



Pro Bono  
Conference

## The Clinics Programme

### About LawWorks

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

At LawWorks, we encourage, facilitate, support and celebrate the contribution of pro bono by solicitors, law students and the wider legal pro bono community across England and Wales. Pro bono is not an alternative to legal aid – but it makes an important contribution to accessing legal information, advice and representation.

LawWorks is a membership organisation, supporting volunteers from over 150 law firms and legal teams across England and Wales. Our members play an invaluable role in extending access to justice to those in need of legal advice through their membership fees and pro bono volunteering. By providing this support, our members make a significant difference to individuals and local communities across England and Wales.

Involvement with the LawWorks Clinics Programme and support from the Clinics Team does not require LawWorks membership.

## About the Programme

The LawWorks Clinics Programme provides support and assistance to a network of independent free legal advice clinics across England & Wales, supported by volunteer solicitors.

We also help to set up new sustainable clinic partnerships between law firms, in-house legal teams, law schools and advice agencies to help address unmet legal need in the community.

Clinics on the LawWorks Clinics Network generally provide free initial advice to individuals who cannot afford to pay for legal services and are not eligible for legal aid. Some clinics also assist individuals with form-filling, case work and representation. Clinics cover a wide range of legal issues, often including housing, employment, consumer rights, welfare benefits, family and small claims.

Thousands of solicitors, trainees and law students volunteer across the LawWorks Clinics Network; however, more volunteers are always needed.

The LawWorks Clinics Team can help match volunteer solicitors with suitable existing clinics on the network. The team can also work with law firms to help them develop a new pro bono clinic suitable to their requirements.

Solicitors can support clinics on the LawWorks Clinics Network through:

**Clinic Volunteering:** delivering free legal advice in person or remotely, usually in partnership with community organisations or universities.

**Supervision & Mentoring:** supporting law students, trainees and junior solicitors who are also involved in clinics.

**Clinic Development:** helping to establish and grow clinics, ensuring they can meet local community needs.

313

clinics registered on the  
LawWorks Clinics Network in  
2024.



## How does it work?

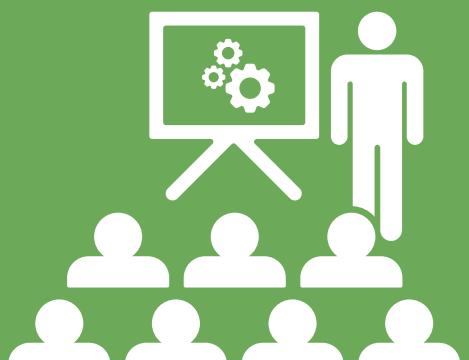
1. Local partners (such as community groups, advice agencies or universities) work with LawWorks to establish or host a clinic.
2. Volunteer solicitors (sometimes with support from law students, paralegals or trainees) provide initial advice to clients on a pro bono basis.
3. LawWorks provides guidance, resources, training and ongoing support to clinic coordinators and volunteers.
4. Clinics can operate in-person, online, or in hybrid formats depending on local needs.
5. LawWorks monitors and evaluates the network, sharing good practice and helping clinics adapt to emerging needs.

## How we help you

- Finding appropriate pro bono opportunities with clinics.
- Guidance, templates and resources to help set up and run a clinic.
- Training and networking opportunities for clinic coordinators and volunteers.
- Ongoing support from the LawWorks Clinics team, who are available to advise on clinic management and operational issues that may arise.
- Access to the wider LawWorks pro bono community for collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
- A focus on flexibility: volunteers can commit to clinics in line with their capacity and expertise.

**66,000+**

**people helped by clinics on the  
LawWorks Clinics Network in 2024.**



## Examples of clinic volunteering in practice

### In-house solicitors

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) Pro Bono Group is a strong advocate for pro bono work and advertises available opportunities monthly, including the ability to be an advisor at the Waterloo Legal Advice Service (WLAS). Through this, people are able to get connected with WLAS and begin the process of becoming involved as an advisor.

WLAS operates their service every Thursday evening, and each advisor is expected to come once a fortnight. We see a variety of different concerns brought in by clients within the Waterloo area – common legal issues include employment grievances, tenancy/housing issues, and local council disputes. Before becoming an advisor, volunteers shadow another advisor for a number of sessions – usually three, but it can be as many as one wants before they feel comfortable doing it themselves. In addition, at each session there are two mentors available, who are highly experienced practitioners, for advisors to speak with and get views on any issues they are less familiar with or want a second opinion on. Clients are given an appointment slot and are seen by advisors as when available – typically an advisor would see two to three clients a night.

For qualified lawyers, being an advisor at WLAS provides a great opportunity to keep our legal knowledge sharp and to use our legal skills in a different way to that at the FCA. It provides challenge by requiring us to step outside of our usual areas of practice and expertise, broaden our legal skill sets, explore new areas of law, and engage directly with clients - opportunities that are not within our day-to-day role at the FCA.

In addition, those who are not yet qualified, such as paralegals and trainees, are able to be advisors, and given the support of a supervisor, which is an invaluable way to gain some practical legal work experience.

The most rewarding aspect of volunteering with WLAS is the opportunity to support individuals who may not otherwise have access to legal assistance. It is a meaningful way to give back to the community and contribute to promoting access to justice.

## **Medium law firm**

Hodge Jones & Allen's (HJA) ethos is rooted in fighting for people's rights, which they advance by actively supporting pro bono clinics on the LawWorks Clinics Network. These clinics offer vital free legal advice to the public.

To get started, HJA liaised with clinic managers to tailor their support to each clinic's model. Their lawyers have advised on diverse issues including Personal Injury, Contested Probate, and Protest Law. University students involved in the clinics receive training from HJA, participate in remote advice sessions, and draft client advice notes under supervision, gaining valuable experience and soft skills.

The clinics strengthen community ties and ensure clients access specialist legal expertise. For HJA, the initiative aligns with their corporate social responsibility goals and boosts staff morale through meaningful collaboration. While launching clinics posed challenges, particularly navigating university bureaucracy and limited resources, HJA encourages others to adapt their support to fit with a clinic's existing model and persevere with energy and determination.

## **Large law firm**

In 2018, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer LLP partnered with national youth homelessness charity Centrepoint and a global financial institution to launch the Connect Legal Advice Clinic. Open to young people who have been homeless or are at risk of homelessness, the Clinic provides free, one-off legal advice on issues such as employment, housing, civil liberties and consumer matters.

It operates most Wednesday evenings via telephone, with papers shared in advance and calls lasting 30–60 minutes, led by one volunteer from HSF Kramer and one from the financial institution. Each case is followed by a written advice email within a week. The Clinic has given around 40 young people each year access to high quality free legal advice, while also benefiting volunteers by exposing them to new areas of law and client experience.

A steering committee of representatives from all three partners meets several times a year to review impact, supported by Centrepoint's Legal Clinics Coordinator, who oversees referrals and attends sessions.

## Impact

By volunteering with clinics on the LawWorks Clinics Network,  
you contribute to:

- Supporting individuals who would otherwise struggle to access legal advice.
- Strengthening local communities by improving access to justice.
  - Building confidence and knowledge in clients to better understand their rights.
- Increasing the capacity of pro bono clinics to support more individuals.

To find out more about the Clinics Programme visit:  
[www.lawworks.org.uk/solicitors-and-volunteers/get-involved](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/solicitors-and-volunteers/get-involved)  
or email [clinics@lawworks.org.uk](mailto:clinics@lawworks.org.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.



LawWorks.org.uk  
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