



**Student  
Pro Bono  
Awards  
2024**



**LexisNexis®**



## **The LawWorks and Attorney General's Student Pro Bono Awards**

**Thursday 9th May 2024, 3:30-5:00  
Cholmondeley Room and Terrace  
House of Lords**





## Welcome from the Attorney General

Welcome to the LawWorks and the Attorney General's Student Pro Bono Awards 2024.

Pro bono work is vitally important. It benefits both the people who receive it and the lawyers that donate their valuable time to deliver it.

At a time when law students could be focusing their efforts elsewhere, I commend those that selflessly provide pro bono advice to thousands of people every year.

Advice is given in a variety of areas of law such as family, welfare benefits, personal injury, employment, housing and small claims, and volunteering takes various forms.


The LawWorks Clinic Report shows that over the last academic year thousands of students willingly give their time to provide pro bono advice, which has helped make a real difference to people's lives as well as their communities. In return, students gain legal skills and experience which will be of benefit to them throughout their professional career.

These awards present a wonderful opportunity to appreciate a group of committed and hardworking law students who have gone to great lengths to help increase access to justice in their community.

All students nominated across all categories should be very proud. I hope that they will consider a career in the Government Legal Department where they can work on some of the most complex and sensitive cases of national importance, while providing committed public service. Something I am all too familiar with having been a government lawyer for many years.

I would like to extend my gratitude to this year's panel of Judges who have given their time to cast their expert eye over the shortlist and agreed the winners. I would also like to thank LexisNexis for kindly sponsoring this event, Alasdair Douglas for once again introducing the awards, and to the LawWorks staff team for making them happen.

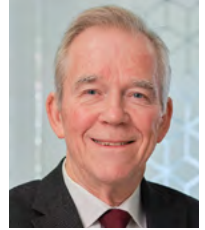
Most of all, I commend and thank all this year's entrants for their outstanding contributions to pro bono.

  
Rt Hon Victoria Prentis KC MP,  
Attorney General



## Welcome from LawWorks Chair of Trustees

I am very pleased to welcome this year's shortlisted nominees to the House of Lords for the 18th annual LawWorks and Attorney General's Student Pro Bono Awards. We are grateful for the continued support of the Attorney General and her office for the awards and today's celebration.



The Awards play a central role in LawWorks' involvement with students and offer a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the innovation, commitment and dedication of law students and law schools.

It is clear that the pro bono work being done by law students across the country is playing a significant role in the delivery of free advice to those in need. At a time when many face barriers to accessing legal advice, it is gratifying to see that student pro bono is now embedded and growing at so many UK universities. Today, we come together to recognise this commitment and hard work.

On behalf of LawWorks, I would like to pay tribute to all the students nominated, to the teachers and lawyers working within the law schools and to local solicitors, barristers, legal executives and others who support them. For me, it is one of the most inspiring aspects of our work and gives us great hope for the future.

Each year a large number of innovative and diverse projects are nominated across the award categories, this year is no different. The award categories this year are: 'Best New Student Pro Bono Activity'; 'Best contribution by an Individual Student'; 'Best contribution by a Law School' and 'Best contribution by a Team of Students', and our winners are chosen by an independent panel of judges.

We also welcome the winners of the Law School Challenge to the Award ceremony. Their imaginative efforts in raising money for LawWorks and our sister charity, Advocate, is much appreciated.

Congratulations to all the nominees; you should feel extremely proud of your achievements and the contribution you have made in enabling access to justice. I sincerely hope that you will continue with your commitment to pro bono as you move forward in your career, demonstrating that participating in pro bono is an essential part.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Alasdair Douglas'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue background.

Alasdair Douglas, Chair of Trustees

# The Awards

- Law School Challenge
- Best New Pro Bono Activity
- Best Contribution by an Individual
- Best Contribution by a Law School
- Best Contribution by a Team of Students





## **LawWorks and Advocate Law School Challenge 2023/24**

LawWorks and Advocate would like to congratulate and thank the eight teams who participated and raised funds in the Law School Challenge 2023/24. Their amazing hard work and dedication to our charities is greatly appreciated.

LawWorks and Advocate would like to congratulate The University Huddersfield for winning the 2023/24 Law School Challenge.

