



Pro Bono Awards 2018

The LawWorks Annual Pro Bono Awards & Lecture

Monday 3rd December 2018

Supported by



The Law Society



Welcome to the LawWorks Pro Bono Awards 2018



Alasdair Douglas
Chair of Trustees

I am delighted to welcome you to the Annual LawWorks Awards. The Awards are a highlight of the LawWorks' calendar, and provide the opportunity to come together and celebrate pro bono commitment and achievement over the past year.

We are very grateful to the Rt Hon David Lammy MP, for kindly agreeing to give the annual talk and to present the awards, and to Matthew Stadlen for hosting the evening.

This year we again received many truly inspiring and high-calibre nominations. We know that the pro bono work recognised here tonight is a snapshot of the valuable and important work undertaken across England and Wales – pro bono which makes a difference to individuals, local communities and the charities and not-for-profit organisations supporting them. We hope that the Awards help to raise awareness of the commitment of our members and the profession to pro bono, and also the importance of partnerships and the contribution of law schools, law centres, charities and others.

On behalf of LawWorks I would like to thank all those who took the time to submit a nomination, to those who were nominated and to all the shortlisted candidates.

I would also like to extend our gratitude to the panel of Judges, who have given their time and consideration in order to agree on the winners. Thanks also to our sponsors, LexisNexis, and to the Law Society for hosting the event this evening. Most of all, my congratulations go to those shortlisted and to the winners; we hope that your achievements recognised and celebrated here tonight will encourage and inspire others.

If you would like to find out more about LawWorks, information about the charity and our work is included at the end of this programme.

Order of Proceedings

Time	Event
6.30pm	Welcome by Matthew Stadlen
6.35pm	A welcome from Christina Blacklaws, President, the Law Society
6.40pm	A word from James Harper of LexisNexis
6.45pm	Annual talk by the Rt Hon David Lammy MP
7.05pm	Interview with David Lammy by Matthew Stadlen
7.25pm	Award presentations
8.30pm	Drinks and canapés reception in the Reading Room

Guest Speaker

The Rt Hon David Lammy MP

David was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 1994, practised as a barrister in England and the United States and became the first black Briton to study a Masters in Law at Harvard Law School, graduating in 1997.

Elected as the MP for Tottenham in June 2000, David served as a Minister in the last Labour Government for eight years, including a period as the Minister responsible for Legal Aid.

In January 2016, the then Prime Minister David Cameron asked David to lead an independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in our criminal justice system. The Lammy Review was published in September 2017, and included 35 wide-ranging policy recommendations for Government and the criminal justice sector.

A vocal and successful campaigner for social justice, David led the campaign for Windrush British citizens to be granted British citizenship and paid compensation.

David has led a high-profile campaign calling on Oxbridge to improve access for students from under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds. In May 2018 the University of Oxford announced a £150 million investment in its outreach programmes and committed to publishing annual admissions reports, and the University of Cambridge announced plans to introduce a foundation year.

Since the Grenfell Tower fire he has been at the forefront of the fight for justice for the Grenfell families.

Host

Matthew Stadlen

Matthew is a radio and television presenter, producer and writer. He has presented weekend overnights on LBC since October 2016. He previously presented and produced the BBC interview series 'Five Minutes With...!', and the BBC documentary series 'On the Road With...!'. His interviews and documentaries have appeared on the BBC News Channel, BBC One, BBC Two and BBC Four. He has worked on Newsnight and as a programme editor on BBC One's This Week.

Judging Panel

Adele Edwin-Lamerton

Adele studied at the University of Westminster, graduating with an LLB (Hons) degree in law. She spent six months working as a paralegal before joining renowned legal publisher LexisNexis Butterworths and then moving on to Sweet & Maxwell. She is a solicitor at Pattinson & Brewer Solicitors. Adele was until recently the chair of the Executive Committee of the Junior Lawyers Division of The Law Society of England and Wales. The Junior Lawyers Division is the largest division of the Law Society, representing over 75,000 members. Adele is also a Social Mobility Ambassador for The Law Society and has had articles published in both *Young Lawyer* and the *Solicitors Journal*.

Jeremy Miles AM

Jeremy Miles is the Counsel General for Wales. He was born and brought up in Pontarddulais. As a Welsh speaker, he was educated at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera in the Swansea valley and New College, Oxford where he studied law. Straight after graduating, Jeremy taught law at Warsaw University in Poland. Later, he practised as a solicitor in London and then held senior legal and commercial posts in media sector businesses, including ITV and the US television network and film studio NBC Universal. After returning to live in Wales he set up his own consultancy working with international clients in the broadcast and digital sectors. Jeremy was elected to the National Assembly for Wales for the Neath constituency in May 2016 as the Labour and Co-operative party candidate, following the retirement of Gwenda Thomas AM.

Chris Minnoch

Chris is Operations Director at the Legal Aid Practitioners Group, where he assists with member services, training initiatives, policy and campaigning work. Chris was educated in New Zealand and after graduation worked within the law centre movement. He came to the UK in 2001 and, after a brief stint in the civil service, in 2002 joined Greenwich Housing Rights (a charity specialising in housing advice and undertaking policy work, training and public education to improve housing conditions and access to justice) to co-ordinate their housing possession duty schemes and train and support pro bono lawyers and student volunteers.

Dame Janet Smith

Dame Janet Smith was called to the Bar in 1972, and specialised in personal injury and clinical negligence cases. She was appointed as a High Court judge in 1992, and promoted to the Court of Appeal in 2002, where she served until 2011.

Whilst on the High Court bench, Dame Janet conducted the inquiry into the activities of Dr Harold Shipman. After retiring from the Court of Appeal, she conducted the inquiry into the activities at the BBC of Jimmy Savile.

Dame Janet also practises as an independent evaluator and as a mediator.

Paul Rogerson

Paul is a journalist who is currently the Editor in chief of The Law Society Gazette where he has worked since 2007; before that he was a business journalist on a variety of publications – most latterly as the City Editor of The Glasgow Herald.

Information on Shortlisted Finalists

Best Contribution by a Small Firm

Fry Law

“Our organisation has little funding and more importantly we needed legal advice, guidance and advocacy, without Fry Law we would not have had the confidence to make a challenge.”

Access to justice has become extremely difficult in recent years for disabled people due to the lack of legal aid and changes in the law. Chris Fry and Fry Law have responded to this with overwhelming generosity. Chris’s work in disability law and policy has enabled great strides to be made in disability rights in recent years. Chris has led his team at Fry Law to contribute their time and efforts to advancing disability equality and he regularly provides oral and written evidence to Parliamentary Committees, writes articles and responds to consultations. Fry Law acted pro bono in a judicial review case against Reading Borough Council in an attempt to block the introduction of a ‘shared space’ development which creates problems for people with sight loss. Their pro bono support for Not Dead Yet UK has ensured that the voice of people with disabilities has been heard in the assisted dying debate.

PAPA Legal

“Having a volunteer of Ian’s calibre and professional experience is a huge asset to the charity, enabling us to engage much more effectively with the court system.”

Ian Smith, the sole practitioner operating under the name of PAPA Legal, has volunteered with the charity FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru for four years. He provides one-to-one legal advice at three different clinics in North Wales (travelling thousands of miles every year from his office in North West England after work to do so). He handles referrals for urgent legal advice from litigants in person on a telephone helpline, supporting parents and grandparents excluded from the lives of children they care about. In the past 12 months, Ian has delivered more than 260 legal advice sessions for the charity’s service users and the charity considers themselves fortunate that Ian gives of his time and experience so readily. He also provides a significant amount of help and advice in employment law, representing clients on a pro bono basis all the way through the tribunal process.

Tyrer Roxburgh Solicitors

“The service Tyrer Roxburgh provides at Hearthstone is a lifeline for many women who are unable to access legal remedies to help reduce their risk and [to enable them to] live in a non-violent environment.”

Tyrer Roxburgh Solicitors have worked in partnership with Hearthstone Domestic Violence Advice and Support Centre (Hearthstone) for the past ten years to provide pro bono legal advice at clinics to victims of domestic violence. Clients range from women who have already taken the decision to move to a domestic violence refuge to women who have only recently learned to identify abusive behaviour. Tyrer Roxburgh volunteers provide advice to domestic violence clients on separation, cohabitation and children and financial proceedings. Some of these women are not eligible for legal aid, despite being victims of domestic violence, and these clinics may be the only opportunity they have to receive good quality pro bono legal advice. The firm also receives referrals from Nia Domestic Violence Project and Solace Women’s Aid. Volunteers from Tyrer Roxburgh also provide advice at Haringey Citizens Advice Bureau pro bono advice clinic, ensuring that homeless walk-in clients are given first priority.

