



# **LAWWORKS CLINICS NETWORK REPORT JANUARY 2018 - DECEMBER 2018**

**PROVISIONAL ANALYSIS OF CLINIC  
ACTIVITY ACROSS THE LAWWORKS  
CLINICS NETWORK BETWEEN  
JANUARY 2018 AND DECEMBER 2018**

**LAWWORKS, JUNE 2019**



# A growing network

LawWorks supports and develops a growing network of legal advice clinics across the country. Setting up and supporting free legal advice clinics has been a long-standing feature of LawWorks' work and the LawWorks Clinics Network now totals 261 clinics.

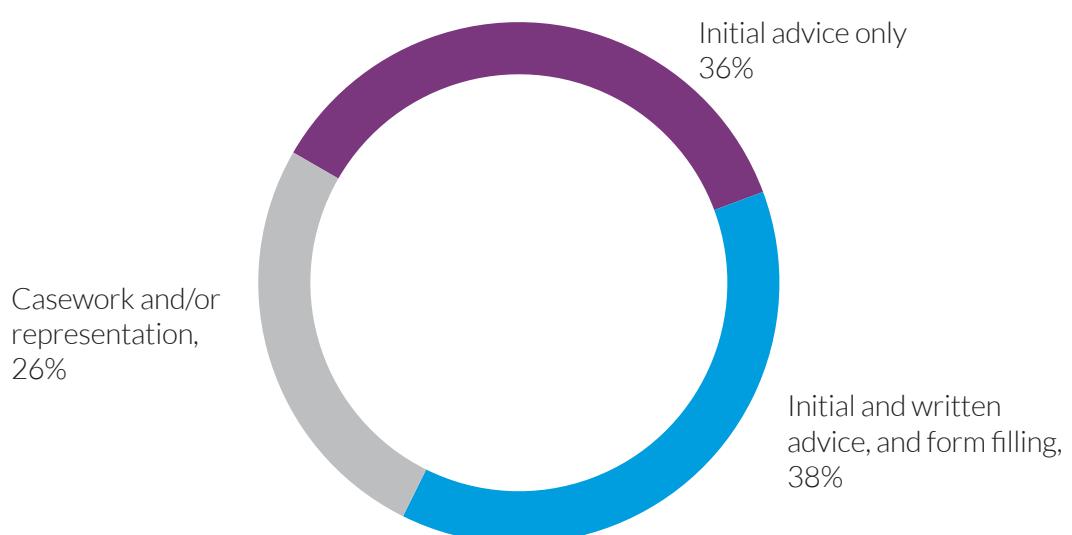
While each clinic is unique, they generally involve a partnership bringing together a mix of law schools, law firms and legal teams with advice agencies and other charities to support individuals in the local community.

LawWorks is able to help with the development of new clinic services from initial idea stage through to piloting and launch, as well as providing ongoing support and consultancy to established clinics. In 2014 there were 175 clinics registered on the LawWorks network, so it is heartening to see that number increase by over 80 the last 5 years. This rise in clinic activity has co-incided with a period of severe public spending cuts for free legal advice and support, with a near 80% loss of funding and capacity in social welfare and family law services. We would emphasise that with unmet need for legal advice estimated by researchers to be as high as one in three people, development of pro bono capacity and new clinics alone cannot be expected to address the challenges of unmet need.<sup>1</sup>

Clinics in the network have traditionally focused on providing initial advice to clients. As our outcomes data suggests, where clients have straight-forward issues an initial advice session can provide the reassurance needed for the client to take the issues forward themselves, and strengthen legal literacy and legal capability. Initial advice also provides a space to identify client eligibility for legal aid support, and often clinics provide the gateway to access local legal aid or other funded in-depth support.

The number of volunteers in clinics has been growing every year, as has the diversity of the network and the number of clinics in Wales and the English regions. We increasingly see clinics offering services that go beyond initial advice and able to deal with more specialist areas of law.

**Figure 1: Types of clinic service**



<sup>1</sup> See LawWorks' response to the LAPSO Review (2018) [www.lawworks.org.uk/about-us/news/lawworks-submission-laspo-implementationreview](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/about-us/news/lawworks-submission-laspo-implementationreview)

## Geographical spread

The challenge of legal “advice deserts” has been well documented, including by the Law Society’s “End Legal Advice Deserts Campaign”.<sup>2</sup> This has found, for example, that over a third (37%) of the population of England and Wales live in a local authority area with no housing legal aid providers.

Pro Bono clinics cannot (and should not be expected to) fill these gaps in legal aid, either in areas where there is insufficient legal aid supply, or for matters for which there is no legal aid because the legal issues are out of scope. However, it is encouraging to see that clinics are spreading out across the English regions and Wales, often focussing on areas of high unmet need.

**Figure 2: Map of England and Wales clinics**



<sup>2</sup> [www.lawsociety.org.uk/policy-campaigns/campaigns/access-to-justice/end-legal-aid-deserts](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/policy-campaigns/campaigns/access-to-justice/end-legal-aid-deserts)

## A volunteering network

Across the growing network clinics reported that during 2018 there were 10,383 volunteers; this included students, qualified lawyers and other volunteers. Family law was the most common area of advice followed by employment law.

**Figure 3: Volunteering and advice**



Most commonly  
advised on area



Family Law

## Clinics in action

Clinics come in different shapes, sizes and partnerships – there is no “typical” clinic on the LawWorks network, so we have compiled some examples of the work of a few selected clinics as case studies.

