



A black and white photograph of a group of about ten people standing in a garden. They are surrounded by various plants, including large-leafed ones in the foreground. The background is filled with tall trees. A large, semi-transparent green circle is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the text.

# LawWorks Not-for-Profits Programme

**Annual Report 2020**

*"A lifeline for small organisations!"*

Applicant

# Contents

About LawWorks	1
Free legal assistance	2
How it works	3
Other services	4
Impact: our response to COVID-19	6
Impact: our services	8
LawWorks and the UN Sustainable Development Goals	12
Case studies	14
Interview with a volunteer	16
Get involved!	18



## About LawWorks

LawWorks is a charity working in England and Wales which enables access to justice through free legal advice. We 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.

We gather information and publicise evidence from across our network about the requirements of people and not-for-profit organisations in need, and use this to advocate for and influence changes to policy in order to promote access to justice.

### About the Not-for-Profits Programme

Our Not-For-Profits Programme supports small and medium-sized not-for-profit organisations that help people in need in England and Wales. Their work for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society varies enormously but, for example, commonly deals with poverty, disability, abuse, social exclusion, and special education needs.

These organisations are working at the very heart of our communities and would otherwise struggle to pay for legal advice. LawWorks helps them access legal assistance for free, thereby supporting them to help their wider beneficiaries.

### Our volunteer lawyers

LawWorks engages with solicitors to support, promote and encourage a commitment to pro bono.

We have created a pro bono community across a network of over 140 member law firms and in-house legal departments. Our volunteers are from some of the country's top legal teams.

### Our services

## Casework

📄 DISCRETE LEGAL MATTERS

## Honorary Counsel

🗨️ ONGOING LEGAL ADVICE

## Free Talks

📺 LEGAL WEBINARS

## Charity Registration

📝 NEW PILOT SERVICE

# Free legal assistance

LawWorks brokers relationships between small not-for-profits and volunteer lawyers. The volunteer lawyers then advise the not-for-profit organisations on a range of discrete legal matters.

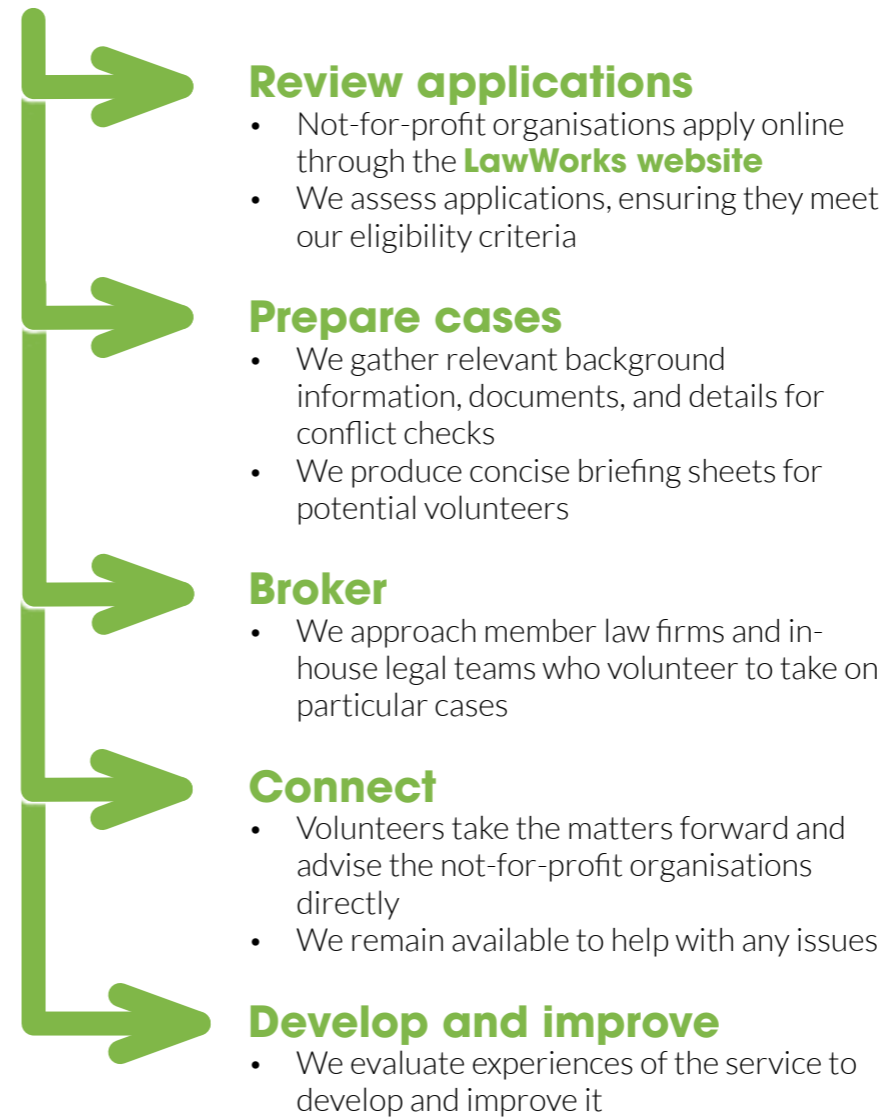
In 2020, a significant number of applications for legal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The main areas of law advised on were **property, commercial** and **employment** law, as well as **corporate** matters (such as constitutions and transfers of assets). We also provided advice on **dispute resolution** (including in relation to property and commercial contracts), **intellectual property, tax, insolvency** and **data protection** law. Volunteers are unable to advise on detailed charity law matters, other than with our Charity Registration Pilot (see page 5 for more details).

