



**Pro Bono
Awards
2017**

The LawWorks Annual Pro Bono Awards & Lecture

Tuesday 5th December 2017

Supported by



The Law Society



Welcome



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

We are very grateful to Hilarie Bass, President of the American Bar Association, for kindly agreeing to deliver our annual lecture and to present the awards, and to Paddy O'Connell for hosting the evening.

This year we again received many truly inspiring and high-calibre nominations. We know that the pro bono work recognised here tonight is a snapshot of the valuable work undertaken across England and Wales – activity which makes a difference to individuals, local communities and the charities and not-for-profit organisations supporting them. We hope that the Awards help to raise awareness of the commitment of our members and the profession to pro bono, and also the importance of partnerships and the contribution of law schools, charities and others.

On behalf of LawWorks I would like to thank all those who took the time to submit a nomination, to those who were nominated and to all the shortlisted candidates.

I would also like to extend our gratitude to the panel of Judges, who have given their time and consideration in order to agree on the winners. Thanks also to our sponsors, LexisNexis, and to 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 is included at the end of this programme.

Alasdair Douglas
Chair of Trustees

Order of Proceedings

Time	Event
6:30pm	Welcome by Alasdair Douglas (Chair of LawWorks) followed by Paddy O'Connell
6:35pm	A welcome from Christina Blacklaws, Deputy President, the Law Society
6:40pm	A word from James Harper of LexisNexis
6:45pm	Annual lecture by Hilarie Bass, President of the American Bar Association
7:05pm	Interview with Hilarie Bass by Paddy O'Connell
7:25pm	Award presentations
8:30pm	Drinks and canapés reception in the Reading Room

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

Guest Speaker

Hilarie Bass

President of the American Bar Association

As Co-President of international law firm Greenberg Traurig and a prolific trial attorney with a highly successful 30-plus year career, Hilarie Bass is one of the most recognised women attorneys in the United States. Hilarie is currently President of the American Bar Association, the world's largest voluntary professional organisation with more than 400,000 members. At Greenberg Traurig, she helps chart the course for the multi-practice firm with approximately 2,000 attorneys across 38 offices worldwide. Hilarie is also the founder and former chair of Greenberg Traurig's Women's Initiative.

Hilarie is widely recognized for her pro bono work on behalf of two foster children that led to the elimination and declaration as unconstitutional Florida's 20-year-old ban on gay adoption.

Mentoring others in the legal field and giving back to the community has always been a top priority for Hilarie. She has led top legal and community organizations and received numerous prestigious awards for her achievements. She has dedicated herself to supporting the mission of the ABA for more than 30 years, beginning as a young lawyer and now serving a one-year term as President.

Host

Paddy O'Connell

Paddy is a television and radio presenter, including presenting Radio 4's Broadcasting House each Sunday morning. Paddy was a local radio reporter in Devon, Essex and Cleveland and worked on the launch of Five Live. He was a reporter for The World a US-based daily programme and later a host on LBC 97.3. As BBC Wall Street Correspondent, he lived and worked in the USA for eight years, and reported from New York during the attacks of 9/11. He is an occasional presenter of PM on BBC Radio 4, standing in for regular host Eddie Mair, and often stands in for Jeremy Vine on his BBC Radio 2 lunchtime news and current affairs programme.

Judging Panel

Mick Antoniw

Mick has served the people of Pontypridd and Taff Ely as their Assembly Member since 2011, having been re-elected in 2016. Mick is a visiting fellow of the University of South Wales and has lectured widely across Wales, the UK and internationally in the field of health and safety, corporate accountability and law reform. In June 2016 Mick was appointed Counsel General for Wales and fulfilled the role until November 2017. As the Welsh Government's Law Officer, he was the Welsh Government's chief legal advisor and represented it in the courts.

Alison McKenna

Judge Alison McKenna was appointed as the first President of the Charity Tribunal in 2008 and is now the Principal Judge for the First-tier Tribunal (General Regulatory Chamber). She is a proud Diversity and Community Relations Judge.

Chris Minnoch

Chris is Operations Director at Legal Aid Practitioners Group, where he assists with member services, training initiatives, policy and campaigning work. Chris was educated in New Zealand and after graduation worked within the law centre movement. He came to the UK in 2001 and, after a brief stint in the civil service, in 2002 joined Greenwich Housing Rights (a charity specialising in housing advice and undertaking policy work, training and public education to improve housing conditions and access to justice) to co-ordinate their housing possession duty schemes and train and support pro bono lawyers and student volunteers.

Paul Rogerson

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

Bryan Scant

Bryan is a solicitor specialising in private family work. He trained with a High Street firm in Poole, Dorset, before moving to work for legal 500 firm, Coffin Mews Solicitors, based in Bournemouth specialising in high value matrimonial cases and disputes involving children. He was until recently Chair of the Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society which represents approximately 70,000 members from LPC students to solicitors of up to 5 years PQE.

Information on Shortlisted Finalists

Best Contribution by a Small Firm

Curtis Law Solicitors LLP

“The contribution given by Ismail, in the form of an afternoon family law clinic every Monday, is of the greatest value to the PSU and the people that we assist...To be able to refer a client...for specialist legal advice, for free, is invaluable, especially to those litigants that are often vulnerable, anxious and feel that the justice system is not on their side.”

Curtis Law solicitor Ismail Foolat volunteers his time every Monday afternoon to give free legal advice on family law issues at a clinic held in the firm's Blackburn offices, to members of the public who come from as far as Sheffield and London to seek help. On average the clinic helps ten clients a week and Ismail also provides telephone advice to those that are unable to attend in person. He provides detailed impartial, practical advice to litigants in person on how to proceed with their cases, in order to give them the confidence, for example, in dealing with experienced counsel in court. Ismail also works in collaboration with the Personal Support Unit in order to provide clients with additional support at court.

Hugh Jones Solicitors

“With over 30 years' experience in supporting vulnerable and mentally incapacitated people, their families and advisers, Hugh Jones Solicitors did not hesitate to offer their pro bono services in helping... to set up and, most importantly, to maintain our dementia law service.”

Solicitors from Hugh Jones volunteer their time in order to supervise law students at the University of Manchester Legal Advice Centre who provide vulnerable clients (who are not eligible for legal aid and cannot afford a lawyer) with advice on a range of legal issues. In addition, the firm provides specialist training and supervision for students who want to take part in the Dementia Law Clinic, in partnership with the health and social care charity, Making Space, to ensure students have a deeper level of understanding around the needs of those living with dementia and their carers. During the last academic year, 89 students took part in this training and 48 clients were seen in the clinic, many under the supervision of Hugh Jones Solicitors. As a result of their support, the Dementia Law Clinic has expanded its services and gone from strength to strength.