### Anglia Ruskin Peterborough Family Law Clinic

The Anglia Ruskin Peterborough Family Law Clinic opened in February 2019 at the Peterborough campus, providing family law advice one morning per month. It was set up in response to a request from the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Women’s Consortium, who contacted LawWorks about the high need for family law advice in the area, given the reduction in legal aid availability. Four solicitors volunteer supported by Anglia Ruskin students.

The clinic gives students an opportunity to gain practical legal experience, carrying out fact-finding interviews with clients who are often in stressful situations, and observing qualified solicitors providing advice in real-life scenarios. Students also assist with form-filling for court applications for child arrangements.

***“We have worked on 17 cases and had 15 students take part in the clinic since February, and we hope that these numbers will grow”***

### Bristol Law Centre

Bristol Law Centre (BLC) runs a range of different clinics using pro-bono support from firms across the city. They run a weekly Employment and Family clinic from the Law Centre whereby clients can make face-to-face advice appointments with lawyers. They also run a weekly Virtual Law Clinic delivered both from the Law Centre and the individual volunteers’ offices. This provides advice in family and employment to clients of partner organisations in North Somerset and South Somerset.

BLC also support a civil litigation scheme working at the Civil Justice Centre, with pro-bono lawyers providing telephone advice on appeals. They are currently developing an appointment service, both face to face advice or by telephone/skype, on civil litigation matters for clients from Bristol and the wider South West region.

### East Greenwich Legal Advice Clinic

East Greenwich Legal Advice Clinic (EGLAC) was launched during National Pro Bono Week in 2017 as a self-supporting service open to individuals and small companies/charities in south east London. The clinic is based at Christ Church (Church of England parish of East Greenwich) as part of the church’s social justice outreach work. EGLAC hold fortnightly clinic sessions and keep running costs to a minimum. The service is delivered by eight lawyers, supported by administrative volunteers from the Church and local community.

EGLAC handle immigration, family, housing, welfare benefits, civil litigation and probate matters. Two lawyers, who are retired practitioners, have capacity to take on matters beyond advice at clinic sessions and have been involved in representation of clients in various tribunals and litigation in county and magistrates courts.

EGLAC are also involved in initiatives with the Ministry of Justice and other bodies looking at ways of improving access to justice and support for individuals navigating the legal system.

## Queen Mary College

The Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre (QMLAC) is a free, student led community law centre in the heart of east London which processes 2000 enquiries a year, and provides legal advice to around 350 clients a year. The Centre engages over 100 volunteer lawyers from 25 different firms and chambers. Around 300 undergraduate law students are engaged in pro bono activities through the Centre, with Student Advisers acting under the supervision of volunteer lawyers to complete client cases. The current supervising solicitor has previously been a volunteer student adviser.

QMLAC also runs two Street Law Programmes: SPITE for Schools, which sends teams of three undergraduate students into local secondary schools to run sessions on revenge porn, and the "I am You" project, which sees ten students run multiple sessions for 8-9 year olds on the principles of the Equality Act.

## University of Manchester Justice Hub

The innovative Justice Hub was established by the University of Manchester to synchronise, co-ordinate and expand the extensive pro bono work being undertaken. It comprises the award winning Legal Advice Centre; Manchester Free Legal Help; Dementia Law Clinic; Miscarriages of Justice Review Centre; Legal Tech and Access to Justice; Legal Advocacy Support Project; Student Pro Bono Society; and Vacation Scheme. Since January 2018, over 1,000 clients have been assisted through the Justice Hub.

The hub is a pioneering partnership between the public, charitable and private sectors with a collaborative approach involving students and academics working collaboratively with law firms, barristers' chambers, law centres and a medical charity. Currently 138 students participate in the work of the hub, which has been recognised for outstanding community engagement. The University of Manchester are investing in pro bono provision and clinical legal education, and in April this year moved the Justice Hub into easily accessible premises in a terraced property over 3 levels on Waterloo Place, Oxford Road.

## North East Law Centre

Based in Newcastle, North East Law Centre (NELC) is a charity established in 1978, and focusses most of its work on areas no longer funded by legal aid. Services are targeted at groups of the community who have the greatest need, such as the unemployed and low paid, people with disabilities, BME communities, and women and children.

NELC currently run a range of legal advice and representation projects, with the support of volunteer legal professionals, in asylum, immigration, family, welfare benefits, employment and education law, as well as targeted community legal education. Between March 2017 and April 2018 1,195 clients were given free advice, equating to over 4,560 advice hours, saving clients over £542,000 in legal advice fees, and achieving over £20k in financial gains.

## Poplaw (Tower Hamlets)

Together with LawWorks, the law firm Dentons set up the first Poplaw clinic in January 2006. The drop-in clinic operates out of the Idea Store in Poplar every Tuesday evening, 50 weeks per year, and offers free legal advice to individuals who may not otherwise be able to access or afford it. Poplaw is hosted by Dentons solicitors with administrative support from law students from Queen Mary University. Dentons' lawyers have provided over 17,000 hours of free legal advice to Tower Hamlets residents, representing £7.6m in chargeable time and significantly increasing access to justice in the local community.

Following the overwhelming success of the Poplar Poplaw clinic, in 2017 a second legal

advice clinic was launched at the Idea Store in Whitechapel every Monday evening. Both clinics advise on most areas of law, except for criminal, family and immigration law. The most common subjects advised on include debt, housing, consumer issues, employment and welfare benefits.

## **Sheffield Hallam University**

The Refugee Family Reunion Clinic, based within the Sheffield Hallam University Law Clinic, started in March 2016 opening for just three hours on one evening a week in term time. It was launched in response to the refugee crisis and local needs, for those struggling to reunite with loved ones they were forced to leave behind when having to flee their home countries. This was partly due to the withdrawal of legal aid from many aspects of immigration and asylum related work, and also to the desperate lack of specialist legal representation available in the area.

