

Citizens Advice and pro bono: Opportunities and added value LawWorks InfoExchange

James Sandbach, London Development
Claire Blades, Strategic Justice lead



Objectives of the session

- Pro Bono plays a vital role in enabling access to justice for clients at many local Citizens Advice, partnering with the legal profession to extend our specialist advice offer
- This session will
 - Provide an **overview of Citizens Advice** and explain the structure of the national organisation, the local and regional networks, and advice model including partnership work in the legal sector.
 - Consider the **business case** for pro bono in a Citizens Advice setting
 - Hear from **clinics** working with Citizens Advice who will explain their models and share learning and best practice.

There will be an opportunity to ask questions and for discussion

Agenda

3.30	Introduction – Ann-Marie Dillon, LawWorks
3.40 Citizens Advice contributions	<p>James Sandbach (London Citizens Advice) and Claire Blades (Citizens Advice, Strategic Justice lead) – will present an overview,</p> <p>Other Citizens Advice Clinic leads or partners will take a few minutes each to talk about their work on their models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rebecca Scott, Director of Legal Services and Senior Solicitor, RCJ Advice- Amanda Crutchley, Bath partership- Mhairi Laker-Jones, Citizens Advice Harlow- Clare Cutler, Citizens Advice St Albans
4.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Questions, discussion, challenges and issues- Ensuring schemes are genuinely pro bono, rather than ‘lead generation’ for paying clients- Opportunities – eg new SQE training pathways
5.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Round-up

About Citizens Advice

We are a network of local Citizens Advice charities; each member of our service is an independent charity, supported by a national membership body (England and Wales). Together we form the Citizens Advice service.

- There are 259 local Citizens Advice. We provide support in approximately **2,500 locations** across England and Wales with over **18,000 volunteers** and **8,650 staff**
- We helped over 2.55 million people annually to find a way forward with one-to-one advice

Citizens Advice in London

28 local Citizens Advice charities providing free advice cover all area of advice (benefits, debt/ money, housings, employment consumer, immigration, community care, legal) in all boroughs & different community settings (eg community & childrens' centres, food banks) via different channels

<https://londoncitizensadvice.org.uk/>

Contact: jsandbach@londoncitizenadvice.org.uk

Offices & outreaches ●●●



Our reach and impact in numbers (2021-22 Impact Report)

In another year of uncertainty, we were there to help millions find a way forward.

40.6 million

visits to our website

1.96 million

people using our phone service

624,000

people helped by email

183,000

people helped face to face
(when Covid restrictions allowed)