## Examples of what we can help with:



*“A superb system to help charities with legal matters.”*  
Applicant

# How it works



*“You’re providing such an incredibly valuable service to small charities like ours who could never afford this specialist advice ourselves.”*  
Applicant

*“Excellent service. A very quick response and efficient processes.”*  
Time and Talents Association

# Other services

## Free Talks

LawWorks Free Talks are short online videos specifically aimed at small not-for-profit organisations.

The videos focus on common legal issues they face such as renewing leases, managing redundancies, Charity Commission registration, protecting intellectual property rights, and lots more. They are all free to watch from the LawWorks website and aim to help when making important decisions.

In 2020, we continued the process of updating the Free Talks as part of our commitment to providing comprehensive legal assistance to not-for-profits.

New Free Talks included 'Charity property transactions', 'How to incorporate a charity', and 'Handling and reporting serious incidents'.

## Signposting

Where we cannot assist a not-for-profit organisation, our team signposts them to more appropriate sources of help or information wherever possible.

We have been focusing on collaborating with other organisations in order to build on the assistance we offer.

## Training

We offer a training programme to all our volunteer lawyers, ranging from legal training to professional and advice skills courses.

LawWorks collaborated with the In House Pro Bono Group in 2020 to put on employment law and data protection law workshops in early 2021. Feedback from attendees included "I attended the [workshop] last week which was really useful – yet another way that you've supported [our charity]".

## Charity Registration Pilot

Our charity registration pilot service has been set up in response to an identified need for pro bono legal advice on registering a charity. LawWorks has traditionally been unable to assist in this area, since it requires experience outside of the usual work of the law firms and in-house teams we work with. For LawWorks to facilitate pro bono charity law advice requires strong collaboration and commitment to pro bono.

LawWorks is therefore pleased to be piloting the service in partnership with three law firms, one of which specialises in charity law. Advice is provided by volunteer lawyers who receive training from, and then work in consultation with, charity law experts.

The pilot was launched in summer 2020. To be eligible, applicants must meet LawWorks' usual eligibility criteria and then a second set of criteria set by the charity law firm. Given the extraordinary nature of the year in which it was launched, the service will continue as a pilot throughout 2021 and beyond.

***"LawWorks have been very helpful and supportive by offering extra benefits like training. They keep in touch and suggest ways to improve..."***

Applicant

# Impact: our response to COVID-19

It is not possible to write about 2020 without discussing COVID-19. The pandemic has profoundly affected everyone involved in the Not-for-Profits Programme: not-for-profits beneficiaries, not-for-profits staff, volunteer lawyers, and LawWorks staff.

**The following pages set out the adaptations which the Programme has made in response to the pandemic.** Equally importantly they are an acknowledgement of its pervasive impact, and provide an opportunity to thank all involved.

**The pandemic disproportionately affects vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.** The consequences are immediate and long-term; observable and hidden; and public and deeply personal. Many of the discriminatory elements of the pandemic have social rather than scientific causes, which access to justice hopes to address. In this context, LawWorks, an access to justice charity, is proud to have both maintained the Not-for-Profits Programme and adapted and grown it in response to changing needs.