The University of Sunderland and the University of York are recognised as this year's runners up. The other participants in the Law School Challenge were University of Birmingham; Nottingham Trent University; Birmingham City University; City, University of London; and University of Manchester.

Once again, we would like to say a big thank you to all the students that participated in the Challenge, for the valuable contribution you have made to LawWorks and Advocate.

## Best New Pro Bono Activity

### Reach out to Survivors: Domestic Abuse, University of Chester

*"Without your help I don't think I could have filled in the forms as I found them so overwhelming. As you know we have had a positive result now and I cannot thank you enough for your support and help."*

Reach out to Survivors is a new, student-led project providing legal support to survivors of domestic abuse in the Chester area. The University based project is overseen by a student project manager and run by a team of 9 student volunteers.

The project has established a partnership with Cheshire West and Cheshire Domestic Abuse Intervention and Prevention Service. There, volunteers attend weekly open access groups for women run by Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, providing on-the-spot legal information, guidance and moral support to individuals who need assistance because of being in an abusive relationship.

Working with Tomorrow's Women, a Chester based charity supporting women who have been in contact with the criminal justice system, volunteers established an appointment-based service, hosted at the charity's premises, to assist women survivors in completing applications Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders.

They also created a range of resources including leaflets; online and social media content; and guides to illustrate the legal options available to women in abusive situations.

In their first year, the team has reached thousands of people online, provided information and guidance to over 200 women and men, and supported eight women with specific legal queries, all of whom have achieved a positive outcome at court.

### City Community Legal Advice Centre Housing and PIP Service; The City Law School; City, University of London

*"I was really impressed with the knowledge these young people have [about PIP, and] on what information was needed to complete the forms."*

Opening its doors in September 2022, The City Community Legal Advice Centre (CityCLAC) is based in Clerkenwell, an area of social deprivation, where 42.1% of children are living in poverty. The centre provides a lifeline to



the local community enabling access to free, local, independent legal advice both in person and online.

In response to local demand the Personal Independence Payment Filling Service (PIPS) and a Housing Disrepair Service (HDS) were added in 2023. The new services offer 120 PIP appointments and 60 housing appointments each year. The HDS provides one-off advice to social housing tenants suffering from unresolved, ongoing disrepair issues, such as mould, leaks or lack of utilities. PIPS offers form filling assistance to clients who experience disabilities.

Students work alongside the law firm volunteers developing their practice adhering to the pro bono protocol, receiving supervision and training. They are treated like trainees, gaining exposure to corporate lawyers and social welfare. The appointments can last up to three hours, allowing clients time to have an in-depth consultation in a sensitive and unhurried fashion.

The feedback from clients has been excellent: clients rate the service 4.8/5 and 100% said they would recommend our service to others.

### **Exceptional Case Funding Clinic, Liverpool John Moores University**

*"Thank you, I appreciate all the team, for all your help, time and efforts, also for taking the trouble to help me, guiding and supporting me when I was very low ...you provided all this support and help with such respectfulness and patience, also understanding and kindness...Thank you for such kindness, this has helped me to rebuild Hope.."*

Based in the Legal Advice Centre at Liverpool John Moores University, the Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) Clinic opened in October 2022. Since then 43 students have participated in the clinic, and the quality of their work is illustrated by the clinic's 100% success rate in obtaining a grant of ECF for clients in civil and family matters.

Students see each application for ECF through from beginning to end. From the initial client meeting, to completing legal aid forms, preparing supporting statements and gathering of evidence to support the application, submission of the application to the Legal Aid Agency (LAA), dealing with subsequent correspondence with the LAA, and challenging refusals of ECF where appropriate.

ECF applications take many hours, solicitors are not paid for the time spent

preparing an application unless funding is granted, and so work is done at risk of non-payment. ECF is the only form of legal aid that individuals can apply for directly without having already instructed a legal aid provider.

The clinic also enables a research project that is exploring how Legal Aid Agency decision-making in ECF cases shapes rights to legal aid. The project is using a novel research method – collaborative advice-led ethnography. Students working in the ECF Clinic are co-producers of the research data.

The activities of the clinic has also succeeded in increasing awareness of ECF in the Liverpool City region, with regular referrals now coming from local law firms, local courts and the advice sector.