176,000

people helped via webchat

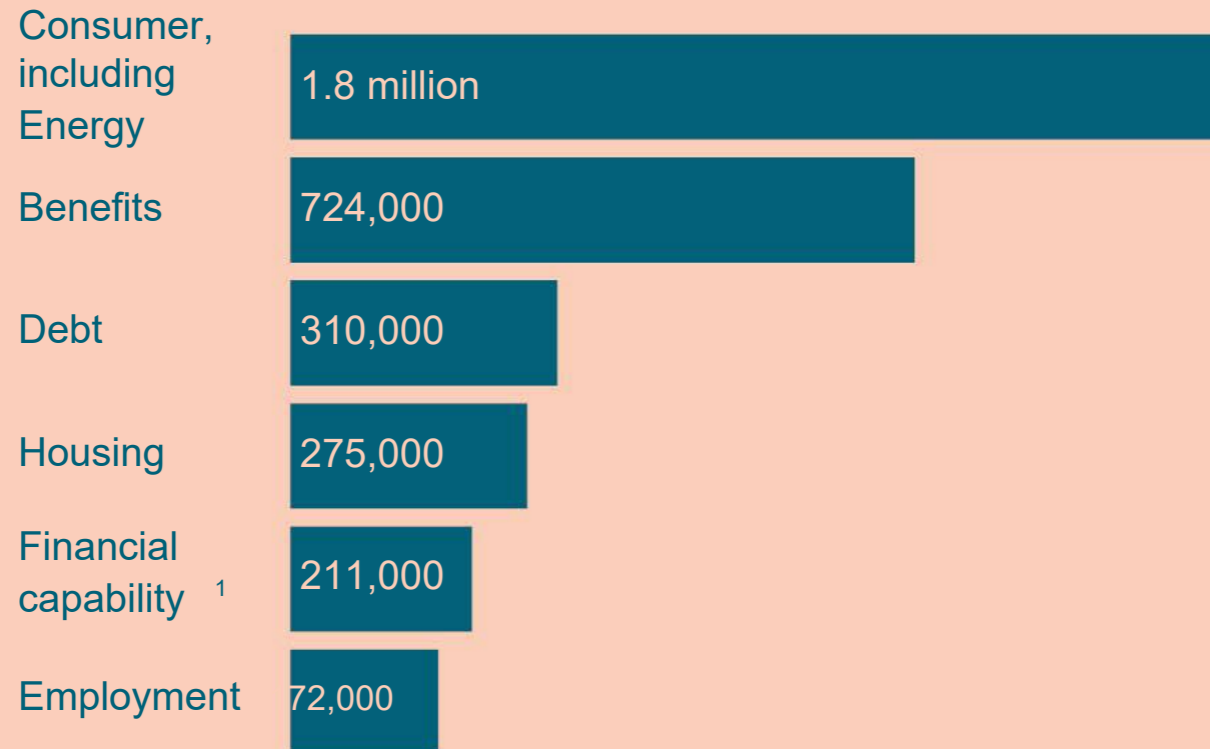
87,000

witnesses helped through
the Witness Service

The problems we helped people with

Every year, millions of people come to us with a range of different problems from benefits to housing, employment to debt. This means our data (information on the problems people come to us for help with) provides us with a unique insight into the challenges people face across England and Wales.

In 2021-2022, the main issues our advisers helped people with directly (by phone, webchat and email, or in person) were:



The top areas of advice people came to our website for were:



¹ Financial capability helps people develop their financial skills and confidence, helping them avoid unmanageable debt and other money problems.

Despite unprecedented demand for our services, and more people coming to us with urgent and complex problems:

6 in 10

people said they felt less stressed, depressed or anxious as a direct result of our advice

we helped **75%**
of people solve their problem

nearly 8 in 10

people said we were easy to access

87%

of people would recommend our services to a friend

96%

of people supported by the Witness Service said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received from us

Benefits advice

For many people who turn to us for help, we look at how we can maximise their income by making sure they're receiving all of the benefits they're entitled to. Our advisers record the total value of expected or achieved income gain after giving advice.

In 2021-2022 we helped clients to claim on average an additional £6,614 a year per person—which is a recorded gain of £200 million in total. We know for definite that our clients received this £200 million, but this is likely to be an underestimate. If all clients we gave benefits advice to went on to receive the entitlements we identified, this total would be over £650 million. And where people hadn't received their full entitlement, we helped them get an average of £1,159 in back payments.

Help to Claim

Our Help to Claim service, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) supports people in the early stages of a Universal Credit claim, from the application, through to their first correct payment. It's delivered through local Citizens Advice and across multiple channels to ensure that people can access support in a way that works best for them. In 2021-2022 this included phone, webchat and face-to-face (when Covid restrictions allowed).

"I have severe mental health problems and applying for universal credit is extremely difficult and without Citizens Advice I would have not been able to even attempt doing it. Thank you."

Help to Claim client

Debt advice

In 2021-2022 we saw many more people struggling financially and seeking support with debt. Citizens Advice delivers debt advice across England, funded by the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS). Advice and support is given all the way through to debt solution, via phone, webchat and in person. The service is provided through partnerships with over 173 local Citizens Advice as well as 10 independent Advice Agencies. In addition we provide a central Debt Relief Order processing service for local advisers to refer into.

In 2021-2022, we had 500 (full time equivalent) advisers, who helped:

89,000 people via local offices

83,000 people via the national debt helpline

52,000 people via webchat

Our debt advice has a huge impact on people's lives:

Over **£523 million** of debt was advised on—over £1million per debt adviser

On average we helped people write off **£13,059** of problem debt (a total of £118,287,945)

9 out of 10 people would recommend us to a friend

89% of people said we helped them find a way forward

In-depth expert advice is at the heart of our service

Our Expert Advice team supports local Citizens Advice advisers across multiple channels so they're best able to help clients find a way forward in several advice areas—benefits and Help to Claim (Universal Credit), work, debt, housing, consumer, family, immigration and discrimination.

