out Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in the Mediterranean, particularly on the stretch of water between Turkey and Lesvos. The firm assisted by carrying out a range of research topics including on the detention of SAR vessels and the legal justification for their SAR operations.

## **Maddie Drabble, Dechert**

*"Thanks to [Maddie's] help, we are now expanding "My Period Limited" and its app across the UK, now reaching over 1,800 locations where people in poverty can access free products."*

One of Maddie's chief pro bono achievements has been to support the social enterprise, Hey Girls, an organisation that aims to eradicate period poverty in the UK through a "buy one donate one" business model. To date, the organisation has donated over 33 million products to people in need. Maddie provided valuable assistance by advising on the structuring and registration of a related charity, "My Period" which helps people to find free products near them and also helps employers to become period-friendly businesses.

Maddie's other pro bono work has been through supporting vulnerable individuals, such as advising on a successful disability benefits appeal where

the DWP allowed the appeal without the need for an oral hearing. She also assisted two families with child citizenship applications through the Kids in Need of Defense project. The impact of this work cannot be overstated as it ensures that the child is not at risk of deportation and enables them access to work, higher education and other life opportunities. Maddie is also a regular volunteer at the Islington Law Centre evening advice clinic.

### **Olivia Scalise Gaspar, Covington & Burling**

*“Olivia’s work has changed the lives of those she has assisted. Her commitment to quality means that all the applications she has worked on have been successful.”*

Working with the Islington Law Centre on Kids in Need of Defence (KIND) UK, Olivia has assisted in regularising the long residence of multiple families who are fully integrated into British society with their children, whose entire lives and futures exist here, yet were previously undocumented in the UK. These families are typically lone-parent households on minimum or low-wage jobs, often dependent on welfare benefits, for whom this legal assistance would be unaffordable.

The work Olivia does is time-consuming and complex with each client’s circumstances being intricate and unique. Her detailed knowledge of immigration rules and policy, and the impact of any changes, enables her to speak comfortably about different routes available to clients and to address obstacles at the outset. Given her outstanding ability and expertise in this area, she often leads informal training sessions for lawyers (both more junior and more senior to her) on the structure of the Immigration Rules and applications. Her passion for KIND UK work has also inspired subsequent generations of junior lawyers to become involved.

### **Arushie Marwah, Herbert Smith Freehills**

*“Arushie’s work has had the impact of enforcing human rights for the voiceless.”*

Arushie makes a significant contribution to several important pro bono projects.

In the Caribbean Death Row Project, she has been pivotal in providing pro bono representation to four death-row inmates who faced appalling miscarriages of justice in Trinidad and Tobago. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights found in favour of the prisoners, granted compensation and will now resentence them. One has been released from prison after

more than 25 years of incarceration. Arushie worked long hours to ensure that submissions were filed with the IACtHR on time. These cases also put international pressure on Trinidad and Tobago to ensure compliance with the State's human rights obligations.

Arushie also acts as the firm's Relationship Associate for RCJ Advice (linked with Citizens Advice) which provides free legal advice to litigants in person seeking recourse for often complex and emotive injustices, organising three or four sessions every month and motivating others to volunteer too.

Her commitment, dedication, work ethic and outstanding legal research skills have been essential to these major projects, as well as multiple others on which she has worked.

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## Best Contribution by an Individual

### Julie Chiu, Herbert Smith Freehills

*"Julie's contributions spread beyond her individual clients, as she nurtures the pro bono culture within our firm."*

A star volunteer, Julie leads by example and provides unparalleled contributions to two projects: the Prisoners Advice Clinic (PAS) and the Whitechapel Legal Advice Centre (WLAC). At WLAC she oversees a team of over 24 trainees and associates and has developed a supportive and nurturing culture. This, in turn, leads to increased pro bono activity and better client outcomes. She leads on matters such as illegal evictions which go straight to the heart of her client's physical safety and financial security. For PAS, her work enables many prisoners to access the support they are entitled to under the law but otherwise would struggle to access. Her unwavering and long-term support for this charity helps ensure that some of society's most marginalised people understand the legal system, by educating and empowering them to help themselves.

What sets Julie apart is her total willingness to take on the less glamorous tasks. She is a humble and quiet achiever often taking on the work that doesn't receive acknowledgement but enables others to deliver impactful work.

### Harry Eccles-Williams, Mishcon de Reya

*"Harry has displayed a passion and commitment to pro bono work throughout his career at Mishcon and nurtures this passion in every new cohort of trainees."*

Harry acts pro bono on a range of complex and often multi-jurisdictional disputes, many of which have a reputational and/or political element.

Harry has day-to-day management of the claim against Facebook on behalf of the Rohingya people. He co-leads the firm's relationship with Queen Mary University on the SPITE project, which provides pro bono legal advice to victims of revenge porn – i.e. where someone shares and publishes intimate images without the victim's consent. He also acted for Azeem Rafiq in his fight against racism in cricket. During this case, Harry worked with Nick De Marco KC (who also acted pro-bono) on a successful application for the hearing before the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) against Yorkshire County Cricket Club and others to be held in public. No previous CDC disciplinary hearing had ever been held in public before. The wider societal impact of this case shouldn't be understated – it has opened a conversation about racism in sport, as evidenced by the wide media interest.

