

**LawWorks’ Strategy 2015-17**

**LawWorks believes in the power of pro bono legal advice to help improve the lives of people in need. We do this in two ways:**

* **by enabling access to justice to individuals in need of advice, who are not eligible for legal aid and are without the means to pay for a lawyer; and**
* **by brokering legal advice to small not-for-profit organisations, to support the continuation and expansion of their services to people in need.**

LawWorks supports and develops pro bono activity across England and Wales, using our experience and understanding to ensure pro bono efforts are targeted where they can be most effective and have the greatest impact.

LawWorks’ experience shows that the most effective way to impact on the needs of large numbers of people is through legal advice clinics. Through these clinics individuals can receive vital advice and support. However, we recognise that for some people more comprehensive support is needed. Because of this, where other forms of free legal advice are unavailable, we work with partner stakeholders to strengthen and deepen the legal expertise on offer in response to particular areas of identified need, for instance through secondary specialisation.

LawWorks understands the essential role of not-for-profit organisations, legal aid solicitors in private practice, and the advice sector across England and Wales in connecting with, and supporting, people in need. We seek to work in partnership with these groups and the wider legal profession to enable access to justice for people in need.

We collaborate with not-for-profit organisations to enable the provision of pro bono legal advice as part of the services they offer to clients. Through our Community Groups programme we connect smaller not-for-profit organisations in need of legal support with the skills and expertise of lawyers willing to meet those needs for free, strengthening the capacity of those organisations to deliver their services.

Our work is informed by the needs of people, developed in collaboration with partner stakeholders, and delivered by a network of committed volunteer lawyers and law students.

**LawWorks’ role is to work within England and Wales to connect people in need of legal advice and assistance, and not-for-profit organisations that support them, with the skills and expertise of lawyers willing to meet those needs for free.**

To carry out this role we will:

1. **Strengthen and develop mechanisms that allow us to connect people in need and the not-for-profit organisations that support them with lawyers willing to give their skills for free.**
	1. We will support the development of an increasing number of law clinics across England and Wales, increasing our local presence and focussing on collaboration with organisations that support people in need.
	2. We will employ staff lawyers and through them develop a programme of secondary specialisation for volunteer lawyers. This will deepen the support offered to people in need of legal advice who cannot afford to pay for it and who cannot access legal aid.
	3. We will extend and strengthen our provision of training that supports volunteers to provide help to people in need.
	4. We will strengthen small not-for-profit organisations that support people in need by brokering free legal advice and assistance to them through our Community Groups programme.
	5. We will use technology to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and reach of free legal advice provision to people in need.
2. **Help grow a culture in which the number and effectiveness of lawyers willing to give their skills for free is maximised.**
	1. We will put in place a system of learning about effective pro bono legal work, including monitoring and evaluation of our own work, and sharing learning with our peers.
	2. We will embed processes for learning from our own and others’ research, evaluation and impact assessment to ensure it informs the improvement of opportunities for lawyers, at all career stages and across all employer types, and appropriately supervised law students to provide free legal advice and assistance.
	3. We will advocate the business case for pro bono, developing an evidence base to support this work.
	4. We will ensure that our activities avoid duplication and signpost people in need, where appropriate, to available legal aid and affordable paid for work.
3. **Work to remove barriers to pro bono legal activity and access to justice.**
	1. We will gather and publicise evidence from across our networks about the legal advice requirements of people in need, including the impacts of legal aid reforms, and advocate for positive change.
	2. We will use evidence from our work to advocate for change to policy and regulation that hinder the provision of free legal advice and assistance to people in need of it.
4. **Ensure that LawWorks is a strong, healthy and well-run organisation.**
	1. We will recruit, develop and retain expert staff.
	2. We will review our membership model and offer, to ensure relevance and transparency to current and prospective members.
	3. We will diversify our funding so that we are not over-reliant on any particular funder.
	4. We will review our governance to ensure it is effective and aligned with best practice for charities.
	5. We will develop our ability to communicate effectively both internally and externally.