Also based at Sheffield Hallam University is the Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice, a hub for social justice and human rights work which offers a portfolio of pro bono and access to justice charity projects. Other projects include a Criminal Appeals Clinic, a Law Clinic and Helpdesk support with the Personal Support Unit at the Sheffield Combined Court.

*“With the help of external and internal funding we have been able to open for longer and supervise many more students than before. All of our students work alongside accredited specialist immigration advisors and we have worked on 151 separate applications.”*

## **Staffordshire University Legal Advice Clinic**

Staffordshire University Legal Advice Clinic (SULAC) launched in October 2018. In its first year the clinic made appointments for 187 clients of which 96 related to family law enquiries. Students provide letters of advice on most areas of law except immigration, criminal law and welfare benefits.

SULAC also operates various satellite clinics aimed at the most vulnerable, but also public sector workers who also experience problems accessing justice, particularly relating to family matters. Clinics operate in the community in Stoke and Stafford, as well as weekly and monthly clinics to support staff at a local prison, hospital and military base. Virtual priority links were also provided to a local MP and Macmillan Cancer Support.

The Law School have noted that the clinic has been a great success and has improved students' resilience, confidence and practical skills. Feedback from the clients and community partners has been excellent.

## **Suffolk Law Centre**

Suffolk Law Centre was set up by Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE) and launched in spring 2018, with the support of the Suffolk and North Essex Law Society.

The Legal Advice Clinic offers a weekly pro bono advice service by appointment through a triage system, offering appointments in family, employment, housing, immigration, personal injury and general law. In 2018-19, 1,399 initial enquiries were recorded, of those 442 clients had one-to-one advice, either in person or by telephone, and 429 were signposted to other services, including our discrimination casework service, *Tackling Discrimination in the East*.

Faced with increased waiting lists in specific areas, such as family law, Suffolk Law Centre have devised new projects to help meet demand, including extended appointments to support clients in completing forms for child access procedures and, more recently, the Family Support Helpdesk at the Magistrates Court.

## Clinics in Wales

**Swansea Law Clinic** was established at the start of the 2017/18 academic year, based at the Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law. Advice is provided in landlord and tenant disputes, freehold and leasehold disputes, relationship breakdown, employment issues, consumer and contract issues, equality issues, and welfare benefits. As well as appointments at the Swansea University site, the clinic runs outreach services at various locations throughout Swansea, including Maggie's Centre, Singleton Hospital, as well as trialling skype interviews. They also operate a helpdesk at Swansea Civil Justice Centre.

Students participate in the clinic's work on an accredited basis with twenty credit modules available in clinical legal education on Mondays during term time. The clinic also runs an extra-curricular summer law clinic during July and August.

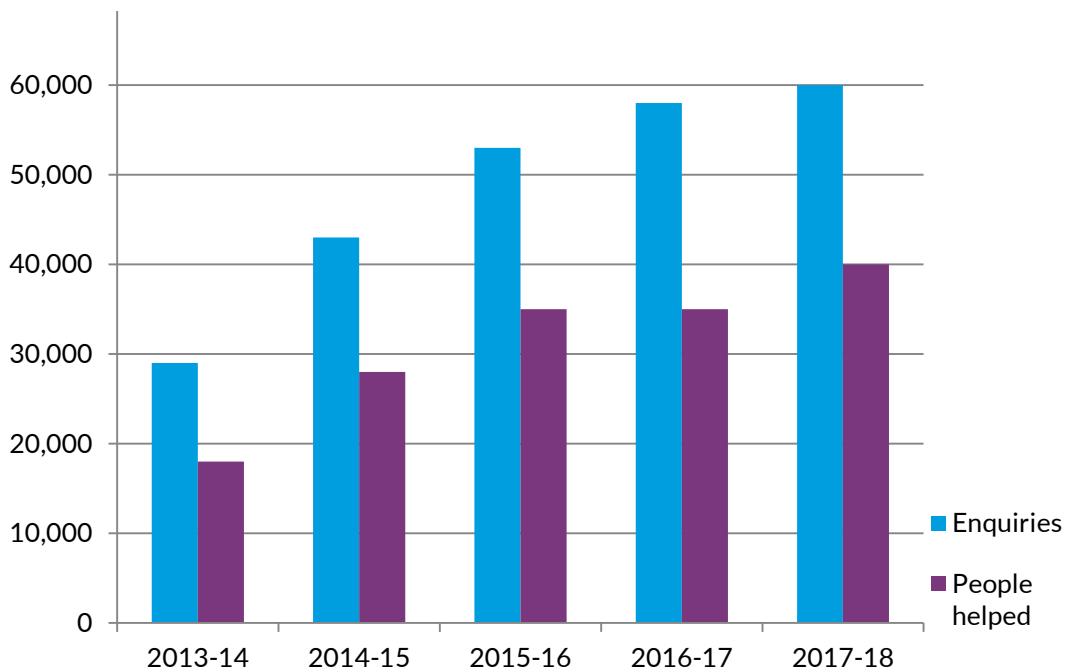
**The University of South Wales** (USW) Legal Advice Clinic provides advice and assistance in a number of areas including employment, family, consumer, litigation and housing law. Students are supervised by 6 of the law school's lecturers, who are all qualified solicitors. The clinic was established in 2013, and was originally situated on the University's Cardiff campus. In 2017 the clinic relocated to USW's Treforest campus in Rhondda Cynon Taff where the law school is based. This has enabled the clinic to become an integral part of the law curriculum.