## **Josianne El Antoury, Covington & Burling**

*“Josianne’s rapport with the mum of the family...was vital to prevent a catastrophic deterioration in the mother’s mental health by containing her distress.”*

Josianne is one of Covington & Burling’s Pro Bono Coordinators who also advises on pro bono cases involving her speciality, namely insurance disputes. Examples of her work include helping charities such as Glyndbourne Productions, TAP Social Movement (a UK based brewery and hospitality organisation that creates training and employment for prisoners) and DASH (a London-based disabilities charity) to recover business interruption losses occurring as a result of Covid-19. Non-contentious matters include advising the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Separately, Josianne has helped Kids in Need of Defense UK which helps undocumented minors to settle in the UK. She recently supervised a team who obtained leave to remain for a family who had been unsuccessful in their prior attempts over many years by providing the Home Office with detailed evidence of their level of integration in the UK. With her Arabic language skills, she is also assisting in the evacuation of former Afghan judiciary to the UK, Germany and Canada.

## **Naga Kandiah, MTC Solicitors**

*“Naga’s work is legal in nature but compassionate in practice. He seeks to bring hope back into lives that have been abandoned. Each case he champions not only changes lives but raises the standard for the legal profession itself.”*

Naga’s relentless pro bono advocacy covers vulnerable elderly Windrush victims, gender-based domestic violence victims, exiled renowned activists from the Far East and LGBTQ+ individuals.

He helped three Jamaicans who were residing in London to alter their unlawful status in the UK, thus ending years of reliance and misery made worse by illness. One client had been told to expect medical costs of £70,000 after a cancer diagnosis but, as a result of the change in her immigration status, was able to receive treatment without significant medical debt. Another client, because he could not afford to pay for a lawyer, overstayed, lost his right to employment and was subsequently evicted. Naga worked on the case pro bono and, after achieving a successful result, supported him to find alternative employment and housing.

Naga took on pro bono two cases of well-known Hong Kong and China activists by supporting them through the asylum process and also through lobbying Parliament to solve systematic errors to clear a backlog on similar cases.

## **Emine Mehmet, Duncan Lewis Solicitors**

*"In the world of accessible justice, Emine Mehmet is not just a lawyer; she is a beacon of hope, a mentor, and a force for transformative change. Her collaboration with UEL paints a picture of a brighter, more just future, where the legal system is not just a privilege for the few, but a right for all."*

As Chairperson of the Duncan Lewis' Pro Bono Committee, Emine is at the heart of putting the firm's commitment to improving access to justice into practice. Emine dedicates a significant amount of her own time to ensuring that the firm gives back to the community, and she currently runs ten surgeries in her team alone.

Emine has been instrumental in setting up the University of East London (UEL) Legal Clinic where she mentors UEL students. Through this collaboration, Emine imparts her encyclopaedic knowledge, guiding young minds in navigating the complexities of real-world cases. These budding lawyers, under her mentorship, learn the nuances of empathetic legal practice, making them not just advocates but compassionate problem solvers. This initiative, designed to upskill a future generation of legal professionals, is Emine's way of ensuring that the torch of accessible justice continues to burn brightly.

## **Rachel Metcalf, Linklaters**

*"Rachel's work for APPEAL is a shining example of how commercial lawyers can lend their skills to disadvantaged individuals. Her leadership of this long running case and the excellent memorandum is testament to Rachel's skill and dedication."*

Rachel's pro bono work has included contributing her time and skill to criminal appeals charity APPEAL, death penalty charity Amicus and Citizens Advice. Through the firm's partnership with APPEAL, Rachel co-leads Linklaters' work for an individual who is seeking to appeal their conviction. Rachel has been involved in managing a team of up to 20 lawyers to investigate different potential case theories to sustain an application to the Criminal Cases Review Commission. Rachel has been instrumental in leading the project's

case theory memorandum which brings together the various theories that suggest that the conviction was potentially unsafe. APPEAL described the memorandum as “the best piece of work” they had ever received. Rachel’s contribution to this cannot be underestimated, dedicating many hours to ensure that all potential avenues were pursued and appropriate areas for follow up were identified. Rachel has been a key driver in maintaining the firm’s relationship with APPEAL and their feedback reflects how highly the team’s work is regarded.

### **Geraldine Palfreman-Pigot, Covington & Burling**

*“Geraldine has gone the extra mile for us every step of the way and we honestly don’t know what we would have done without her.”*

Geraldine contributes her time and expertise on a wide range of complex lease and development projects including TAP, an independent hospitality organisation which creates training and employment opportunities for prison offenders; CLASS a charity supporting a network of women-led community associations in deprived areas; and the death penalty charity, Amicus.

For several years, Geraldine has provided invaluable support for TAP enabling it to take up additional premises, adjust the terms at existing premises and retain and expand its operations and employ more personnel who might otherwise struggle to find work.

Geraldine’s work for CLASS involved complex funding issues. Through Geraldine’s “eminently professional approach,” CLASS were able to utilise funding in a way that will provide a free space for local women’s groups. CLASS describe Geraldine as an “amazing person who seems to solve all our problems.”

Geraldine is currently working with a wider team to assist an Amicus death row mitigation case enabling the defence team to focus on strategy rather than reams of disclosure, providing a better chance for the defendant to mitigate their case.