**It also has significantly affected the small not-for-profits we work with; these organisations are frequently the least well-placed in terms of size, infrastructure and resources to respond to the many challenges of COVID-19.** Their staff and volunteers have had to adapt to changes to their working environment and personal circumstances, alongside significant financial disruption to the charity sector. The work of small not-for-profits has therefore become simultaneously more vital and challenging. LawWorks is consequently extremely grateful to staff and volunteers at not-for-profits for their continued engagement with the Programme, and is proud to be working with them.



**COVID-19 has also had a significant effect on the legal industry.** There has been a huge shift in how the legal sector and lawyers work and in how they engage with pro bono. It has been a challenging year for our volunteers, including in ways we cannot know or measure. Despite these many challenges, volunteers have continued to provide their legal expertise to not-for-profits through the Programme at this critical time. We want to take this opportunity to thank them.

**Finally, the challenges of 2020 have also been experienced by LawWorks' staff.** LawWorks is extremely grateful for and proud of its team; all of the Programme's achievements this year should be celebrated all the more in light of the extraordinary working conditions.

**The principal achievement in relation to COVID-19 is our growing page of COVID-19 FAQs and resources for not-for-profits.** These resources help not-for-profits respond to the unique effects of the pandemic on their work. They were created in response to not-for-profits' feedback and requests; and LawWorks' experience and understanding of the sector. As at January 2021, we have had 2,230 page visits and 1,200 resource downloads.

**2,230**  
 👁️ **PAGE VISITS**

**1,200**  
 📄 **DOWNLOADS**

# Impact: our services

THE ORGANISATIONS OUR VOLUNTEERS ASSIST WORK WITH VULNERABLE OR DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- ✔ Supporting children or **young people at risk**
- ✔ Supporting people **affected by crime**
- ✔ Supporting people who have a **disability**
- ✔ Supporting people who are in **poor physical health**
- ✔ Supporting people living with a **mental health** problem
- ✔ Improving the employability of current and/or **ex-offenders**
- ✔ Providing community support to **isolated older people**
- ✔ Working with **homeless** people and/or people without housing security
- ✔ Working with people living in poverty and/or living in **deprived neighbourhoods**
- ✔ Working with **refugees and asylum seekers**
- ✔ Working with people who are **unemployed** / underemployed

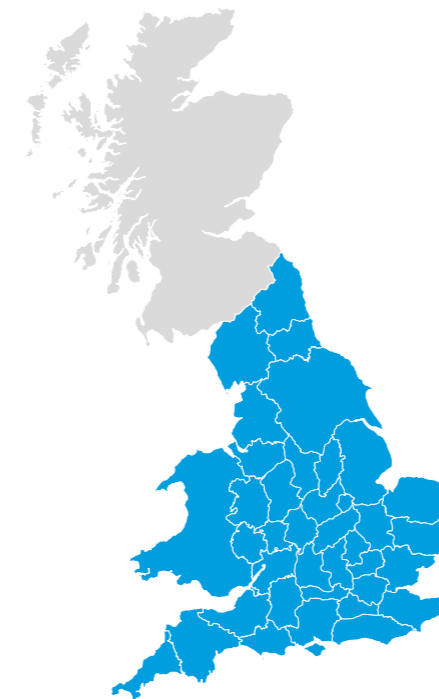
- ✔ Advising or providing educational services to people **at risk of exploitation**
- ✔ Improving **access to justice**
- ✔ **Anti-racism** work / responding to discrimination against BAME people
- ✔ Responding to discrimination against the **LGBTQI+** community
- ✔ Responding to gender discrimination and/or sexual and **gender based violence**
- ✔ Responding to **disability discrimination**



244\* CASES TAKEN ON BY LAWWORKS MEMBERS IN 2020

\* The programme was paused over the Summer

THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS WE SUPPORT WORK ALL OVER ENGLAND AND WALES AT ALL LEVELS: FROM SMALL, LOCAL OR NEW ORGANISATIONS HELPING 10 INDIVIDUALS TO ESTABLISHED COUNTRY-WIDE ORGANISATIONS HELPING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.