In 2021-2022 this included:

over 4,000 queries answered from advisers seeking help on complex client cases in work, benefits and housing

over 6,000 advisers receiving weekly email updates with up-to-date information on legal changes, expert insights on emerging issues and details of other useful advice resources

over 30 online articles published giving advisers in-depth commentary, guides and tactical advice on a variety of advice issues with over 38,000 total views

over 3,600 advisers supported through online communities including moderated peer-to-peer support and sharing of best practice, to improve outcomes for the people who come to us for help

More in-depth advice is often needed where cases are particularly complex, or where the law is new, uncertain or untested.

Types of cases where advisers have been supported by in-depth legal expertise:

- challenging homelessness decisions
- advising clients about evictions
- entitlement to claim benefits such as Universal Credit
- challenging decisions not to award benefits such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- pay problems, such as deduction from wages and holiday pay
- unfair dismissal and redundancy
- maternity and family rights and discrimination

"I just wanted to say thank you for all your help in this matter, we really are grateful for all your experience and advice, it really has helped me. After much deliberation and armed with all the information the client decided to settle out of court for a settlement of £5000 which she is really happy with. The employer has put in place new measures and management in response so she feels that she may have made a difference which was very important to her."

Local Citizens Advice adviser

About Pro Bono: We support the protocol definition

Joint Pro Bono Protocol

1.1. When we refer to Pro Bono Legal Work we mean legal advice or representation provided by lawyers in the public interest including to individuals, charities and community groups who cannot afford to pay for that advice or representation and where public and alternative means of funding are not available.

1.2. Legal work is Pro Bono Legal Work only if it is free to the client, without payment to the lawyer or law firm (regardless of the outcome) and provided voluntarily either by the lawyer or his or her firm.

1.3. Pro Bono Legal Work is always only an adjunct to, and not a substitute for, a proper system of publicly funded legal services.

Pro bono

- Honorary Legal Adviser(s)
- Pro bono clinics
- Partnerships with law schools
- Opportunities for volunteer lawyers (to provide free legal advice and representation)

**Law firms,
In house,
Legal Execs**

**Chambers,
Barristers,
Professional
bodies**

Pro bono charities

- LawWorks
- Advocate, FRU
- NPBC, PBC

**Universities
and Law
Schools**

Wider CA legal sector partnerships, services and engagement with the legal professions

- Legal aid delivery
- Trusteeship and governance
- Public Legal Education projects
- Policy and campaigns work
- Fundraising., eg Legal Walks
- Support in kind
- Corporate Partnerships

No single model for pro bono

- 'Additionality' to core services – however pro bono resources should not be used where legal aid is available (Protocol)
- Regulatory and professional compliance essential
- Must work within Citizens Advice policies and principles
- Encourage local partnership
- Basic resources on our intranet (some of which signpost through to LawWorks clinic resources)

Business case

Very similar to the Business Case already developed by LawWorks

- Training, skills and professional development
- Legal workforce morale and engagement
- Recruitment and retention in legal sector
- Building relationships, collaboration and community relations
- Reputation and CSR

Business case

But also.....

- Bases pro bono in community settings
- Additional training opportunities (adviser training)
- Volunteer value (value of Citizens Advice volunteering)

The value of working with volunteers

Our estimate of the public value of working with volunteers:

**Wider economic and social benefits (public value):
£82.5 million**

Improvements in health, wellbeing, participation and productivity

- Client value

£14 in wider economic and social benefits (public value)

Solving problems, improves lives – and this means better wellbeing, participation and productivity for the people we help

Total: £4.6 billion

£2.20 in savings to government and public services (fiscal benefits)

By helping stop problems occurring or escalating, we reduce pressure on public services like health, housing or out-of-work benefits

Total: £717 million

£7.90 in value to people we help (financial outcomes following advice)

As part of our advice, we can increase people's income, through debts written-off, taking up benefits and solving consumer problems

Total: £2.6 billion

Honorary legal adviser (HLAs)

- Volunteer lawyers working with local Citizens Advice (having an ongoing and direct relationship with the local Citizens Advice), must have current practice certificate. Undertakes various functions, such as:
 - secondary support services such as consultancy and training
 - providing advice or representation for clients.
- *Legal advice sessions using HLAs:* Some local Citizens Advice operate regular advice sessions staffed by HLAs. They are a useful means of increasing client access to legal services. However, local Citizens Advice can also examine other approaches, taking account of local circumstances (e.g., sending the client to the solicitors' offices may be appropriate, or a remote follow up call etc.)