## **The LawWorks Cymru Award**

### **Ukraine Project Cymru, Asylum Justice**

*"Students have gained insight into how immigration policy affects the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our society, and how important it is that people in this situation get the right legal advice."*

Ukraine Project Cymru (UPC) was set up in Autumn 2022 in response to the war in Ukraine and is a unique partnership between Cardiff University and the Welsh immigration charity, Asylum Justice. There are approximately 6,500 Ukrainians living in Wales under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and 4,000 under family and extension schemes.

UPC offers regular remote appointments to anyone with a direct link to a Ukrainian person in Wales. The legal advice provided can be on issues including Ukraine Visa Schemes and work, family and visitor visas. The project lead, Jennifer Morgan (an immigration and asylum lawyer and Cardiff University lecturer) provides the advice and is supported by law students and volunteer paralegals. Asylum Justice provide all the infrastructure and administrative support through their virtual desktop.

Since launching, the project has advised 34 clients, with that advice going on to benefit another 59 people. Ongoing advice has been provided to several clients, and in one case a non-Ukrainian sibling has been allowed to join Ukrainian family members in the UK for Christmas.

### **University of South Wales Legal Advice Clinic, University of South Wales**

*"The clinic is a fantastic pro bono legal service and is run by a very hard-working team...it is providing access to justice for some of the most vulnerable people in society."*

Celebrating ten years of impact, the University of South Wales Legal Advice Clinic plugs a vital gap in access to justice in an area where limited pro bono advice is available. Over 100 students volunteered at the clinic in 2022, providing free legal advice on employment, family, consumer, litigation, business, probate and housing law. The Homelessness Advice Clinic, in partnership with Cardiff Lawyers Care, was developed as an advice clinic for those experiencing homelessness. So far, 98 clients have been assisted on this project.

The clinic's Street Law Project sees law students delivering presentations to

educate unrepresented claimants on Employment Tribunal procedure. This year saw the launch of a new project in conjunction with Action in Caerau & Ely, a charity developing and delivering a projects and activities to benefit the communities of Ely and Caerau. This project will work closely with local GP surgeries who can refer patients who are experiencing legal problems that could be impacting their health, and the clinic will provide them with free legal appointments.

## Best Contribution by a Pro Bono Clinic

### Bath Law Clinic, Bath Spa University

*"The need for legal advice is greater than ever. The cost of living crisis and the after effects of the pandemic are hitting residents across Bath & North East Somerset. This new partnership enables us to offer more people much-needed legal advice for free."*

Recognising an unmet need for legal support in the Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) community, Stone King Solicitors, Bath Citizens Advice and Bath Spa University established the Bath Law Clinic to provide pro bono legal advice to residents. Specialist legal advice can now be provided to those with significant legal issues in the areas of wills and probate, family law, employment law and immigration. The clinic has now supported 104 clients. 99% of these clients felt they would be in no position to afford a lawyer otherwise.

The clinic has also established a stand-alone Social Enterprise advice clinic, providing pro bono advice to social enterprises, B Corps and charities. It is believed to be the only dedicated Pro Bono Social Enterprise clinic in the UK. The clinic aims to encourage businesses to consider community benefit and recognise social purpose behind a successful business, in turn benefitting the BANES community and supporting the area to become a hub for thriving social enterprises.

### BPP Legal Advice Clinic, BPP University Pro Bono Centre

*"I was very impressed with the level of professionalism of the service provided throughout. I highly value the level of effort that was put into the research behind addressing my situation, and I can now say that I am more confident in acknowledging the legal requirements of my industry than I was prior to the consultation."*

The BPP legal advice clinic runs across multiple locations providing advice in a range of areas of law. During 2022/23 they received nearly 2000 enquiries, with over 400 clients receiving advice and representation, covering family, housing, enterprise, welfare and consumer law, along with environmental policy issues. 366 students were involved in giving this advice, supported by BPP staff and external lawyers.

There are high levels of client satisfaction (97.5%) with over £230,000 recovered in financial claims. Other claims involve child arrangements, rent increases and eviction claims, and eight welfare benefits appeals to the First-

tier Tribunal.

The clinic recently retained its Advice Quality Standard which it has held since 2015, with numerous areas of good practice highlighted including training, supervision and reporting, as well as adaptability during the pandemic. The hard work of the team was recognised with no corrective action necessary.

### **Dads House Family Law Clinic, Dads House**

*“Without the assistance of Dads House Family Law Clinic, [the] client would have had to spend upwards of £100,000.”*

Dads House Family Law Clinic is run from their charity premises, which also provides additional community services such as a foodbank, lunch club and social activities. Volunteers support clients without the benefit of advanced technology, and with limited resources. This makes their work very challenging as they strive to make a difference to the lives of vulnerable clients.

In a recent notable case, the clinic was able to support a young client to secure the return of two young siblings who had been abducted to the Philippines and been away from their family for over 5 months. Three volunteers provided numerous appointments, and were able to gain legal advice and representation from four specialist barristers including a KC.

The case was fraught with complications which made the successful result even more impressive. Some of the challenges faced by the volunteers included the client not having an automatic right to apply, language barriers, the ambivalence of the local authority, the significant risk of harm to the children and the Philippines not being a party to the Hague Convention.