The clinic is open all year round. Students conduct full casework and support clients at court hearings, and take part in a number of collaborative partnerships which help meet local community needs. New projects set up over the last year include a family law clinic at Risca Citizens Advice, a litigation clinic, an Employment Litigants in Person Support Scheme Student Triage Service at Cardiff Employment Tribunal, and a general legal advice clinic at Citizens Advice in Pontypridd. These have enabled the clinic to play a crucial role in widening access to justice for the Valleys and South Wales communities. The clinic assisted 50 clients during April 2017-March 2018, increasing to over 160 from April 2018 - March 2019.

## Clinics data

Every year, LawWorks requests data in order to gather an accurate account of pro bono activity in clinics across England and Wales. Year on year, our data has shown an increase in the number of enquiries received, and an increase in the number of clients that clinics have been able to provide support to.

**Figure 4: Trends 2013-18**



Source – LawWorks Clinics Network reports for 2013-14<sup>3</sup>, 2014-15<sup>4</sup>, 2015-16<sup>5</sup>, and 2017-18<sup>6</sup>

In early 2018, LawWorks undertook a review of our data collection process and we are currently trialling a new approach to reduce the reporting burden on clinics. A key change has been to move to a single collection period based upon the calendar year, January to December, decreasing the frequency of our data requests. We also now ask for less information (data points) on clinic activity to be collected.

**Figure 5: Data collection process**

LawWorks Clinics Data Collection Process	
Old system	New System
20 Questions	15 Questions
60 Data points	40 Data points
Twice yearly collections	Single annual collection
Two reporting periods April – September October - March	Single reporting period January – December + New support tools

3 [www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/Lawworks-clinics-network-report-Apr-13-Mar-14.pdf](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/Lawworks-clinics-network-report-Apr-13-Mar-14.pdf)

4 [www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/LawWorks%20Clinic%20Network%20Report%202014-15.pdf](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/LawWorks%20Clinic%20Network%20Report%202014-15.pdf)

5 [www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/LawWorks%20Clinics%20Network%20Report%202015-16.pdf](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/LawWorks%20Clinics%20Network%20Report%202015-16.pdf)

6 [www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/LW-Clinics-Report-2017-18-web.pdf](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/LW-Clinics-Report-2017-18-web.pdf)

The signs are encouraging in that we are achieving a higher data return rate overall, with 83% of the network returning data. As this is the first year of our new data collection process, LawWorks will not be publishing a full Clinics report this year because we are still testing and refining the new system. Moreover, the questions asked are framed differently under the new collection system, and the data collection period has changed, so there is limited comparability with previous years' data.

We are however able to share some provisional findings from our data collection from clinics for the period between January to December 2018.<sup>7</sup>

During 2018 there were 75,907 separate enquiries received by clinics across the network.

**Figure 6: Total enquiries**



Not all enquiries will result in the provision of legal advice and support. Each clinic will have policies and procedures in place for identifying the types of enquiries that require advice and, if advice is not needed or available, then appropriate information, signposting or referral may be provided. Also, some matters may be beyond the capacity of clinics to deal with.

Advice or other support was given in response to 63% of enquiries (47,941). Of those helped, 75% received legal advice.

Clinics have also provided some commentaries on the data recording process, and these suggest it is not always straightforward to disaggregate between enquiries, clients helped, advised or referred onwards. Different clinics have different intake systems.

*"We have no figures on email enquiries and have a drop-in which largely accounts for the discrepancy in enquiry numbers compared to numbers helped"*

*"There were a number that we couldn't get hold of when returning their call or solved their problem whilst waiting for an appointment."*

*"We are an end-to-end legal advice clinic; therefore our focus is on providing extensive support throughout their matter; in addition, the figures do not paint an accurate account of our work as a lot of our casework involved helping existing clients."*

<sup>7</sup> This is an aggregation of April-December 2019 data collection with a pro-rata of from September 2017-March 2018 collection period

*“Not helped” figures made up of clients who did not arrive or respond to appointments or clinic communication estimated as regards enquires.”*

*“We don’t keep records of how often clients return. The figures I have are the total number through the door, I would expect all get legal advice.”*

*“We have not included those we couldn’t help and referred on. We have also not included the queries we received directly at the office following enquires with the local Citizens Advice.”*

*“Figures based on incoming queries, amount of people signposted.”*

We will reflect on the issues raised to think about how we can better help clinics capture essential information on how clients present to clinics, and the support they are able to access. We are treating the 2018 reporting process as a transitional year for the purposes of data collection. A key issue going forwards is understanding the client journey.

We have further broken down the proportion of enquiries by location or type of clinic (i.e. Law School based, court based, advice agency based, etc); this is shown below.

### **Figure 7: Enquiries by clinic type**

Clinic type	Number of enquiries
Citizens Advice	19,569
Court-based	545
Law Centre	9,723
Law Firm	1,958
Law School / College	25,734
Other non-profit	18,378
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,907</b>

### **English regions and Wales breakdown**

With clinics in the network spread across England and Wales, the following presents information by geographical area. It includes an analysis of the work being conducted by ‘national’ clinics – those which provide services to individuals across England and Wales regardless of where the client is based, often via online or telephone advice clinics (e.g. national advice lines for specific areas of law).

There is considerable variation across the regions, which reflects the concentration of clinics seen in different parts of England and Wales. Over 40% of enquiries received and advice given across the network occurs in London.