Best Contribution by a Firm with an English Regional Head Office

Attwaters Jameson Hill Solicitors

“Without Attwaters, our law clinic would not be as successful and as wide-ranging in the advice we can offer. Nothing is ever too much trouble and we feel supported in our work to help local residents with their legal problems.”

The Citizens Advice Harlow Law Clinic was established in September 2015 with support from Attwaters Jameson Hill Solicitors (Attwaters) which offered initially to provide free legal advice in the areas of employment law and medical negligence/ personal injury. The firm now also provides advice on wills and probate as well as family law and offers a popular monthly “workshop” on Lasting Powers of Attorney, which has attendees of 15-20 clients at each session. Over 800 clients were seen by the clinic in its first two years and, with Attwaters providing lawyers for five days every month, the firm was responsible for having helped a high proportion of these clients, 97% of whom expressed how the advice received had put their minds at rest. The reputation of the clinic is spreading and it has been approached by several other local organisations such as Mind, local schools' inclusion officers and the local MP's constituency office, to ask if direct referrals can be made.

Fisher Jones Greenwood LLP

“I was worried sick about what was going to happen to me and the kids and I didn't know where to turn...Rachel and Lisa have really put my mind at rest...No, my problem hasn't gone away [but] I've got more of an idea of what's probably going to happen and what I can do about it.”

Jaywick in Essex is one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England. Due to the efforts of the Tudor Residents Association who were aware that there was a significant local need for legal advice in relation to family law issues, Fisher Jones Greenwood agreed to provide volunteers to meet this need at the Jaywick Sands Law Clinic, which was launched in July 2017. It was anticipated that take-up of the service would initially be slow because of an inherent distrust of 'authority' which proved to be the case in practice, but the firm has continued to provide unwavering support, led by Rachel Earnshaw. With increasing interest from third party organisations such as Mind, local schools and the council with an interest in providing referrals, bookings are now increasing rapidly and the clinic is gaining local trust and is a very important development for this community.

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Muckle LLP

“Within the legal sector Muckle LLP occupies a position of leadership in the area of corporate social responsibility. There is a special sense of CSR vocation within the Muckle culture that is translated into leadership both within and beyond its moorings in the legal sector.”

Muckle LLP is a successful corporate law firm based in Newcastle Upon Tyne but has always felt that it cannot operate in isolation from the broader community and its many challenges, given the level of deprivation that exists in the North East of England. It is therefore committed to a Corporate Social Responsibility programme which includes donating 1% of its annual profits to charity, promoting volunteering across the firm, helping young people from disadvantaged areas overcome barriers to entering the legal profession and providing a range of charities with unpaid legal advice. In addition, the firm has entered into an arrangement over the past two years with Skillbridge, a local project which links charities with businesses which are willing to assist them. The firm decided to focus its efforts on the West End of Newcastle which is an area of considerable deprivation and is now helping three local projects in that region.

Shoosmiths LLP

“Being a responsible corporate citizen has been at the heart of [the Shoosmiths] business plan since 2010...we seek to capitalise on colleagues’ desires to make a difference in the community.”

Shoosmiths work closely with a number of pro bono partners to provide legal advice to those in need, operating and supporting law clinics in Reading, Northampton, Manchester, Basingstoke and Edinburgh. The firm also supports Business in the Community’s ProHelp programme in the East and West Midlands as well as advising small not-for-profits organisations through LawWorks’ Not-For-Profits Programme. Shoosmiths was instructed on a pro bono basis by Bankside Open Spaces Trust which needed urgent legal advice to obtain a tenancy of a community building next to Waterloo Millennium Green called Living Space (including a little-used sports pitch and disused adjacent adventure playground). As a result of quick action taken by Shoosmiths, the new lease was agreed at a peppercorn rent and terms were also negotiated for a range of community tenants to occupy the building. For the first time the park, sports pitch, playground and community building are all in common ownership, and the adventure playground is open to the public and being run successfully – a wonderful result for the local community.

Thompson Smith and Puxon

“Richard, our volunteer solicitor from Thompson Smith and Puxon, is very supportive of our students... [He] regularly attends our clinic and as a result we have been able to help many clients, some of whom were in dire straits.”

Thompson Smith and Puxon has a long history of providing pro bono support to the Essex Law Clinic, a student law clinic at the University of Essex. This pro bono work benefits the local community by offering free initial advice about legal problems while giving its students the chance to work alongside practising lawyers in advising real clients. Most of the enquiries at the clinic relate to family law, landlord and tenant law and employment law, as well as consumer issues. Fact-finding interviews are led by students under the direct supervision of pro bono solicitors such as Richard Porter from Thompson Smith and Puxon, who has provided both the clinic and its clients with immense support over the last two years. Without his involvement, many of the sessions at the clinic would simply not have taken place.

Best Contribution by a Firm with a London Head Office

Addleshaw Goddard LLP

“Addleshaw Goddard has been involved in a vast array of pro bono where the advice makes a real, positive impact to people’s lives.”

Addleshaw Goddard’s (AG’s) London office has been collaborating with an independent legal clinic since 1974, providing specialist advice on housing, community care, debt and welfare benefit matters. Currently 35 of AG’s fee earners are fully trained and take part in the advice rota. AG has been advising Mind, the mental health charity, on a pro bono basis since January 2016 and has recently provided its employees with training on data protection, which is of utmost importance to the charity in view of the forthcoming changes. Having identified the inaccessibility to legal advice by many great innovators in Manchester, AG’s Manchester office has partnered with Manchester University’s Law Faculty to set up a Business Law Café which offers commercial legal advice to start-ups. AG is regularly involved in the LawWorks Not-For-Profits Programme and volunteers have provided advice, for example, on property law to the charity Sirona which offers therapeutic horsemanship to children, young people and adults who are unresponsive to other forms of psychotherapy.

Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP

“For ten years Sonali Gardens Legal Advice Service has...run an amazing advice resource within the East End of London...It truly is a beacon within our community!”