Partnerships with local/regional law firms and/or other agencies

- HLA relationship – can develop into partnership with firm(s) for new pro bono clinic(s)
- Managed referral pathways (including multi-partners, eg Support through Court)



Examples: Devon

[Home](#) [News](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Sport](#) [What's On](#) [Motoring](#) [The Business Daily](#)



Citizens Advice Exeter marks national pro bono week

Authorised by News Desk Posted Monday, November 7, 2016 - 7:47am

Leading local advice charity, Citizens Advice Exeter, is highlighting the success of its legal clinic scheme as part of national pro bono week which runs from 7 – 11 November 2016.

The legal clinic scheme enables Citizens Advice clients to access free legal advice from local law firms.

Citizens Advice Exeter Chief Executive Steve Barriball said: "Our legal clinic scheme has proved very popular with our clients who are otherwise unable to afford legal fees. We are very grateful to Michelmores, Veitch Penny, The Family Law Company and Cartridges Law for their support. In the last year they have helped over 70 clients."

Kathryn O'Reilly from Michelmores LLP said: "We have been involved in the legal clinic scheme with Citizens Advice Exeter for more than 10 years. Over that time we have been able to see the benefits of the scheme for many clients who otherwise would struggle to access specialist employment advice."



Gallery



More from: Business



Entering markets -

Children & Domestic Abuse Law Clinic

The Children & Domestic Abuse Law Clinic offers free legal consultancy and support to people who are not eligible for legal aid and cannot afford to instruct a lawyer.



Issues we cover

- Parental Disputes About Children
- Child Arrangements
- Parental Responsibility
- Domestic Abuse (Non-molestation & Occupation Orders)

What help do we offer?

- Advice on the law, your rights, your options and what to do next
- Assistance with court applications and statements/evidence
- Advice on court process and procedure

Please note: We support clients as litigants in person. We do not undertake litigation on a client's behalf or offer representation at court. When receiving advice, clients remain responsible for the management and conduct of their case.

Eligibility

The clinic is available to clients throughout Devon & Cornwall.

We cannot advise if you are currently instructing or receiving advice from a lawyer or professional McKenzie Friend.

Before contacting us, please [complete a legal aid check](#). If you are entitled to legal aid we cannot assist you with your case.

Please note: We cannot currently accept divorce, finance, cohabitation or public child law cases.

Legal Advice Centre

Citizens Advice Plymouth can provide remote legal advice with University House Law Centre in London. We also have in house legal workers who can provide one off advice or ongoing case support.

We may be able to help you in the following areas:

- Employment
- Housing
- Welfare benefits (Tribunal and Appeals only)
- Family Law

Examples: Brent

ome > John Fisher Free Legal Advice Sessions



270-272 High Road, NW10 2EY **Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm**

John Fisher Free Legal Advice Sessions

To limit the spread of COVID-19 our face to face services are closed, but we're still here for you.

You can get advice by phone, email or webchat return to the [homepage](#) for details

The John Fisher Free Legal Advice Sessions are on Tuesday evenings from 7 till 9pm.

The sessions were established in 2001 by Clyde & Co international law firm in memory of the late John Fisher, a former partner and a Honorary Legal Adviser at Brent Citizens Advice for over 17 years. Today, the sessions are attended by both trainees and solicitors of Clyde & Co as well as a number of legal advisers from local and other City firms.

For an appointment, you must first come to an **assessment** so that we can learn about your problem and decide if a referral is appropriate.