### **Family and Employment Law Assistance in Legal Advice Deserts: Charles Russell Speechlys LLP, Plymouth Citizens Advice and University House Legal Advice Centre**

*“The impact that this project has had on clients’ lives cannot be overstated ... nothing can beat having the opportunity to discuss your issues with a specialist solicitor.”*

This webcam clinic was a first of its kind when launched in November 2019 – when legal advice clinic appointments via webcam were virtually unheard of. The collaboration with Plymouth Citizens Advice and Legal Advice Centres was set up so that lawyers from offices in London, Guildford and Cheltenham could direct their support to Plymouth and the South-West, an area in great legal need and considered a legal advice desert.

When the pandemic hit, the clinic structure for remote advice was already there and became critically important as advice centres temporarily closed. In the post-lockdown world, Charles Russell Speechlys continues to work closely with their clinic partners to learn what new structure works for both their teams and the individuals attending the appointments. A pilot expansion of the family clinic began in May 2023, partnering with family lawyers at firms Withers and Hunters Law.

Over the last four years, 50 lawyers have staffed clinic appointments, assisting over 320 individuals on issues varying from domestic abuse and childcare arrangements to unfair dismissal and discrimination.

### **Kent Law Clinic, University of Kent**

*“The pro bono work of the clinic staff & students is nothing short of outstanding.”*

In January 2022 Kent Law Clinic was contacted by a group of care workers who had been working for a privately owned care home for the elderly, which ceased trading with no proper warning. The care workers had not received their full pay nor the correct pension contributions and were distressed by the manner residents had been relocated.

Acting for 22 clients at once is demanding, especially with tight deadlines. Clinic staff organised a total of 24 law students into teams to work on the multiple cases. Each of the clients' claims to the Employment Tribunal had to be individually pleaded and there were 170 legal causes of action in the 22 claims made. Remarkably all but two of the 170 causes of action were successful and a total of £206,450 was awarded to the care workers. The judge who presided over the case commended both the lawyers and students for their painstaking work on such a complex case. As the care home is now insolvent, the clinic is now pursuing claims to the government's Redundancy Payments Service.

Obtaining a favourable judgment was of enormous comfort to the clients and eye opening for the students.

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

Four years ago 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 nominees for 2023 are:



### Covington & Burling

*"We deeply appreciate the dedication of Covington & Burling's lawyers...in pursuing justice for LGBTIQ+ individuals facing discrimination."*

The Covington & Burling team supported a pro bono client who was seeking compensation from the Polish public broadcaster for the unlawful termination of his self-employed contact based on his sexual orientation, which occurred immediately after the client had released a Christmas video with his husband.

The Polish courts referred the case to the EU and subsequently Covington & Burling took the case on, preparing both written submissions and arguments for the oral hearing. Representing the client at the European Court, five judges and the Advocate General were asked by the pro bono lawyers to decide whether the anti-discrimination protections of a particular EU Directive applied to self-employed persons (which had to date remained untested). Covington's arguments convinced the court and resulted in a landmark judgment in EU discrimination and employment law – the law is now clear that sexual orientation cannot be a reason to refuse or terminate a contact with a self-employed worker – thus strengthening protection for all self-employed workers across the EU.

### Crowell & Moring U.K.

*"Capturing first-hand experiences was vital to ensuring actionable proposals that would have the greatest positive impact for vulnerable juveniles in the justice system."*

In 2022, Crowell & Moring's International Dispute Resolution group partnered with the International Legal Foundation and their partners at the Public Defender Society of Nepal on a project aimed at shining a light on the state of juvenile justice and the conditions of confinement of children and young people in detention in Nepal.

The international team drafted a report based on the findings of 1,600

interviews of juveniles who were in detention in Nepal. The report highlighted the areas for improvement in Nepal's juvenile justice legal framework. Some of the major areas identified were lack of access to legal representation, the misapplication of the law by judges, discrimination against certain ethnic groups and significant overcrowding in the detention centres. The report makes recommendations on how to address some of these issues and consequently improve the lives of juveniles in detention in Nepal.

### **Beirut port blast litigation, Dechert**

*"The claimants and their families, as a result of Dechert's efforts over two years, have been able to take comfort in the fact that at least one entity involved in the explosion has been found liable for their injuries and for unjustly taking the lives of their loved ones."*

The Beirut port explosion on 4 August 2020 was one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history. The catastrophic event resulted in the tragic loss of 218 lives, left over 7,000 people injured and displaced over 300,000 Beirut residents.

Dechert, in collaboration with the Beirut Bar Association and a team of barristers, filed a claim against Savaro, the UK-registered chemical company which had purchased and arranged for the delivery of the ammonium nitrate that caused the explosion. Savaro initially defended the claim and denied responsibility, but the defence was struck out and the High Court in London found it guilty of the death, injury and damage caused by the explosion. At a hearing in June 2023, the High Court went on to issue £100,000 plus interest for the pain and suffering of each relative of a deceased victim. One survivor was awarded £125,000 for pain and suffering together with over £400,000 for past and future medical expenses.

### **Rule 39 Pro Bono Initiative: CILD and Orrick, Freshfields, DLA Piper, Linklaters, Herbert Smith Freehills, Osborne Clarke, Reed Smith and Eversheds Sutherland**

*"Out of those who helped us, Daria and the Rule 39 Initiative lawyers were the only ones who were able to move us... thanks to them our lives were saved from the bombs that, in the end, fell on the Centre."*

The Rule 39 Pro Bono Initiative ("the Rule 39 Initiative") provides high quality pro bono legal assistance to migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees across the 46 Member States of the Council of Europe, by assisting in the preparation

and lodging of applications and interim (Rule 39) requests to the European Court of Human Rights.