The Sonali Gardens Legal Advice Service (SGLAS) is a weekly pro bono clinic that has been running for ten years as a result of a close collaborative partnership between Berwin Leighton Paisner (BLP) and St Hilda’s East Community Centre (St Hilda’s). Advice is provided on a range of law including housing, benefits, employment law and debt by volunteers from BLP (224 in total over the past decade) and three staff members from St Hilda’s provide administration for the service which is aimed at residents in South West Tower Hamlets, one of the UK’s most deprived boroughs. Assistance is also provided by law student volunteers from Queen Mary’s University. 3,620 advice appointments have taken place over the past decade – one recent example is a client and his family who were at risk of losing their home due to significant rent arrears. He was awarded £13,200 in backdated housing benefits and Working Tax Credits and was overwhelmed with the help that he had been given by SGLAS.

Duncan Lewis Solicitors

“The Duncan Lewis outreach programmes have impacted on countless individuals in localities aside the direct reach of the firm’s branches...where language and cultural barriers often make access to mainstream legal services problematic.”

Duncan Lewis provides local communities in East London, Birmingham and Cardiff with essential pro bono legal services at legal clinics in areas such as housing, immigration, employment, welfare benefits and family law. In addition it has forged a partnership with the University of East London (UEL) and assists with the students’ own pro bono clinic. The firm has just started a collaboration with UEL at the Romford Autism Hub Legal Advice Clinic which aims to increase access to justice for autistic clients and their families. The firm also provides trained advisors to and/or holds monthly advice surgeries at a number of other organisations such as the Brixton Domestic Violence Clinic, Hestia, Young Turks Club, Shelter Hackney, Enfield Citizens Advice and Trussell Trust Brent Food Bank, thereby providing support and protection to a broad range of individuals who would otherwise have had no recourse to legal advice.

Goodman Derrick LLP

“We set out to encourage and champion activity and over the last 12 months...we have seen the levels of participation snowball into something very exciting.”

Goodman Derrick have been committed to providing pro bono advice for many years but its formal pro bono programme is just over 12 months old and is now given equal recognition to fee earning work. One example of pro bono work undertaken is a case on behalf of a worker in the ‘gig economy’ which reached the European Court of Justice this year and on which the Advocate-General noted the “acute social importance of the issues... given the prevalence in the so-called gig economy of what were once atypical working patterns.” Other volunteers regularly give their time, for example, to the Wandsworth Mediation Service and to the Rights of Women telephone advice line which provides free family law advice to women across England and Wales. Another solicitor successfully led a case in the First Tier Tribunal on behalf of local residents seeking environmental information from a local authority relating to the development of an airfield. Goodman Derrick is also the first law firm to sign up to support Shelter’s new pro bono programme.

Howard Kennedy LLP

“[Howard Kennedy’s] professionalism, plus warm understanding gave this small charity just what it needed. They took their time to understand the issues, and to help me understand, and dealt with the problem effectively.”

Howard Kennedy’s pro bono programme was set up less than ten months ago but has already grown considerably since its inception. A team of 20 volunteers advises at the Toynbee Hall Legal Advice Centre. One client from the Centre, whose case involved a disturbing issue spanning family, criminal and civil law, said that the support she had been given by her adviser was “life-changing”. Howard Kennedy volunteers also provide advice to small charities through the LawWorks Not-For-Profits Programme and the firm currently has seven live matters. Other pro bono cases are supported on an ad hoc basis and include, for example, a landmark LGBT rights matter in Africa, helping a client find temporary accommodation following a house fire, supporting tenants where landlords had attempted to evict them as punishment for bringing legitimate disrepair claims, and assisting mentally vulnerable individuals in navigating their way through the courts system.

Best Contribution by an International Firm

Allen & Overy LLP

“Our partnership with Allen & Overy...is central to FLAC’s sustainability. They are not only committed and reliable, but are also genuinely interested in the work that Toynbee Hall does with its community and the most vulnerable people within it.”

Allen & Overy has been providing support to Toynbee Hall’s Free Legal Advice Service (FLAC) in Tower Hamlets for almost 15 years, sending a cohort of volunteers every Thursday to advise clients on a variety of issues including consumer law, small claims, property disrepair and private tenancies. FLAC itself was founded in 1898, is the oldest pro bono law clinic in the country and was known originally as the ‘Poor Man’s Lawyer’. The local community surrounding the clinic has some of the worst rates of inequality in the country and is the second most densely populated borough in London, and therefore the service provides much needed help for those who would not otherwise be able to obtain legal support. The firm has also helped to improve FLAC’s effectiveness and impact by providing an annual grant to help pay for its running costs and provides support with developing its triage process and case management systems.

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP

“Having worked in partnership with Cleary for over two years, we have had the opportunity to experience at first hand their female volunteer team’s huge drive, enthusiasm and commitment to supporting our women-only legal advice clinic.”

Toynbee Hall’s women-only legal advice clinic provides a safe environment for women across London to seek legal assistance on a wide range of issues including employment and housing law, domestic violence and family law. The service was cancelled in 2014 due to funding constraints but reinstated again with funding from Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton and with support from over 20 female lawyers who staff a clinic on Saturday mornings. Through the dedication of the female lawyers and the firm’s business support staff who provide administrative and front of house assistance, the women-only clinic has become an invaluable safe space, providing advice and support for those who need it most. The firm’s London lawyers have also devoted thousands of hours to international pro bono projects, including preparing resettlement applications for individuals fleeing from violence and persecution.

Dechert LLP

“Our partnership with Dechert has gone from strength to strength over the past five years...The advice clinics provide legal expertise which would not otherwise be available to them and can have a huge impact on their fledgling businesses.”

Dechert began a collaboration with The Prince's Trust in 2012 after the charity asked the firm's lawyers to provide business-oriented legal advice to young people participating in its 'Enterprise Scheme' which enable budding entrepreneurs under the age of 30 to find the funding, training and mentoring needed to turn business dreams into reality. Over the past five years, 136 Dechert lawyers have provided more than 2,900 hours of legal advice to 157 of the Trust's entrepreneurs to help them overcome potentially troublesome pitfalls as they nurture their burgeoning businesses. One acted on Dechert's advice to turn down what seemed at the time to be an excellent opportunity and instead launched a street food consultancy that now employs 15 people, an achievement honoured in The Prince's Trust's Celebrate Success Awards in 2016.

Herbert Smith Freehills LLP

“WLAC is an invaluable part of Tower Hamlets Citizens Advice for clients who cannot afford legal advice and representation. The service offers a lifeline to individuals who would otherwise have nowhere else to turn.”