Best Contribution by a Firm with an English Head Office

Bates Wells Braithwaite

“Bates Wells Braithwaite is proud that it was able to use its expertise in real estate and construction law in order to support this important project.”

Dale Youth Boxing Club, a renowned community space in North Kensington, trained young people in the local area for over 50 years. The youth club was formerly housed on the second floor of the Grenfell tower and, following the Grenfell fire tragedy, the BBC DIY SOS teamed up with Bates Wells Braithwaite (BWB) and other parties to rebuild the Dale Youth Club. The Westway Trust donated the land to the project and has made a commitment that the buildings will be for community use. Lawyers at BWB were involved from the inception of the project in October 2017 right through to the completion of the lease to the Dale Youth Club in September 2018. The work included drafting and negotiation of the key documents, and ensuring the project was progressed smoothly. Today Dales Youth Boxing Club now resides at Bay 20 on St Marks Street in North Kensington, enabling it to continue its important role in the community.

Duncan Lewis Solicitors

“The women who have been supported...are extremely grateful to receive their services and express how professional, friendly and successful their support has been to them.”

Duncan Lewis Solicitors regularly works with a number of pro bono surgeries and projects, including the Romford Autism Hub. The Hub (run in collaboration with the University of East London) aims to make legal advice more accessible for clients of the Sycamore Trust UK on the autism spectrum. The firm’s Family and Childcare Director also runs a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Clinic to provide frontline legal advice to those who are at risk from FGM or have experienced FGM. The Cardiff office has developed a clinic with Citizens Advice 30 miles outside Cardiff where legal advice is in short supply. Since January 2018, the housing team has provided pro bono assistance at Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth on housing related matters such as disrepair, homelessness, neighbourhood problems and possession proceedings. Departments in the London office collaborated in June 2017 to support the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire, providing drop-in clinics at Al Manaar Mosque and Westway Sports Centre.

Howard Kennedy

“As a result of [Howard Kennedy’s] advice, the client had an extremely positive outcome... and has been so grateful for the advice and support received. [She] said she now ‘lives in hope’...it has, in short, been life changing for her.”

Since the inception of Howard Kennedy’s pro bono programme, the firm has contributed to a variety of pro bono projects. Howard Kennedy’s team of volunteers at Toynbee Hall Free Legal Advice Centre consists of nearly 30 members of the firm, who provide advice to members of the public on a weekly basis. Examples of individual pro bono cases include preparing letters for a client to locate temporary accommodation following a house fire; advising on a case of identity theft; assisting a client who had been unlawfully evicted and advising vulnerable women and victims of domestic abuse on their rights. The firm also provides advice through the LawWorks’ Not-for-Profits programme and has assisted on over 20 matters over the past 18 months. As well as providing legal advice, the firm delivers pro bono training to members of LawWorks. Sessions have included civil litigation advice, immigration law and the basics of contract law, all of which received excellent feedback from participants.

Irwin Mitchell

“The effort of firms such as Irwin Mitchell means we are able to continue the essential work of helping the most vulnerable get access to justice.”

Solicitors from Irwin Mitchell provide pro bono advice across the country through a variety of projects which support and empower vulnerable people, as well as running individual pro bono cases. One example of the work undertaken is through the provision of free legal advice to users of the Rape and Sexual Violence Project in Birmingham, covering a broad range of legal topics. The firm’s family law team in London have also partnered with the University of Bloomsbury to deliver regular legal clinics, which have so far advised on 250 cases. Irwin Mitchell has also secured £26,500 since 2015 for the Access to Justice Foundation through pro bono cost orders and fundraising. In 2018, the firm represented the National Children’s Bureau on a pro bono basis which successfully intervened in a landmark Supreme Court case to decide whether unmarried parents should be granted access to bereavement payments when their partners die. The ruling means that, in future, children will not suffer a further disadvantage because their parents chose not to marry.

Best Contribution by an International Firm

Allen & Overy

“Allen & Overy has a long tradition of contributing time and expertise for the benefit of the society and communities around us...we have significantly grown our pro bono and community investment work.”

Allen & Overy have a longstanding tradition of providing legal services to communities and have in recent years significantly grown the scope of their pro bono work. Starting with its involvement in Battersea Law Centre over 27 years ago, the firm's pro bono practice encompasses a broad range of access to justice issues which include helping displaced individuals (through the International Refugee Assistance Project) and exploring the use of innovative legal-tech software, including connecting refugees with pro bono lawyers. As part of its law clinics programme the firm partners with Central England Law Centre and Coventry University to provide remote pro bono employment advice in Coventry. It supports weekly sessions with South West London Law Centres and Toyne Hall, and sessions at RCJ Advice. The firm's work with Coram Children's Legal Centre includes opening 16 new cases for children living in Greater London, Essex, Norfolk and Somerset and successfully helping four children to gain British citizenship. Since the project started in 2015, the firm has assisted a total of 27 children in obtaining British citizenship.

Ashurst

“We believe that the approach we are taking will allow for sustained pro bono growth by our own lawyers combined with more effective pro bono projects by our firm and other firms, resulting in increased impact for the communities we all seek to assist.”

Ashurst believes that a strong pro bono practice is one that focuses on doing 'better' pro bono instead of simply 'more' and the firm has taken a number of steps to achieve this. They have focused their efforts on communities experiencing marginalisation and disadvantage, targeting pro bono support to achieve systemic change, using pro bono support to help communities react to emerging need, innovating how the firm uses its pro bono resources and encouraging pro bono collaboration across the commercial legal sector.

Examples of the firm's pro bono work include assisting unaccompanied minors in family reunion cases with Safe Passage (a Citizens UK project), helping to set up the Islamophobia Response Unit advice line and seconding pro bono manager expertise to help leverage the capacity of two different not-for-profits, thereby increasing both organisations' ability to respond to legal need using pro bono support.

Cooley

"The partnership with Cooley has paved the way for young people, wrongly denied social security payments, to access justice...the volunteers have produced appeal submissions to the highest standards to get truly fantastic results for deaf young people."

Commitment to the community is an important part of the culture at Cooley. The firm promotes a wide range of pro bono opportunities to facilitate broad participation including involvement in established programmes where the need is ever increasing, such as RCJ Advice, Liberty and the Prisoners' Advice Bureau; engagement with charities, such as the National Deaf Children Society and Z2K, and the identification of organisations at or near the start of their journey, such as the Margot Florence Foundation (which creates empowering experiences for profoundly disabled children and their families), and People First Tameside. In 2018 Cooley became one of the original volunteer firms to engage in a joint 'statelessness' project set up in collaboration with the UNHCR and the Migrants Resource Centre which represents individuals seeking to have their statelessness formally recognised. Firmwide, Cooley commits 3% of billable hours to pro bono matters.

Kirkland & Ellis

"I would like to say once again my BIGGEST THANK YOU to all of you for taking, managing and especially winning my...claim in the tribunal. I really, really appreciate all your work and effort..."

In the autumn of 2015, Kirkland & Ellis lawyers began participating in the LawWorks secondary specialisation programme, an initiative that trains lawyers from private practice in developing expertise in social welfare law. Since 2013, cuts in legal aid funding have led to a 79% decrease in the number of people able to access legal advice in this area of law. In addition, more stringent assessment criteria for welfare benefits aimed at disabled people have made it difficult for many disadvantaged individuals to obtain the benefits they had previously received. This project focuses on Employment Support Allowance (ESA), a welfare benefit that provides financial support to people who have had difficulty finding employment due to long-term illness or disability. Nearly 40 volunteer lawyers from Kirkland & Ellis have now been trained to represent clients during the appeal process in relation to decisions made about their ESA. The volunteers have had a 90-95% success rate, enabling nearly all the clients to successfully retain their benefit allowance.

Sidley Austin

“Now that the dust is settling after my successful appeal, I would like to thank you and your team so much for your help and assistance in achieving such a positive result... To say I am grateful is an understatement.”

The introduction of Personal Independent Payments in 2013 led to an influx of thousands of claims from individuals who considered that they had been incorrectly denied benefit payments. The removal of support for basic tasks such as cooking, washing and getting around has had drastic consequences for claimants who are not eligible for legal aid and therefore pro bono support is vital. In partnership with LawWorks, over 40 volunteer lawyers from Sidley Austin received training and subsequently represented over 40 clients at tribunal hearings, with a 97% success rate. Without this support, clients would have been forced to navigate the tribunal process alone and would have been at high risk of losing access to a critical income source. The firm’s contribution to pro bono work is driven by a commitment to the public good and this initiative has become a touchstone project, signalling to the global firm what can be achieved through a dedicated pro bono programme that addresses unmet legal need.

Best Contribution by an In-House Team

Barclays Bank plc

"This [pro bono] programme allows the lawyers to use their drafting skills to turn the clients' story into a legal document..."

