



# The Free Legal Advice Centre at Toynbee

## Hall: Law Firm Partnership Opportunity

Toynbee Hall: Registered Charity no. 211850

### About Toynbee Hall

Toynbee Hall gives a voice to deprived communities by providing free access to advice and support services and working collaboratively to tackle social injustice.

Based in Tower Hamlets in the East End of London, it has been a catalyst for social reform in the UK for over 130 years. From being an influential pioneer of adult education and free legal advice services, to tackling financial exclusion, low aspirations and social isolation today, Toynbee Hall has a positive national impact far beyond its local community.

Tower Hamlets is one of the most culturally diverse and creative parts of the country, but at the same time has the highest rate of child poverty of any UK local authority, and is the third most deprived borough in London. Toynbee Hall provides accessible, free, practical help to thousands of local people every year, many of whom are facing unemployment, poor housing and social isolation. Since 1884, it has furthered its vision of a future free from poverty by sharing practical experience of its community work to help policy makers tackle the root causes that trap people in poverty. Toynbee Hall's advocacy role on the frontline of social policy continues its founders' goal of bridging the gap between rich and poor, which is echoed by its unique heritage and location between the City and Whitechapel.

### Celebrating 120 Years: The Free Legal Advice Centre

Founded in 1898, the Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC) in Aldgate is one of the oldest continuously running pro bono legal advice centre of its kind in the world, and this year is celebrating its **120<sup>th</sup> anniversary**. FLAC helps people across London to understand and exercise their legal rights, offering vital advice to those who would not otherwise be able to afford legal support. FLAC is now seeking to develop more long term partnerships with law firms in order to scale up its impact and meet the growing demand for its services.

- FLAC is a volunteer run advice service; providing free confidential quality assured legal advice, (FLAC advice services have been awarded the Advice Quality Standards Mark).
- During 2016/17, 150 volunteers provided almost 1,300 hours of free legal advice to over 1,500 people at FLAC in Aldgate. For people who have nowhere else to turn, this advice can be a lifeline.
- FLAC volunteers are a mix of barristers, solicitors, trainee solicitors, paralegals and LPC students. They are an immensely valuable and valued



part of the Toynbee Hall community, often choosing to remain involved with the organisation for a number of years.

FLAC currently operates three evenings a week by appointment only, in addition to the women-only Saturday sessions held twice a month. These sessions provide a safe environment for women from a diverse range of backgrounds to discuss sensitive legal matters, often related to family law.

Toynbee Hall's initial assessment service, which refers clients for FLAC appointments, is a drop-in service open every weekday between 10am and 4pm.

A summary of FLAC services:

- Monday: employment rights (weekly) and immigration law (fortnightly) for OISC level 1 matters only.
- Wednesday: general advice, family law, criminal and civil litigation and civil liberties (weekly).
- Thursday: housing law and consumer rights (weekly).
- Saturday: women-only clinic (twice a month).

Current lead law firm partners at Toynbee Hall include **Allen & Overy LLP** and **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP**.

The partnership with Cleary Gottlieb has allowed FLAC to increase the number of women-only free legal advice clinic sessions. Since September 2015, a cohort of 15 female volunteer lawyers from Cleary Gottlieb has delivered over 500 pro bono hours of legal advice to women who would otherwise have been unable to receive access to justice. Toynbee Hall was delighted to see Cleary Gottlieb's team receive the LawWorks 2017 Award for 'Best International Firm' in recognition of their work at the women-only clinic.

## Law Firm Partnership Opportunity

During the 120<sup>th</sup> year, Toynbee Hall are seeking to work with more law firms with a passion for pro bono and access to justice who can support them in securing the success and sustainability of the service in the years to come.

Toynbee Hall are looking for strategic partnerships with firms who are able to make a financial contribution to support the running costs of the service and play an instrumental part in their vision of securing access to justice for all. Toynbee Hall's plans for FLAC include:

- Developing the service's operational capacity by introducing innovative new triaging software.
- Enabling remote working for volunteer advisers and supervisors via Skype clinics and telephone advice.

- Undertaking a strategic digital legal capability project via the new website, comprising downloadable legal self-help documents, podcasts and videos and AI advice and signposting features.

Toynbee Hall is now seeking the support of a number of law firms to help them secure the future of FLAC, and enable them to develop, improve and increase the capacity of the service.

In particular, they are currently looking for firms who can support them by providing a pool of qualified solicitors and barristers to advise at the Wednesday evening civil litigation clinic, and the Saturday morning women-only clinic.

Toynbee Hall welcomes all kinds of support – beyond strategic partnerships, individuals and firms can make a huge difference by supporting through their own charitable giving and fundraising initiatives. Toynbee Hall always want to hear from those who have a real interest in the work they are doing, and are always happy to discuss ways in which they can work collaboratively to achieve shared goals.

## The benefits

FLAC's corporate partners make a vital contribution to the work of the service through their financial support.

By becoming a partner you will:

- Enhance your reputation among employees, potential recruits, clients and the broader public.
- Demonstrate your commitment to staff development and community engagement.
- Fulfil Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives and receive tailored updates from Toynbee Hall to support your CSR reporting.
- Receive additional benefits including branding opportunities, recognition on the website and in wider communications, invitations to special events and discounts on Toynbee's Hall's heritage venue space from late 2018.

*“As an ambassador for Toynbee Hall and former volunteer, I urge you to consider how your organisation can play a role in supporting your community through the Free Legal Advice Centre”*

Sir Nicolas Bratza, FLAC Ambassador

## Additional information

### 1. Hear from their partner: Allen & Overy LLP

*“In our day jobs, we deal with large domestic and multinational companies and while that work is incredibly exciting and challenging, I also feel it’s important to stay connected to the problems that people encounter on a day-to-day basis, and to help people who cannot afford to seek legal representation. It’s incredibly rewarding to be able to use your skills to support those in need of advice.”*

Sarah Henchoz, Partner at Allen & Overy LLP

### 2. Hear from their partner: Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP

*“Our partnership with Toynbee Hall has been, and continues to be, a great success. The positive experiences of the Firm’s volunteers, thanks in no small part to the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff at Toynbee Hall, continues to inspire the Firm’s female lawyers to volunteer. We look forward to supporting Toynbee Hall in the future and to ensuring that women in London have access to this vital legal service.”*

Raj Panasar, Partner at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP

### 3. Hear from a client: Sarah

*“I have gained everything by going to Toynbee Hall. I had lost my marriage, my job, my self-respect. Everything. But due to the support from them, I regained my self-respect and my self-esteem. I don’t know what I would have done. I wouldn’t be here today without them – that’s for sure. Toynbee Hall and the advisers were and are fantastic. Thank you.”*

An extract from Sarah’s case study, read the full case study at:  
[www.toynbeehall.org.uk/sarah](http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/sarah)

Toynbee Hall: [www.toynbeehall.org.uk](http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk)

## Interested?

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