Herbert Smith Freehills established the Whitechapel Legal Advice Clinic in 2000 in Tower Hamlets Citizens Advice in order to provide high quality free legal advice to local residents in one of the most disadvantaged areas in London (Tower Hamlets has the highest rate of child poverty, the second highest unemployment rate and the lowest male life expectancy in any London borough). Unusually, the lawyers who advise at each clinic offer an “end-to-end” service, including free representation in tribunals and courts in civil matters outside the scope of legal aid. Herbert Smith Freehills also funds the post of an experienced duty solicitor and an administrative assistant to help manage client demand. Examples of recent successes include representing a client in the employment tribunal and obtaining an £18,000 judgment against his employer; representing a client in order to successfully set aside a £25,000 default judgment, and obtaining a refund of the full costs of a substandard wedding venue.

Proskauer Rose LLP

“As a Director of Roots HR, I appreciate how important the terms on which this lease is predicated are to our cash flow and business continuity. There is no way we would have...been able to afford the amount and quality of advice we needed throughout this period.”

Roots HR is a small social enterprise which provides specialist consultancy on human resources and health and safety for the social sector. Roots needed help negotiating a lease on its new offices and found assistance from Proskauer Rose through the LawWorks Not-For-Profits Programme. The work expanded to include a licence to alter, a license to occupy on a short term basis, a side letter, a review of the service charges and a lease summary report. The immediate beneficiaries of the advice have been the employees of Roots HR who now have peace of mind knowing that the terms of the lease are sustainable for the next 6 years. As a result, the social enterprise can continue to offer high quality, affordable services to its fee-paying and pro bono clients.

Best Contribution by an In-House Team

Barclays Bank Plc

"I have seen at first-hand their enthusiasm for the importance of pro bono and the significant efforts that the litigation team are making to build and develop pro bono participation by the bank's lawyers."

Over the last four years, Barclays has built up a solid and consistent pro bono programme as a result of the commitment and enthusiasm shown by Barclays lawyers across all divisions of the Bank's legal function. Specific examples include Sophie Karnthaler who used her legal expertise in consumer law to assist Team Unlimbited, a new charity which generates 3D printed limbs that can be customised in terms of colours and patterns, quickly and cheaply for children and adults across the UK. She also used her skills to demystify the legalistic and technical language in a disability tribunal decision for members of the See Around Britain charity. Members of the team have assisted small not-for-profit organisations through the LawWorks Not-for-Profits Programme and others volunteer, for example, at the Springfield Church legal advice centre and at a clinic based in Newham for Black and Asian Women suffering domestic violence.

BPP Pro Bono Centre

"After three years of trying to make sense of my dispute issue I feel there has been a big breakthrough [after] visiting the BPP Clinic...I feel, at last, that I'm in capable hands."

The BPP Pro Bono Centre was started in 2004 and the in-house team is based in London with oversight of six regional centres in Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. Examples of their work include a pop-up advice clinic in Lambeth with the Law Centre and the Council, a Skype clinic in Leeds working with local solicitors' firms, a drop-in housing service at North Kensington Law Centre (including helping people affected by the Grenfell Tower fire) and manning a telephone line to help victims of the Manchester bomb attack. These run alongside 20 other projects such as legal advice clinics (which helped 238 clients across London, Leeds and Manchester with a variety of legal problems), an Employment Telephone Advice Line (which delivered advice to 500 clients last year) and the Streetlaw programme which delivers workshops to community groups on legal issues that impact their users.

Microsoft Limited

"This ground-breaking project involves a wide range of people and groups working together to achieve the best possible results for vulnerable children."

The London office of Covington & Burling and a team of in-house lawyers from Microsoft partnered together in 2016 to provide legal support in order to establish the charity Kids in Need of Defense UK (a collaboration between the US charity KIND Inc and Central England Law Centre, Coram Children's Legal Centre and the Migrant and Refugee Children's Legal Unit at the Islington Law Centre). From March 2017 volunteers from both offices have taken on a series of cases preparing Home Office applications for long-term residency for children who have been living in the UK for at least seven years but have no legal right to reside here. Each case is typically assigned one Microsoft lawyer and two Covington & Burling lawyers who have received immigration law training and the work done to date has resulted in nineteen children having access to justice, two children having improved their financial conditions via a change of conditions application and eleven adult parents likely to benefit from the applications.

Best Contribution by an Individual

Sarah Calder (Citizens Advice Harlow)

“At a time when free legal advice was so crucial due to the demise of legal aid in many areas and at a time where our clients so needed that specialism, Sarah Calder walked through our doors.”

Sarah has been employed as a part-time Law Clinic Co-ordinator for Citizens Advice Harlow since 2015, and during that time has worked hard to identify all of the areas where local clients need legal advice the most. She met with local firms and gained trust and then very quickly set up a wrap-around service to meet those needs and provide free legal advice, for example, on debt, welfare benefits and immigration law. In addition, having identified an increasing number of queries relating to family law, she has set up workshops for schools and parents to cover issues such as arrangements for contact with children, as well as arranging workshops on Lasting Powers of Attorney and wills. Over 800 clients have now been helped at the Law Clinics and Sarah’s passion for the subject has meant that news of the pro bono work has spread throughout the local community and is recognised as being vitally important for the town and its residents.

Rebecca Greenhalgh (Ashurst LLP) and Felicity Kirk (Ropes & Gray LLP) – joint nomination

“[We are] so grateful to Rebecca and Felicity for really going above and beyond in the wake of the Grenfell disaster [and] feel really confident that the pro bono response, so rapidly coordinated by them, was as effective as it could have possibly been.”

The Grenfell Tower fire of 14 June 2017 is believed to have killed over 80 residents and left many more homeless. Rebecca (Pro Bono Senior Associate at Ashurst) and Felicity (Head of International Pro Bono at Ropes & Gray) coordinated an immediate London-wide pro bono response on behalf of commercial law firms to channel support to North Kensington Law Centre (NKLC) as it responded to the tragedy – helping over 30 law firms to set up an emergency secondment, advice services, clinics and support networks for those affected, combined with pro bono support from housing lawyers and specialist advice sector lawyers. This on-going coordination prevented NKLC from being overwhelmed and allowed it to focus on helping over 150 local households who had been affected by the fire. This collective support has helped NKLC transition from an initial crisis response to a longer term coordinated response to meet the needs of the local community.

Heather Iqbal Rayner (Duncan Lewis Solicitors)

“Heather has dedicated her career to working in legal aid...and has a level of integrity and ethics which has impressed her peers – she is an inspiration to lawyers both entering and already working in the profession.”