At Barclays Bank plc, participation in pro bono comes from across the range of in-house lawyers based in Birmingham and London. The commitment and enthusiasm for pro bono is demonstrated by the breadth of programmes supported. 45 lawyers have signed up to bid for pro bono cases with the LawWorks Not-for-Profits programme. One volunteer (a commercial lawyer from Birmingham) is assisting Stepping Stones, a charity which helps adults with learning difficulties. The charity needed to overhaul their Memorandum and Articles, and required advice on what records need to be filed with Companies House. Lawyers from Barclays in Birmingham have partnered with Dentons to provide legal support to the National Centre for Domestic Violence. This pro bono work involves interviewing clients to draft witness statements to support applications for non-molestation orders. Lawyers in the London office have joined with Norton Rose Fulbright to provide legal advice to callers on the Liberty Advice Line, answering questions on civil and criminal law issues while lawyers from both offices volunteer for the Simmons & Simmons Access to Justice programme, assisting individuals with social security tribunal appeals.

Visa

"The advice is great and just what the trustees wanted to know...thank you so much for your time and helping us with this matter, it really will make a difference."

Visa has significantly increased its investment in pro bono and is particularly proud of the work of its data privacy team in helping to advise organisations on their obligations following the introduction of the GDPR this year. Volunteer lawyers provided employment advice to YOU Foundation (which provides youth services for 11-25 year olds in Bristol), data protection advice to Working Families (UK's leading work-life balance organisation), employment advice to Edlington Community Organisation (a drop-in centre in Doncaster) and data protection advice to South London Cares Ltd (an organisation which helps young professionals to support their older neighbours). Migrateful is an organisation where asylum seekers and refugees, who are struggling to access employment in the UK, teach their traditional cuisines to the public. Visa lawyers worked with them to adapt their mission to UK legal requirements.

Visa has also become an Honorary Counsel to Breast Cancer UK through the LawWorks Not-for-Profits programme, carrying out an in-depth investigation into the charity's main documents in order to ensure they were compliant.

Best Contribution by an Individual

Jill Davies (Shoosmiths)

“Jill was instrumental in setting up the partnership between CommuniCare and Shoosmiths to provide a monthly pro bono clinic for those in need – some of the most vulnerable and financially excluded people in Reading.”

In 2009 Jill, who leads a medical negligence team for Access Legal Solicitors Thames Valley, set about establishing Shoosmiths’ first pro bono clinic. Acting as coordinator, trainer, volunteer and champion, Jill secured the commitment of the charity CommuniCare and the School of Law at the University of Reading and in its first year the East Reading-based CommuniCare Legal Advice Centre helped almost 40 members of the local community. Now into its ninth year and over 90 monthly sessions later, when Jill stepped down as clinic coordinator last summer, the clinic has helped over 260 people in the local community, providing guidance on a range of legal matters making a difference to their daily lives.

Jill’s pro bono work paved the way for the establishment of a network of Shoosmiths pro bono champions and the firm becoming more involved in pro bono programmes across the country, including the creation of a new clinic in Northampton and the provision of volunteers to other clinics in Edinburgh and Manchester.

Chris Fry (Fry Law)

“It has been very difficult, in an age of austerity, to find solicitors who are willing to give up their time to work, pro bono, on projects for some of the most disadvantaged and discriminated against in the community... [however] I’ve been fortunate to work with Chris Fry.”

Access to justice has become extremely difficult in recent years for disabled people due to the lack of legal aid and changes in the law. Chris Fry and Fry Law have responded to this with overwhelming generosity. Chris’s work in disability law and policy has enabled great strides to be made in disability rights in recent years. Chris has led his team at Fry Law to contribute their time and efforts to advancing disability equality and he regularly provides oral and written evidence to Parliamentary Committees, writes articles and responds to consultations. Fry Law acted pro bono in a judicial review case against Reading Borough Council in an attempt to block the introduction of a ‘shared space’ development which creates problems for people with sight loss. Their pro bono support for Not Dead Yet UK has ensured that the voice of people with disabilities has been heard in assisted dying debate.

Gareth Keillor (Herbert Smith Freehills)

“Through Gareth’s efforts, WLAC has developed into an unparalleled project in scope and impact in the community. In all of that, he retains a humble demeanour, never seeking the spotlight but always available to help when he is needed.”

Gareth commits a great deal of his time to the Whitechapel Legal Advice Clinic (WLAC) each week and has done so for over 12 years. He is a team leader for one of six practice groups of WLAC volunteers from Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) and, as the senior volunteer lawyer, has supervised and trained many volunteers over the years. He has built the clinic’s profile within HSF and been the main driver for change throughout WLAC as well as overseeing many service improvements which have benefitted the local community over the period. WLAC meets the challenge of its clients’ needs by going beyond initial free advice, for example by representing them in the county court, having recorded many successes. Gareth has been the representative in many of the cases. He has the longest running active involvement in a pro bono programme of any fee-earner at HSF.

Alexander Kolmakov (DLA Piper)

“Alexander’s active involvement in providing end-to-end legal advice to children applying for British citizenship has changed the lives of children and families.”

Alexander, who is a transactional lawyer admitted to practice in New York, England & Wales and Russia, has volunteered at various charities, including Coram Children’s Legal Centre (CCLC), ActionAid and UNICEF. At CCLC he provides legal advice and end-to-end case work in relation to underprivileged children applying for British citizenship, thereby allowing them access to critical services, as well as providing security and a sense of identity and the ability to travel abroad to see relatives. Each case can take up to 30 hours to complete, with Alexander taking on six cases over the last two years. Alexander’s commercial advice and assistance to charities allows them to operate effectively, as well as set up operations outside the jurisdiction. In his spare time, he has actively sought to support charities by fundraising and raised nearly £200,000 for UNICEF with a group of lawyers undertaking a 5 day endurance challenge in Peru. He embodies the idea of doing business responsibly, a key value of the firm.

Lynda Reid (Duncan Lewis Solicitors)

“Lynda’s work continues to bring invaluable support to those communities that would otherwise be out of reach of essential legal advice, whilst also delivering services which go above and beyond the call of duty. It is this dedication to her practice and the people that she helps which makes Lynda’s pro bono activity so impactful.”

Lynda is a housing solicitor at the Cardiff office of Duncan Lewis Solicitors, with over 25 years of post-qualification experience. She has shown a commitment to pro bono work throughout her professional life and has established two pro bono surgeries in association with Caerphilly Citizens Advice in areas that face many social and housing issues. Lynda undertakes pro bono work on an individual basis, often travelling up to 30 miles outside Cardiff to so-called ‘advice deserts’. She undertakes end-to-end case work, including handling anti-social behaviour cases, injunctions, mental health and domestic violence (sometimes featuring in the same case), regularly representing disadvantaged clients at court. Lynda takes cases on even where the merits are poor, believing in a progressive approach to access to justice, while making the wellbeing and peace of mind of her clients a priority.

David Warner (South Westminster Legal Advice Centre)

“David is the life blood of the South Westminster Legal Advice Centre, a vital resource for the community, which has only seen steady uptick in work over David’s eight years at the helm...He is truly an inspiration.”

David Warner has been the supervising solicitor and Chief Executive at the South Westminster Legal Advice Centre (SWLAC) for the past eight years. Open every Tuesday and Thursday evening, David has attended every session acting as the supervising solicitor for 3 to 5 other lawyers. He was responsible for initially speaking to every client that attended (usually 20 to 25 per session) and has therefore had an impact on over 10,000 people over this period. Outside these hours he voluntarily took on more substantial work and had notable successes for clients against various social landlords in Westminster ensuring that essential works were carried out, or by supporting clients through the employment tribunal process. David was solely responsible for keeping SWLAC in operation and inspiring other lawyers to get involved, and it is a testament to him that whilst other legal advice and pro bono centres in the area are closing or limiting their service that it has managed to maintain such a vital service to the citizens of Westminster.

Junior Lawyers Division Pro Bono Award

Lereesa Easterbrook (Baker McKenzie)

“It was Lereesa’s contribution that ensured that Stonewall had strong legal representation and that a positive outcome was delivered... [she] is a pro bono champion within Baker McKenzie.”

Lereesa was the lead associate acting for Stonewall in the Court of Appeal in its first ever intervention, which involved a private family law case relating to the right of a transgender father to have direct access to her children. The father had been and the children remained in a strictly Orthodox Charedi Jewish community, and the father was being denied direct contact by the children’s mother on the basis that it would make the community hostile to and marginalise or exclude the children, especially at school. The High Court found in favour of the mother; the father appealed and Lereesa (together with Counsel from Matrix Chambers) acted for Stonewall in its intervention.