### **Special Educational Needs Judicial Review Project, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool**

*"The [clinic] has been a fantastic support, offering me free legal advice when my child was left without an education."*

This unique clinic addresses a major gap in advice provision around Special Education Needs (SEN). There is a huge dearth of legal aid lawyers specialising in education law, and even where lawyers are available, many families face problems with legal aid eligibility.

At the SEN Judicial Review Project at the University of Liverpool local lawyer James Betts supervises a dedicated team of students and one trainee solicitor to research and draft letters of claim, challenging the decisions of public bodies in relation to educational provision for children with SEN. These letters are often enough to overturn the decision; and where they are not, they nonetheless leave the family in a better position to pursue further action. The clinic's links with local legal aid law firms allows for smooth referrals for clients.

To date, the project has secured more appropriate school placements and home education packages for several pupils, challenged a number of decisions around the removal of school transport, and campaigned for changes to an unlawful school transport policy, amongst other successes. The clinic also provides a unique volunteering experience for students at the university.

## **Welfare Law Clinic, University of Plymouth**

*"This is a unique provision, and one that offer huge benefits to our service and clients."*

The University of Plymouth Welfare Law Clinic is a new initiative which launched this year. Students in the clinic assist clients with a range of issues including Personal Independence Payment applications and appeals; Universal Credit queries and applications; and Carers Allowance applications.

The clinic has developed a successful training partnership and referral pathway with their local Citizens Advice and engages with other local organisations in the city providing outreach sessions. They also work closely with other University-based projects, taking referrals from the immigration and refugee law and employment law clinics.

The clinic has already produced notable results in terms of successful applications and appeals for clients, including one case in which volunteers were able to secure PIP for a refugee at appeal, and an increase in the experience and knowledge of disability and trauma-informed practice amongst student volunteers. Local District Tribunal Judge Elizabeth Johnson commented that she expects the development of the clinic to '...be of significant benefit not only to Appellants whose appeals it takes on, but also to the efficient and effective disposal of appeals within the tribunal process...'

## **Best Contribution by an Individual**

### **Sushant Agarwal, City Community Legal Advice Centre**

*"Sushant is a special kind of student and deserves recognition for his efforts."*

In the 12 months Sushant has volunteered for City Community Legal Advice Centre (CityCLAC) he has quickly become a highly trusted member of the team, keen to take on extra work. He has been a stand-up volunteer who is always ready to step in. He is also a great ambassador for City CLAC amongst other students.

Starting in the PIP form filling clinic, he was soon promoted to PIP Senior Student Advisor and allowed to work solo due to his attitude and ability. Whilst still only a second year LLB student, Sushant has been allowed exceptionally to work on the Housing Disrepair Service. As well as working on his own complex housing disrepair cases, he has been an invaluable support with his consistent approach of stepping up, including completing unfinished cases in order to help the service meet its standards. Sushant's voluntary audit of the case management system and subsequent tidying up of files, providing feedback on attendance notes, renaming files and triaging clients, is all essential work which often goes unnoticed.

Sushant behaves like a consummate professional, a quality that really stands out for someone at his academic level.

### **Jekaterina Bodnarchuk, Hertfordshire Law School, University of Hertfordshire**

*"Jekaterina has been our standout pro bono student over the last few years ... she throws herself whole heartedly into everything she does."*

Jekaterina has volunteered as a Student Advisor at Hertfordshire Law Clinic for the last 5 years, taking part in family law and employment law clinics and recently completing training for a new Special Educational Needs Clinic. She has played a fundamental role in helping members of the public access free legal advice in a timely manner on a wide range of topics. She also volunteered at outreach pop-up clinics through the 'Justice Bus'. Jekaterina has helped reach vulnerable clients who would otherwise be unaware of the clinic's service.

She volunteered for the Employment Litigant in Person Support Scheme, shadowing and supporting employment lawyers as they provide free one-off advice to litigants in person.

Jekaterina supported clients from one of the most deprived parts of Hertfordshire at every stage of their appeals against the refusal of PIP through the Stevenage Welfare Benefits Appeals Project. This included helping complete application forms, gathering evidence, drafting mandatory reconsideration letters and preparing appeal documents. She has been directly responsible for winning several appeals and the awarding of over £12,000 in benefits.