Heather is a Director at Duncan Lewis Solicitors and a zealous activist in ensuring that access to justice is available to everyone. She campaigned extensively in 2013 following the enactment of LASPO, assisted in the organisation of a protest at Swansea, petitioned the Welsh Assembly and lobbied peers about the impact of cuts to the legal aid budget on clients. She is also involved in multiple pro bono projects, such as the housing pro bono surgery at the Cardiff Civil Justice Centre, a drop-in surgery at the Duncan Lewis office in Cardiff and a surgery run from the Cardiff Central Library. Heather has given pro bono advice to hundreds of clients since the legal aid changes in April 2013, each of whom would have qualified for funding prior to that date. She assists the most vulnerable clients who may not possess the means, education or mental capacity to help themselves, and has dedicated herself to standing up for the underprivileged and under-represented in society.

Tim Johnson (Shoosmiths LLP)

“The playing fields are vitally important to the wellbeing of the school and this excellent result is a big step along the way towards keeping them intact for future generations of school children.”

In January 2017 the Friends of Judith Kerr Primary School (an inclusive, co-educational comprehensive state school in Southwark) obtained planning permission for school use of its playing fields as these were threatened with development by the freeholder of the land. The freeholder of the land challenged the planning permission by bringing a judicial review, at which point planning partner Tim Johnson took conduct of the matter on behalf of Shoosmiths and instructed pro bono counsel Admas Habteslasie to contest the proceedings. Permission was refused for the review by two High Court judges and a pro bono costs order was made against the developer. Without Tim’s involvement, the school’s ability to use its green space for the wellbeing of its children and the community would have been in jeopardy, and the school can now use the playing fields both during the school day and for after-school clubs until at least 2062.

David Jones (Hugh Jones Solicitors)

“David regularly provides invaluable pro bono supervision for our students [and] contributes to our specialist dementia awareness training...to ensure that students have a deeper level of understanding around the needs of those living with dementia and their carers.”

David is a solicitor at Hugh Jones who has been closely involved in developing the dementia law clinic with the University of Manchester Legal Advice Centre and is one of its most regular volunteers. Along with Tom Young, he regularly provides training in partnership with the health and social care charity, Making Space, which 89 students attended in the last academic year and provides supervision to students who advise clients at the dementia clinic. He conducted two well-received workshops for students as part of the wider Legal Advice Centre training programme, which involved dealing with potentially vulnerable people from a lawyer’s perspective as well as analysing an example advice letter. The clinic is only able to achieve the results for its clients because of the commitment of David Jones and Tom Young.

Emine Mehmet (Duncan Lewis Solicitors)

“Emine specialises in delivering legal advice, support and protection to a broad range of individuals who would otherwise have no recourse to legal advice, such as vulnerable women and those on the autistic spectrum who may otherwise not have the confidence to approach a law firm to safeguard themselves and their children.”

Emine is Director of Childcare at Duncan Lewis and has been devoted to pro bono work for the past 16 years. She has a particular interest in helping women and also members of ethnic communities and her aim is to empower vulnerable individuals to seek the help they need. She maintains a Tuesday drop-in session at the Dalston branch of Duncan Lewis and, as head of the Pro Bono Committee, has established free monthly surgeries at a large number of non-profit organisations such as the Ann Taylor Children’s Centre, Nia (a refuge for women with drug and alcohol issues) and the Trussell Trust Food Bank. She also delivers talks and arranges community work for those suffering from domestic abuse as well as informing them about the availability of legal aid.

Tom Young (Hugh Jones Solicitors)

“Our university students benefit greatly from the practical advice that Tom is able to [supply] in supporting them to provide good quality free legal advice to the public.”

Tom is an Associate Solicitor at Hugh Jones who has made a substantial contribution since its inception to the dementia law clinic run at the University of Manchester Legal Advice Centre. Together with David Jones, he prepares and delivers the mandatory training that all of the students undertake at the clinic and reviews cases as they come in, liaises with students ahead of the appointments, supervises appointments via skype and reviews draft advice letters prepared by the students. Tom specialises in advice regarding the duty of care owed by local authorities and the issues surrounding Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and has a growing reputation beyond the firm for his skill and determination to help the vulnerable and their families. The clinic is only able to achieve the results for its clients because of the commitment of Tom Young and David Jones.

Junior Lawyers Division Pro Bono Award

Francis Keeper (DLA Piper)

“Francis’ pro bono work has demonstrated his commitment to access to justice and his ability to provide high quality advice to vulnerable clients on a range of issues.”

Francis has worked on two significant pro bono cases with the National Deaf Children’s Society in the past year. The first involved a seven year old girl who suffers from a genetic condition which affects her hearing, vision and balance and Francis was successful in convincing the First Tier Tribunal to reinstate her Disability Living Allowance which will have a major impact on her quality of life. The second involved assisting a nine year old boy with severe hearing loss and, despite the fact that the First Tribunal initially found against his claim, Francis convinced it to remit its decision to the Upper Tribunal which is expected not only to overturn the decision but also to explore a number of wider issues relating to the Department of Work and Pension’s decisions in similar cases. Francis has also been involved in two cases with Coram Children’s Legal Centre to secure permanent immigration status for children who have grown up in the UK but remain undocumented.

Josh Little (Allen & Overy LLP)

“Because of [Josh’s] work, some of the damage inflicted to the thousands of gay and bi men who faced terrible persecution in the last century, just because of who they are, can begin to be undone.”

Josh was the lead associate advising LGBT + rights group, Stonewall, on how the Protection of Freedoms Act could be widened to improve the position for gay and bi-sexual men with historical convictions. The team had to sift through a century of English case law and prepare a briefing for Stonewall, in order to amend the existing disregard scheme to help more people clear their names for activities which should never have been criminalised. Stonewall used this advice to support their efforts to encourage the government and MPs to take action and improve the existing scheme, which resulted in the passing of the “Turing Law”. It is estimated that, of the 65,000 men convicted under the laws criminalising homosexual acts which are no longer illegal, 15,000 are still alive. This change in the law will therefore allow thousands more men to clear their names, and families of men impacted by these convictions will be able to clear the names of deceased loved ones.

Isabelle Westbury (Allen & Overy LLP)

“Isabelle gives generously of her time to a number of projects, particularly at the Battersea Legal Advice Clinic, where the co-ordinators...praise her work and her client manner.”