The Court of Appeal upheld the appeal and remitted the case back to the High Court for consideration, describing the case as one “of profound significance for the law in general and family law in particular.” The judgment has been viewed as a success by Stonewall and for the LGBT community with impact extending far beyond the factual boundaries of the case.

Marios Kontos (Duncan Lewis Solicitors)

“Marios Kontos has been a key part of Refugee Legal Support Athens since its inception, and his pro bono work has made a significant contribution to the project’s success.”

Marios is an active member of the Duncan Lewis Pro Bono Committee. He oversees the running of weekly pro bono sessions in Dalston and provided training to lawyers at the offices in Harrow and Shepherd’s Bush to strengthen the firm’s pro bono outreach. Marios helped to set up a pro bono law clinic in Athens in April 2017, namely Refugee Legal Support Athens (“RLS-Athens”). RLS-Athens provides advice to adult and children refugees on applications for asylum and family reunification across Europe, and is staffed by volunteer lawyers from the UK who travel to Athens. Since its inception over 400 refugees have been advised by more than 50 lawyers.

Marios works at RLS-Athens both as a volunteer lawyer and a member of the executive committee, where he is involved in marketing, fundraising and operational aspects. In the latter role he has orchestrated successful cross-border work with other organisations and law firms in Greece and the UK. In addition Marios provides and oversees weekly pro bono training sessions to lawyers, and delivers information sessions to asylum seekers on family reunification, family reunion, and resettlement.

Rachel Mathieson (Bates Wells Braithwaite)

"[Rachel] had a key role in the recent ground-breaking pro bono case against the global transportation company, Uber...[with] management of the case from BWB's side."

In September 2017 Rachel and the Bates Wells Braithwaite team (BWB) successfully represented Yaseen Aslam and James Farrar on a pro bono basis against Uber in the Employment Appeal Tribunal ("EAT"). Uber's contracts state that its drivers are self-employed but the EAT upheld a decision of the Employment Tribunal that Uber drivers are in fact workers and, as such, are entitled to certain benefits including the statutory minimum wage, and holiday and sick pay. Uber appealed the decision on 30 and 31 October 2018 in the Court of Appeal and Rachel and the BWB team again represented Messrs Aslam and Farrar.

The case will have an impact on Uber drivers (over 40,000 in London alone) as well as other individuals working in the "gig economy", estimated to be over 1.5 million in total. The case has received enormous public interest and media coverage, and Rachel has been featured in and quoted by a number of prominent news outlets. James Farrar said that working with Rachel and the BWB team made him feel "empowered."

Sarah-Beth Neville (Ashurst)

"Sarah-Beth has demonstrated significant commitment to pro bono and social justice issues and she is one of Ashurst's most committed pro bono stars."

Sarah-Beth is heavily committed to pro bono work and her contributions range from assisting disadvantaged individuals to supporting NGOs. The NGOs she has worked with include the Islamophobia Response Unit (the "IRU"), Care International UK ("CIUK"), and Focus on Labour Exploitation ("FLEX"). With the IRU Sarah-Beth helped an individual who had experienced Islamophobia in the workplace to bring a claim in the Employment Tribunal for harassment, discrimination and victimisation, helping to reassure both the individual and their wider community that they need not stand alone when dealing with Islamophobia. CIUK has stated that Sarah-Beth always demonstrates a genuine interest in its cause and work, and FLEX said that "Sarah-Beth has not only offered [us] excellent pro bono legal support but has done so in a way that has served to reassure us, listening to our concerns at all times." In addition Sarah-Beth was one of the first volunteers in the LawWorks' pilot Unpaid Wages Project, now up and running successfully. Overall Sarah-Beth has contributed 289 hours of pro bono work in the past year.

Louise Taylor (Anthony Gold)

“Arguably, one of the biggest impacts Louise is having at Anthony Gold is internally, by promoting the benefits of pro bono work and being an ambassador for volunteering... She is happy to give up her own time and is passionate about human rights, equality and access to justice and this can only serve to create a ‘feel good’ vibe in the office.”

Louise volunteers regularly at Centre 70 and her efforts to bring teams of trainees to assist have had a significant impact on the clinic. Since last year Louise has been Safeguarding Trustee of Southwark Law Centre. Her pro bono work includes acting for a victim of the London Bridge terror attack in his Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority claim and being the firm’s representative on the Law Society’s Pro Bono panel for major incidents. She also recently assisted a personal injury client with his immigration status and homelessness.

Louise is Pro Bono Coordinator and vice-chair of the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee at Anthony Gold. She has written blogs about the benefits of pro bono work and is considered a champion of pro bono work and ‘giving back’ in the firm.

Louise Youngman (Ashurst)

“Louise is a dynamic, compassionate and bubbly solicitor who brings this energy and determination wholeheartedly to the assistance of her pro bono clients.”

Louise is a two years PQE solicitor at Ashurst, who qualified in March 2016 into the Dispute Resolution team. Louise has always had a strong involvement in Ashurst pro bono practice, and has exceeded the firm’s pro bono annual target of 52 hours since she was a trainee. Louise’s pro bono work has included working with Safe Passage (a project of Citizens UK) on the early stages of the cases of two lone refugee children from Eritrea and Afghanistan who were stranded in accommodation centres in Northern France and seeking reunification with family members legally residing in the UK. This fact-finding work enabled legal aid firm Bhatt Murphy Solicitors to bring the cases to Judicial Review (both children were eventually reunited with family members in the UK). Louise also volunteers with international legal action charity Reprieve and her work has included preparing written submissions about breaches of international law and human rights in relation to individuals who were facing imminent execution, particularly in South East Asia.

The LawWorks Cymru Award

Cardiff University School of Law Pro Bono Unit

“LawWorks’ research shows that the majority of clinical provision in the UK focuses on providing initial advice to members of the public. Therefore this delivery model is unusual as the Law School does not offer a direct access clinic. Each of the schemes is delivered in conjunction with external partners, and the Law School works with a range of organisations, including solicitors’ firms, barristers’ chambers and third sector agencies.”

The School of Law & Politics (Cardiff University) has offered its law students pro bono clinical education opportunities for over a decade in its mission is to be recognised as a connected university that is of benefit to Wales and its communities. Currently there are 12 different schemes on offer including the Cardiff Law School Innocence Project, the Mencap-WISE student advice project and work with the Personal Support Unit. Around 265 students are involved, contributing around 20,000 pro bono hours annually.

The Law School’s Innocence Project has dealt with approximately 40 cases and is responsible for more than half of all UK university submissions to the Criminal Cases Review Commission. The Law School has also assisted clients in recovering more than £190,000 in wrongly paid care home fees.

Duncan Lewis Solicitors (Cardiff Office)

“The Cardiff office constantly seeks new ways to help the communities we serve, ensuring that quality legal advice is made accessible for those that need it most. Without the team’s pro bono assistance, a large number of individuals in the local area would be unable to instruct legal practitioners, leaving the most vulnerable individuals without access to justice.”

The Duncan Lewis Cardiff office is currently involved in three pro bono projects. The firm was integral to the inception and commencement of the Housing Pro Bono Surgery at Cardiff Civil Justice Centre. The Housing team also runs a drop in surgery that takes place in Duncan Lewis’s Cardiff office and is run in conjunction with LawWorks Cymru. A second surgery is run from the Cardiff Central Library in union with Citizens Advice and Cardiff County Council.

Since the legal aid cuts in April 2013, the Cardiff office staff have given pro bono advice to hundreds of clients, each of whom would have qualified for public funding prior to this date. The Cardiff team’s efforts to combat the presence of legal advice ‘deserts’ in the areas surrounding Cardiff highlights their commitment to ensuring that everyone has access to justice.

Swansea Law Clinic, Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law

“The [Miscarriage of Justice] Project brings a ‘real hands-on approach’ to students’ learning and supports students by working in collaboration with legal and forensic experts that really empowers them.”

The Swansea Law Clinic, launched in October 2017, provides legal advice and assistance, mainly on housing, relationship breakdown, equality, consumer and employment issues. The clinic works in a collaborative way with other advice agencies to provide an integrated service, for example working closely with Swansea Council and participating in a One Stop Advice Service with over twenty other advice agencies.

The clinic has a number of other projects comprised of: a weekly Litigant in Person Helpdesk in Swansea Civil and Family Justice Centre; the Miscarriage of Justice Project; a prison law clinic in partnership with the Prisoners Advice Service; a clinic for Legal Aid Exceptional Case Funding Applications; Streetlaw which is a first-of-its-kind in Wales whereby public legal education is provided to school children and the Employment Tribunal Litigant in Person Support Scheme, in collaboration with BPP University, Cardiff University and the University of South Wales.

In partnership with Swansea University’s Computer Science department students, the clinic has developed a ChatBot to provide children with accessible legal information on issues such as bullying.

