

Free Legal Advice Centre

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TOYNBEE
HALL



For a future without poverty



Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC)

Poor Man's Law service set up in 1898

124 year old service

Based in east end of London, traditionally a very poor part of London

Help thousands of people across London each year

2000+ pro bono hours dedicated by volunteers each year- corporate partnerships and individual lawyers



Why Pro bono?

- Organisations and individuals have different motivations- don't necessarily have to be altruistic, if they help create impact.
- Identify motivation and determine if the clinic/service can provide suitable opportunities for mutual gain.

The Business Case for Pro Bono

Through understanding the business case for pro bono, we have:



Developed effective partnerships- longest one has existed for 20 years



Recruited and retained, committed individual lawyers and support volunteers- **some volunteers have served for over 10 years.**

Corporate Partners

- Suitable pro bono opportunities assist firms and organisations with their CSR objectives.
- Strong CSR offers help with staff retention, morale, engagement, **reputation, branding, and training and development**



Corporate Partners: Training and Development

How can the service/ project provide value through training and development? – Differs depending on the partner

Common theme

- Junior lawyers and support staff seek opportunities to take on cases and have full responsibility for matters. Helps with developing confidence and soft skills.

Question: How can we provide a safe and supportive environment to meet these needs, while also meeting service objectives?

- Having a clear and structured way of working, with suitable supervision and articulating this well (e.g. Guides, manuals containing policies and processes- what is expected of volunteers and clinic leads, information CRMS, training opportunities etc.)

Corporate Partners: Training and Development

Supervision

- Suitable supervision is often very important- Corporate volunteers don't usually have experience in social welfare law

Things to consider

- Qualifications and experience of the supervisors
- How much time they have to provide friendly and helpful guidance - practical points (how supervisors can be accessed, pre, post and during pro bono sessions etc.)
- Other support needs- PIE, creating a supportive learning environment.
- Helpful to be able to outline this.

Good supervision can help build capacity



Example: Firm

A

- FLAC contributed to a pro bono panel discussion at the firm and spoke about our women-only legal advice service
- Two trainees expressed an interest in assisting
- They committed to one session a month
- After gaining a firm grasp on some of the reoccurring issues, they went on to supervise other trainees in their firm. This increased the firm's pro bono offer and increased capacity at the clinic






Corporate Partners: Branding & Reputation

Good pro bono opportunities help firms and organisations with their branding and reputation.

Things to consider

- How can you help raise their profile and create awareness of their impact in the community? (With their permission- articles, blog posts, nominations for awards, events etc)
 - Good reporting practices
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Corporate Partners: Non-Legal Organisations

- In-house teams provide a good inroad for getting non-legal organisations on board- currently work with a bank and a consulting company.

Things to consider

- Opportunities for volunteers without a legal background
 - (research, triaging etc.)



Example: Consulting Firm B

- Have a strong desire to develop their CSR offer around certain themes, including migration
- Clear that they did not want to provide advice
- Assist with triaging – increases FLAC's capacity to see more clients.



Individual Volunteers

- Various motivations
 - Training and development
 - Give back to the community
 - Belong to a network or group of lawyers
 - Opportunities after retirement.
- Things to consider
 - Is your service / project right for them (supervision, engagement, opportunities etc)?
 - How can you develop a structured pro bono offer?

Example: Tier 1 Volunteers at FLAC

- Tier 1 volunteers are legal postgraduates- not fully qualified.
- Volunteers are often looking for experience, training and development

What they do for the service

- Help to increase capacity by assisting with basic queries, freeing up time of more experienced advisers
- Help with research tasks (eg PLE)



Example: Tier 1 Volunteers at FLAC (Cont....)

What the service does for them

- Provides mentoring opportunities (in partnership with corporate partners)
- Provides networking opportunities (e.g., legal walk etc., volunteer events)
- Provides a great learning and supportive environment (often supports journey to full qualification)





Thanks for your time

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