Isabelle gives regular pro bono legal advice on employment, housing and consumer issues at the Battersea Legal Advice Clinic and diligently compiles the letters of advice to clients post-interview. As part of the network of legal clinics, she also contributed a significant amount of time to the North Kensington Law Centre following the fire at Grenfell Tower in order to provide legal advice to victims in the immediate aftermath of the fire. She has also supported the Migrant and Refugee Children’s Legal Unit, researching key areas of law on education rights and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Melissa Wilkinson (DLA Piper)

“Since starting her training contract...Melissa has been a true pro bono champion, has proved her ability to provide high quality advice and support to both individual and charity clients on a range of issues and is determined to make a difference through her work.”

Melissa has carried out a substantial amount of pro bono work for a case with the National Deaf Children’s Society which involved a 12 year old girl who is unable to understand speech or interpret sounds without assistance but who had been denied Disability Living Allowance. Melissa worked on appeals both to the First Tribunal which decided that the girl was ineligible for the benefit, and then subsequently to the Upper Tribunal which found that the original decision was flawed. Melissa has also been involved in a project assisting a United Nations organisation in preparing a report which explores barriers to access to justice and the right to education for children with disabilities in ten European countries.

Morgan Wolfe (Goodman Derrick LLP)

“Morgan is a highly promising trainee who is whole-heartedly committed to increasing staff access to and involvement in pro bono. She supports and inspires her colleagues and is a positive influence on the firm’s ethos.”

Prior to retraining as a lawyer, Morgan worked for the United Nations on international humanitarian issues and since joining Goodman Derrick has been instrumental in shaping the firm’s pro bono and Corporate Social Responsibility strategy. She works as the firm’s LawWorks co-ordinator and has overseen a 75% increase in the number of staff volunteering in relation to its Not-For-Profits Programme. She actively champions the work of The Funding Network, an organisation which organises live crowdfunding events, and in January 2017 Goodman Derrick hosted an event which raised over £35,000 for projects supporting education and migrants in detention. Goodman Derrick has supported Women on Boards UK since 2012, a social enterprise which is committed to breaking down barriers to women’s entry to the boardroom and Morgan has been a dynamic supporter of the organisation since she joined the firm.

Julia Wookey (Howard Kennedy LLP)

“Julia is an absolutely inspirational lawyer [who] very quickly enthused a large team of solicitors and trainees who...within two months started advising regularly at the Free Legal Advice Centre and are an invaluable addition to the service.”

Julia helped to set up the Howard Kennedy’s pro bono programme and committee when she was a trainee solicitor. She now manages a team of 20 lawyers, trainees and paralegals who volunteer their time at the Toynbee Hall Free Legal Advice Centre where she also gives advice on issues such as housing, debt and domestic violence. She also regularly attends the women-only clinic at Toynbee Hall on Saturday mornings where she advises vulnerable women on a range of issues, including civil litigation and human rights matters. She is almost always shadowed by a trainee advisor and continues the training in follow-up sessions. In addition, she co-ordinates the firm’s charity pro bono work through the LawWorks Not-For-Profits Programme, and puts together the best teams for each job from within the firm to ensure that the work is always carried out to the highest standards.

The LawWorks Cymru Award

Cardiff Pro Bono Employment Clinic

“The clinic provides a much-needed and valuable source of expert advice and assistance, in a field of law where there is very little pro bono provision. We...would be unable to cope with the level of demand without it...and the work that it does is essential in this area.”

The Cardiff Pro Bono Employment Clinic is hosted at the Speakeasy Advice Centre where volunteers from more than 15 local organisations, with at least two years’ post-qualification experience, provide free advice twice a month on employment rights, appeal procedures and tactics as well as helping to draft letters and tribunal documents. 234 people were provided with pro bono advice in the past 12 months, many of whom were low paid workers with unpaid wages. Others were at the early stages of appealing to an employment tribunal and needed guidance on how to prepare and what to say. One client had struggled both to get recognition of a disability and to receive an acknowledgement and response to a grievance she had raised. Students from Cardiff University Law School attend each session to help with the administration but also sit in on client interviews and gain valuable experience.

Citizens Advice Rhondda Cynon Taff

“The provision of a free legal clinic is an invaluable service to our clients [in Rhondda Cynon Taff]. In recent feedback 80% of them were very happy with the services they received and 85% felt it had made a positive impact to their wellbeing.”

Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) is the third most deprived local authority area in Wales, with the lowest life expectancy and over a quarter of the children in the borough live in poverty. Citizens Advice at RCT has been running a weekly free general legal clinic at its Pontypridd office for several years in order to provide specialist legal help to vulnerable people in the area from local solicitors on a wide range of issues such as housing, insurance, neighbour disputes, wills and probate. This year sessions dedicated solely to family law have begun in order to meet an increased need in the area for this kind of advice and it is hoped that the service will also soon be able to provide specialist advice sessions in relation to care of the elderly.

Duncan Lewis Solicitors

“Duncan Lewis Solicitors’ Cardiff housing team is involved in numerous pro bono projects, assisting the most vulnerable clients who may not possess the means, education or mental capacity to access justice.”

The housing team were integral to the inception and commencement of the Housing Pro Bono Surgery at Cardiff Civil Justice Centre which has provided over 300 disadvantaged clients with invaluable assistance. An example of the type of case that the team works on involved a client who lived in the same property for over 40 years but was facing a demotion of tenancy as her son had been found in her house in possession of drugs, of which she had no knowledge. Legal aid is no longer available for this area of law and the client felt abandoned and hopeless. However, the housing team worked hard on the case and was eventually successful in protecting the client’s tenancy. The team also runs two other surgeries: one is a drop-in surgery that takes place in the Cardiff office of Duncan Lewis and the other is run from Cardiff Central Library and is run in union with Citizens Advice and the Cardiff County Council.

School of Law & Politics, Cardiff University

“Since we began offering clinical activities, we estimate that approximately 1,750 students have participated, many of [whom] go on to qualify as practitioners and become our pro bono advisors of the future, thus evidencing that pro bono has been inculcated into their professional practice.”

The delivery model at the School of Law & Politics is unusual in that they do not offer a direct access clinic. Partnerships fall into two distinct categories: the schemes where a member of the School’s academic staff is responsible for day-to-day delivery with an external partner overseeing the advice provision (such as the Cardiff Law Innocence Project, the Welsh Rugby Union/Cardiff University Free Legal Advice Scheme and the Mencap-WISE student advice project) and the schemes which are delivered entirely by the partner organisation (such as the Personal Support Unit, the Hafal Appropriate Adult Scheme and the Bridgend Children’s Contact Centre). Students provide, on average, 4 hours a week of clinical work to their chosen clinic, thereby contributing about 20,000 pro bono hours every year.

Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership

Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP and St Hilda’s East Community Centre

“For ten years Sonali Gardens Legal Advice Service has...run an amazing advice resource within the East End of London...It truly is a beacon within our community!”

The Sonali Gardens Legal Advice Service (SGLAS) is a weekly pro bono clinic that has been running for ten years as a result of a close collaborative partnership between Berwin Leighton Paisner (BLP) and St Hilda’s East Community Centre (St Hilda’s). Advice is provided on a range of law including housing, benefits, employment law and debt by volunteers from BLP (224 in total over the past decade) and three staff members from St Hilda’s provide administration for the service which is aimed at residents in south-west Tower Hamlets, one of the UK’s most deprived boroughs. Assistance is also provided by law student volunteers from Queen Mary’s University. 3,620 advice appointments have taken place over the past decade – one recent example is a client and his family who were at risk of losing their home due to significant rent arrears. He was awarded £13,200 in backdated housing benefits and Working Tax Credits and was overwhelmed with the help that he had been given by SGLAS.

BPP’s Enterprise Legal Advice Clinic & The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network

“Overall BPP had a significant impact on participants’ confidence in their business propositions...and in making them overall “safer” and more comfortable in approaching business in the UK.”

The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network (TERN) is a social enterprise and was established last year in order to recognise and support the talent and potential within the refugee community. Recognising that both organisations share the same goals, BPP’s Enterprise Legal Advice Clinic and TERN created a partnership in April 2017 to offer TERN’s clients tailor-made legal advice on their own businesses, with a view to becoming self-sustainable. Refugees were given the opportunity to meet in advisers in person or through Skype to discuss their business propositions and were provided with a detailed letter of advice as well as precedent documents. The Enterprise Clinic also provided legal training to TERN’s 2017 participants on issues such as different business structures, business insurance and data protection with a view to demystifying the UK’s legal framework. The training engendered a sense of optimism in the participants who felt empowered to apply the knowledge they had gained to their own business plans. The partnership plans to expand next year from 27 participants in 2017 to 60-70 in 2018.

Clyde & Co LLP & Citizens Advice Brent

“The service is a wonderful example of the effectiveness of partnership work and a fitting legacy to the work of John Fisher.”

Since 2001 volunteers from Clyde & Co have attended a weekly advice session known as the John Fisher Free Advice service at Citizens Advice Brent in order to provide advice to a very diverse local population. John Fisher was a former partner at Clyde & Co and the advice service was established as a tribute to the fact that he provided 17 years of pro bono advice to the people of Brent. Since 2005 the firm has also partnered with BPP law students who provide support to the project and in 2013 a weekly skype clinic was established, enabling volunteer solicitors from London and Manchester to provide advice from their offices. As well as providing on-the-spot advice, some very difficult cases are taken to court – one such case involved a claim against a client under a purported loan agreement of £30,000, where both the loan agreement and the legal charge on his property had been forged. With help from volunteer advisers, the case was settled and the client was able to save his house.

Debevoise & Plimpton LLP and Haringey Law Centre

“Despite very difficult funding circumstances the Centre’s staff and volunteers have been both inventive and resilient and have managed to provide a high quality much-needed service for local people claiming disability benefits.”

In April 2016 Haringey Law Centre was nearly forced to close after the local authority withdrew its funding but, despite this setback, some of the staff continued working as unpaid volunteers. Lawyers from Debevoise & Plimpton LLP (D&P) decided to help by setting up a project to advise local residents on Disability Benefits Appeals, as well as providing funding. Volunteers received training in order to be able to conduct comprehensive interviews with clients, prepare submissions and then represent them at tribunals. So far, they have achieved an 83% success rate, with more cases pending. One such client is Patricia who, despite suffering from lupus, fibromyalgia syndrome and other medical conditions had her claim for Employment Support Allowance refused. With support from D&P volunteer lawyers, this decision was overturned on appeal – a result that Patricia described as “amazing”.

Herbert Smith Freehills LLP and the Whitechapel Legal Advice Clinic

“WLAC is an invaluable part of Tower Hamlets Citizens Advice for clients who cannot afford legal advice and representation. The service offers a lifeline to individuals who would otherwise have nowhere else to turn.”

Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) established the Whitechapel Legal Advice Clinic in 2000 in Tower Hamlets Citizens Advice in order to provide high quality free legal advice to local residents in one of the most disadvantaged areas in London (Tower Hamlets has the highest rate of child poverty, the second highest unemployment rate and the lowest male life expectancy in any London borough). Unusually, the lawyers who advise at each clinic offer an “end-to-end” service including free representation in tribunals and courts in civil matters outside the scope of legal aid. HSF also funds the post of an experienced duty solicitor and an administrative assistant to help manage client demand. Examples of recent successes include representing a client in the employment tribunal and obtaining an £18,000 judgment against his employer; representing a client in order to successfully set aside a £25,000 default judgment and obtaining a refund of the full costs of a substandard wedding venue.

Microsoft Limited and Covington & Burling LLP

“This ground-breaking project involves a wide range of people and groups working together to achieve the best possible results for vulnerable children.”

The London office of Covington & Burling and a team of in-house lawyers from Microsoft partnered together in 2016 to provide legal support in order to establish the charity Kids in Need of Defense UK (a collaboration between the US charity KIND Inc and Central England Law Centre, Coram Children’s Legal Centre and the Migrant and Refugee Children’s Legal Unit at the Islington Law Centre). From March 2017 volunteers from both offices have taken on a series of cases which involve preparing Home Office applications for long term residency for children who have been living in the UK for at least seven years but have no legal right to reside here. Each case is typically assigned one Microsoft lawyer and two Covington & Burling lawyers who have received immigration law training and the work done to date has resulted in nineteen children achieving access to justice, two children having improved their financial conditions via a change of conditions application and eleven adult parents likely to benefit from the applications.

Suffolk Law Advice Centre: Ashtons Legal; Attwells Solicitors; Bates Wells Braithwaite; Birketts LLP; East Anglian Chambers; Eversheds Sutherland; Fairweather Law; Fenners Chambers; Goodwin Cowley Solicitors; Gotelee Solicitors; Immigration Legal Services; Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE); Jackamans Solicitors; Kerseys Solicitors LLP; Landmark Chambers; Marshall Hatchick Solicitors; Prettys Solicitors LLP and Suffolk and North Essex Law Society

“Suffolk is known in the legal world as an advice desert... [and so] the service offered by ISCRE’s Law Advice Centre is a vital part of the landscape for our clients.”