**Figure 8: Enquiries and total number of people helped (by English regions and Wales)**

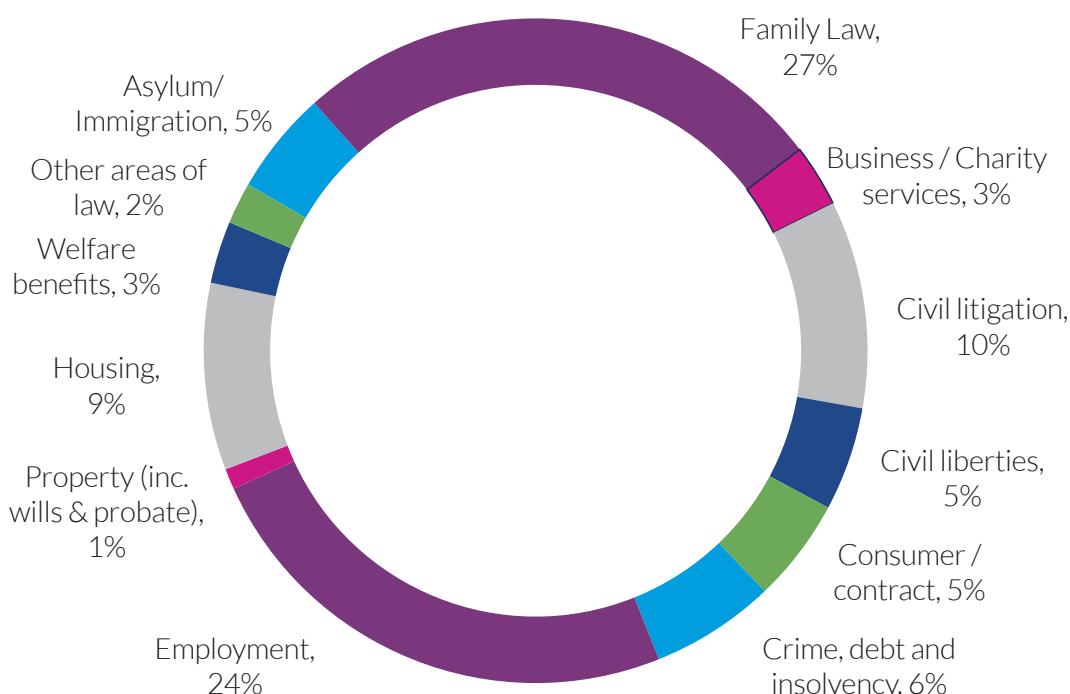
	Number of enquiries	Total number of people helped
National	24,232	15,467
East	5,006	4,153
East Midlands	2,087	987
Greater London	25,180	16,461
North East	1,523	678
North West	3,399	2,227
South East	2,901	1,548
South West	2,811	1,004
Wales	3,109	2,438
West Midlands	2,186	1,485
Yorkshire & Humber	3,473	1,493
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,907</b>	<b>47,941</b>

## Areas of law

The legal problems that bring people to pro bono clinics can be very diverse, but are predominantly civil, social welfare and family law problems. Each clinic decides which areas of law it will offer advice on, informed by local legal need, its own priorities, and the expertise of supervisors and volunteers. Some clinics are specialist in nature and will narrow their offering to advice within a particular area of law. Other clinics are more generalist in scope, offering advice across a broad spectrum of legal issues.

We have broken down clinic enquiries recorded over 2018 by category of law.

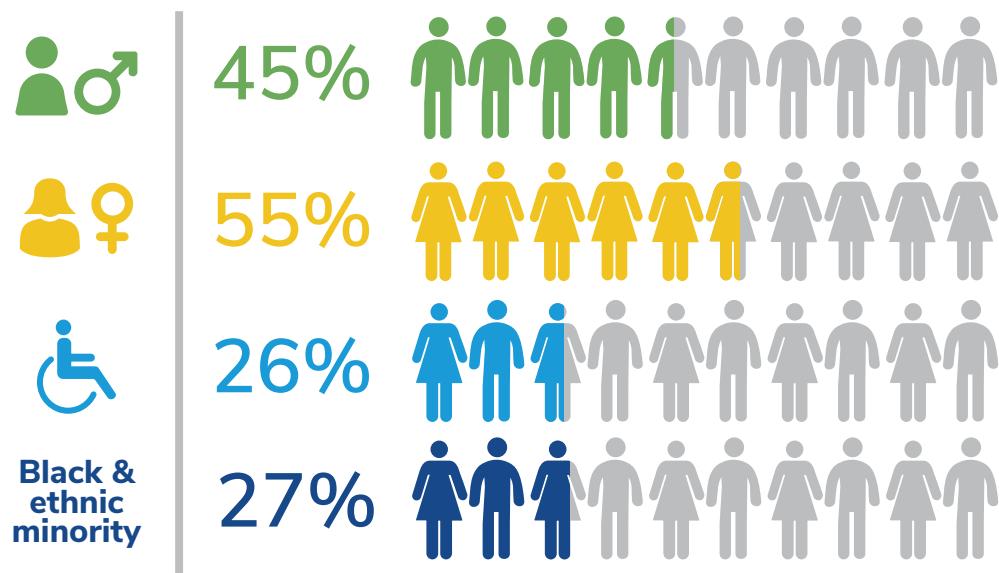
**Figure 9: Enquiries by categories of law**



## Client demographics

LawWorks asks clinics to collect anonymised information on the clients they help in order to identify who is benefiting from their services, and for the purposes of equalities monitoring.

**Figure 10: Client demographics by gender, disability and ethnicity**



## Client outcomes: The impact of advice for clinic clients

A key objective of reviewing our monitoring practices and approach to data collection has been to shift the focus from measuring the 'outputs' of clinic services – for example how many clients have been seen or enquiries responded to – to measuring 'outcomes' that clinics are able to deliver for the clients and communities which they serve.

