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The Law Society



LawWorks Not-for-Profits Programme

Annual Report 2019

"A lifeline for small organisations!"

Applicant

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.

“A fabulous and essential service for small not-for-profits”

Applicant



Free legal assistance

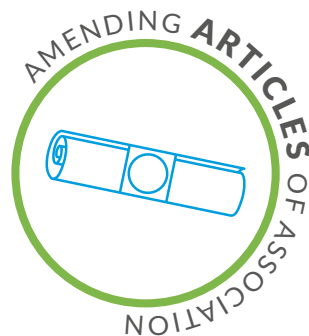
Volunteer lawyers advise not-for-profit organisations on a range of discrete legal matters.

Last year, 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 in **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, nor do they currently help to set up charities or other not-for-profit legal structures.

"A real lifeline"

Applicant

Examples of what we can help with:



Our history

Then

The Not-for-Profits Programme was established in 2001, when LawWorks was 4 years old. Our aim was to increase the number of individuals we assist by helping the organisations which help them: helping one charity helps all the individuals it works with.

The programme launched under the name "LawWorks for Community Groups Project" in September 2001 with a full-time employee and in 2002, our first full year, we placed 100 cases. The programme changed its name in 2015.

Now

HELPING A CHARITY MEANS HELPING THAT CHARITY'S BENEFICIARIES. THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS OUR VOLUNTEERS HELPED IN 2019 WORK WITH AN ESTIMATED

2,686,254
INDIVIDUALS.

A musical performance put on by MetamorPhonics CIC





**219* CASES TAKEN ON BY
LAWWORKS MEMBERS IN 2019**

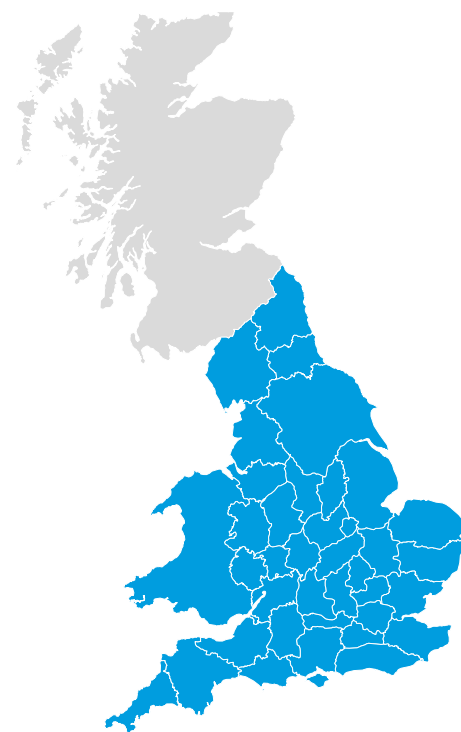
**THE ORGANISATIONS OUR
VOLUNTEERS ASSIST WORK WITH
VULNERABLE OR DISADVANTAGED
INDIVIDUALS FROM A RANGE OF
BACKGROUNDS:**

- ☒ those affected by poverty
- ☒ those affected by disabilities or physical/mental health
- ☒ those affected by homelessness
- ☒ those affected by crime or discrimination
- ☒ refugees and asylum seekers
- ☒ LGBTQI+
- ☒ children and young people
- ☒ elderly people
- ☒ current or ex-offenders
- ☒ Black and minority ethnic communities

* the programme was paused over the Summer



**OF ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS WERE
SUCCESSFULLY PLACED WITH A
VOLUNTEER THIS YEAR**



**THESE NOT-FOR-PROFIT
ORGANISATIONS 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.**

How it works



Review applications

- Not-for-profit organisations apply online through the **LawWorks website**
- We assess applications, ensuring they meet our eligibility criteria

Prepare cases

- We gather relevant background information, documents, and details for conflict checks
- We produce concise briefing sheets for potential volunteers

Broker

- We approach member law firms and in-house legal teams who volunteer to take on particular cases

Connect

- Volunteers take the matters forward and advise the not-for-profit organisations directly
- We remain available to help with any issues

Develop and improve

- We evaluate experiences of the service to develop and improve it

***“LawWorks
is always a
pleasure to work
with, they help
us feel confident
and supported”***

Applicant

***“The whole
process runs
efficiently and
it is easy to
comprehend”***

Applicant

Case studies

René House Case Study

René House CIC was set up by its two dedicated founders in 2018 to provide supported accommodation for vulnerable adults in the Nottinghamshire area. It is intended to give people a safe and solid base from which to rebuild their lives to the point that they can then move onto long-term accommodation and a sustainable lifestyle.

