LawWorks Membership

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LawWorks

LawWorks (the Solicitors Pro Bono Group) is a charity committed to enabling access to justice through free legal advice.

We:

- **Facilitate and support** pro bono legal services and access to justice for people in need and without the ability to pay
- **Connect** smaller charities and not-for-profit organisations with pro bono legal services, enabling them to deliver their mission
- **Add our voice** to policy change to help enable access to justice for all
- **Remove barriers** to pro bono
- **Promote, enable and develop** pro bono activities across the solicitors' profession and at law schools in England and Wales

WHY DO PRO BONO?

For many, pro bono is an essential part of being a lawyer. It is an opportunity to use valuable knowledge and experience to support vulnerable individuals and communities. Pro bono can help build skills and confidence, develop teams and offers the chance to test oneself as a lawyer, perhaps in a new environment. Using professional skills has been shown to be more impactful than other forms of volunteering. It is a rewarding experience, both for the beneficiaries and for those offering help.

It can also make business sense. An active pro bono practice can improve legal skills, provide matters of responsibility for junior lawyers, and assist in recruitment and retention. It can demonstrate a firm or organisation's corporate social responsibility (CSR) credentials, attract value-matched clients, and open up new opportunities. These reasons do not detract from the altruism of legal pro bono; rather, they complement it. Our Business Case for Pro Bono provides more details.

Pro bono is not an alternative to legal aid, but it makes a vital contribution to accessing legal information, advice and representation.

WHY JOIN LAWWORKS?

LawWorks, as well as being a charity, is a business-to-business membership organisation which encourages, facilitates, supports and celebrates the contribution of pro bono by solicitors and law students from over 150 law firms, legal teams, and law schools across England and Wales.

Our members play an invaluable role in informing and supporting our work in extending access to justice to those in need of legal advice through their membership fees and their volunteering.

"LawWorks have given useful exposure to a different variety of work from the normal chargeable work"

International firm

In return, our membership offer aims to support organisations and their individuals in developing the knowledge and confidence to provide excellent pro bono legal advice, to keep abreast of developments in the pro bono sector and to provide their volunteers with pro bono opportunities through our programmes.

Our members make a significant difference to individuals and local communities across England and Wales.

"My colleague has just finished her first "assignment" and has high praise for how efficient and supportive LawWorks were"

In-house team

WHO ARE OUR MEMBERS?

LAW FIRMS/IN-HOUSE LEGAL TEAMS

LawWorks supports both law firms and in-house legal teams to achieve the highest quality pro bono work. We work to develop an impactful programme that fits with your CSR objectives and engages your whole team. For in-house teams, we have professional indemnity insurance cover available for pro bono work conducted as part of our programmes.

Regardless of your team's size or expertise, we provide training and support to help volunteers provide pro bono advice with confidence.

ADVICE AGENCIES

LawWorks works with advice agencies as part of our growing network, including local Citizens Advice and Law Centres, which often support individual clinics.

LAW SCHOOLS

LawWorks collaborates with law schools to help develop the ways in which students can get involved in pro bono, including supporting clinics, and can participate in LawWorks' programmes and policy work.

- LawWorks members are not legally part of the charity. Our members share or support our passion to enable access to justice, but do not need to 'sign up' to a formal statement of aims or purpose.
- In our 'policy voice' work (e.g. responding to consultations), we do not claim to represent our members or their views (unless illustrated, with prior consent, by specific case studies, quotes or examples).
- We encourage and support our members to do pro bono and access member programmes, but there is no obligation to do so. Some organisations join LawWorks because they want to support our charitable work (e.g. to enable access to justice) or they may be planning to do pro bono at some time in the future.

Membership Benefits

OUR POLICY VOICE

LawWorks provides a policy voice on issues concerning access to justice and the barriers to the provision of free legal advice. Our members' experience and expertise feed into LawWorks' wider body of data to help us develop well informed policy positions.

