



Free Legal Answers: Evaluation brief

About us

[LawWorks](#) (the Solicitors Pro Bono Group) is a charity committed to enabling access to justice through free legal advice. We believe in the power of pro bono legal advice to help improve the lives of people in need.

Background to Free Legal Answers

[Free Legal Answers](#) is an online platform where people on low incomes can describe a legal problem or ask a legal question and receive pro bono legal advice from volunteer lawyers.

It is based on a service in the United States supported by the American Bar Association. LawWorks has been granted a license to launch a similar website service in England and Wales. We were kindly provided with project management and technical expertise to assist us in configuring and testing the website to fit the legal environment in England and Wales. We have also been fortunate to receive funding from the Ministry of Justice in partnership with the Access to Justice Foundation. The first phase of Free Legal Answers and its development ran from May 2020, and is due to come to an end in July 2022.

Why now?

With the continuing public health crisis, demand for legal help has increased with more people looking for help and support including online. As we come to the end of the first phase of Free Legal Answers, we are looking to increase its reach and impact as a source of free legal advice. We are also scoping an integrated 'digital hub' for all of our digital platforms (Appendix A).

What we need

We are looking for someone to conduct an evaluation of the Free Legal Answers platform and service, as well as being able to recommend potential improvements and future developments. We have quantitative and qualitative data from users of the site: individuals looking for help, volunteer lawyers, referral agencies and administrators. We would like someone to help us make best use of the data we have, identify gaps and to make recommendations.

Evaluation objectives

This evaluation should:

- Seek to answer the question 'does Free Legal Answers increase accessibility to valuable, high-quality resources and/or services for litigants in person?' (with its focus on initial or one-off legal advice).
- Seek to understand the use of the platform to date
- Identify what has worked well and what the challenges have been
- Produce recommendations, based on evidence, for the future development and engagement with the service
- Where applicable, identify similar models and projects working to increase access to initial free legal advice, to reflect on challenges and opportunities for the sector as a whole to inform a strategy for Free Legal Answers going forward.

Key deliverables

Report on findings

Presentation of findings to the LawWorks Digital and Free Legal Answers team, and key stakeholders

Key stakeholders

Martin Barnes: CEO, LawWorks

Jen Cheshire: Head of Digital Platforms and Projects, LawWorks

Florentina Melinte: Free Legal Answers Project Officer, LawWorks

Tracy Bossman: Digital Services Support Officer, LawWorks

Sasan Abtahi: Grants Manager, The Access to Justice Foundation

Data available

Type	Qual/quant	User	Timeframe	Storage/documentation
Semi-structured interviews	Qualitative	Volunteer lawyers	Oct/Nov 2021	Transcripts & summary
Semi-structured interviews	Qualitative	Referral agencies	Oct/Nov 2021	Transcripts & summary
Survey	Qual/quant	Clients	From July 2021	System
Question data	Quantitative	Clients/lawyers	From May 2020	Agreed evaluation framework & system
Lawyer data	Quantitative	Lawyers	From May 2020	System
Client data	Quantitative	Clients	From May 2020	Agreed evaluation framework & system
Analytics	Quantitative	All	From Oct 2020	Google analytics

Key stakeholders and others will be available for interview

Knowledge, skills and experience

Essential

- Significant experience of evaluating services
- Research skills including evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data
- An understanding of the charity and not-for-profit sector
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and an understanding of its importance in service provision and access

Desirable

- Experience of evaluating digital services

Timetable

Response deadline	4 th March 2022
Interviews	w/c 7 th March 2022
Decision informed to applicants	15 th March 2022
Confirmation of contract	18 th March 2022
Start of project	28 th March 2022
Completion of work	9 th May 2022

Budget

- Up to £8,000

Response required

The submission should be submitted by email to DigitalServices@Lawworks.org.uk

We would like to receive written proposals **by 5.00pm on 4th March 2022** which outlines your approach and your suitability for the project. It should include the pricing schedule (*prices should be inclusive of any VAT*), which should be fixed and include everything required to fulfil the contract.

Evaluation criteria

Criteria	Weighting %
Approach	30%
Experience/potential	30%
Value for money	20%
Timescales	20%

Confidentiality statement

All information that LawWorks supplies as part of the tender process shall be treated as confidential information.

LawWorks will treat any information submitted as part of the tender response as confidential information.

Appendix A: LawWorks Digital Platforms

Pro Bono Portal UK (with Justice Connect)

LawWorks is developing a new pro bono platform to connect lawyers with more in depth pro bono advice, casework, representation and a range of other legal and nonlegal volunteering opportunities. Developed originally by Justice Connect (an Australian access to justice charity), it is part of a project (working with PILnet) to introduce the award-winning platform in different international legal jurisdictions.

The Jeanie Project

The Jeanie Project was established to relieve financial hardship “by assisting in the provision of legal services and advice...”. With initial funding from the Legal Education Foundation, the charity piloted the platform which enables front-line staff and volunteers (in community groups and other local settings) to go through structured scenarios and questions with vulnerable clients with legal problems. Pro bono lawyers and others can then access the ‘triaged’ information remotely and decide whether to take on a case. LawWorks has received a grant for the project to further develop the next iteration of the platform.

Major Incidents

Pro Bono Project LawWorks has been working with the Law Society of England and Wales and other stakeholders (e.g., representatives of the Collaborative Plan for Pro Bono) to create a process and mechanism for enabling and coordinating a profession-wide response to major incidents, when access to advice may be needed.