We reported on the "Better Information Project" in our 2017-18 clinics report, and the client feedback and outcomes framework that LawWorks developed with the support of an advisory group and an independent consultant. We invited clinics in the LawWorks network to take part in the project, and to encourage clients to participate (with informed consent) in feedback calls about their experience of seeking help from a clinic. As a result of this project, we now have nationally representative and statistically significant data on the impact of attending pro bono clinics and the outcomes achieved.

**Figure 11: Participation in client outcomes project**



Based on a total number of 35,008 clinic clients who received advice during the previous year's reporting period,<sup>8</sup> the feedback from our group of 209 respondents gives us a robust and statistically significant national sample, with an assumed 6.8% margin of error.<sup>9</sup>

The data provides valuable insight which is highly relevant to ongoing policy debates about "what works" in early intervention, especially when it comes to measures of:

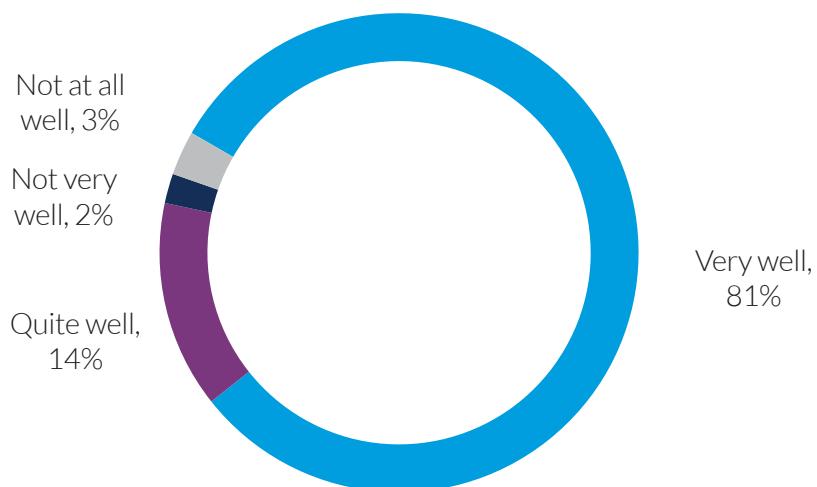
- Legal outcomes
- Capability outcomes
- Health and Wellbeing outcomes

Empirical evidence on outcomes is likely to impact on how public resources are allocated in the future. As the Government's "Legal Support Action Plan" concludes: "There is research evidence demonstrating how problems, if left undiagnosed and unresolved, can escalate, cluster, and lead to damaging cycles that are hard to break. However, there is limited comprehensive research as to what works best, when, and for whom. Further, whilst it is often suggested that early intervention leads to cost savings, the financial and economic benefits of early advice are difficult to quantify with accuracy. We appreciate the complexity of the 'what works' question across diverse problem types and groups of the population, which is why we want to pilot and evaluate several different forms of early legal support."<sup>10</sup>

An important finding at the 'intake' stage is that clients felt listened to and understood by those volunteering at clinics.

### **Figure 12a: Clients understood in clinics**

**95% of clients felt the person they had contact with at the clinic listened to them very well or quite well**



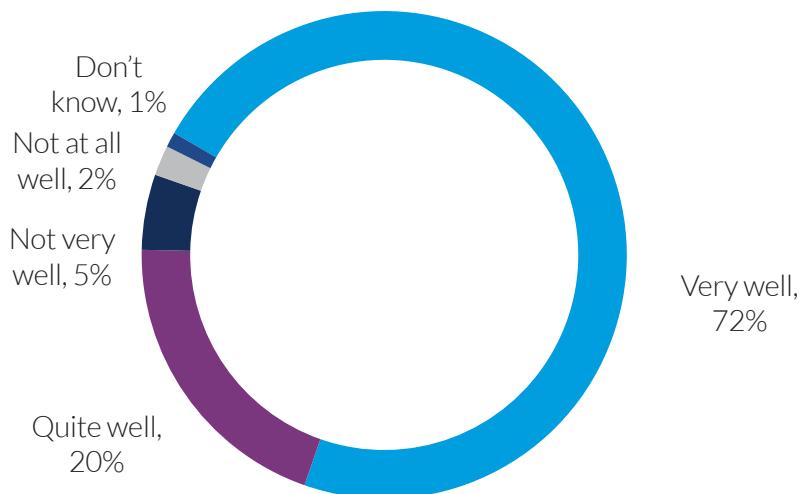
8 Clinics report 2016-17, [www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/LawWorks%20Clinics%20Report%202016-17.pdf](http://www.lawworks.org.uk/sites/default/files/LawWorks%20Clinics%20Report%202016-17.pdf)

9 Assuming a random sample was selected, we can report with a 95% confidence level, and a confidence interval of  $\pm 6.8$ . This means that we can be 95% confident that an observed statistic (e.g. 50%) would lie between 43.2% and 56.8% if all 35,008 clients had been interviewed. In other words, to extrapolate these findings nationally, you would need to assume a 6.8% margin of error.