Through policy, research and advocacy work we aim to:

- **Communicate** a positive message to government, regulators and professional bodies about the value of pro bono and its contribution to access to justice, whilst being clear about its limits
- **Address** systemic issues that create the need for free legal advice and support, and the barriers that people experience in seeking access to justice
- **Understand and shape** the landscape in which pro bono operates, recognising and developing the evidence base on the scale of unmet need

PRO BONO AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

We work collaboratively in strategic partnership with others to influence policy and practice in the civil and family justice systems. We act as part of a network of advice, support and information agencies complementing broader legal aid provision and the formation of a justice system better designed to meet the needs of its more vulnerable users.

REGULATION AND THE LEGAL SERVICES MARKET

We engage with regulators, training providers and legal professional bodies to encourage a favourable environment for pro bono, and to support quality and high standards in pro bono work whilst minimising regulatory barriers.

PARLIAMENTARY WORK

LawWorks supports the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Access to Justice.

LAWWORKS AND REFORM

Pro bono cannot solve the bigger problems that drive legal need – sometimes public policy changes, as well as legal advice, may be needed to solve the problems of pro bono clients. Where appropriate, and based on evidence from clinics and our member network, LawWorks can add a pro bono voice to calls for policy change.

OUR PROGRAMMES

NOT-FOR-PROFITS PROGRAMME

The Not-for-Profits Programme brokers legal advice to smaller charities and not-for-profit organisations on a wide range of legal issues, to support the continuation and expansion of their services to people in need. The issues tackled by the organisations we help vary enormously, but commonly deal with poverty, disability, abuse, social exclusion, and special educational needs.

There are in several ways lawyers from our member organisations can volunteer on the programme.

260+
legal matters placed in 2024

Casework

Giving discrete, one-off pieces of legal advice ranging from reviewing a lease or drafting a contract, to updating a constitution or advising on rights in a dispute.

Honorary Counsel

Working with non-profits on a longer-term basis as their own 'Honorary Counsel' to carry out a health check of their documents, be an ongoing point of contact for initial advice when legal issues arise and identify when further advice is needed.

Provided training for
200+
small charities & not-profits in 2024

Training

Developing free, downloadable memos and FAQs for non-profits, as well as running legal webinars on common legal issues.

KING'S TRUST PROJECT

The King's Trust Enterprise programme provides training and mentoring to young entrepreneurs aged 18 – 30. Entrepreneurs on the programme will often have legal queries – perhaps they've been asked to sign an NDA, need to negotiate a supplier contract, or want to understand their options for registering their company. Under this pilot project, LawWorks aims to find volunteer lawyers from our member organisations who can provide pro bono legal advice to the young entrepreneurs.

SECONDARY SPECIALISATION

Our Secondary Specialisation programme builds on the foundation of frontline advice by enabling pro bono lawyers from member law firms and in-house teams to provide in-depth casework and representation for vulnerable clients in specific areas of social welfare law.

LawWorks arranges training, and our team of specialist solicitors provide on-going supervision that enable volunteers, in pairs, to take on pro bono casework in a new area of law, develop advocacy skills and give vital support to vulnerable clients.

24
law firms participate in our secondary specialisation projects

Unpaid Wages Project

LawWorks receives unlawful deduction from wages cases from referral agencies. LawWorks then assigns the cases to trained volunteer lawyers who are supervised by an experienced in-house employment lawyer at LawWorks to negotiate with employers and, if necessary, take them to the First-tier Employment Tribunal.

£160,292
of unpaid wages reclaimed since 2022

Voices For Families

The project assists children, young people and their families to obtain legal advice and ensure their rights are protected and enforced.

PRO BONO CONNECT

Pro Bono Connect links solicitors and barristers who can act together pro bono on civil matters, for individuals, charities and community groups who cannot afford legal advice or representation. The scheme covers civil claims which are litigated or have the potential to result in litigation, i.e., where a claim or piece of work may reach a stage where it needs input from a barrister perhaps by way of specialist advice, or representation at a hearing. All areas of civil law are covered. The scheme is only limited by the experience of its panel members – the more solicitors and barristers joining the scheme, the greater the range of work covered.

The scheme has recently expanded to include Pro Bono Expert Support. Working with the National Pro Bono Centre we can link lawyers with pro bono experts and litigation support providers.