HELPING A CHARITY MEANS HELPING THAT CHARITY'S BENEFICIARIES. THE NOT-FOR PROFIT ORGANISATIONS OUR VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTED IN 2020 WORK WITH AN ESTIMATED

**2,435,678** INDIVIDUALS

**62**

NOT-FOR-PROFITS WERE REPEAT APPLICANTS

*“Working with LawWorks is always brilliant. Our requests are handled really quickly and the legal support we get is always first rate.”*

Foxglove Legal CIC

**100%**

OF ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS WERE SUCCESSFULLY PLACED WITH A VOLUNTEER THIS YEAR

### How not-for-profit organisations benefit:

- ✓ **Increase confidence** to deal with legal issues
- ✓ Dedicate **more time and resources** to beneficiaries
- ✓ **Protect** the organisation's **best interests**
- ✓ Increase **sustainability**

# 100%

OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS SAID THEY WOULD SEEK (OR HAVE ALREADY SOUGHT) LEGAL ASSISTANCE FROM LAWWORKS AGAIN

# 94%

FELT THAT THEIR CONFIDENCE TO DEAL WITH LEGAL ISSUES IN THE FUTURE HAD INCREASED

*"Clear, understandable, definitive. We could not have asked for more straightforward practical advice."*

Applicant

# 100%

OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS SAID THE SUPPORT INCREASED GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

### How lawyers benefit:

- ✓ Opportunity to **give back** to the community
- ✓ Exposure to new clients and **interesting work**
- ✓ Increase **pro bono hours**
- ✓ Increase organisation's **CSR footprint**, including engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals (see pages 12-13)

*"More opportunities would always be welcome."*

Volunteer

*"[The volunteer] was perfect. She is knowledgeable, good natured, good humoured, explains things clearly and isn't afraid to point out where we could have done better too. I appreciate it."*

Applicant

*"Made me feel like a special client rather than a charity case."*

Applicant

# 100%

OF VOLUNTEERS WOULD TAKE ON ANOTHER CASE AND/OR RECOMMEND COLLEAGUES TO DO SO



A Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers service user

# LawWorks and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, underpinned by 17 key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals represent targeted areas for global improvement and broadly relate to areas such as health, education, equality and environmental sustainability.

As a social justice charity, LawWorks believes that SDGs 10, 11 and 16 – ‘reduced inequalities’, ‘sustainable cities and communities’ and ‘peace, justice and strong institutions’<sup>1</sup> – are encompassed by what we do. On the Not-for-Profits Programme, we work with a variety of small charities and other not-for-profits which together have an even wider reach, encompassing yet more of the SDGs.

On page 13, we have carried out a snapshot analysis of each of the organisations assisted by the Not-for-Profits Programme in 2020 and compared this to 2019 figures, in order to give an idea of which of the SDGs the Programme’s work engages with.

If you would like more information, please email [nfp@lawworks.org.uk](mailto:nfp@lawworks.org.uk).