Rule 39 requests are a scarcely known and often mishandled tool, for which legal aid is very rarely provided by Member States. However, due to the expertise provided by those involved in the Rule 39 Initiative, it has been successful in response to human rights issues stemming from the refugee exodus in Afghanistan after the Taliban's return. It has also been used in cases concerning the rights of foreigners detained in a Ukrainian detention centre dangerously close to the front line. Within ten days of the ruling secured by the Rule 39 Initiative, all migrants, refugees and asylum seekers held in Mykolaiv detention centre were moved to a different and relatively safe area, thus avoiding the bombs which fell only a few days later.

## **Best New Pro Bono Activity**

### **Bath Law Clinic**

*"The need for legal advice is greater than ever. The cost of living crisis and the after effects of the pandemic are hitting residents across Bath & North East Somerset. This new partnership enables us to offer more people much-needed legal advice for free."*

Recognising an unmet need for legal support in the Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) community, Stone King Solicitors, Bath Citizens Advice and Bath Spa University established the Bath Law Clinic to provide pro bono legal advice to residents. Specialist legal advice can now be provided to those with significant legal issues in the areas of wills and probate, family law, employment law and immigration. The clinic has now supported 104 clients. 99% of these clients felt they would be in no position to afford a lawyer otherwise.

The clinic has also established a stand-alone Social Enterprise advice clinic, providing pro bono advice to social enterprises, B Corps and charities. It is believed to be the only dedicated Pro Bono Social Enterprise clinic in the UK. The clinic aims to encourage businesses to consider community benefit and recognise social purpose behind a successful business, in turn benefitting the BANES community and supporting the area to become a hub for thriving social enterprises.



## Bridge to the City

*"It is a truly unique programme that I hope will benefit many diverse candidates like me for years to come."*

Bridge to the City is a social mobility scholarship programme launched by Ropes & Gray and delivered in partnership with the Bloomberg Legal and Compliance department's Pro Bono Programme. It is aimed at first-year university students from diverse and underserved low socioeconomic backgrounds in the UK.

Students are offered a two-week paid work experience scheme at the London offices of both Bloomberg and Ropes & Gray. The scheme features panel and networking events, mentorship and a variety of masterclasses, designed to provide the students with the necessary insights and skills development to successfully apply for future graduate positions. Students are also encouraged to build a peer network of like-minded students where they can learn from each other. At the end of the scheme, two students are awarded scholarships comprising of a £20,000 bursary, long term-mentoring and a choice of a place on a Ropes & Gray vacation scheme or Bloomberg's internship programme.

The scheme provides students from diverse backgrounds with a differentiated offering, not just in law, and aims to expose them to different options, both in private practice and in-house.

## City Community Legal Advice Centre

*"I was positively overwhelmed by the careful and detailed approach engaged to advise me on how to approach my housing need. I am pleased that I got a positive outcome from the advice that was offered to me."*

The City Community Legal Advice Centre opened in September 2022 and provides legal advice to London residents on a variety of legal issues including civil litigation, family, employment, housing, welfare benefits, consumer and small businesses. In response to local need, two specialist services have been developed namely the Person Independence Payment Form Filing Service (PIPS) and a Housing Disrepair Service (HDS).

The PIP application is notoriously complex and often people who experience disabilities have difficulties in completing these forms. PIPS trains and supervises volunteers law students to help with the process, with each appointment lasting up to three hours, as research shows that assistance from

a specialist gives clients a far greater chance of success.

HDS provides one-off advice to social housing tenants suffering from unresolved, ongoing disrepair issues, such as mould, leaks or lack of electricity and gas. In addition to legal advice, HDS also drafts a letter of complaint to be sent to the landlord or Housing Ombudsman.

## **Islamophobia Response Unit**

*“The Islamophobia Response Unit left no stone unturned which the workers greatly appreciated”*

Despite rising levels of Islamophobia, the significant barriers to reporting hate crimes means that such crimes are notoriously underreported. Within this context, the Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) was formed as a bespoke legal advice service in November 2021.

IRU is passionate about access to justice and has developed expertise in the legal areas relating to discrimination, human rights, hate crime, employment, mistreatment in housing, education and public services. One case involved a Muslim woman who was verbally assaulted in public and her belongings were violently damaged. As a result of IRU’s intervention the offender was found guilty of racially and religiously aggravated intentional harassment and ordered to pay criminal damages of several thousand pounds. In another case, a Muslim woman suffered harassment at work and sought help from IRU which supported her through the internal grievance procedure and with the preliminary stages of her tribunal claim, resulting in a financial settlement on her behalf.

## **Micro Rainbow LGBTQI+ Ukraine Scheme**

*“The scheme has been a great success. The work that Weil has undertaken pro bono has proved vital in securing safety in the UK for LGBTQI+ Ukrainians.”*

The Micro Rainbow LGBTQI+ Ukraine Scheme provides practical and legal support to LGBTQI+ Ukrainians who have fled the war and currently reside in neighbouring countries where social, legal and cultural attitudes towards LGBTQI+ rights can be hostile. Under the scheme, clients are assisted with securing UK immigration status via the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Given the urgent nature of the support needed by prospective clients, the teams worked intensively to create the scheme in just three weeks.