75
cases successfully placed in 2024

CLINICS PROGRAMME

The LawWorks Clinics Network comprises around 300 independent legal clinics across England & Wales, who are all committed to the provision of free legal advice via volunteer lawyers and law students. Our network of clinics provides LawWorks with the knowledge and relationships to help members realise their pro bono potential within a clinic setting.

Each clinic is unique and runs its services differently; this can be as a drop-in or appointment-based service, running weekly, fortnightly or monthly and delivering general legal advice or targeted to specific legal areas of social welfare law. Clinics operate on a face-to-face basis or offer telephone, email and web/online services.

Our team help set up new, sustainable clinic partnerships between law firms, in-house legal teams, law schools, charities, and advice agencies to help address unmet legal need in local communities. LawWorks can help our members to set up their own clinic, or assist in placing a member's volunteer solicitors in an established clinic.

OVER 61,900
people helped through the LawWorks Clinics Network in 2024

FREE LEGAL ANSWERS

Free Legal Answers is an online platform where people on low incomes can describe a legal problem or ask a legal question and receive initial or one-off pro bono legal advice. The service is designed to be a convenient accessible way for eligible qualified lawyers to participate in pro bono work, when and where they choose.

Once registered on the site and verified by LawWorks, participating lawyers can review the legal questions being asked, search by legal topic, and choose which questions to answer. The site is supported by the LawWorks team, who can be contacted with any queries, concerns or technical questions. In addition, volunteers can record the time taken to provide pro bono legal advice. LawWorks can also provide reports on time and activity. Advice can be provided advice anonymously if the solicitor should so wish.

340

pieces of one-off pro bono legal advice were given to individuals via Free Legal Answers in 2024.

OUR PRO BONO EVENTS

LAWWORKS CONFERENCE

Our annual pro bono conferences bring together pro bono clinics, law firm coordinators, volunteers, and stakeholders from the wider advice sector.

Through panel discussions, breakout sessions and networking opportunities, attendees have the opportunity to share knowledge, gain inspiration and make new connections to help build a strong pro bono practice and network.

ANNUAL PRO BONO AWARDS

Our annual pro bono awards (lawworks.org.uk/awards) recognise and celebrate achievement in legal pro bono undertaken by firms and organisations (large and small), in-house teams and individuals, and the dedication and commitment of the legal sector to positively impact individuals and communities. Members of LawWorks are eligible to nominate themselves or their volunteers for an award.

LAWWORKS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL STUDENT PRO BONO AWARDS

Our student awards (lawworks.org.uk/student-awards) celebrate the exceptional contribution of law students and law schools to pro bono legal advice.

The winners of the LawWorks and Advocate Law School Challenge, which raises funds for both charities, are also presented with an award at the event.

DEVELOPING AND BUILDING CAPACITY

LawWorks helps its members through:

- Implementing robust eligibility checks and application procedures to ensure that opportunities are matched with volunteer lawyers with relevant experience
- The LawWorks team being available to assist with any issues that may arise in relation to the delivery of pro bono advice / our Programmes
- Understanding that lawyers' capacities constantly change, and so volunteers are able to select cases only as and when they have the capacity to do so
- Continuously evaluating experiences of our services to develop and improve what we do

13
training sessions, developing the legal knowledge of hundreds of volunteers in 2024

UK PRO BONO PORTAL

Our award-winning UK Pro Bono Portal (the 'Portal') is a digital platform that connects our members with pro bono opportunities, in one place - efficiently, simply and securely.

The LawWorks' programmes' pro bono opportunities are uploaded onto the Portal, with weekly email reminders notifying registered users of current opportunities. Users then indicate which cases they would like to take on and are allocated available matters.

In addition, members can express an interest in pro bono opportunities from advice agencies, law centres and other participating organisations that are advertised on the Portal.

WINNER
Disruptive Technology of the Year
Legal Innovation Awards 2022

DIGITAL SERVICES

We work with our members to encourage and develop the application of technology to pro bono legal advice, and explore the potential to enhance (and better coordinate) existing pro bono projects.

TRAINING

We provide a suite of specialist resources, including regulatory guidance. We also facilitate the delivery of training in social welfare law and professional/ advice skills to equip volunteers with the confidence and competence to provide pro bono legal advice. There is access to member only online training, resources, videos and other information.