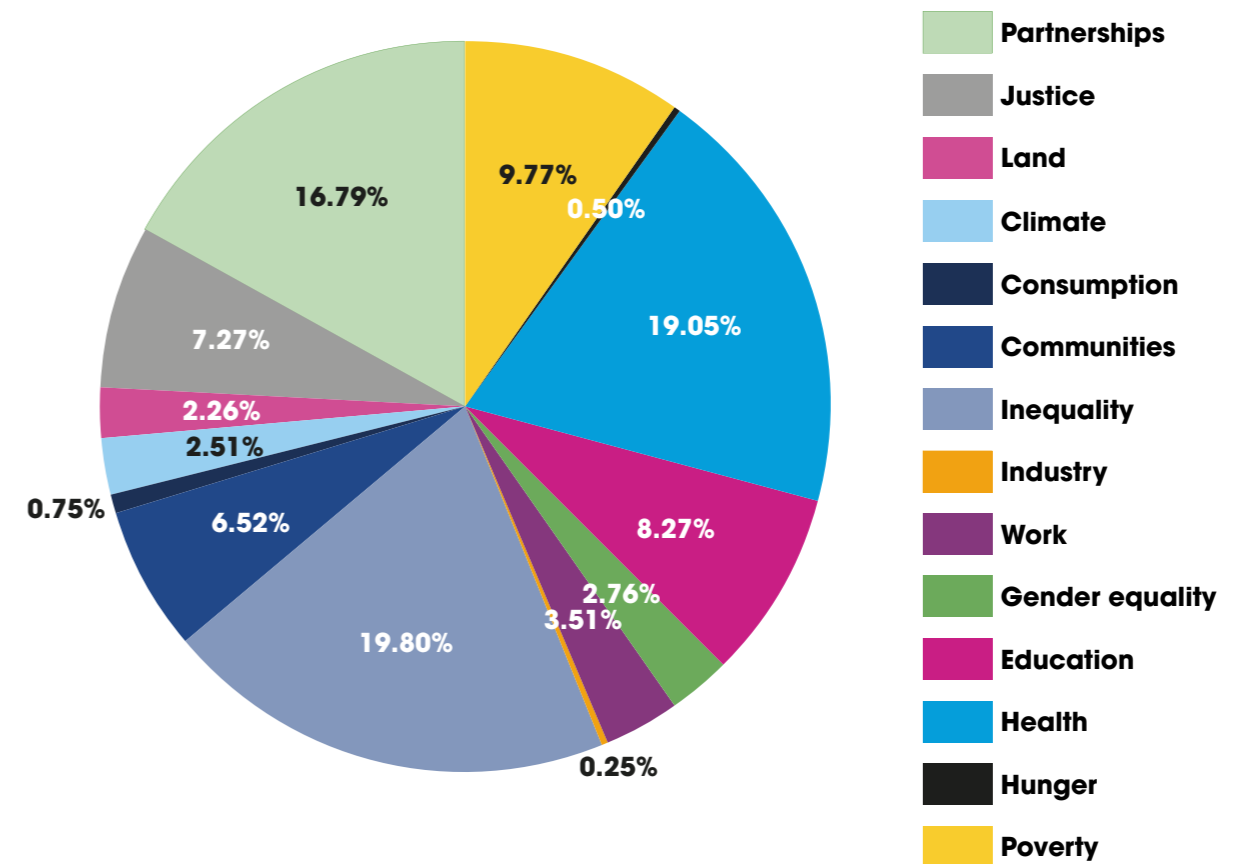
<sup>1</sup> Including a provision for ‘access to justice for all’ – see <https://www.lag.org.uk/article/202025/the-importance-of-goal-16>

**20%**  
OF THE NOT-FOR-PROFITS WE HELPED AIM TO ADDRESS SOCIAL INEQUALITY

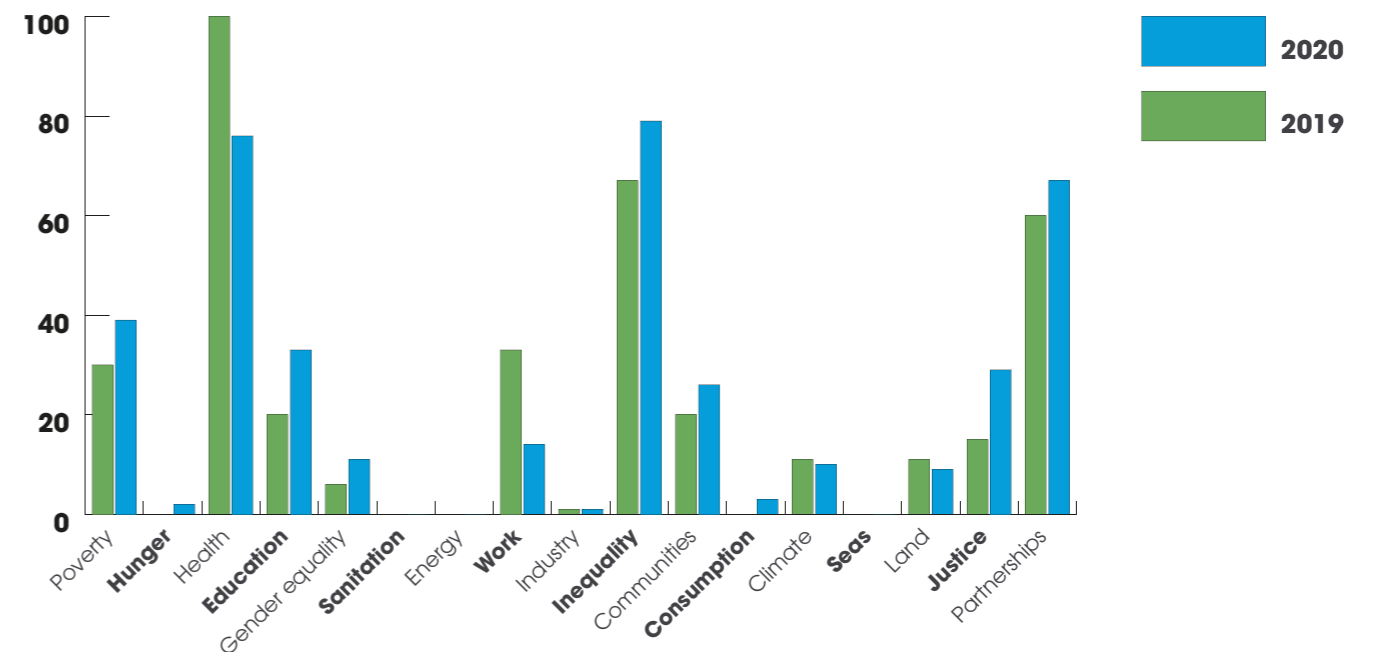
OVER ONE IN FIVE OF THE ORGANISATIONS WE WORK WITH ON THE NOT-FOR-PROFITS PROGRAMME FOCUS ON GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**17%**  
OF NOT-FOR-PROFITS WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS TO ACHIEVE THE SDGs