The first 12 cases managed through the scheme resulted in a 100% success rate, with 14 Ukrainians receiving immigration status and a place to live in the

UK. In addition to this, visa applications made through the scheme have been secured faster than the average rate with the Home Office. As a result of the scheme, Micro Rainbow have been able to increase its capacity and support more LGBTQI+ Ukrainians in need at no cost, thanks to the pro-bono work from Weil, Gotshal & Manges.

## **Protect Environmental Whistleblowing Toolkit, Protect**

*“Our new Environmental Whistleblowing Toolkit provides the practical information workers need to speak up and raise a concern with confidence. Knowledge is power, and giving workers the know-how will ensure they’re better informed to speak up and stop harm when they see it.”*

2023 saw the whistleblowing charity, Protect, embark on an ambitious project to raise awareness and increase the effectiveness of environmental whistleblowing. Workers inside organisations are the most likely to be first to spot environmental harms, however very few workers report their concerns. To support would-be whistleblowers to speak up, Protect produced an interactive Environmental Whistleblowing Toolkit full of practical step-by-step guidance on how to raise concerns and the legal protections in place.

The Toolkit was drafted with the pro bono help of multiple lawyers and organisations, including Outer Temple, Doughty Street Chambers, Leigh Day, and 1MCB Chambers. It provides clear information on whistleblowing in the workplace, to help workers to raise environmental concerns safely and with maximum impact. By providing workers with the right information, they can raise concerns and damage can be prevented, thus minimising the impact on the environment and helping to ensure organisations are accountable for their climate impact.

## **UCL iLAC-ESI PIP Form Filling Clinic**

*“The service is very well organised and very professional and [the volunteers] have made it very easy for me to understand that there is support for disabled people who don’t really understand their rights.”*

The increasing cost of living and rising levels of ill-health in the UK mean more people are applying for Person Independence Payments (PIP) than ever before. PIP is a disability benefit for people with long term health conditions which affect their ability to carry out everyday tasks or their mobility. PIP applications are complex, with many applicants experiencing difficulty understanding the eligibility criteria. There is also very little free legal advice

and support available to the public.

UCL iLAC, based in central Stratford, offers members of the East London community free in-person legal advice on all aspects of social welfare law and since January 2023 it has partnered with Eversheds Sutherland International to offer pro bono assistance to PIP applicants and those apply for mandatory reconsiderations of negative or unfavourable decisions. A hybrid model has been adapted to address concerns surrounding digital exclusion. Interviews typically take two hours with further work carried out on the application afterwards before it is submitted.

## Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership

### City Community Legal Advice Centre

*"... the CityCLAC has been an incredibly invaluable addition to the Westminster Refernet Partnership. Since joining the partnership, the CityCLAC gives residents the access to the justice they deserve and which they do not have the means to seek themselves, which is crucial given the rising cost of living in the UK."*

City Community Legal Advice Centre (CityCLAC) has developed effective partnerships with five law firms, charities, and City Law School staff to enable the delivery of sustainable advice services in areas of unmet legal need, without geographic restriction.

CityCLAC provides legal advice on family, employment, housing disrepair, benefits, general civil litigation, consumer and small business law. When the service opened they surveyed local providers to assess gaps in provision. The family service, housing disrepair service and personal independence payment service, are a direct result of those enquiries.

They can refer directly to over 200 organisations due to membership of referral networks. CityCLAC is part of the social prescribing network, On your Doorstep, and the Westminster Refernet partnership, they have also established referral pathways from Mental Health Trusts, Probation Services and a GP Federation. These partnerships ensure the clients obtain the advice they need.

## **Domestic Abuse Response Alliance (DARA): Travers Smith, Reed Smith, Hogan Lovells International, Latham & Watkins, Slaughter and May, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, Debevoise & Plimpton, Eversheds Sutherland (International), DLA Piper UK, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld**

*"DARA was incredibly helpful and I was delighted with the outcome of my case. I felt supported, heard and safe with the team members, without whom I would not have been able to have succeeded."*

In 2022, a multi-firm advocacy alliance consisting of the DARA firms was launched to represent survivors of domestic abuse who are ineligible for legal aid and who cannot afford to pay for private representation: the Domestic Abuse Response Alliance (DARA).

It comprises a special combination of expertise to deliver social justice: legal prowess and manpower from seven of the world's top law firms, governance from LawWorks, clients from the NCDV and FLOWS and family law oversight on every case from specialist firm Beck Fitzgerald. The result is the largest pro bono project ever assembled to provide end-to-end representation and, crucially, advocacy for survivors seeking protective orders against their abusers.

Collating and analysing feedback allows DARA to be truly innovative. Following feedback received, DARA's budget includes a 'fighting fund' which removes a further obstacle to justice by covering the cost of service of the NMOs and police disclosure.

## **Employment Law for London Project: BPP University and South West London Law Centres**

*"Our lawyer volunteers feel engaged and enthused through the successful facilitation of ... pro bono advice services and our student volunteers enhance their educational experience and ... develop the pro bono ethos which we hope will continue with them into their careers as future lawyers."*

In December 2022, the Employment Law for London (ELF London) project was set up as a partnership between the BPP Social Impact Team and South West London Law Centres (SWLLC). The partnership is made up of BPP staff, BPP law student volunteers and external volunteer employment lawyers (including from private practice and in-house companies) and SWLLC. It is a free initial employment law telephone advice service, helping some of the

most vulnerable individuals who live, work or study in London.