### **Simrit Brar, University of Leicester Legal Advice Clinic**

*"Simrit was kind, patient, supportive; was approachable and accessible, very helpful and a good listener. She gave wonderful law advice with precision and clarity which really helped me along the way."*

During Simrit's 2 years at the University of Leicester, she has shown excellent commitment to pro bono through her work in the Legal Advice Clinic, focusing on family law, and in her second year as student Director of the Pro Bono Clinic project.

Throughout her volunteer time in the Legal Advice Clinic, Simrit will have advised about 20 clients (more than any other student). Playing an integral role in developing the family casework part of the clinic offering great ideas on how to ensure that students can participate in a meaningful way.

After being elected Student Director of the clinic, Simrit contributed to recruiting and training 40 student volunteers, and brought about new ideas and opportunities to encourage students to participate in clinic work. During this time, Simrit also volunteered at a local community centre, helping garment workers, and worked on a project for a Family Court Judge to compile resources for distribution to court users.

### **Sophia-Ada Hamdan, University of Southampton Legal Clinic**

*"Sophia has made an outstanding contribution to pro bono, both locally and nationally."*

Sophia is a second year LLB student at the University of Southampton, who has been instrumental in establishing the university's first law clinic. Sophia has played a key role in many of the clinic's activities including setting up the clinic's student committee and being elected by her peers as the President of the committee. Her hard work resulted in 110 students joining the clinic, where they support clients providing a 60-minute consultation, followed by

a detailed letter of advice. Sophia's dedication to client care, pro bono, and leadership skills has resulted in the clinic being sponsored by Hodge Jones & Allen Solicitors. As part of her role as President, she also supports Junior Lawyers Against Poverty (Southampton) in running workshops for refugees. Outside of her work at the clinic, Sophia is a member of the Hampshire and Isle of White Pro Bono Committee, the Secretary of Lawyers Without Borders, and supports clients as a McKenzie Friend. On an international pro bono level, Sophia has worked cases helping Afghan women apply for political asylum in the United States.

### **Ella Heilmann, SOAS, University of London**

*"Ella's work at the RLC has had a positive and important impact on her cases, and also on building the project as a whole through the range of other activities she has engaged in."*

Ella is a LLM student and has volunteered for the University of London Refugee Law Clinic (RLC) since 2022. During her time at the clinic she has worked on five cases, each dealing with complex issues and engaging various aspects of refugee and immigration law. Two of these cases have now been submitted to the Home Office awaiting a decision. Ella picks up and applies concepts quickly and demonstrates strong skills around drafting and client interviewing. She has demonstrated a keen interest in asylum law and has become a Level 1 qualified OISC adviser in Immigration and Asylum and Protection.

Ella has also participated in a street law session delivered to Afghan asylum seekers about the fresh claims process. She has worked with the clinic manager to develop a workshop for volunteers on 'trauma-informed interviewing' which is now a key part of the training for RLC volunteers. Additionally, she has helped to develop a research project based on the RLC's work.

### **Adam Samji, The City Law School, City, University of London**

*"We commend Adam to you for his outstanding dedication, legal knowledge, client handling skills and sheer hard work contributing to the success of the clients he helps... He has a true 'pro bono spirit'... We only wish we could offer him a training contract!"*

Adam is a final year law student and has been volunteering at City Community Legal Advice Centre (CityCLAC) since January 2023. Having trained to assist with PIP form filling, Adam progressed to become a student

adviser in the general CityCLAC service. He is now a senior student adviser and mentors' other students. His enthusiastic and calm nature puts clients and volunteers at ease.

As a senior student adviser, Adam helps deliver a new housing disrepair advice service, alongside three law firms. The advice and representation that Adam provides for clients is of the highest standard, with returning clients asking for him by name. Adam has assisted over 18 tenants to fight for their homes to be fit for human habitation. Over the last six months, he has helped approximately three clients every week. Adam's commitment and professionalism stands out head and shoulders above all the other volunteers.

### **Laurent Sammouri, Dickson Poon School of Law, King's College London**

*"Laurent did excellent work...We felt respected because he was so well organised, efficient, informed, conscientious, prompt and very friendly."*

In his time as a student at Dickson Poon School of Law Laurent has proven his commitment to access to justice with over 450 hours of pro bono work. As a caseworker at the Windrush Justice Clinic, he supported individuals affected by the Windrush Scandal seeking compensation under the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

Appointed Student Director of the Human Rights and Environment Clinic, Laurent managed students as they undertook transnational legal projects on human rights and the environment. At the clinic he worked with grassroots organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa for over two-years on an amicus intervention in a constitutional climate case against the Ugandan government's failure to prevent deforestation.