SDGs addressed by the not-for-profits we supported in 2020



SDGs addressed by the not-for-profits we supported in 2020 compared with 2019





# Case studies

## Arkbound Foundation

**Our work with Arkbound Foundation illustrates the complementary nature of our Honorary Counsel and Casework Services, which can alternate seamlessly where required.**

Arkbound Foundation (“Arkbound”) aims to improve wellbeing through providing opportunities for writing and getting published. The organisation also offers mentoring, health education and signposting. Its beneficiaries include those affected by homelessness, poverty, disability, crime, addiction and equality-related exclusion.

Arkbound applied to the Not-for-Profits Programme’s Honorary Counsel Service – whereby volunteer solicitors (the “Honorary Counsel”) are matched with applicants such as Arkbound to work together on a long-term basis.

Arkbound requested an Honorary Counsel team initially to assist it with formalising publishing arrangements; ensuring it onboarded new staff with the proper procedure; looking over its draft annual report; and reviewing its existing policies.

Two lawyers from Reed Smith took on the role of Honorary Counsel. Arkbound is now in its second year of working with its Honorary Counsel and describe them as “our first point of contact for any problems and queries”, supporting Arkbound to “turn a new page”.

Where one aspect of the work created a conflict of interest for Arkbound’s Honorary Counsel, Arkbound was able to reapply to our Casework Service. Help was quickly found from another law firm for that discrete matter – an example of how LawWorks’ Honorary Counsel

and Casework Services can operate seamlessly to complement each other. (Beneficiaries can also rely on the Casework Service to supplement the Honorary Counsel Service where specialist advice is required).

Without the legal help received over the years via LawWorks and its members, Arkbound would not have been able to expand its staff and services as planned; would have faced potential litigation; and would have had to attempt claiming against a debtor without the legal knowledge needed for a successful claim.

Arkbound has stated that the assistance provided through the Not-for-Profits Programme “has given us the confidence and security needed to keep Arkbound Foundation alive and getting stronger as a small organisation, even in difficult situations”.

Jessica Tagg, Pro Bono Associate at Reed Smith, states: “We are proud to be part of LawWorks’ Honorary Counsel Service. Taking on the role of Honorary Counsel allows our lawyers to use their commercial legal skills to help a not-for-profit organisation. Our lawyers particularly enjoy building long-term relationships with their clients over the course of the Honorary Counsel Service. We are delighted to be able to help these organisations with legal support, allowing them to put their (often limited) resources to better use in achieving the organisation’s objectives and maximising impact”.

**“Our first point of contact for any problems and queries.”**

Arkbound Foundation

## Healthwatch Islington

**Healthwatch Islington (“Healthwatch”) is a charity that aims to improve access to statutory health and care services in the London Borough of Islington by providing residents with information about their health and care entitlements.**

The service is provided in a number of ways, ranging from working with a partner organisation in order to carry out door-to-door visits in the most deprived postcodes, to working with residents with long-term health needs (including poor mental health) who may have limited English.