As a result of joining forces with SWLLC, the BBP team helps to relieve the administrative strain on receptionists and the in-house employment caseworker, freeing them up to focus on casework matters. With trained BPP student volunteers carrying out the initial triaging, and a bank of volunteer employment lawyers attending weekly advice appointments, the project has a very important place in the free legal advice sector, established from a strong and effective partnership between BPP, SWLLC and the volunteers.

**Green Tech Legal Collaborative: Bloomberg L.P., Ropes & Gray, Willkie Farr and Gallagher, Ashurst, Mayer Brown, Travers Smith, Shearman and Sterling, Venner Shipley**

*“By providing holistic legal and compliance assistance and guidance to these greentech startups at a crucial stage of their development, we hope and anticipate that they will succeed in meaningfully and positively impacting climate action for a better and healthier planet.”*

The Green Tech Legal Collaborative (GTLC) is in its third year of providing pro bono legal support for greentech startups from Imperial College’s Enterprise Lab. This pioneering and collaborative pro bono programme arose from a shared vision of supporting climate action and sustainability through a legal/compliance pro bono initiative. The programme is designed to work with greentech start-ups with diverse legal and compliance needs. The role of each volunteer is to provide an approachable, hands-on advisory service tailored to the needs of the startup.

GTLC launched in 2021 with the goal of helping six greentech startups navigate a wide range of complex legal and compliance challenges. Over time, the programme has grown and evolved to support more startups across additional practice areas, with further law firms joining to create a full-service collaborative programme for legal and compliance professionals who want to do their part in supporting climate action. This year 18 greentech startups have been supported through the GTLC.

## **Kids in Need of Defense UK (KIND UK)**

*“Becoming documented can mean everything to a child - the difference between stability and fragility, even life and death. By combining the existing skills and resources of our partners with our expertise in immigration and citizenship law, we deliver high quality advice and representation on a large scale to those who need it most. With a success rate of 99%, this really is pro bono working at its best.”*

KIND UK is a collaboration between five organisations specialising in children’s immigration, asylum, and citizenship law: Central England Law Centre, Coram Children’s Legal Centre, Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit, JustRight Scotland, and Migrant and Refugee Children’s Legal Unit at Islington Law Centre. KIND UK partners with KIND, a US charity supporting children facing deportation proceedings.

The process for gaining status in the UK is complex and many face it alone, without legal representation or protection of their rights. KIND UK provides free legal help to vulnerable children and their families as they navigate immigration and nationality procedures to regularise their status. KIND UK engages the support of pro bono legal volunteers to significantly increase resource and reach and to ensure the best quality free legal representation for undocumented children.

## **Not Beyond Redemption & Akin, Clyde & Co, Latham & Watkins, Morrison Foerster and Sidley Austin**

*“Since I first had contact with NBR I have felt so much more important and more involved in the decision-making [process] regarding my son. I cannot thank them enough for the hope and happiness I now feel...”*

Founded by Camilla Baldwin, Not Beyond Redemption (NBR) is the only charity that provides free family law advice and representation to mothers in prison to help them re-establish and maintain contact with their children during their sentence and upon release.

Since 2013, legal aid has been extremely limited for most family law cases, leaving incarcerated mothers uninformed of their parental rights and unable to advocate for their children. NBR runs legal clinics in seven women’s prisons in England and aim to expand this service to all women’s prisons in England by 2025. NBR has a team of specialist family lawyers who provide family law training to volunteer lawyers from a number of corporate firms to

enable them to take full-scope casework to advise mothers on family law and children proceedings both during and after their prison sentences. Since NBR was founded in 2020, 167 women have been assisted by the charity, with 71% stating that they reported an improvement in their self-worth.

## **Queen Mary University London & Mishcon de Reya**

*“The Black Justice Project...is undertaking the essential work need to help fill the void in the provision of legal advice to the Black community, that specifically focuses on the community’s needs and the pervasive long-term discrimination that leads to ever-restricting access to justice.”*

Mishcon de Reya has partnered with Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre (QMLAC) where it supervises students to give one-off legal advice on a number of specific projects within its East London community.

Through the Black Justice Project, QMLAC offers free legal advice to members of the Black community where they have faced employment discrimination and/or have potential claims under the Equality Act. Through Pink Law, QMLAC is committed to offering both a welcoming and confidential environment for the LGBT+ community, providing advice on discrimination, civil partnership formation and dissolution, cohabitation issues, immigration, will and probate and hate crime. The SPITE clinic offers legal support to those who have been the victim of revenge porn i.e. someone sharing and publishing intimate images without their consent. Finally, Windrush Support helps those who want to apply for financial compensation through the Windrush Compensation Scheme as a result of any losses suffered.

## **The Small Business Advice Line - The University of Law**

*“The service may not seem particularly glamorous but is necessary and sought-after, with practical implications that positively enhance people’s lives and opportunities in a meaningful and lasting way.”*

The University of Law (ULaw) launched the Small Business Advice Line (SBAL) in Autumn 2021 to enhance its portfolio of pro bono clinics providing practical legal experience for students. Recognising the death of commercial law clinics and the significant rise in small business start ups post pandemic, SBAL draws on diverse legal expertise from solicitors in commercial and business practice who advise on contract law, intellectual property, company, finance and GDPR. Student involvement enhances efficiency and gives them the opportunity to play a triage or observer role.



