



London South Bank University Legal Advice Clinic: Law Firm Partnership Opportunity

About London South Bank University

London South Bank University (LSBU) is a public university in Elephant and Castle, based in the London Borough of Southwark, close to the south bank of the Thames.

The university, formerly known as the “Borough Polytechnic Institute”, was founded in 1892 from charitable donations. The original aims were “the promotion of the industrial skills, general knowledge, health and well-being of young men and women”, and the remit was to educate the local community in a range of practical skills.

Today, LSBU is a modern university achieving university status in 1992. The university widens participation in higher education: of the students in the law school a quarter live locally; the majority are over 21; 70% come from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community and a sizeable percentage care for at least one school-age child.

In the legal tables the law school has fared well with the Guardian rating LSBU joint 13th for law students.

There is high need for advice in the local vicinity. The London Borough of Southwark was ranked the 41th most deprived area out of 326 local authorities and districts in the indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010. Local advice agencies are inundated with clients. Southwark Legal Advice Network reports that there is a high level of need in all areas of social welfare law in Southwark.

LSBU Legal Advice Clinic

In 2011 LSBU opened its innovative drop-in Legal Advice Clinic where students, under the supervision of experienced and legally qualified university-employed staff deliver immediate face-to-face social welfare law advice, to clients from the local community.

In 2016 the Legal Advice Clinic was highly commended in the category of “Best Contribution by a Law School” - LawWorks and Attorney General’s Student Pro Bono Awards.

Since 2011, the clinic service has assisted more than 3,500 local people, trained over 200 student legal advisors and collaborated with a large number of solicitors and advice agencies in their local legal advice network. In 2013 LSBU worked with their students and the Higher Education Academy to produce a 70 page open access manual for use by other universities interested in setting up a drop-in Legal

Advice Clinic. The clinic service has subsequently extended its clinical provision to include a help desk at the local County Court and, most recently, a support service at the Central Family Court for unrepresented parties in private family law applications.

Each year, the Legal Advice Clinic recruits 40 second and third year undergraduate law students to work on extended placements in the clinic (a minimum of 12 x 3 hour weekly sessions). During term-time the Legal Advice Clinic is open to the public for drop-in advice 9 hours each week in 3 x 3 hour sessions. At these sessions the student volunteers provide basic information on any legal topic, give generalist advice in all social welfare law matters, signpost and refer to appropriate local legal advice agencies and law firms, or refer to the clinic's own evening sessions.

In the evening sessions, volunteer solicitors and barristers specialising in employment, family or housing law give advice to clients referred from the daytime drop-in advice session. The clinic appointments provide the students with the opportunity of observing experienced practitioners taking instructions and advising. The students then write up the attendance notes from the interview under supervision of the specialist practitioners. The aim of the clinic is twofold: to offer a social welfare law service to disadvantaged communities in Southwark and Lambeth and to provide a clinical education for the students so they can gain an understanding of working in real-life situations and improve their employability.

Law Firm Partnership Opportunity

The LSBU Legal Advice Clinic currently work with legal partners, Philcox Gray & Co, Wainwright Cummins LLP and Anthony Gold Solicitors, both inside and outside of the clinic. The partners give specialist advice at the evening sessions and not only do they provide a valuable service to vulnerable members of the community who are not able to access advice elsewhere, but also give guidance and insight to the students at an crucial time in their legal career.

LSBU is looking for a new law firm partner to give specialist advice in **employment law**. The lawyers will be required to attend the evening advice sessions, deliver advice in employment law and support the students in drafting the attendance notes. The opportunity is particularly suitable for a law firm interested in promoting social mobility and professional development for students.

The benefits

LSBU's legal partners make a vital contribution to the work of the service to the local community and the law students.

By becoming a partner you will:

- Provide a much needed service to people who have nowhere else to turn.
- Support LSBU students in their first step in their legal career.

1. Hear from their clients:

“A very good and valuable service for people who have nowhere else to turn for advice”.

“Excellent and helpful service – we will recommend to others”.

“I was very impressed with the quality of the service that I received. Very informative and I feel more confident in my situation and will proceed with advice given”.

“This is so professional. Good at providing information and advice. I appreciated the way they advised me”.

“Really good service. Provided reassurance and relevant information to help with my case”.

2. Hear from one of their partners: Beck Fitzgerald Ltd

“LSBU Legal Advice Clinic provides an enormously valuable service to its users who, owing to legal aid restrictions, would otherwise be unable to access quality legal advice. Able law students from LSBU provide advice, support and guidance to members of the public on an appointment basis and if specialist advice is required the “client” can be referred to the specialist team of volunteer lawyers from private practice who provide evening advice sessions with law students in attendance. What is really unique and special about the clinic is that it performs a dual role in providing much needed advice and assistance to members of the public who would otherwise not be able to access legal advice but also provides “hands on” practical training and guidance for the LSBU law students who observe and participate in the advice sessions and record keeping following the sessions. I am really proud to be involved with LSBU Legal Advice Clinic - a fantastic scheme which genuinely helps those in need and contributes to the development of the next generation of lawyers!”

Susan Fitzgerald, Director (Family Law) at Beck Fitzgerald Ltd

3. Hear from a LSBU student: Craig

“I wanted to share my experience after completing my placement in the Legal Advice Clinic last year in December 2017.

I absolutely loved it. I enjoyed my experience in clinic especially with the help of supervisors. I learnt many things, for instance: how to deal with clients, how to introduce yourself, be clear and ask questions if you are not sure about anything. Clinic also gave me the opportunity to have experience in different kinds of law such as employment, housing and family law. I have learnt that social justice is vital as the clinic showed me that the law is not always about money but also about access to justice. Legal advice centres, law centres and clinics like us within society are helping many people get justice”.



Additional information

LSBU is within easy access of Central London: based a 2 minute-walk from Elephant and Castle underground (Northern and Bakerloo) and from the Elephant and Castle Rail Station (trains run directly from Blackfriars and City Thameslink – 4 minutes and 8 minutes respectively), 20 minute-walk from London Bridge and 12 minute-walk from Waterloo or an quick bus ride from either of the latter two stations.

The current Director is Catherine Evans, formerly of Southwark Law Centre and the founder of the Clinic is Alan Russell, formerly of Camden Law Centre.

[LSBU Legal Advice Clinic:](#)

[Sample Drop-in University Clinic Handbook:](#)

Interested?

Please contact –

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