10 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/legal-support-action-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/legal-support-action-plan)

**Figure 12b: Clients understood in clinics**

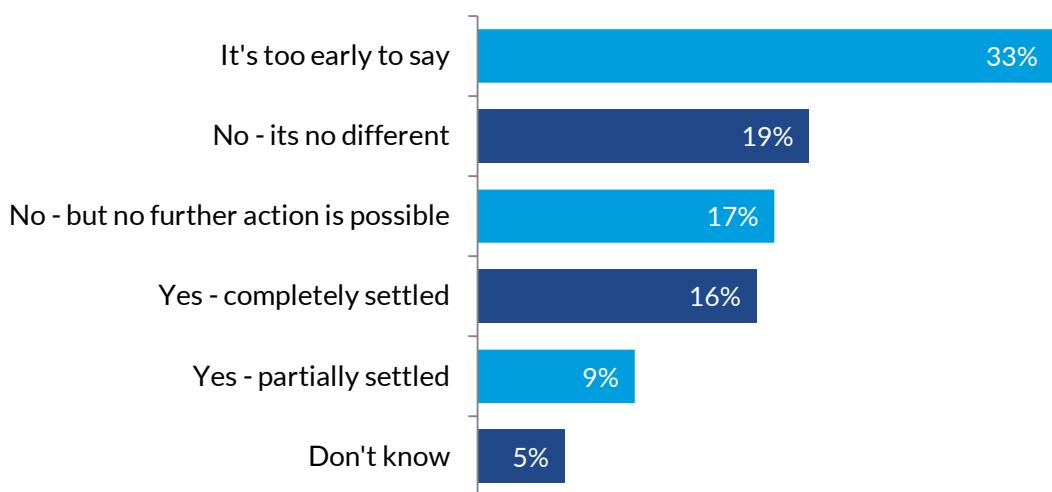
**92% of clients said their legal problem was understood well or very well**



## Legal outcomes

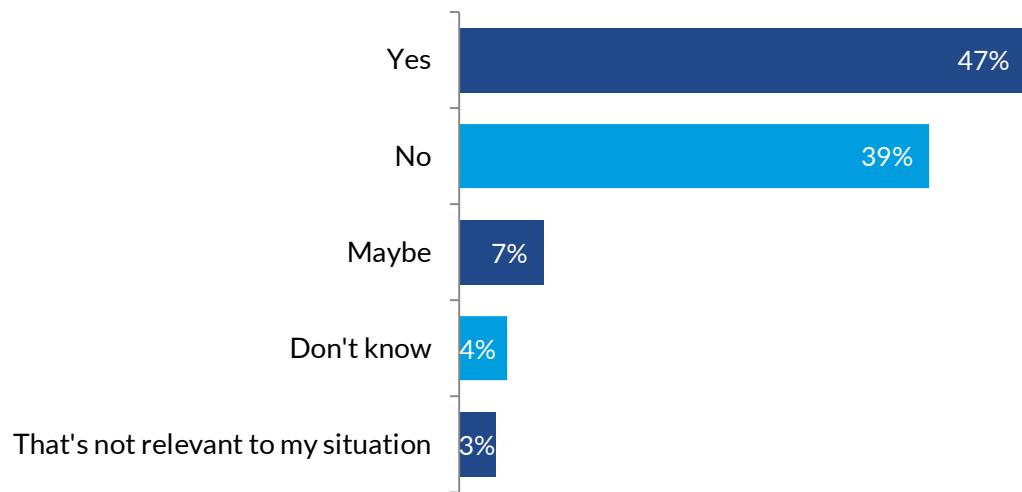
Visiting the clinic was very much the start of a process of resolving legal problems. For the majority it was too early to tell whether the matter had been resolved – this is perhaps unsurprising as client interviews typically took place six weeks after they had completed consent forms. For a quarter of clients the matter was completely or partially settled following the advice.

**Figure 13: Have clients' problems been resolved?**



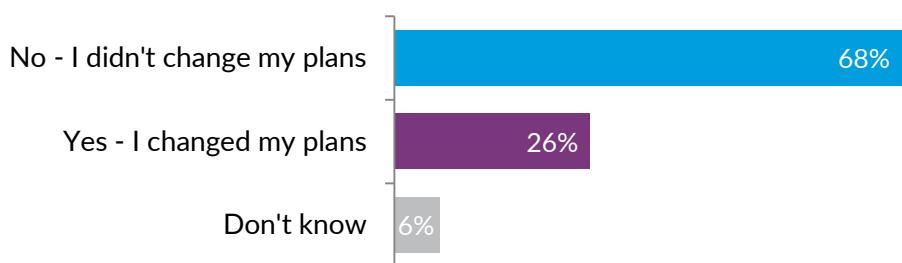
Before getting support from the clinic, nearly half of the clients interviewed were thinking of going to court or tribunal.

**Figure 14a: Going to court or tribunal (before advice)**



A particularly interesting finding is that of those who said they were thinking of going to court or tribunal, a quarter changed their plans following advice.

**Figure 14b: Going to court or tribunal (after advice)**



## Capability and wellbeing outcomes

The highest scoring responses to questions were those that involved capability and wellbeing, with clients also expressing how much better and confident they felt following advice.