Volunteers for certain LawWorks programmes are given access to Lexis+ to assist their pro bono work.

In addition, we hold events throughout the year which bring together key stakeholders and partners in the pro bono and advice sector - forums for members, round tables for clinics as well as the annual LawWorks Pro Bono Awards and the Attorney General and LawWorks Student Pro Bono Awards.

INSURANCE

Insurance is available for the programmes and pro bono volunteers we directly support, such as our Secondary Specialisation projects, and for eligible in-house lawyers whose organisations are Members for our pro bono programmes.

In addition, we can support Member's own specific registered pro bono projects at our discretion and when insurance is not otherwise available.

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

We provide regular news and information bulletins to our members, keeping you up to date with the latest developments across the wider advice and access to justice sectors.

LawWorks Cymru

We are pleased that currently LawWorks membership is free if your head office is based in Wales.

LawWorks Cymru supports a network of independent pro bono clinics across Wales, as well as working on improving engagement with the Not-for-Profits Programme and Free Legal Answers programme in Wales, and facilitates training and engagement events.

LawWorks Cymru works with a range of stakeholders, including legal teams, legal aid providers, law schools and charities to identify and support opportunities for pro bono volunteering. In addition, LawWorks Cymru hold the Secretariat for the Pro Bono Committee for Wales (jointly with Advocate).

Joining as a member in Wales includes all LawWorks membership benefits including: volunteering on our programmes, assistance in setting up and supporting pro bono initiatives and/or clinics, accessing LawWorks training and ongoing support and nominating for our annual pro bono awards (which include a 'Best Pro Bono Contribution in Wales' category).

CARDIFF HOMELESSNESS CLINIC

Clive Thomas, a solicitor from Watkins & Gunn and then President of the Cardiff & District Law Society, approached LawWorks Cymru after becoming aware of the significant increase in people living on the streets in Cardiff.

LawWorks Cymru organised a steering meeting three homeless charities to discuss the need for legal help, practical issues that might be faced, venues, safeguarding, insurance, volunteers and training. LawWorks subsequently ran a recruitment event and training for legal volunteers.

Clive Thomas (3rd left), along side staff and volunteers from The Wallich, USW and LawWorks at the launch of the clinic

"Thanks to the help and support of LawWorks, Cardiff Lawyers Care has made an impact by helping a number of people experiencing homelessness..."

Cardiff Lawyers Care

The clinic was launched in 2019 at the Wallich in Cardiff with a fortnightly drop-in service. Legal advice is offered on housing, family law and welfare benefits for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Cardiff area. LawWorks Cymru has set up a steering group of key stakeholders to support the clinic.

Pro Bono Case Studies

NOT-FOR-PROFITS PROGRAMME – "NUMBER CHAMPIONS"

About: Number Champions is a charity dedicated to improving the educational and life chances of children who struggle with maths. They train volunteers to go into state primary schools and work with children aged 6 to 8 on a 1:1 basis every week, using games and other creative activities to help them to overcome the 'maths barrier'.

Case: Number Champions approached LawWorks as they wanted to obtain legal advice on the requirements for validly entering into a contract. The matter was taken on by a LawWorks member law firm.

Resolution: Number Champions said that working with the volunteer lawyers was *"… an excellent experience. They asked insightful questions to make us think through what we really required. The process was efficient, effective and friendly" and will allow them to "improve operational efficiency…[which] will make the charity's operating model more robust".*

The LawWorks member said **"***It is the opportunity to work on matters such as this – where we can collaborate with and make practical and substantial contributions to genuinely transformative organisations like Numbers Champions – that means [we] always looks forward to working with LawWorks".*

SECONDARY SPECIALISATION – "MARIA'S STORY"

About: 'Maria', who is originally from Mexico and in the UK on a visa, was employed as a nanny and domestic worker by a family.

After 2 months, the family dismissed her without giving her notice pay or her last two weeks wages. They had also been paying her below national minimum wage for the length of her employment.

Case: When Maria sent her ex-employers a letter to formally ask for her owed wages, they threatened to report her to the police and falsely accused her of damaging their property and traumatising their daughter. Maria was very worried about the affect this might have on her visa and about navigating the legal system alone, especially as English is not her first language.