In the words of René House, “Everyone deserves a second chance. Our residents come to us looking for a ‘renaissance’ in their lives. At René House, we listen to their needs in order to understand their limitations and discuss potential solutions”. Its current beneficiaries are men with nowhere to live or at risk of nowhere to live; they all have multiple complex needs varying from ex-offender status records, to drug addiction, to mental health issues.

The organisation offers a wide range of activities to its beneficiaries including developing domestic and life skills, helping with managing finances and assisting in accessing health, social care and other services in the sector. René House sought help from LawWorks early in its formation, when it was looking for assistance with the drawing up of employment contracts. After this legal work had been completed, René House applied for the Honorary Counsel Service, excited by “the opportunity for long-term legal support for free”.

The LawWorks Honorary Counsel Service matches small not-for-profit organisations with a team of volunteer solicitors (the

“Honorary Counsel”), who will work together on a long-term basis to proactively identify and prevent legal issues.

Through LawWorks, René House instructed global law firm DLA Piper on a pro bono basis to act as its Honorary Counsel. To date, DLA Piper’s advice has included drafting and reviewing property leases and licences, corporate governance policies, employment documents and other day to day legal queries. René House has been impressed with how the volunteers at DLA Piper took an interest in what René House is trying to achieve and how the volunteers adapted their legal advice in a pragmatic way to help René House achieve its aims.

DLA Piper states “We are delighted to have been given the opportunity by LawWorks to provide support to organisations such as René House CIC. It has been a pleasure to advise the team at René House CIC and to support them in achieving their aim to deliver quality supported accommodation properties which provide a platform for positive change”.

“I don’t know what we would have done without that type of support”

Theo Brown, Housing Manager at René House CIC

Bromley Experts by Experience Case Study

Bromley Experts by Experience Community Interest Company (“Bromley XbyX”) is a user-led organisation run by and for deaf and disabled people and carers. It aims to support its service users to work with the local authority in order to help shape local policy and planning; to provide accessible information about their rights and entitlements; to facilitate an inclusive and accessible society; and to promote independent living for disabled people.

Bromley XbyX sought help from LawWorks when both its lease and service contract with the local council were up for renewal and LawWorks put it in contact with Susan Pearson at Howard Kennedy LLP. Susan prepared a report on the draft lease and services agreement, highlighting specific points for the organisation to consider. The organisation was highly appreciative of the fact that she “took care to go over [its] documents thoroughly” and “explained her comments in straightforward language”.

Susan’s advice enabled Bromley XbyX to go back to the council and negotiate some changes in the lease and contract. The changes meant that the organisation could feel confident of its future and gave the Board peace of mind going forward. Without help from LawWorks, it would have had to sign the contract and lease without querying the proposed terms, as it could not have afforded to pay for a lawyer.

Joanne Munn, Coordinator at Bromley XbyX, said that Susan was “very patient, responsive and professional ... we felt we wouldn’t have had a better level of service if we had paid for it”. She said that LawWorks provides an “invaluable service” that is “needed more than ever” in the climate of

“If we had lost the contract and lease we would have had to close”

Joanne Munn, Coordinator at Bromley XbyX

austerity that has hit many not-for-profit organisations hard.

Susan said she enjoyed working with Joanne and knowing she was able to offer help to the organisation. The case also gave her a greater understanding of how charities operate and, in particular, the importance of drafting appropriate services agreements.

Whilst recognising that people choose to contribute to charitable causes in many different ways, Susan would recommend taking on a pro bono matter to anyone who is considering doing so.

A meeting held by Bromley Experts by Experience CIC



Honorary Counsel

The Not-for-Profits Programme launched its honorary counsel scheme in 2019 following a successful pilot.

The Honorary Counsel scheme matches not-for-profit organisations with a volunteer lawyer who provides long-term pro bono assistance - an "Honorary Counsel". Like a company's General Counsel, the Honorary Counsel is the first port of call for initial, brief advice about potential legal issues and carries out legal "health checks" of the organisation's documents.

In LawWorks' experience, early legal advice can prevent issues escalating. Honorary Counsel provides this from a consistent and dedicated team of lawyers.