Best Contribution by a Pro Bono Clinic

Birmingham Peoples Centre

"I had a problem with an employment dispute and had no idea what to do regarding legal solutions. Trevor and his team at BPC went above and beyond when helping me in my case and it was settled quickly and professionally. I could not do it without their guidance and cannot thank them enough."

Birmingham Peoples Centre (BPC) provides employment law advice to members of the public unable to afford legal representation. Their work covers all stages of dispute from drafting grievance letters to representation at tribunal. BPC resolves many disputes without the need for legal action by helping individuals through grievance and disciplinary processes. In addition BPC also supports litigants in person representing themselves at tribunal, providing ongoing access to advice and guidance.

BPC is open every working day and believes in helping the public to understand and enforce their employment rights. Last year they assisted 750 clients and achieved over £250,000 in tribunal awards and settlements. They are on course to advise 1,000 clients this year.

BPC also provides opportunities to local law students to gain work experience with the aim of widening access to justice and helping to develop the next generation of pro bono lawyers.

BPP Legal Advice Clinic

"The advisors were very sympathetic and attentive to me while I was narrating the background of my case. They requested me to bring the documents that could help them understand my case and they were very clear in explaining what the procedures would be like and, in the letter I received, the steps to be taken were well researched and detailed."

BPP Legal Advice Clinic began operating in 2004. It has grown and adapted over the last 14 years to meet the changing need in the legal landscape. In 2013 the BPP Family Clinic opened in direct response to the legal aid cuts. In 2017 BPP launched a Residential Property Tribunal clinic at the First-tier Residential Property Tribunal (RPT) and this year the Deputy Regional Tribunal Judge specifically expressed how much the RPT judges value the service.

BPP are now established at various locations across the country covering a wide range of law. This includes a Family Law Clinic in London, General Legal Advice Clinics in Leeds and Manchester, a Commercial Law Clinic in Leeds, a Housing Clinic in London and Enterprise Clinics in Manchester and London.

Dentons' PopLaw Clinic

"Our neighbourhoods are in some of the most deprived wards in London. Residents face multiple challenges in their lives which often mean they need to access professional support but have no capacity to pay for it. To have PopLaw in our neighbourhood is an essential lifeline for many as there is a dearth of provision in the area."

PopLaw was established in 2006 as a drop-in clinic operating in Poplar, a district in Tower Hamlets, every Tuesday evening 50 weeks per year, offering free advice to individuals who might not otherwise be able to afford or access it. Due to its overwhelming success, in 2017 a second clinic was launched and provides advice in Whitechapel on Monday evenings. The clinics are hosted by Dentons solicitors with the administrative support of 48 volunteer law students from Queen Mary University. 125 Denton lawyers and trainees are on the PopLaw rotas – more than 35% of the London-based fee-earner workforce - and over the last decade have provided over 15,500 hours of free legal advice, assisting more than 5,600 clients.

Both clinics advise on almost every area of law, including debt, housing and consumer law and welfare benefits. The service has been widely advertised in local charities and surgeries and the Mayor of Tower Hamlets also refers constituents to the service. PopLaw's running costs are met by the firm.

University of Bristol Law Clinic

"It is helping to produce a generation of lawyers who have a level of awareness and self-awareness that is unparalleled...which they will take with them into the large commercial firms or to the Bar."

The University of Bristol Law Clinic operates in a number of ways. As an advice centre, students have successfully represented individuals in the Employment and Social Security Tribunals where legal aid was unavailable. The students also participate in Streetlaw, attending local schools and charities giving presentations, for example, on employment rights during maternity leave to service users of Womankind and on police powers to stop and search to local school students. Outreach sessions are held at CLIC Sargent, where legal advice is provided to parents of children undergoing treatment for cancer. Students also attend Bristol County Court to advise about the court process as part of the LiP Service project run in conjunction with students from UWE and the University of Law.

This year over 30% of third year law students have a place in the Law Clinic and 240 cases have been taken on. Unusually, the clinic maintains a service throughout the summer, recognising the need for advice at all times of the year.

University of Manchester Legal Advice Centre

“Their service adds to the support and guidance that litigants in person can obtain with the Civil Justice Centre and the ‘free legal advice clinics’ really benefit many of the PSU clients.”

The flagship Legal Advice Centre (LAC) has been offering free advice since 1999 to members of the public who are not eligible for legal aid – a number growing day by day. In response to the demand, the Law School expanded the service to include Manchester Free Legal Help (MFLH) at the Manchester Civil Justice Centre and the Dementia Law Clinic, which provides advice to people with dementia and their families.

In 2017, the family clinic saw an average of nine clients a week, the immigration clinic saw eight clients a week and the housing clinic saw an average of six clients a week. LAC also provided advice to almost 300 clients.

LAC and MFLH advise on areas not covered by legal aid and these centres are the only resources that the community have recourse to access. The service has seen how grateful their client base has been for the assistance that they receive, reinforced by agencies that support litigants in person, such as the Personal Support Unit.

Best New Pro Bono Activity

Anglia Law School Law Clinic

“As a litigant in person ... I didn’t feel alone because of all of the support that I received from the clinic. To me, their work was invaluable for the technical side of the case but also, the courage they instilled in me, made it possible for me to overcome my emotions and concentrate on the job at hand.”

The Anglia Law School Law Clinic opened in April 2018 and has become a trusted, well-respected, ‘go-to’ resource for local people in need of legal advice, with referrals coming directly from Cambridge Women’s Aid, Citizens Advice, local children’s centres, mediation services, housing associations and, most recently, a local MP’s office.

The clinic has focussed on providing family law advice as this is the area of greatest need given the lack of legal aid available in this area. Volunteer lawyers have also referred their own paying clients who are struggling with fees to this service. In further response to demand, the clinic is launching a Support at Court service at Cambridge County Court.

33 advice sessions have helped 196 clients so far and the clinic also gives student volunteers the chance to interact with real people with real problems from the outset.

Bates Wells Braithwaite: Uber Employment Appeal Tribunal

“For decades, minicab drivers in London and throughout the UK have suffered working conditions best described by Frank Field MP as amounting to ‘sweated labour’. Ninety hour weeks on around £5.00 per hour is the norm and drivers carry all the financial, operational and regulatory risk.”

Yaseen Aslam and James Farrar instructed Bates Wells Braithwaite (BWB) in September 2017 to represent them on a pro bono basis before the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) in their case against the global transportation company, Uber London Ltd.

Uber classifies its drivers as ‘self-employed’ rather than as ‘workers’. Aside from a consequent shortfall in employment rights, Uber’s drivers often have to drive an excessive number of hours in order to earn an equivalent to the National Minimum Wage. This practice poses a risk to both drivers and passengers. Establishing worker status would mean that the drivers are entitled to the National Minimum Wage and paid annual leave. James Farrar states “by representing the rights of Uber drivers, we are standing up for the rights of more than 1.5 million gig workers in the UK alone.”

East Greenwich Legal Advice Clinic

“With the help and professional legal support I’m getting from [EGLAC] I am not totally beaten. This is manageable with the kindness being shown to me. I am truly grateful.”

The East Greenwich Legal Advice Clinic (EGLAC) was launched in 2017 and in its first year provided advice to approximately 80-100 clients across a wide range of areas of law. Over 90% of EGLAC’s work is for individuals with limited means and often with significant physical, emotional and/or psychological needs. Whilst some clients only need advice and assistance, the clinic also provides ongoing advice and support including representation at courts and tribunals.

EGLAC is also involved in policy initiatives that are important and potentially ground breaking. It has made submissions to the Solicitors Regulation Authority in relation to its handbook and the role of pro bono clinics in certain reserved activities. After assisting a number of litigants in person, the clinic is now evaluating the duty of a solicitor when opposing a litigant in person. The clinic is also engaging with other stakeholders to improve decision-making at the welfare benefit assessment stage so that claimants receive the correct classification rather than having to go through the stress of an appeal.

Kobre & Kim: First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support)

“Navigating what can be a complicated and daunting legal landscape immediately relieves some of the pressures on our clients, and results in positive and life-changing outcomes.”

Working with LawWorks, Kobre & Kim volunteer solicitors offer pro bono representation to individuals denied welfare benefits in appeals before the First-tier Tribunal. Their clients suffer from severe physical and mental disabilities. The volunteers meet and work with the clients to understand their abilities and concerns before providing both written submissions and representation at hearings.

In six months, Kobre & Kim volunteers have devoted 226 hours to their cases and have obtained the restoration of benefits for four clients and are currently representing several more. The results have an immediate and substantial impact on their clients and their families. The volunteers’ work enables the clients to fulfil their basic needs and to focus on their medical conditions. This relief also extends to their families, as these are usually their primary caregivers. These cases offer an opportunity to the legal volunteers to provide help that is life changing for clients.