With the help of LawWorks Unpaid Wages volunteers, Maria was able to take her ex-employees to the Employment Tribunal. Due to the complexity of the case, LawWorks solicitor volunteers were also assisted by a volunteer barrister through Pro Bono Connect, who provided advocacy at the Tribunal.

Resolution: Maria was awarded £4,679.89 for unpaid wages, notice pay and holiday pay and for compensation for unfair dismissal and the failure to provide a written contract and payslips.

Maria said *"I am absolutely delighted by the result LawWorks got me. Without the volunteers' legal knowledge, I never would have known everything I was entitled too, and I would not have had the confidence to fight in the way that they have for me. Getting this money has taken so many worries off my mind, and I am so happy justice has been done"*

Membership Fees

Our membership fee is an annual fee and the prices listed are for joining in 2026.

The fees vary by type, size and location of organisation and factors such as the number of fee earners or lawyers based in England and Wales. There are a number of categories, including for in-house teams, smaller firms, legal aid firms and not-for-profit organisations and charities. If you join part way through a calendar year, the membership fee will be for a pro rata amount for the remainder of the year.

FIRMS WITH THEIR HEAD OFFICE IN LONDON

Very large firm, 1000+ fee earners	£11,000 + VAT
Large firm, 501 - 1000 fee earners	£7,500, + VAT
Medium/large firm, 301 - 500 fee earners	£4,500 + VAT
Medium firm, 101 - 300 fee earners	£3,000 + VAT
Medium/small firm, 51 - 100 fee earners	£1,250 + VAT
Small firm, 21 - 50 fee earners	£925 + VAT
Very small firm, up to 20 fee earners	£125 + VAT

FIRMS WITH AN ENGLISH REGIONAL HEAD OFFICE

Very large firm, 500+ fee earners	£3,750 + VAT
Large firm, 301 - 500 fee earners	£2,500 + VAT
Medium/large firm, 101 - 300 fee earners	£925 + VAT
Medium firm, 51 - 100 fee earners	£500 + VAT
Small firm, up to 50 fee earners	£125 + VAT

INTERNATIONAL FIRMS

International firm 40+ fee earners	£3,750 + VAT
International firm, 21 - 40 fee earners	£2,500 + VAT
International firm, up to 20 fee earners	£1,250 + VAT

IN-HOUSE TEAMS

In-house teams, 40+ lawyers	£1,250 + VAT
In-house teams up to 40 lawyers	£625 + VAT

LEGAL AID FIRMS

Legal aid firms, 50%+ income Legal Aid contracts	£125 + VAT

FIRMS WITH A WALES HEAD OFFICE

We are pleased to be able to offer free membership of LawWorks Cymru to organisations with a head office in Wales.

ADVICE AGENCIES/NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

Not-for-profit organisations	£60 + VAT

OTHER MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Educational institutions with 3 or more sites	£1,250 + VAT
Educational institutions with less than 3 sites	£500 + VAT
Public sector body	£125 + VAT

The income from membership, and the involvement and 'in kind' support of our members, makes a vital contribution to our work. We are also kindly supported by the Law Society of England and Wales, and we receive funding from trusts, foundations, individual donations and sponsorship.

We are registered with the Charity Commission under our legal name: the Solicitors Pro Bono Group.

Contact us

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

membership@lawworks.org.uk

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website: LawWorks.org.uk

LinkedIn: LinkedIn.com/company/LawWorks

Bluesky: LawWorks.bsky.social

WAYS TO SUPPORT LAWWORKS

There are many meaningful ways to support LawWorks beyond becoming a member. As a charity, we rely on voluntary contributions to sustain and grow our vital services, and every act of support makes a real difference.

You might consider making a one-off or regular donation, taking on a challenge event like a skydive, or bringing colleagues together to fundraise as a team. You could also help raise our profile by sharing our work, attending events, or becoming an ambassador for our charity. And for those looking to make a lasting impact, leaving a gift in your will ensures your support continues for generations to come. However you choose to get involved, your contribution helps us extend access to justice to those who need it most.

To find out more, please contact fundraising@lawworks.org.uk

www.lawworks.org.uk

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