As well as providing information, Healthwatch works to influence service design to better meet the needs of health and care service users, based on their feedback. It also delivers digital inclusion workshops to help ensure that residents are less excluded from some of the key health information available to them. The latter has been particularly important in light of COVID-19.

Healthwatch applied to the Not-for-Profits Programme at LawWorks as it was in the process of moving to new premises. It had been provided with a draft lease by the new landlord and wanted a volunteer solicitor to review the lease to check whether the terms were onerous; and to negotiate where necessary with the landlord.

The Not-for-Profits Programme was able to match Healthwatch with Susan Pearson, a volunteer solicitor from the law firm Howard Kennedy. Emma Whitby, Chief Executive of Healthwatch, said: “The expertise shared gave me and the Board reassurance that we understood the implications of the lease we were signing and that we weren’t going to get caught out by anything. The solicitor who helped us out gave us really clear, authoritative and easy-to-follow advice”.

Without the advice from Howard Kennedy, Healthwatch would have been hesitant to sign a lease for new premises; and would not have been confident about identifying which terms to further negotiate with the landlord.

As a result of the legal advice gained through the Not-for-Profits Programme, Healthwatch is now in the process of moving to its new premises and is excited for this next chapter in the charity’s development.

Susan states: “I really enjoy working with the LawWorks Team and providing assistance to charities which would otherwise not be able to access legal advice. I was especially keen to assist Healthwatch Islington as I volunteer for another charity in Islington which provides support to the community and I felt there was a connection there. Working with Emma was a delight, she was really friendly and enthusiastic, and I enjoyed helping her and Healthwatch Islington in providing guidance on the terms of their proposed lease”.



The CEO outside the new premises

# Interview with a volunteer

LawWorks interviewed Angela Becker, an Associate in Fried Frank's Corporate Department, about her experience volunteering through the Not-for-Profits Programme.



## In your opinion, what are the (personal and professional) benefits of engaging with the Not-for-Profits Programme as a way to find pro bono matters?

I highly recommend that any lawyer considering assisting with pro bono matters does so through the Not-for-Profits Programme. Not only is the programme incredibly efficient, with all of the available opportunities circulated in one easy-to-digest email, the team are incredibly helpful and welcoming.

More broadly, I would encourage lawyers to participate in pro bono matters for their own professional development. For junior to mid-level lawyers, it can be a great opportunity to take a leading role on matters, actively engaging with the client and taking primary responsibility for delivering advice. For more senior lawyers, it's a great opportunity to expand your knowledge base by focusing on areas that are outside your day-to-day practice.

*"I would encourage lawyers to participate in pro bono matters for their own professional development."*

## What is your motivation to carry out pro bono work?

I think it is important to contribute to the broader community when the opportunity arises, whether this be generally or in connection with specific causes that are important to me personally. There are other benefits too. By undertaking a broad range of pro bono work, I've had the opportunity to immerse myself in legal areas that I wouldn't otherwise deal with day-to-day. This has also led to working closely with colleagues in other teams that I wouldn't typically work with.

*"I could see the visible relief on the client's face by the end of the call – which was very rewarding."*

## You've volunteered on a number of matters through LawWorks. What has been the highlight for you?

It is hard to pick just one! Having said that, a particular highlight for me was the first Zoom call I had with a new client. She spent about an hour explaining the relevant issue facing the charity. This issue had clearly been weighing very heavily on her and it was clear she wasn't quite sure what the next steps should be or what approach the charity should take.

Being an outsider, I was able to offer a fresh perspective. In addition, given that I had dealt with similar matters previously, I was able to quickly set out the steps we could take together to resolve the issue. I could see the visible relief on the client's face by the end of the call – which was very rewarding. The call was on a Friday afternoon, I like to think that having a plan and support alleviated her stress a little and she was able to better enjoy her weekend.

This is only one small example but I hope it encourages not-for-profits to reach out and make use of the services provided by LawWorks. The volunteer lawyers regularly deal with the kinds of issues that clients face, so an issue unfamiliar to a client might be simple for us to assist with. This means the not-for-profit can quickly go back to focusing on what matters most - supporting the community.

## The Not-for-Profits Programme is lucky to have support from you and other solicitors in drafting COVID-19 briefings for our website, to assist small not-for-profits during a challenging time. Can you talk a bit about this experience?