Examples: Medway

Pro Bono Solicitors

Citizens Advice Medway is fortunate to be able to offer some of our client's Solicitor referrals who can provide pro-bono (free) advice. To utilise this service, during your Initial Check with us, our Advisor will determine if you qualify for a referral.

From there, they will book a telephone appointment for you with one of our pro-bono solicitor partners.

The current organisations we partner with for this Pro-Bono Solicitor advice are:

- Hodge Jones & Allen Solicitors
- Takk & Company Solicitors

And, the subject areas our Solicitors provide pro-bono advice are:

- Civil Liberties
- Clinical Negligence
- Criminal Law

As our Advisors are booking appointments for any of these subject areas, they will consider various deadlines and time limitations. Some of these appointments are being scheduled for a month in advance due to the limited appointment slots we have available with our partners. For each pro-bono subject area, we are only able to hold appointment sessions once or twice a month



Examples: Yorkshire



Adviceline freephone **0808 278 7900** Monday to Friday 9 am to 4.30 pm (except bank holiday)

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Law Centre

Our Law Centre team covers all areas of North Yorkshire and York.

To make a referral into any of our specialist legal teams contact our FREE advice line on **0808 278 7900**, email [us](#), or use our online form to [refer a client](#).

We're always looking to make connections with local solicitors who would like to offer pro bono like to talk to us about opportunities, please [get in touch](#).



YorLaw referral service

YorLaw advice

CAY clients with family law problems can be referred to YorLaw for expert legal advice from a solicitor. In the past year (2020-2021) YorLaw has assisted more than 100 clients. Clients not already registered with Citizens Advice should phone 0808 278 7895 to register their details. Once this has been done they may be referred to Yorlaw.

YorLaw McKenzie Friend scheme (approved by the York Family Court)

This is a scheme for YorLaw clients who are representing themselves in a court case about children without legal representation. YorLaw McKenzie Friends offer moral support in court and make notes of what happens but do not speak on behalf of clients. Students studying for a law degree or legal professional qualification may also become McKenzie Friends. To access this service contact Citizens Advice York on 0808 278 7895.

There is no cost for these services.

Law Schools

- Partnering with law schools to offer clinical/work experience opportunities
 - Clinic partnerships
 - SQE pathways

Law Schools – Examples: Sussex

Sussex law students win 'Advice Project of the Year' from Citizens Advice

By: Alice Ingall

Last updated: Monday, 29 October 2018



The Citizens Advice Project, part of the University of Sussex Law department's Clinical Legal Education programme, has won the 'Advice Project of the Year' award at the Citizens Advice annual conference.

The project is a collaboration with Citizens Advice in Central & South Sussex. The award-winners were announced at an evening ceremony at Manchester Central last night (Thursday 11 October).

The project with Citizens Advice Central & South Sussex sees University of Sussex law students undergoing intensive training with the charity, and then advising their clients on a range of legal issues, such as housing, welfare and family law. In the last academic year, 722 people were helped at the Citizens Advice clinic. Of those, 532 were complex cases.

The Citizens Advice 'Advice Project of the Year' award recognises a project that makes it easier to get advice – whether it's a new partnership, new way of delivering services, or a new way of reaching clients.

The other five awards announced last night were One Service Working, Championing Equality, Money and Financial Support, Outstanding Research and Campaigns and Volunteer of the Year. The category winners are chosen by a panel of senior staff from Citizen's Advice.

The University of Sussex Clinical Legal Education programme was established by Dr Amir Paz-Fuchs in 2016 and it has already become one of the most comprehensive free legal advice clinics anywhere. Advice given by students, under the guidance of tutors and lawyers, covers the Citizens Advice Project, litigants in person, employment law, family law, housing and welfare law, criminal justice law. This academic year also sees the launch of the first ever migration clinic.



From left to right: Citizens Advice Chair, Warren Buckley; Lynette Hanna and Jason Mather, both from Citizens Advice Central & South Sussex; and Citizens Advice Chief Executive, Gillian Guy.