The Suffolk Law Advice Centre started many years ago as a small unfunded ISCRE project but, following the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, secured funding for an officer post which has led to the recruitment of a pool of over 70 professionals from 14 different legal firms and chambers, who provide free legal advice services which are open to the whole community of Suffolk. The Law Advice Centre has strong links with diverse local communities, reflecting the changing demographics of the county’s poorer residents, including groups such as the Eastern European Roma community and clients with mental health problems. In April 2016 a “form filling clinic” was piloted for certain family law applications which has proved extremely popular and the organisation now plans to form Suffolk Law Centre in order to be able to undertake follow-on casework in order to provide even more support to local residents.

The AIRE Centre, Ashurst LLP, Herbert Smith Freehills LLP and Reed Smith LLP

“With the assistance of Ashurst, HSF and Reed Smith, we have increased our provision of formal advice to nearly 600 individuals [since October 2016]...and the commitment of the volunteers has been excellent.”

The AIRE Centre (Advice on Individual Rights in Europe) is a charity whose mission is to promote awareness of European law rights and assist marginalised individuals and those in vulnerable circumstances to assert those rights. It receives requests for advice, for example, from those facing destitution and homelessness as a result of welfare benefit refusal, victims of human trafficking and women subjected to domestic violence. Following training from the AIRE Centre, lawyers from Ashurst, Herbert Smith Freehills and Reed Smith are able to provide detailed letters of advice on issues such as the right to reside, the right to work and on health care and other benefits. The AIRE Centre struggles to meet demand for its services particularly following the vote to leave the European Union but the volunteers have increased the capacity of the charity by 15% and the letters have made a real impact to the individuals concerned.

University of East London and Romford Autism Hub Legal Advice Clinic

“Many parents of children on the Autistic Spectrum and adults with Autism often struggle and feel isolated, not knowing how to resolve their issues...the UEL’s clinic is [therefore] extremely popular and a vital service to the community.”

The Romford Autism Hub is a service provided by the Sycamore Trust UK which supports clients and their families who are affected by Autistic Spectrum Disorders and/or learning difficulties. Following a successful pilot project with the University of East London (UEL), the Romford Autism Hub Legal Advice Clinic was established in October 2017 and involves students from UEL (who have undergone specialist training both on Autism and relevant legal areas) who are supervised by lawyers from Duncan Lewis Solicitors. The weekly clinic is able to provide support on a variety of issues including family law, employment law and legal advice on SEN (special educational needs) issues, housing and support with appealing benefit decisions. Accessing the clinic is empowering the families involved and giving them the confidence to challenge decisions and feel supported in doing so.

University House’s Disability Benefits Appeal Tribunal Project: Dechert LLP; Reed Smith LLP; Ropes & Gray LLP; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP; Slaughter and May and White & Case LLP

“The participating firms have been instrumental in making this project work and are providing an invaluable service to vulnerable clients with many successful outcomes... All the cases they worked on are researched thoroughly with excellent written submissions being produced.”

University House (a legal advice centre) has set up a pro bono advocacy scheme with lawyers from six firms based in the City of London which supports local residents in Tower Hamlets and Hackney who are unable to work as a result of mental and physical disabilities and, following a series of welfare reforms in the UK, have faced the abrupt termination of their benefit payments. The volunteer lawyers meet clients to discuss their appeals and then prepare written submissions to the First Tier Tribunal in relation to decisions on Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, as well as representing them at the appeal hearings. Participating firms have taken on 31 appeals since October 2016 with an average success rate of 80-100%, demonstrating that having legal support significantly bolsters clients’ chances of success, thus helping tribunals to make fairer decisions and allowing individuals to access the benefits to which they are entitled.

About LawWorks

Supporting and celebrating pro bono

LawWorks (the Solicitors Pro Bono Group) is a charity committed to enabling access to justice through free legal advice. We encourage, facilitate, support and celebrate the contribution of pro bono (by solicitors, law schools, law students and others) across England and Wales.

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

Supported by the Law Society, our members and funders, our work is informed by advice and support needs, developed in collaboration with partners and stakeholders and delivered by a network of committed volunteer lawyers and law students. We enable the provision of pro bono through:

- Supporting a growing network of over 220 independent pro bono clinics. We work with lawyers, advice agencies, charities and others to establish or develop new clinics, and provide on-going support, information, training and webinars and legal resources (including the online legal research tools Lexis@Library and Lexis@PSL);
- Our Not-For-Profits Programme facilitates the provision of free legal advice for smaller charities and not-for-profit organisations, supported by volunteer solicitors from among LawWorks members. We also provide free online training videos for charities, covering many of the common legal issues they face;
- We support more in-depth pro bono ('secondary specialisation'), in areas of social welfare law. This includes supporting solicitors to provide representation at First Tier social security tribunals (for Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independent Payment appeals), and, working with the charity Together for Short Lives, to provide legal advice and case-work for the parents and carers of children with life-limiting conditions.

Supporting litigants in person

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

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

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

This year we have begun to build a 'policy voice' for LawWorks and pro bono, including co-ordinating a briefing for the Justice Committee on legal aid and the review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) (supported by 15 organisations). LawWorks provides the Secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group on Pro Bono and Public Legal Education.

Student pro bono

The pro bono contribution made by law schools and students is significant and growing. LawWorks encourages and supports student pro bono (for example, 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, held at the House of Commons. Student teams help raise awareness and fundraise through an annual Law School Challenge, to support the work of LawWorks and the Bar Pro Bono Unit.

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 over 150 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 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 (including an 'Honorary Counsel' role for solicitors as a source of ongoing advice and support for a specific charity).

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

By joining LawWorks you will be supporting our charitable work to encourage, support and celebrate pro bono, and also our work to highlight - and address - barriers to accessing justice. The fee depends upon the size of the firm - with other categories for in-house teams and organisations.

For more information about membership of LawWorks and the difference your membership can make, please get in touch with James Sandbach, Director of Policy, at james.sandbach@lawworks.org.uk or on 020 7092 3941, or visit our website at: www.lawworks.org.uk

Other ways to support LawWorks

LawWorks is grateful for the support of trusts and foundations, and the donations and fundraising of individuals and organisations. If you would like to support our work, please contact Kate Buchanan, our Fundraising Consultant, at kate.buchanan@lawworks.org.uk or on 020 7092 3947, or visit our website at the above address.

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

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