Kobre & Kim volunteers are also partnering with LawWorks on their unpaid wages project.

Shoosmiths Trainee Pro Bono Challenge

"We continually strive to develop the skills and qualities of our solicitors, whilst doing 'good' and this has been a great challenge to achieve all of these goals."

In 2017/18 Shoosmiths instructed their 22 new trainees to provide legal advice to organisations addressing the global Sustainable Development Goals (set by the United Nations) as part of the firm's trainee corporate responsibility challenge.

This challenge aimed to help organisations unable to afford legal advice to progress their programmes, as well as setting trainees on a path of providing legal advice to those in need throughout their careers, thus making effective use of their unique skills as lawyers. It also provided the opportunity for legal advisers across the firm to collaborate on specific projects and to raise awareness amongst staff.

A wide range of advice and assistance was given by the trainees including, for example, the compilation of a legal report for the Renewable Trust (a Nottingham-based charity). This has helped support the Trust's key objectives of relieving poverty and regenerating the area, through social cohesion and developing employment potential, with the aim of improving the quality of life of the residents living in two of the most deprived wards in Nottingham.

St Hilda's East Legal Advice Clinic

"The Clinic has built a wonderful reputation locally as the 'place to go' for legal advice for people facing problems."

St Hilda's East Legal Advice Clinic was launched in 2017 (in partnership with Macfarlanes and BPP Law School) after it was identified that there was a need for free legal assistance in the local community served by St Hilda's East Community Centre in Tower Hamlets.

When developing the clinic, importance was placed on how the service could be accessible to the most vulnerable in the local area. Running the legal advice clinic in conjunction with the Community Centre's existing Food Co-op Project has maximised engagement from the local community and means that the clinic provides free legal advice to individuals that would otherwise not have access to justice. In the last year, 80 local residents have been helped with their legal queries by the 39 volunteer lawyers from Macfarlanes alongside 22 volunteer students from BBP University. The volunteers have provided tailored legal advice on issues ranging from housing, employment, consumer law and general enquiries. Participation in the project has had significant benefits for the student volunteers who are able to develop their legal professional skills and gain invaluable legal experience.

The Open University: Open Justice Law Clinic

“The free service is comprehensive and invaluable in guiding people towards understanding a stressful legal situation when they do not have the financial means to pay for advice.”

The Open Justice Law Clinic is a ‘virtual’ legal advice clinic run by The Open University Law School. Led by students working collaboratively under the supervision of qualified solicitors, the clinic is unique in providing an entirely online service. It is accessible across the UK to anyone with an internet connection, which is particularly important for clients in remote locations or who cannot attend a clinic in person.

Members of the public submit enquiries via a website. Cases deemed within the scope of the clinic are allocated to a ‘law firm’ comprised of three or four students, who arrange video interviews with clients, research the law, and prepare letters of advice. Where enquiries are not appropriate for the clinic, written responses and signposting are provided. Since its inception in September 2017, the clinic has grown to 50 law students, provided signposting to 147 clients and completed 30 cases, with additional cases ongoing. The clinic has successfully engaged distance-learning law students in clinical legal education and helped them develop key vocational skills.

Working Families’ pro bono email ticketing platform

“Our pro bono email initiative is empowering more vulnerable working parents with the knowledge and confidence to challenge their employers on violations of their employment rights.”

Working Families, the UK work-life balance charity, has developed a pro bono email ticketing platform that has boosted the charity’s capacity. More than 60 solicitors have been trained to pick up and draft responses to email queries sent to the charity’s Legal Advice Service, mostly by low-income parents experiencing unjust treatment at work. The platform allows solicitors to respond to anonymised queries remotely at a time that suits them, making it as easy as possible for busy lawyers to volunteer. The solicitors, whose main client base tends to be employers, enrich their professional practice through advising employees and gaining an insight into the charity’s policy work. Volunteers responded to around 100 queries between September 2017 and June 2018, saving the charity’s in-house team an estimated 50 hours. This time has been used responding to more complex queries and working on policy issues, to effect legislative change for the benefit of working families UK-wide. If volunteers continue to participate at the same rate, they will save the charity 2.5 weeks of adviser time per year.

Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership

Allen & Overy and Simmons & Simmons: Five Lamps

“This is the largest single investment raised by a UK responsible finance provider, with the £5m of capital enabling over 100,000 loans to financially excluded individuals over the investment period.”

Simmons & Simmons and Allen & Overy both advised pro bono on aspects of a £5 million notes issuance for Five Lamps, a UK-based charity and responsible lender offering affordable loans to socially and financially excluded individuals, as an alternative to high-cost credit. Simmons & Simmons provided advice to Five Lamps throughout the year-long project which concluded in July 2018, designing a bespoke syndicated loan note structure capable of meeting all of the investors’ various requirements and investment criteria. Allen & Overy acted for nine investors subscribing to the notes, including specialist social investment funds and charitable trusts. The £5 million raised in committed social impact capital represents the largest-ever single investment in a UK community lender. The deal will increase the visibility of the positive impact that social investment can have on the responsible lending sector, and will allow Five Lamps to grow the scale and impact of affordable credit to vulnerable individuals nationally, with over £60m of lending set to be mobilised thanks to the new funding.

Cardiff University Law School Pro Bono Unit and Mencap Cymru: Mencap WISE student advice project

“The student advice project is...integral to Mencap Cymru’s delivery of the wider Mencap WISE initiative. At the same time, the project provides the students with a unique opportunity to acquire an understanding of learning disability and the work of the third sector.”

The Mencap Wales Independent Support & Empowerment (WISE) student advice project has developed a series of toolkits aimed at those who care for/support people with a learning disability. They cover a range of legal topics including child protection, accessing social and healthcare services, and further education, and were developed to focus on areas where the law in Wales differs from that in England. The toolkits provide easy-to-access guidance and are an important mechanism for empowering families struggling to obtain services. They are available online and the information in them is also disseminated via workshops delivered by Mencap WISE caseworkers. In 2017/18, 78 information workshops were delivered to 716 people, and there were 827 unique toolkit views. In addition to having developed the toolkits, students also undertake ad hoc advice work to support caseworkers, such as conducting legal research and drafting advice notes where particularly complex enquiries are received. 1,500 pro bono hours are generated by the project annually.

Centrepoint, Goldman Sachs International, Herbert Smith Freehills, Intralinks and Shelter: Connect Legal Advice Clinic

“A lot of my young people come to Centrepoint with legal issues but their opinion of the legal system is totally skewed; they’re scared of it...the clinic enables us to bring that into their support environment and get the advice they need at the right time.”

The Connect Legal Advice Clinic (Connect) is a collaborative project between Centrepoint, Goldman Sachs International (GS), Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) and Intralinks. Established in 2016, it is a collaboration which provides virtual legal advice to vulnerable young people who are being supported by Centrepoint, often including victims of severe childhood abuse and neglect. The clinic is run remotely, using video conference or telephone, to improve access for clients, including those outside of London.

Collaboration between lawyers and non-lawyers has been the key to Connect’s success. Additional to the pro bono work provided by lawyers from GS and HSF, a dedicated team of non-lawyers ensure the clinics run smoothly each week. Intralinks have provided Connect with a free online space to house shared resources and workspaces, and HSF funds a part-time Connect Coordinator. Further collaborations with Shelter and LawWorks have enabled the project to expand its areas of support.

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton and Toynbee Hall’s Free Legal Advice Centre (women-only clinic)

“Our collaboration with Toynbee Hall has been invaluable both for the local communities supported by the Saturday morning women-only Free Legal Advice Clinic and our lawyers. I am constantly inspired by the tangible human impact of Toynbee Hall’s advice services for women who would otherwise be unable to obtain access to justice.”

Since 2015, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton (CGSH) and Toynbee Hall’s Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC) have developed a partnership based around the women-only advice clinic that runs every other Saturday at Toynbee Hall. The clinic is designed to provide a safe environment for women across London to access advice on legal issues. The partnership began as a financial contribution and quickly grew to include regular volunteering at FLAC with CGSH providing female lawyers and business support staff to help administer the clinics.

The partnership has a commitment to driving innovation, and they are currently undertaking research to identify the mental health needs of individuals seeking advice. Based on a growing understanding of this need, the clinic has secured the attendance of a psychologist at the clinics who is on hand to support clients as required. This has shaped FLAC’s commitment to building a “Psychologically Informed Environment.”

FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru with PAPA Legal, Emma Williams Family Law, Avery Naylor, Cameron Jones Hussell & Howe and Alun Jones Family Law

“Family disputes are often the most traumatic of legal problems with tensions running high and allegations and counter allegations in abundance. The partnership between the charity and solicitors creates a unique environment for help and support, drawing together the two elements that our service users tell us they want – specialist legal advice and emotional support.”

FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru runs a network of ten monthly legal advice clinics covering family law and domestic violence, delivered in community settings across Wales. Pro bono solicitors from five different firms support the charity’s service users by attending clinics to provide free one-to-one legal advice on family and domestic violence issues, in a range of locations across Wales including supermarket cafes, theatre foyers, university buildings and a fire station.

The clinics offer a safe space for parents, grandparents and new partners to vent their anger, resentment, frustration and often despair in a supportive environment where they can receive emotional support. That work – largely undertaken in small groups – provides the foundation to make the most of the specialist legal knowledge provided by the volunteer solicitors. The partnership of skills between lawyers and emotional support volunteers is at the heart of the project’s success.

Howard Kennedy and Toynbee Hall’s Free Legal Advice Centre

“The impact at clinics that Howard Kennedy volunteers attend is noticeable. Together it has allowed us to create an environment in which clients feel safe, respected and listened to and receive effective advice from their team.”

Howard Kennedy has partnered with Toynbee Hall’s Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC) for the past 18 months, primarily providing volunteers to the general advice clinic. The team numbers approximately 30 individuals from across the firm, ranging from paralegal to legal director. The firm sends volunteers to attend FLAC on a weekly basis to advise clients on their rights, and also fundraises for and contributes financially to Toynbee Hall to assist with its running costs.

Howard Kennedy’s commitment to finding ways to work around the challenges of providing access to justice has led to considerable innovation at FLAC, including the recent creation of a remote advice service, which is currently being trialled. The idea for this pilot came from the recognition of work pressures upon the pro bono solicitors and the physical limitation of the centre. The remote advice service was devised as a solution to these two limiting factors and aims to increase the capacity of FLAC and its accessibility to service users.

Pro Bono Connect, Adam Kramer of 3 Verulam Buildings and Morrison & Foerster

"It has meant a lot to me and my family. We will never forget your help. You and your family will always be in our prayers. I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart."

A local shopkeeper spent years befriending an elderly woman, on the basis that they were both from Afghanistan. He eventually persuaded her to hand over £70,000 of family money to invest in his business to obtain an entrepreneurial visa which he said would help her family to escape the Taliban, but then denied ever receiving the funds. Adam Kramer, a barrister from 3 Verulam Buildings represented the client pro bono at one hearing and realised she needed support all the way to trial. Through Pro Bono Connect, he found assistance from the team at Morrison & Foerster led by Jonathan Wheeler, with Jason Mbakwe as lead associate. After months of preparation (with over 500 pro bono hours work) and a dramatic two day trial, the client was awarded around £80,000, together with a pro bono costs order of £2,000. Without this partnership, it is unlikely that justice would have been achieved and, thanks to their efforts, they literally changed the client's life.

Outstanding Contribution to Access to Justice

Eddie Coppinger (Legal Advice Centre, University House)

“Eddie’s years of dedication to improving the service and offering of the Legal Advice Centre has not only changed the lives of vulnerable people through enabling access to justice but has also had a transformative effect on the wider sector, both locally and nationwide.”

Eddie Coppinger has worked at Legal Advice Centre, University House (LAC) for over thirteen years and has been instrumental in directing it into new and emerging service delivery areas. He has headed the development of a case management system which has not only increased pro bono services but has allowed LAC lawyers in London to be able to advise clients remotely in Cornwall. He has trained other free legal advice services to apply for case funding under the provision of Legal Expenses Insurance. Eddie recognises the importance of sharing knowledge and expertise across the sector including providing services and training to other organisations which need support. He continues to contribute to working groups, panels and conference events such as the annual Legal Voice Conference and his generous attitude with LAC resources has resulted in the growth of advice services across the country and consequently the improvement in access to justice for many people.

Steve Cornforth (Steve Cornforth Consultancy)

“Steve has been a dedicated campaigner and advocate for access to justice... [and] his commitment to the cause has been unwavering.”

Steve Cornforth firmly believes that access to justice should be available to all, regardless of status or means. He has been a director of the Liverpool Law Society for 18 years and was elected President in 2011, during which he set up the Liverpool Law Society’s Access to Justice Committee, the first in any local Law Society in the country. Through its Forum meetings, it brings together Liverpool’s pro bono organisations, senior lawyers, local councillors and members of the judiciary in order to discuss pro bono service provision in Liverpool. He has also been a trustee of the North West Legal Support Trust since 2013, is a key organiser of the Liverpool Legal Walk and writes his own blog on access to justice. Steve is also a supporter of the Vauxhall and Community Law Centre which provides pro bono services in a highly deprived area of Liverpool where life expectancy is 7.5% lower than the rest of the city.

Kent Law Clinic

“The quality of [the Kent Law Clinic’s] work, unflinchingly sustained over quarter of a century, has been quite remarkable... [and] the tangible (and intangible) benefits to its clients mark real improvements in their lives.”

Kent Law Clinic is part of Kent Law School and it supplies a referral, advice and representation service to those who cannot afford to pay. The service is provided by both local lawyers and academic staff and the sessions are managed by law students who observe and assist the lawyers, through interviewing clients, carrying out legal research and drafting correspondence and documents. Since 1992 the clinic has dealt with over 20,700 legal enquiries and recovered over £5.6 million on behalf of clients. After LASPO the clinic expanded (with charitable funding raised by staff) to include a dedicated immigration and asylum solicitor and in one case, the Home Office was persuaded to grant refugee status to an Afghan application on the grounds of fear of religious persecution because he was an atheist and had previously been a Muslim. The clinic aims not only to assist individuals; it also strives to ensure that future generations of lawyers wish to pursue access to justice through pro bono assistance throughout their careers.

Giles Peaker (Anthony Gold)

“Housing Law is key to people’s lives, particularly the most vulnerable. Giles has worked pro bono, both to inform people of their rights in a complex field, and to extend those rights to enable people to secure a safe home, where currently they have no access to justice to do so.”

Giles Peaker is a well-known housing law expert with an intense dedication to his subject. He works with various charities in his belief that the law can and should be used to help and protect the most vulnerable in society. Giles is the founder of the leading housing blog, Nearly Legal, which provides a stream of housing information that is widely read by housing lawyers and judges, as well as tenants, housing officers and landlords, thereby providing a source of public legal education for many who would otherwise be unaware of their rights. This year he has worked closely with Karen Buck MP, in the wake of the Grenfell disaster, in order to secure the passage of the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Bill through Parliament. The bill will be a ‘game-changer’, ensuring that tenants can take action in civil courts against both private and social landlords in respect of any dangerous defects to their homes.

Carol Storer (Legal Aid Practitioners Group)

“The work that she has done has focused on challenging the barriers to access to justice on a policy level with Government, whilst also working tirelessly at a grassroots level to enable the provision that does exist to be used effectively to make a real difference to those marginalised in our society.”

Carol was the director of the Legal Aid Practitioners Group for ten years, leading it through one of the most challenging periods in the history of legal aid and social welfare advice provision. She has also sat on the Law Society’s Access to Justice Committee for ten years and is its current chair, as well as being a trustee and vice chair of the Legal Action Group. During the past decade, Carol has campaigned actively in Parliament, attended demonstrations and challenged politicians. She has played a pivotal role in the All Party Parliamentary Group on legal aid, highlighting the devastating impact on the millions who require legal advice to support their basic housing and income needs, while also working tirelessly at the less glamorous end of the spectrum holding the Legal Aid Authority to account. Carol made the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year (LALY) awards into a successful and inspiring event, making it as inclusive as possible.

David Warner (South Westminster Legal Advice Centre)

“David is the life blood of the South Westminster Legal Advice Centre, a vital resource for the community, which has only seen steady uptick in work over David’s eight years at the helm...He is truly an inspiration.”

David Warner has been the supervising solicitor and Chief Executive at the South Westminster Legal Advice Centre (SWLAC) for the past eight years. Open every Tuesday and Thursday evening, David has attended every session acting as the supervising solicitor for 3 to 5 other lawyers. He was responsible for initially speaking to every client that attended (usually 20 to 25 per session) and has therefore had an impact on over 10,000 people over this period. Outside these hours he voluntarily took on more substantial work and had notable successes for clients against various social landlords in Westminster ensuring that essential works were carried out, or by supporting clients through the employment tribunal process. David was solely responsible for keeping SWLAC in operation and inspiring other lawyers to get involved, and it is a testament to him that whilst other legal advice and pro bono centres in the area are closing or limiting their service that it has managed to maintain such a vital service to the citizens of Westminster.

Outstanding Contribution to Access to Justice Foundation Award

THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOUNDATION



Celebrating our 10th year anniversary, the Access to Justice Foundation works to bring additional financial resources to support free legal help for those in need. We are delighted to be part of the LawWorks Annual Pro Bono Awards at the Law Society.