Schools ITS Library Professional services

Schools and services > LPS > Departments > Law > Sussex Clinical Legal Education > Citizens Advice Project

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School of Law, Politics and Sociology

> Sussex Clinical Legal Education

> Citizens Advice Project

CLOCK (Litigants in Person)

Employment Law Clinic

Family Law Clinic

Housing and Welfare Law

Migration Law Clinic

Criminal Justice Law Clinic

Citizens Advice Project

This project is run in collaboration with Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice (CASSCA). The Citizens Advice service offers generalist advice on a range of issues relevant to people in need in the local community. Students deliver advice to clients face to face and by telephone, email and webchat. There are also opportunities to take part in Citizens Advice policy, research and campaign work by gathering frontline data.

The project is led by [Bonnie Holligan](#).

citizens advice

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Law Schools – Examples: Roehampton

Citizens Advice Wandsworth and Roehampton open new advice centre

Thursday, November 22, 2018

Citizens Advice Wandsworth (CAW), in partnership with the University of Roehampton, opened its new Roehampton Advice Centre with a ceremony on Wednesday 21 November at the Picasso Building, Mount Clare, in Roehampton, London.



Students celebrate the launch of a new project that will offer valuable work experience.



Roehampton law students will have the opportunity to gain hands-on legal work experience at the School Clinic, based in the local branch of Citizens Advice Wandsworth (CAW). Eight final year support law lecturer and qualified solicitor Reshma Derasari with her client consultations, evictions and driving convictions.

Law Schools – Examples: Newcastle

New Partnership With Northumbria University Law Students

Jan 8, 2020

Category: News

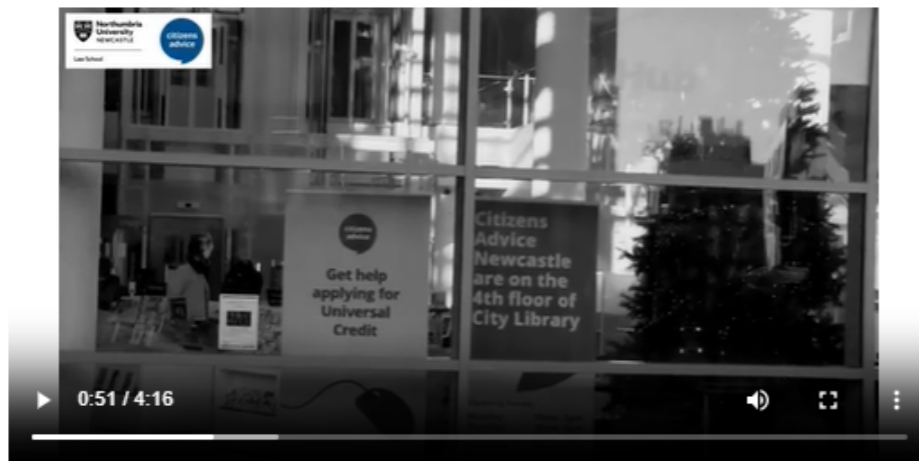
Posted by: newcastle

The law students will work with us over their ten-week placements as part of their law degree course.

We will be training them so that they are able to advise our clients on all our enquiry areas, including debt, benefits, housing, immigration, employment, consumer and family law.

The students will be putting all their academic legal studies into full use, working alongside our staff and volunteers as part of our team. The placements will give them unique practical experience which will really help them in their future careers.

Northumbria University has worked with us to make a special video about our work.



Paul Mckeown, Director of the Student Law Office at Northumbria, Law student volunteer Kelly Anderson, Shona Alexander, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Newcastle and volunteer Law student Imogen Joy.

PRESS RELEASE - 21 MARCH 2019 12:15

Volunteering partnership helps increase access to free legal advice



The Student Law Office at Northumbria University has launched a new project in partnership with Citizens Advice Newcastle which will see law students working with the charity to increase access to legal advice in the city.

Courts - RCJ Advice

RCJ Advice is a unique Citizens Advice Service based at the Royal Courts of Justice, overseen by a Trustee Board, which includes representatives of the Judiciary and city law firms. Services include:-

- Legal advice to litigants in person in civil law delivered within Central London County Court
- Legal advice to litigants in person in family law including a national consultancy service **FLAWS** (Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors - a domestic abuse legal advice service targeted at front line workers and individual women) and CourtNav



Questions, examples etc

[insert name of team or presenter]

[insert contact details]