As president of the of the Kings College Court Human Rights Project, Laurent has raised awareness on issues affecting the MENA region and fundraised over £1,000. He has also empowered other students to engage in pro bono work, such as fundraising for international NGO's, and providing English lessons to refugees.

In addition, he is the co-founder of Ma3kon, an NGO supporting women and children in Lebanon.

## Best Contribution by a Law School

### **Birmingham City University Law Clinic, Birmingham City University**

*"No-nonsense, clear, unequivocal legal advice followed by compelling sensible strategy .... this service was first tier."*

Birmingham City University (BCU) has shown commitment to pro bono activities and has a clear vision to place the BCU Law Clinic at the heart of the Birmingham community to provide access to justice and access to the profession for its diverse student body.

BCU have fostered important charitable partnerships and secured long term funding for its services to key partners. It has invested in the infrastructure of the BCU Law Clinic, recruiting solicitor to provide the clinic's first in-house offering of a substantive family law, and a new personal injury collaboration launched in January 2024 in conjunction with Support Through Court.

The BCU Law Clinic serves areas of law including family, housing, immigration, welfare benefits, employment and personal injury, and offers free services ranging from initial advice to full representation at the Social Security Appeal Tribunal. The clinic is not restricted to the academic year and services are dovetailed in order to provide a more comprehensive service for clients. A free community counselling service is also offered to clients, in conjunction with the BCU's School of Psychology.

### **University of Bristol Law School, University of Bristol**

*"They made it easy to understand the legal process and our agency within it."*

A total of 390 law students are involved with one of more activities provided by the University of Bristol Law Clinic. This year the clinic has taken on approximately 300 enquiries, with students representing people at benefit appeals (in one case securing a back payment of £17,000), employment tribunal hearings and as lay representatives in the county court.

The clinic has a strong relationship with Inquest and students represent families at preliminary hearings and inquests themselves, as well as attending to advise and support the family. They assisted a community group to successfully apply for a local cinema to be granted community asset status and are now advising on its possible purchase. After being contacted by Bristol City Council, four of our students are now available to help on school exclusion hearings.



The clinic co-hosts a project with the Avon and Somerset Constabulary in connection with child abuse cases. Students review recorded interviews with young people, to ensure that officers are complying with best practice, and then cross-examine the officers on how they conducted the interview.

Other activities include projects to promote the public legal education, working with care leavers, giving general advice to Swindon Advocacy, and a newly launched project to take on Windrush cases.

### **Law In Real Life, The City Law School, City, University of London**

*“CityCLAC’s contribution has been crucial, enhancing the availability of free legal advice in our area. Their service responds to local needs and integrates seamlessly with existing projects, making the law school an integral part of the community around St Luke’s.”*

City Law School’s Law in real life (LawIRL) is an extensive pro bono programme focused on addressing community needs, fostered through strong relationships with local community organisations and collaborative working.

The City Community Legal Advice Centre (CityCLAC) is central to LawIRL’s mission offering a wide range of services, from disability benefits assistance to housing dispute resolution, providing access to justice. CityCLAC’s client-centric, and trauma informed approach, offers comprehensive consultations which last up to three hours, ensuring clients ‘feel heard’ and have the opportunity to provide extensive instructions, particularly vital for those with complex needs. Recent Streetlaw activities have covered immigration rights which is a forerunner to the OISC immigration clinic opening soon. The Schools Exclusion Project and the Company Insolvency Project provide vital representation for excluded SEN pupils and struggling businesses. Collaborations with organisations like Westway Trust, St Luke’s Community Centre, Amicus and Help On your Doorstep extend the reach of City Law School’s pro bono efforts.

## **Derby Law School, University of Derby Student Legal Advice Centre**

*“The clinic has successfully enabled refugees to access free legal advice and representation in family reunion matters. As a result, many families have restored family links and managed to reunite in the UK after long family separation due to war and persecution.”*

The centre has grown significantly since its first family law clinic opened in 2019. It now runs nine clinics with a mission to improve access to justice for everyone in society which echoes the university's commitment to civic duty. Through clinical legal education, students can develop knowledge and practical skills within a real world environment. In its five years, student engagement has grown by 627%. 28% of the law school's students currently volunteer in the centre, some enrolled on a clinic module with others engaging on an extra-curricular voluntary basis.