*"Mentally and emotionally, it's helped me a lot."*

*"The biggest impact has been peace of mind."*

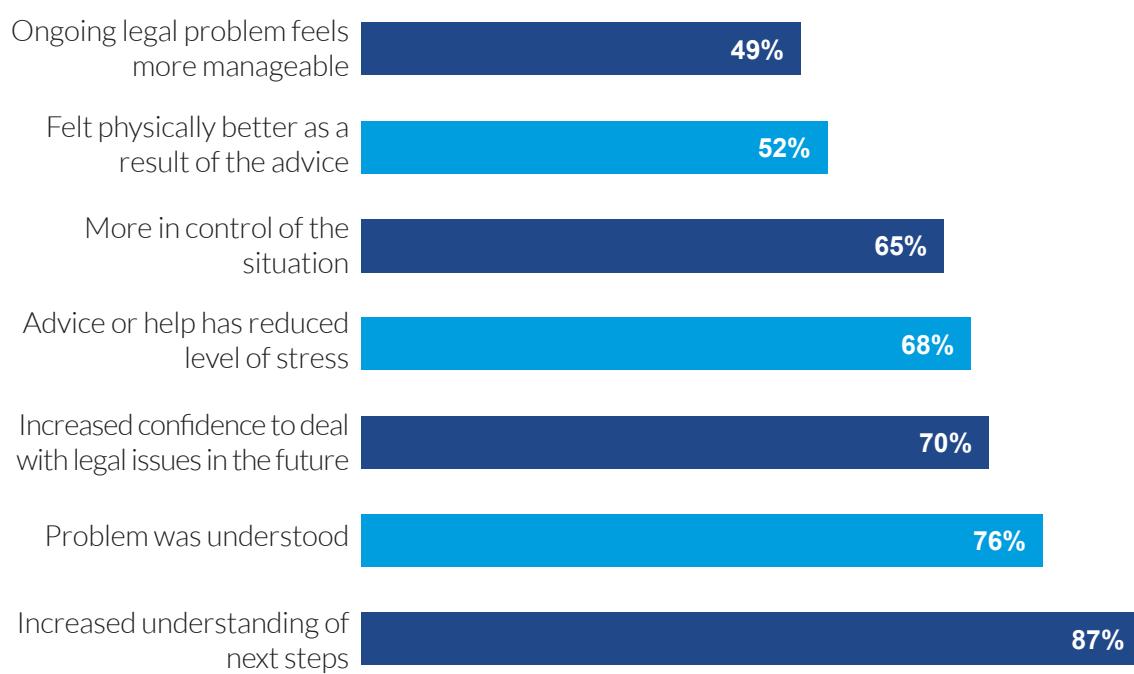
*"They gave me confidence to fight for my rights."*

*"My stress levels and my anger disappeared after the advice was given to me."*

*"Just being able to talk through my situation and have a level of understanding of it, and understanding my rights, was fantastic and really alleviated a lot of the anxiety."*

The scores on the impact of the advice can be seen below - they show a high proportion of clients reporting improved confidence, understanding and wellbeing.

**Figure 15: Impact of advice - capability and wellbeing**



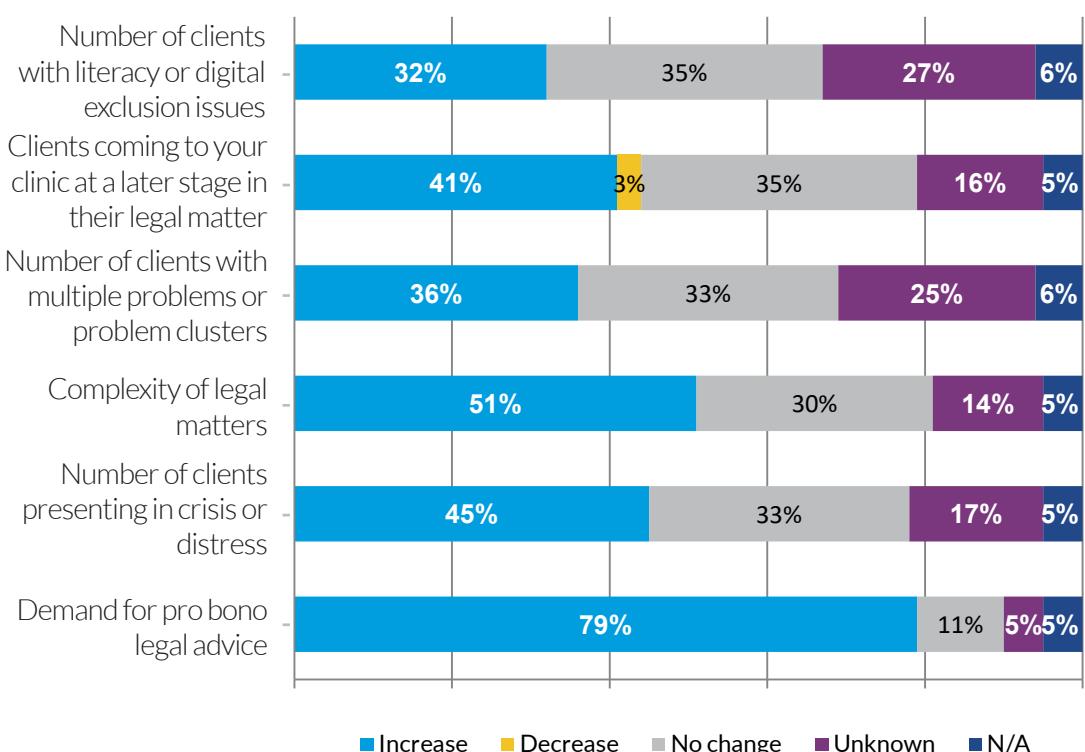
## Clinic feedback

LawWorks also undertakes an annual survey of clinic coordinators about the trends and challenges clinics have been experiencing. The survey aims to help us to understand the main challenges that clinics are facing and the support from LawWorks that is most valuable and needed.

When asked about challenges facing clinics, based on responses to date “increasing demand” and “complexity” were the highest responses recorded.

**Figure 16: Trends as seen by clinic co-ordinators**

**Clinic co-ordinators were asked to indicate which of the following trends their clinic had experienced over the last year.**



## Feedback for LawWorks

LawWorks will continue to develop its support for clinics. We see the first ever clinics conference as an opportunity to discuss with clinic co-ordinators the support we can offer and what more is needed to help develop capacity across the network.

In response to the clinic coordinators survey on what clinics most need and value from LawWorks, online resources and training, and opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge were most in demand.

**Figure 17: Feedback for LawWorks**

### What areas of support and engagement do you most value from LawWorks?