In 2019 we matched 21 organisations with Honorary Counsel, who have been providing pro bono assistance. This took us to a total of 34 Honorary Counsel.

Feedback shows that not-for-profit organisations benefit from "peace of mind" offered by the scheme and found the solicitors to be "efficient, friendly and caring". Volunteer lawyers get enhanced responsibility and client contact and appreciate that they can use their skills to "give something back".



A dance performance put on by LVD Dance Company

Making a difference

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

95%

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

***"LawWorks saved
our charity"***

Applicant

***"We are really grateful
for this service and would
never have been able to
afford it"***

Applicant

100%

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

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 page 12)

"I don't think legal advice should be restricted to those who can afford to pay for it"

Volunteer

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 registrations, 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 2019, we began the process of updating the Free Talks as part of our commitment to providing comprehensive legal assistance to not-for-profits.



To watch, visit:

www.lawworks.org.uk/free-talks

"Really reduced the pressure and stress for our organisation"

Applicant

100%

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



"Her advice was pragmatic and sensible, she has the patience of a saint; she was a pleasure to work with"

Applicant

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.

"A great help for a small charity as legal services are expensive and not easy to understand"

Applicant

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’¹ – 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 2019, 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.

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

18%

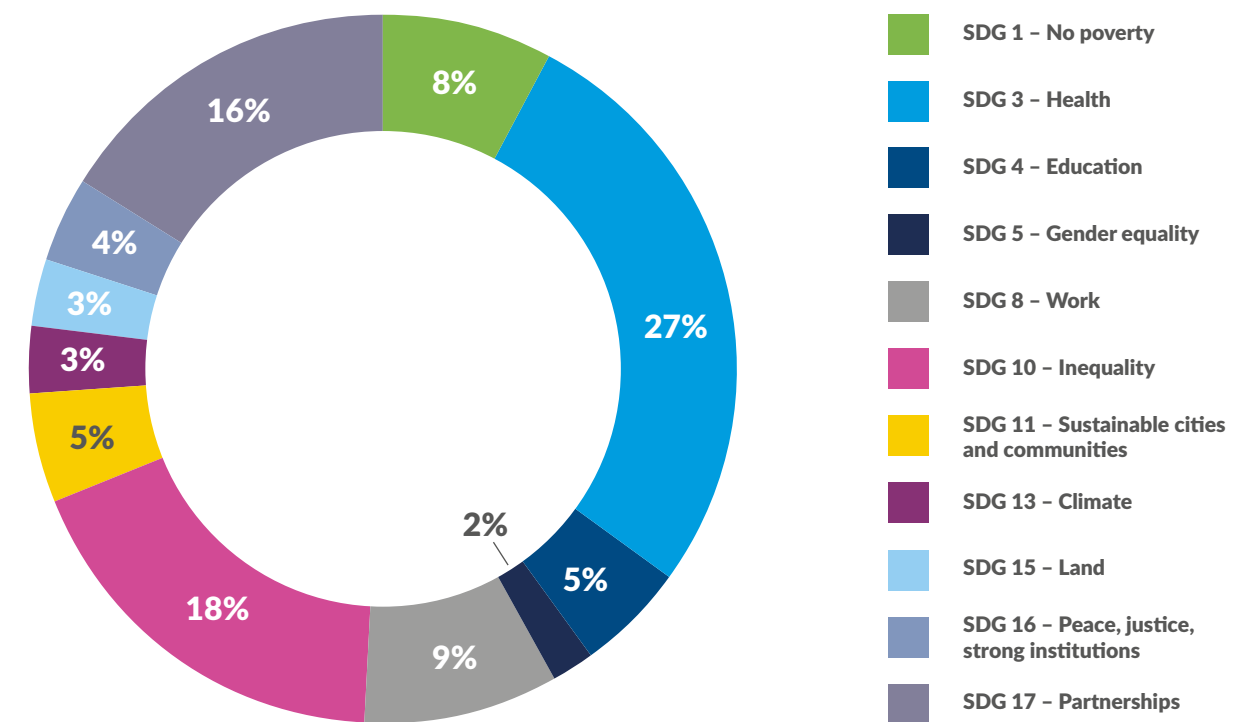
OF THOSE WE HELPED AIM TO ADDRESS **SOCIAL INEQUALITY**

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

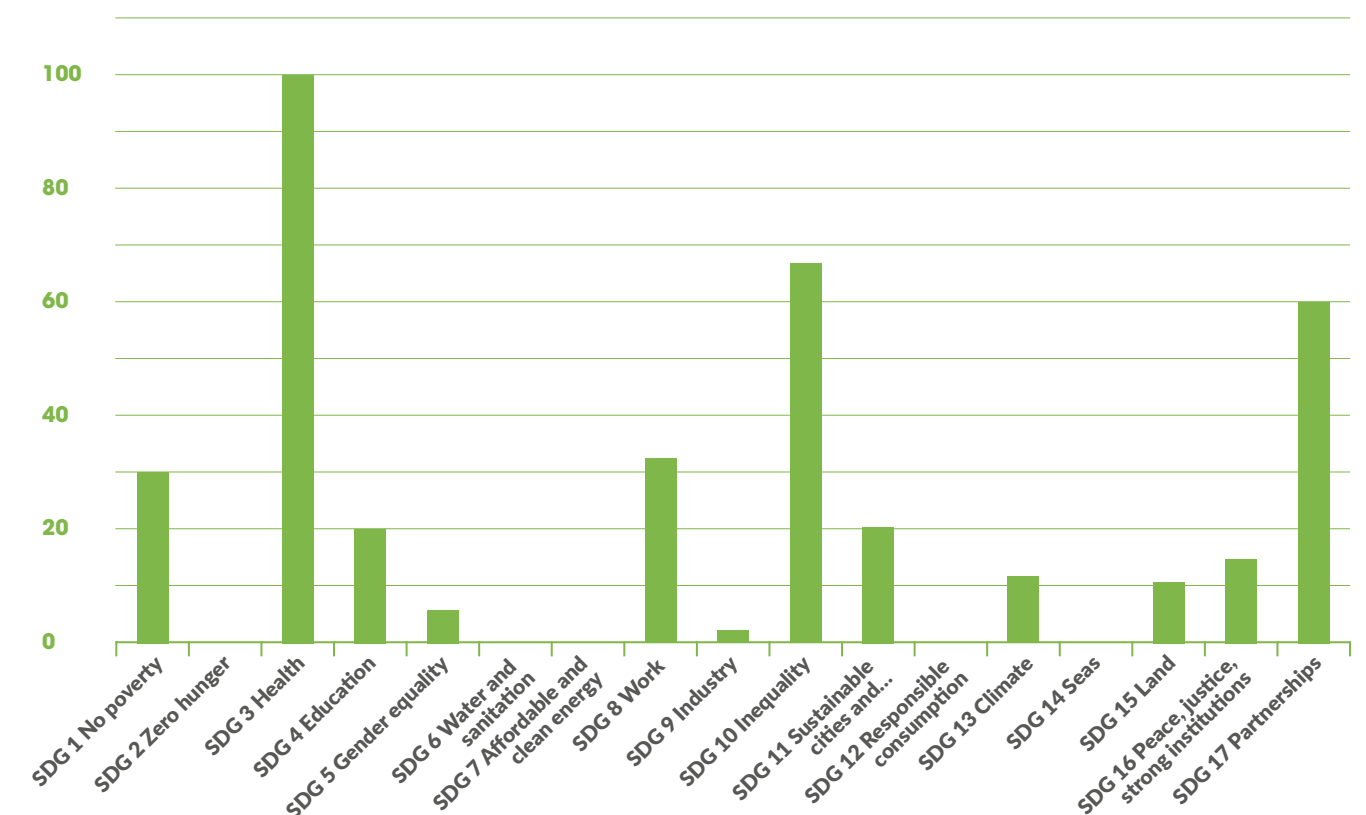
16%

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

SDGs addressed by the not-for-profits we helped in 2019 (by percentage)



Not-for-profits helped by us in 2019 that engaged with the SDGs (by number)



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.

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.

If you are a stakeholder interested in our work generally, please email 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. Consider nominating your firm or organisation for one of our awards.

All statistics and quotes relate to cases and feedback from 2019.
The image used on p. 8 is provided courtesy of Natalie Naccache.
The image used on p. 15 is provided courtesy of Horden Youth and Community Centre.
Back cover image is provided courtesy of Natalie Naccache.

"It's the right thing to do"

Volunteer



Thank you!





✉ nfp@lawworks.org.uk

🌐 www.lawworks.org.uk/legal-advice-not-profits

🐦 @Law_Works



Charity number: 1064274