The centre covers many areas of law, with family law seeing the highest level of client demand. It is supported by the family court at Derbyshire who signpost litigants in person children's matters to the Centre. Citizens Advice Bureau Mid Mercia and Citizens Advice Bureau Lincolnshire regularly signpost to the centre.

The centre also successfully partners with the British Red Cross and Paragon Law to deliver the Immigration Family Reunion Clinic. They are also developing a partnership with the Derby New Arrivals Alliance, which will provide a strategically developed and coordinated service, creating equity for those asylum seekers and refugees arriving in Derby.

## **UEA Law Clinic, University of East Anglia School of Law**

*“90% of clients report that they think things would not have got better without this help.”*

Since launching 12 years ago, the clinic has grown to include some 150 student volunteers at any one time (equivalent to about 75% of undergraduate intake each year) across 14 areas of legal advice, with 8 external partners including Shelter, Norfolk Community Law Service (NCLS) and Citizens Advice Norfolk.

The clinic's fully accessible purpose-built premises at the University of East Anglia is funded by the university and by alumni donors who understand how

important the work is to the students and to the community.

NCLS staff attend the clinic weekly to work alongside students assisting around 4,000 members of the public each year, covering all aspects of social welfare law. In terms of the National Social Value Measurement Framework (TOMs) this equates to a social value of £16.09 for each volunteer hour, totalling £110,682. Two NCLS trustees are former student volunteers, and as solicitors working locally, they now work advising clients and supervising current students.

Last year the clinic established a new business clinic with the support of a local firm and the Mid-Anglia Enterprise Agency, to date they have advised over 60 small business from across the region.

### **University of Plymouth Law Clinic, University of Plymouth**

*"I had given up all hope before I found the Law Clinic. I was referred to them, I put my trust in them, and they helped me. I now have Leave to Remain in the UK after many years of waiting and difficulties. I have no words for what this means. I thank them from the bottom of my heart."*

Celebrating ten years in its current configuration, the law clinic has assisted more people than in previous years and expanded its scope of work reflecting the growing needs of the community. For example, the Refugee Immigration and Refugee Law Clinic works on the issue of those who have fled from Afghanistan because of their work with the British military with several active Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) cases. These cases resonate in Plymouth, a military city.

A significant development this year has been the closer inter-working of clinics for example the Tenancy Clinic advising several Refugee Law Clinic clients made homeless or who it was suggested did not have a right to rent and the Welfare Law Clinic advising on residence tests for refugees. The impact on students themselves has been notable with students describing the experience and the people they have met as "inspiring" and "life changing."

## **Grampian Community Law Centre, Robert Gordon University**

*“The student-led Grampian Community Law Centre has made significant impact through its pro-bono work, encompassing the Torry, Orkney, and Climate Clinics. Each of these addresses’ unique legal needs within its communities, contributing to greater access to justice and empowerment.”*

Grampian Community Law Centre’s commitment to providing legal services to remote and disadvantaged communities, and reducing inequalities, sets it apart as a leader in legal education and public service. The law centre offers guidance and support on diverse legal issues and holds virtual and in-person consultations at Robert Gordon University and chairs three further diverse clinics; Orkney, Torry and Climate clinic. The Torry clinic focuses on a disadvantaged community within Aberdeen; the Orkney clinic offers a unique virtual service, and the climate clinic provides a long-term dedication to environmental justice. Students strive to mitigate the challenges raised under each clinic and counteract the growing deprivation by actively engaging with and assisting these communities.

By providing accessible legal assistance, empowering individuals to assert their rights, and advocating for social justice, these initiatives contribute to creating an inclusive society focusing on equal access to justice. The clinic’s collaborative efforts with community partners and legal professionals support positive change which will continue to grow.

## Best Contribution by a Team of Students

### **Justice Bus Project, Hertfordshire Law School, University of Hertfordshire**

*“The Justice Bus has been a great addition to the Health Hub at Borehamwood Foodbank, bringing much needed legal advice to the heart of Borehamwood.”*

Law student volunteers are at the heart of the “Justice Bus” project, which is a mobile offshoot of University of Hertfordshire Law Clinic. The project was founded in 2022 with the goal of going out into nearby towns and villages to offer free legal advice to individuals in familiar community-based settings and offer students valuable ‘in person’ interactional experiences. Since launching, the Justice Bus has regularly visit trusted community events and venues, including a local food bank and community café.