The service provides free legal advice from experienced solicitors that clients could otherwise not afford – for example in a 40 minute session a client was provided with advice on anti-competitive practice and implied contract by course of conduct, leaving them with a clear understanding of the law and how to present a formal letter to the other party.

## **University of Chester & Pregnant Then Screwed Partnership**

*“Breaking complex legal principles down into plain English, easily-digestible information sheets assist women who may not have anywhere else to turn. Housing them on the PTS website means that women can access legal guidance at any time of the day...or night.*

Pregnant Then Screwed (PTS) is a charity founded in 2015 by Joeli Brearley which seeks to tackle the root causes of maternity discrimination. It promotes the rights of women and offers access to free legal advice via volunteer-led email and telephone advice lines. Its partnership with the Chester Community Law Project began in the summer of 2022, following which students produced a batch of information sheets covering issues such as maternity leave and pay, adoption leave and pay, unfair dismissal, flexible working, redundancy and discrimination. They are freely accessible by members of the public and are often signposted by the volunteers who operate the advice lines. As at July 2023, the sheets had been downloaded over 20,000 times.

The partnership continues to grow, with the student team currently working on information sheets covering the stages of the grievance and Employment Tribunal processes which are due to go live soon.

# About Advocates for International Development



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 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 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 900 development organisations in its network, 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

With less than seven years remaining to achieve the SDGs, 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. Several of these chapters are now available on the SDG Legal Initiative Platform: [sdglegalinitiative.a4id.org](https://sdglegalinitiative.a4id.org)

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 [a4id.org](https://a4id.org). Alternatively, you can contact the Pro Bono Legal Services team at [probono@a4id.org](mailto:probono@a4id.org). If you are interested in getting involved with the SDG Legal Initiative or in knowing more about it, please email us at [SDG.Legal.Initiative@a4id.org](mailto: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 member firms and in-house teams, 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. It also plays an important role in driving forward innovative and nuanced responses to access to justice crises.

Here at LawWorks we enable the provision of pro bono through:

- Supporting a growing network of over 300 independent pro bono clinics. We work with lawyers, law schools, 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 tool Lexis+;
- Our Not-for-Profits Programme, which facilitates volunteer solicitors from LawWorks members to provide free legal advice for smaller charities and not-for-profit organisations. We also provide legal training for charities, through documents, videos and live sessions developed by pro bono lawyers;
- Supervising and training volunteers to undertake in-depth end-to-end pro bono casework ('secondary specialisation'), in areas of social welfare law;
- Connecting barristers and solicitors to jointly litigate civil cases on a pro bono basis through the Pro Bono Connect Scheme;
- Digital platforms and tools, including the Pro Bono Portal UK, which links firms and in-house teams to pro bono opportunities easily and quickly, and Free Legal Answers, enabling individuals to receive initial or one-off legal advice.

## **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.

We have supported various fora for policy engagement including the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Pro Bono and Public Legal Education and look forward to working with the newly constituted APPG for Access to Justice. We also work with a range of legal and access to justice organisations to address issues and challenges that arise in the sector.

## **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. The growth in the range and scale of pro bono activities undertaken by students is analysed in more depth our [Law School Pro Bono and Clinic report](#).

## **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 170 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 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 our annual conference and regional events).

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 Sarah Yates, Membership Officer, at [sarah.yates@lawworks.org.uk](mailto:sarah.yates@lawworks.org.uk) or visit our website: [www.lawworks.org.uk](http://www.lawworks.org.uk).

## **Other ways to support LawWorks**

The need for pro bono support has increased due to cuts in legal aid, the closure of some law centres, and the ongoing effects of the pandemic, which has exacerbated the problems faced by disadvantaged individuals across the UK. As a charity, LawWorks is almost entirely dependent on donations, grants and other philanthropic funding, and the amount we are able to raise determines the scope and reach of our work.

We welcome one-off and regular donations; sponsorship of our events or platforms; and long-term support for our programmes. You can also leave a gift to LawWorks in your will or take part in a fundraising challenge.

The support of our donors enables LawWorks to sustain our vital work and ensure access to justice for those without means. If you would like to discuss supporting LawWorks financially, please contact Sarah Mweene, Head of Fundraising, at [sarah.mweene@lawworks.org.uk](mailto:sarah.mweene@lawworks.org.uk), or visit our website: [www.lawworks.org.uk](http://www.lawworks.org.uk).

### **Our special thanks to:**

James Harper and LexisNexis UK for their continued support sponsoring these awards; the Law Society of England and Wales for hosting the event; Samira Ahmed for hosting the ceremony; our judges - Richard Atkinson, Yasmin Batliwala, Julie Bishop, Chris Minnoch, Professor Richard Owen, Paul Rogerson and Rebecca Wilkie for generously giving their time, guidance and support; the staff of A4ID; and Kate Buchanan & all the staff of LawWorks who helped putting this programme together.

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

See you in 2024.

**LawWorks**

The LawWorks Annual Pro Bono Awards  
are kindly sponsored by



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](http://www.lawworks.org.uk)

 @Law\_Works

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