It goes without saying that the last year has been extremely difficult for many, and I'm very grateful to each critical worker who has worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic.

Whilst adjusting to the new working norms of lockdown, I felt it was important to assist the broader community in any way possible. I joined neighbourhood groups formed to assist vulnerable people in the area with practical matters but I found working with the Not-for-Profits Programme particularly rewarding as it gave me the opportunity to use my legal skill set.

It was challenging to stay on top of the UK Government's response to the pandemic as it was evolving rapidly - at one point the guidance relating to support measures was changing daily! On a personal level, it was interesting to track these developments and it gave me something to focus on other than work and the daily COVID-19 statistics. I am grateful to The Not-for-Profits Programme for the opportunity to participate; I hope the resulting briefings have been useful.

# Get involved!

LawWorks is hugely grateful to the many member law firms and in-house legal teams that support the Not-For-Profits Programme, and especially to the individual volunteers from those organisations who give their time so generously.

We are also very grateful to our partners in the not-for-profit sector that continue to help LawWorks in promoting and supporting the programme.

## Take a case

If you are a law firm or in-house legal team and would like to get involved, join our growing team of members and give something back to your community by providing pro bono advice. Please email [nfp@lawworks.org.uk](mailto:nfp@lawworks.org.uk).

## Ask for advice

If you are a small or medium-sized not-for-profit organisation in need of free legal advice, you can apply to us for help online at [www.lawworks.org.uk/legal-advice-not-profits](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/legal-advice-not-profits).

If you are a stakeholder interested in our work generally, please email [nfp@lawworks.org.uk](mailto:nfp@lawworks.org.uk).

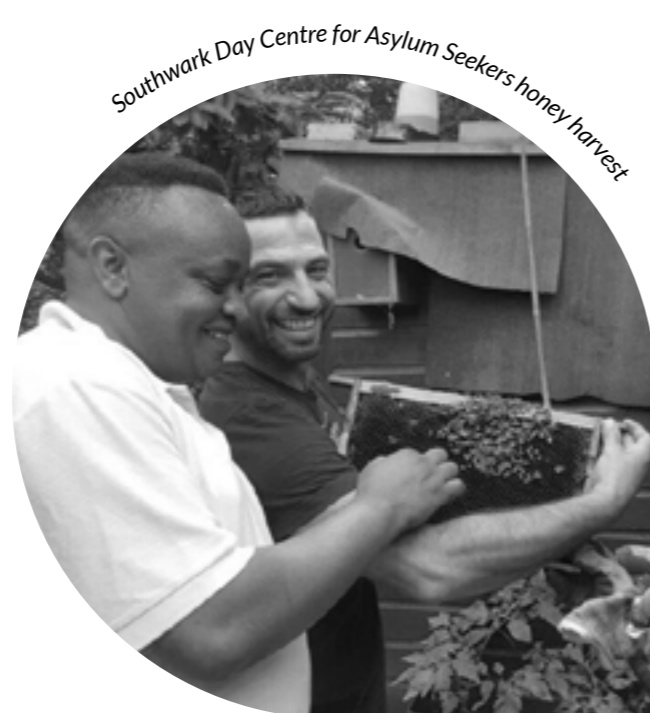
## Pro Bono Awards

All cases taken on through the Not-for-Profits Programme are eligible to be nominated for the annual LawWorks Pro Bono Awards [www.lawworks.org.uk/awards](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/awards). Consider nominating your firm or organisation for one of our awards.

*All statistics and quotes relate to cases and feedback from 2020. Cover and back page images courtesy of Material Cultures and Rachel Hayton. Opposite image courtesy of the Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation.*

## LawWorks policy voice

LawWorks' policy work focuses on access to justice and pro bono, and sometimes wider issues concerning civil society; if you are interested in getting involved in policy work please email [policy@lawworks.org.uk](mailto:policy@lawworks.org.uk).





✉ [nfp@lawworks.org.uk](mailto:nfp@lawworks.org.uk)  
🌐 [www.lawworks.org.uk/legal-advice-not-profits](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/legal-advice-not-profits)  
🐦 @Law\_Works

LawWorks is the registered operating name of the Solicitors Pro Bono Group  
Registered Charity number: 1064274  
Company Limited by Guarantee number: 03410932