This model has been highly effective – both for the clients most in need of legal support, and the students seeking meaningful, experiential learning. There have been at least 30 volunteer Student Advisors working on the Justice Bus project since November 2022. As part of their compulsory training, they are taught about client wellbeing and how to deal with clients sensitively. Some 30 clients have been triaged or given specific advice at these venues, and many more people have been provided with support or signposting. These are mostly individuals who would have otherwise “slipped through the net”.

### **Rights of Nature Toolkit: Rivers Project, Human Rights and Environmental Law Clinic, King’s College London**

*“The toolkit is a fantastic resource, giving river protectors many of the legal tools they need to protect & restore their river.”*

In January 2024, a team of students from King’s College Law Clinic launched the Rights of Nature Toolkit: How to Protect Rivers in England and Wales. The toolkit, which represents a year of consultation and research, is a practical legal guide, aimed at other law students, paralegals, and active communities promoting access to justice and clean water.

Understanding the gap in affordable legal support, the toolkit is written specifically for people who want to protect nature, with tips on accessible legal tools like complaints to regulators, information gathering, litigation and campaigning.

It's no exaggeration to say the toolkit has taken the environmental law community by storm, with leading environmental lawyers and NGOs commenting on its usefulness. A post sharing the toolkit was seen by 78,800 people on twitter, and has been reposted 726 times, leading to discussions about tackling water quality among campaigners, activists, and people from all walks of life.

The team has disseminated the toolkit to 114 organisations and there are plans for the student team to run training sessions with local river protection groups.

### **Justice for Windrush Project, University of Leicester Legal Advice Clinic**

*"The Justice for Windrush students are the most committed and dedicated group of students I have worked with. They bring a passion to their work which propels them to do amazing things."*

The Justice for Windrush project aims to raise awareness about the Windrush Scandal and the Windrush Compensation Scheme, and to help claimants make a claim under the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

The project runs fortnightly drop-ins at the local African Caribbean Centre to support enquiries about eligibility and help people with claims. Making a claim through the scheme can be slow work, nonetheless, they had their first success, with a client securing £20,000 compensation.

Students worked tirelessly over a 3-month period to raise awareness in local non-Caribbean communities, attending community centres for interactive engagement sessions and attending places of worship to hand out leaflets.

Moved, as a result of hearing clients' stories about the adversities and hardships they had faced, the students wanted to celebrate the Windrush community and raised funds to commission a mural and manage its installation in a public location on campus.

The project had remarkable reach and excellent press coverage this year which has doubled the number of enquiries received from Caribbean and non-Caribbean communities.

## **Legal Advocacy Support Project, Manchester Metropolitan University and Greater Manchester Law Centre**

*"I've really enjoyed working with the students; their dedication both to the centre and their clients has been heartening; that we've still got students volunteering with GMLC a year or more after their formal placement ended speaks volumes. They provide vital support to some of the most vulnerable people in the community."*

The Legal Advocacy Support Project (LASP), is a partnership between Greater Manchester Law Centre (GMLC) and Manchester Law School at Manchester Metropolitan University, set up in response to welfare changes and the appeals process.

Students support and train each other in rolling groups of four, creating a sustainable model and strong team network. Required to give four hours per week for thirty weeks, they invariably exceed this, some carrying out extra research in their own time, supporting campaigns, preparing guidance manuals for the team, or developing specialisms. The partnership approach has seen novel legal arguments developed and then presented to Tribunals. The team has established links with the judiciary, regularly marshalling judges and in some instances the Tribunal adjourned appeals and signposted claimants to the LASP team to seek advice before their appeals are re-listed. Between November 2022 and February 2024, they recovered more than £400,000 for clients.

## **The Student Support Team, Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre, Queen Mary University of London**

*"Staff unanimously agree that, put simply, the Centre would not have such a high number of cases without these 12 remarkable individuals."*

The Student Support Team at Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre (QMLAC) are the beating heart of the clinic, supporting staff to run the Centre on a pro bono basis. They triage client enquiries and complete administration tasks such as reminder calls/texts to clients and making hard copy client folders for appointments.