The work of the Foundation is strategic and focuses on generating new sources of funding to support the free legal advice sector.

The Foundation receives funds from pro bono costs, introduced in October 2008 by s 194 of the Legal Services Act 2007, donations of dormant client account funds and works with a matrix of Legal Support Trusts to support the pro bono and advice sector.

The Outstanding Contribution to Access to Justice Award recognises the individual, project or organisation who has made a significant contribution to the access to justice field during the last ten years. Reflecting the work the Foundation itself does, we received nominations from advice agencies, law centres, lawyers, law schools, law firms and chambers across the country which promote, support and fundraise for the work of the pro bono sector.

How you can help

Pro Bono Costs Orders

Under s 194 of the Legal Services Act 2008 you can claim the notional cost of any pro bono work you undertake on a civil case (even where some or the majority of the case was done on a fee paying basis) from the paying party with an order in favour of the Access to Justice Foundation.

Unclaimed client account funds

Unclaimed client account balances are a drain of firm resources. By donating these to the Foundation you can help your local community by ensuring these funds go back into providing access to justice for people who rely on free legal advice services.

The Foundation provides SRA approved indemnities in case the client ever resurfaces, so there is no risk to the firm.

You can find out more about the work of the Foundation and other ways in which you can get involved on our website. www.atjf.org.uk

About LawWorks

Supporting and celebrating pro bono

LawWorks (the Solicitors Pro Bono Group) aims to promote, support and facilitate pro bono legal services that extend access to the law for individuals and communities in need and the organisations that support them.

We champion pro bono because of the positive contribution and difference it makes for individuals, communities and society.

We work (in England and Wales) with the solicitors' profession and our members, the Law Society, law schools and law students, law centres, advice agencies and others to develop and support pro bono legal services, and to promote access to justice for all.

While pro bono is not, and should not become, an alternative to legal aid - it makes an important contribution to accessing legal information, advice and representation.

We enable the provision of pro bono through:

- Supporting a growing network of over 240 independent pro bono clinics. We work with lawyers, advice agencies, charities and others to establish or develop new clinics, and provide on-going support, information, training and webinars and legal resources (including the online legal research tools Lexis®Library and Lexis®PSL);
- Our Not-For-Profits Programme facilitates the provision of free legal advice for smaller charities and not-for-profit organisations, supported by volunteer solicitors from among LawWorks members. We also provide free online training videos for charities, covering many of the common legal issues they face;
- We support more in-depth pro bono ('secondary specialisation'), in areas of social welfare law. This includes supporting solicitors to provide representation at First-tier social security tribunals (for Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independent Payment appeals), an unpaid wages project, and, working with the charity Together for Short Lives, to provide legal advice and case-work for the parents and carers of children with life-limiting conditions.

Supporting litigants in person

LawWorks is a partner organisation for the Litigant in Person Support Strategy, working with Law for Life, the Personal Support Unit, RCJ Advice, the Bar Pro Bono Unit and the Access to Justice Foundation. Funded by the Ministry of Justice, the Strategy works to improve the experience of people involved in legal proceedings who do not have a lawyer.

‘Free Legal Answers’

In early 2019 LawWorks will be launching a new online pro bono resource called ‘Free Legal Answers’. The project aims to enable access to initial legal advice, complementing existing services and sources of support. It will make it easier for lawyers to provide pro bono advice through the flexibility of an online platform, reducing the need to physically attend centres to meet clients at specific times.

LawWorks has been granted a licence for the ‘Free Legal Answers’ website supported in the United States by the American Bar Association (ABA). Deloitte UK is providing management and technical expertise to assist LawWorks in configuring and testing the website to fit the legal environment in England and Wales.

For more information about the project please contact our Chief Executive, Martin Barnes at martin.barnes@lawworks.org.uk

Addressing barriers to justice: a ‘policy voice’ for pro bono

We work to remove barriers to pro bono and use evidence from the work of local clinics, our members and others to advocate for positive policy change to better enable access to free legal advice and to justice.

In building a ‘policy voice’ for LawWorks and pro bono, we have engaged with the Government’s review of LASPO (the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012), including last year submitting a briefing for the Justice Committee supported by 15 organisations.

LawWorks provides the Secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Pro Bono and Public Legal Education. A new public legal education (PLE) vision statement was launched by the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP at a meeting of the APPG as part of Justice Week 2018.

Student pro bono

The pro bono contribution made by law schools and students is significant and growing. LawWorks encourages and supports student pro bono (for example, many law school clinics are part of the LawWorks clinics network) and the important contribution students make is recognised and celebrated through the annual LawWorks & Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards, held at the House of Commons. Student teams help raise awareness and fundraise through an annual Law School Challenge, to support the work of LawWorks and Advocate.

Membership of LawWorks

The support of our members is vital to our work.

Membership of LawWorks makes an important contribution towards the achievement of our charitable objectives and supporting our work in enabling and celebrating pro bono and the importance of access to justice. We have over 150 members, including some of the largest City and International firms, national, regional and local firms, and in-house teams, law schools and charities.

We support our members in a number of ways, including information, guidance and advice (for example, in setting up or developing a pro bono project), and facilitating pro bono activity and connections through our Not-For-Profits Programme.

Members have the opportunity to nominate for our annual awards and have access to our training, online resources, newsletters and networking opportunities (including a quarterly pro bono forum and regional events), and have the opportunity to contribute to our growing policy work.

By joining LawWorks you will be supporting our charitable work to encourage, support and celebrate pro bono, and also our work to highlight - and address - barriers to accessing justice.

The fee depends upon the size of the firm - with other categories for in-house legal teams, charities and other organisations.

For more information about membership of LawWorks and the difference your membership can make, please get in touch with James Sandbach, Director of Policy, at james.sandbach@lawworks.org.uk or on 020 7092 3941, or visit our website at: www.lawworks.org.uk

Other ways to support LawWorks

LawWorks is grateful for the support of trusts and foundations, and the donations and fundraising of individuals and organisations. If you would like to support our work, please contact Kate Buchanan, our Fundraising Consultant, at kate.buchanan@lawworks.org.uk or on 020 7092 3947, or visit our website.

About LexisNexis

In 2018, we are proud to be marking the 200th anniversary of the foundation of our business. Henry Butterworth set up business on Fleet Street in London in 1818 and his bookshop soon grew into the renowned legal publisher Butterworths.

Throughout those 200 years, we have published laws in the UK and around the world; we have documented countless cases; we have produced leading texts and content guiding professionals and academics in their work; we have released decision tools; we have trained judges and we have supported the development of legal infrastructure.

In each case, we have been following our central objective, which sits at the very core of our strategy: to advance the Rule of Law around the world. This is vital for the well-being of citizens, businesses and society as a whole and we are committed to playing a positive role in our communities, through advocacy, partnerships and the provision of high quality information.

We define the Rule of Law as requiring the presence of 4 factors:

Equality Under the Law - as mentioned, this means that all people, regardless of social, economic, political or other rank or profile, are treated the same by the law and the law applies to them equally.

Transparency of Law - everyone should have access to the law, as without knowing what the law is, you cannot enforce it, or demand its protection, or hope to comply with it.

Independent Judiciary - the law should be administered by judges who are not subject to external pressure, corruption or political interference. They should have no interest in who wins as long as the result is in accordance with the law.

Accessible Legal Remedy - everyone should have a fair and equal access to the justice system. This last part is fundamental: if you cannot get access to the legal system, the law can simply be ignored, and if there are no consequences to ignoring the law, then you don't really have the Rule of Law at all.

In the UK, the most significant challenge we have to the Rule of Law sits in the category of accessible legal remedy. Unmet legal need has long been an issue in the UK and is only deepening. Today, we estimate that only c.30% of legal issues receive advice from qualified sources. The rest either self-serve, rely on family or friends, or leave their legal issue unresolved. The Ministry of Justice's own reports suggest that over 7 million individuals have no access to legal advice, especially in areas such as immigration and family law.

It is this threat to the very heart of the Rule of Law that we play a role in alleviating. We are immensely proud of our long partnership with LawWorks and with others across the access to justice community, providing access to content and our software tools. In the last two years, we have also been working closely with the Civil Justice Council and others to support the free legal advice sector with our expertise in digitisation and technology development, to help design and develop tools to drive efficiency and effectiveness. And we look forward to continuing our efforts with all of our partners over the coming year.

It is a pleasure to support these Awards for another year, and to be with you all to celebrate and promote the fantastic, selfless and inspiring actions of many. We warmly congratulate and commend all those nominated and shortlisted for their tireless efforts, without which so many would be left behind.

James Harper

Executive Sponsor, Rule of Law and Corporate Social Responsibility, LexisNexis UK

LawWorks is a charity working in England and Wales to 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.

www.lawworks.org.uk
@Law_Works

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