With many students initially nervous about the prospect of triaging, and with an increase in both emotional subject matter and confrontational clients, the students have handled this with respect, maturity and confidence.

In the current academic year the QMLAC has triaged 1884 enquiries (600 of these were completed by the Student Support Team). This has led to 493 client appointments being booked in. This committed and passionate group of students regularly volunteer to undertake additional hours so the Centre can meet its target of triaging within 5 days. The Student Support Team has also raised £500 organising a cake stall for The Great Legal Bake and organised the Centre's activities for the Law Clinics Global Day of Action for Climate Change.

### **Streetlaw Team, Sussex Legal Clinics, University of Sussex Law School**

*"I am nominating the team, who I supervise, for their outstanding commitment to this project and for going above and beyond my expectations."*

StreetLaw moves away from the traditional legal clinic model taking the law out into the community. The StreetLaw team at the University of Sussex focuses on empowering young people in marginalised communities. The team doesn't offer advice directly, but instead they design and deliver bespoke sessions on legal areas of interest and producing resources for community settings.

They have worked with several groups including, The Crew Club, an independent youth and community charity who are part of a local grassroots campaign that recently had significant success in reforming school admissions procedures in Brighton and Hove. They also worked with young people supported by Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) to understand the issues they face relating to education and to see what support was needed.

The students developed a series of sessions, on a range of topics such as discrimination law, how to start a business, marketing, and a mock trial. Tommy, FFT Youth Manager, reflected on the impact on the young people and said this work "has kind of broken down a stereotype", and that the young people were surprised about the range of law in their lives.



# Thank you to our Judges

- **Nick Emmerson**, President, The Law Society of England and Wales
- **Peter Farr**, Head of Civil Law Policy, Ministry of Justice
- **James Harper**, Executive Sponsor, Rule of Law and CSR for LexisNexis UK & Ireland
- **Olivia Partridge**, Content Manager, LawCareers.Net
- **Samantha Singer**, Joint Chair of the Bar Council Pro Bono & Social Responsibility Committee
- **Deborah Smith**, Executive Director and Senior Counsel, Goldman Sachs and LawWorks Trustee

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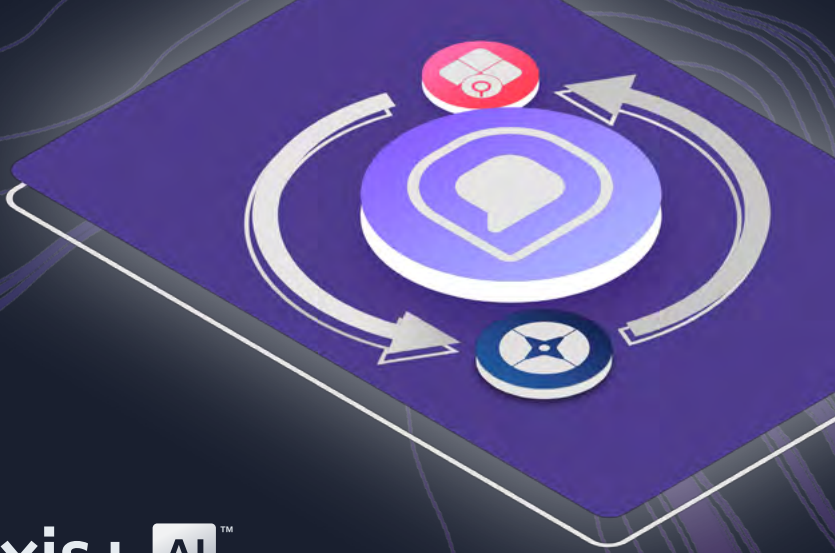


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## About LawWorks

### 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.

At LawWorks we enable the provision of pro bono through:

- Supporting a growing network of around 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 tools Lexis<sup>®</sup>+);
- 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;
- Overseeing the intellectual property initiative IP Pro Bono, which provides intellectual property advice and legal support for individuals and small businesses who find themselves involved in intellectual property disputes;
- 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 in 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, as well as law schools and charities.

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

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 membership 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, [membership@lawworks.org.uk](mailto:membership@lawworks.org.uk) or visit our website: [www.lawworks.org.uk/join-us](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/join-us)

### **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).



The LawWorks & Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards  
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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.

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