



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Legal Advice Clinic

Leicester Law School

Legal Advice Clinic and Pro Bono

Annual Report 2024-25



Table of Contents

Clinic Director’s message	3
Meet the Clinic Staff	4
Positive Client Feedback.....	6
Legal Advice Clinic and Pro Bono - The Year in Numbers.....	7
• Community & Collaboration	7
• Student Engagement	7
• Client Impact.....	7
• Fundraising & Social Impact	7
Spotlight on the Pro Bono Projects.....	8
• Legal Advice Clinic.....	8
• Projects which collaborated with the Clinic to do client work.....	8
• Student-Led Projects	10

Clinic Director's message

What a year! We have seen more clients, and provided more student opportunities, than ever before. As we grow, we are able to spend more time meeting people who need our help in the community. In doing so, we have strengthened key community relationships, with New Dawn New Day, Shama Women's Centre, the African Caribbean Centre, and the local court, and have developed new collaborative relationships with Women 4 Change, BWS Solicitors and Shakespeare Martineau. Empowering clients to move forward will never grow old for us! Key highlights this year include the Clinic supporting claimants to secure substantial compensation from the Windrush Compensation Fund (£120,000 to date), and finding safe accommodation for a family experiencing homelessness. We are proud to have launched an immigration clinic, one of very few university clinics to do so. Feedback from our clients continues to be excellent.

Unsurprisingly given the impact we make on our clients' lives, these experiences affect our students deeply. Clinic students describe how the work ignites a passion for justice, or for a particular area of law. They say Clinic is a highlight of their time at Leicester, using giant words such as 'transformative' and 'life-changing'. Clinic students consistently report an improvement in their professional and legal skills and their confidence. We track Clinic students' academic progress against their non-Clinic peers, and have noticed that Clinic students achieve better overall degree grades.

Our hard work has been rewarded this year by an addition to our trophy cabinet! The Clinic team won the Teaching Award at the University's Citizens Awards, for inclusive and innovative teaching on our annual Summer Vacation Scheme. We were finalists in the national LexisNexis Legal Awards, and the Leicestershire Law Society Awards.

In 2025-26 we look forward to welcoming new colleagues, developing new community collaborations, and giving students a taster of how junior professionals use AI.

Laura Bee, Legal Advice Clinic Director

August 2025



Clinic Team celebrate Teaching Award win in the University's Citizens Awards

Meet the Clinic Staff

These are the staff members who contributed to the clinic in 2024-25.

Laura Bee

Associate Professor and Director of the Legal Advice Clinic

Laura has developed the Clinic since joining in 2018. She's interested in inclusive teaching. She deals with a range of client queries, and is module convenor of the Clinic modules. Laura is a solicitor, with expertise in civil litigation.



Afsaan Sharif

Supervising Solicitor

Afsaan (pronounced 'Afsha') joined the Clinic in 2002. She has developed an immigration clinic which, offering regulated immigration advice under the Immigration Advice Authority. She is keen to grow immigration outreach work. Afsaan supervises the Justice for Windrush and Refugee Family Reunion projects and is Module Convenor for the Law in the Community Pro bono module.



Poonam Chudasama

Supervising Solicitor

Poonam joined the Clinic in September 2022 and became the supervisor for the Family Clinic. Poonam sees clients in the Clinic, and also runs outreach services including the Court Clinic where she advises unrepresented parties at Court. Poonam is interested in supporting students with careers and technology.



Edward Jones

Associate Professor and Supervising Solicitor

Edward is qualified as a solicitor in England & Wales and an Associate Professor in Leicester Law School. His Clinic supervision focuses on employment law, contractual disputes and supporting small and social enterprises with their legal needs. He has worked in professional and academic legal education since 2000 following a career in a commercial litigation context. Outside of the Clinic, Edward teaches employment law, commercial property, real estate law and business law in a professional legal context and is the Law School's admissions tutor for LLB and LLM degree programmes.



Suzanne Xiao

Clinic Coordinator

Suzanne joined the Clinic in 2024. Suzanne assists with the daily operations of the Clinic, helping clients with their legal needs and supporting the team of law students and professionals in their work.



Steven Evans

Associate Professor and Supervising Solicitor

Steve studied law at the University of Cambridge and qualified as a Solicitor. For twenty-two years he was a partner at a law firm in Warwickshire, dealing with Private Client and Property work. He has taught at the University of Leicester since 1992, where he is an Associate Professor, and he also teaches for the University of Law. He has taught on their Legal Practice Course, Graduate Diploma in Law, Professional Skills Course, and Solicitors' Qualifying Exam courses. He remains a consultant solicitor in legal practice, dealing with trusts, wills, and inheritance tax matters.



Emily Wertans

Housing and Homelessness Consultant and PhD Researcher

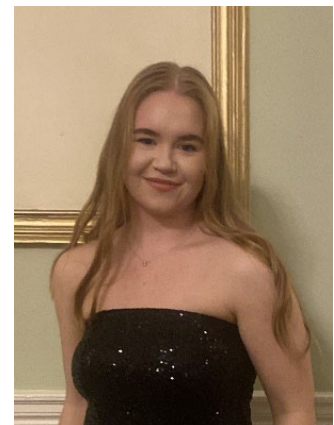
Emily first joined the University of Leicester in 2014 as a student, as has worked in various Schools, in research and teaching capacities since 2020. Emily supports the Clinic's outreach work, providing vital practical help to people with disrepair issues, and who may be experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. Her research specialism is in identity-based harassment. She is passionate about using research evidence to inform interventions and to work with affected communities to generate change.



Ellie Lambert

Student Director 2024-25

Ellie joined the clinic in 2023 and became the Student Director for the year 2024-5. She really enjoys family law and has mainly focused on advising family clients. She developed many valuable skills whilst working as a Clinic advisor such as researching and client interviewing techniques that the curriculum does not tend to teach.



Positive Client Feedback

'Legal Advice Clinic at University of Leicester led by Supervising Solicitor Afsaan Sharif is an impeccable example of legal out-reach community support. The Leicester Law School student team, under Afsaan's experienced and knowledgeable supervision have been most helpful in my mother's struggle to link her passport details to her UKVI account. The team's enthusiasm and drive to help has been most endearing to see. I am truly grateful to Afsaan and her team in their pro-bono guidance to my mother navigating the complex myriad of UKVI account technical issues.'

'I just wanted to send my sincerest thank you for both the session and the write-up of the time and discussions, it has been so invaluable to me. It was a very professional, insightful and well conducted meeting that I am very grateful and inspired by.'

'I would be grateful if you could pass on my sincere appreciation to the team for their support during this difficult time. I truly value their time and efforts.'



Edward Jones and Ellie Lambert handing over funds raised for a local flood-prone town

Legal Advice Clinic and Pro Bono - The Year in Numbers

Community & Collaboration 🧑🏫

- 12 partner organisations and law firms
- 599 LinkedIn followers — [Follow us for updates](#)

Student Engagement 🎓

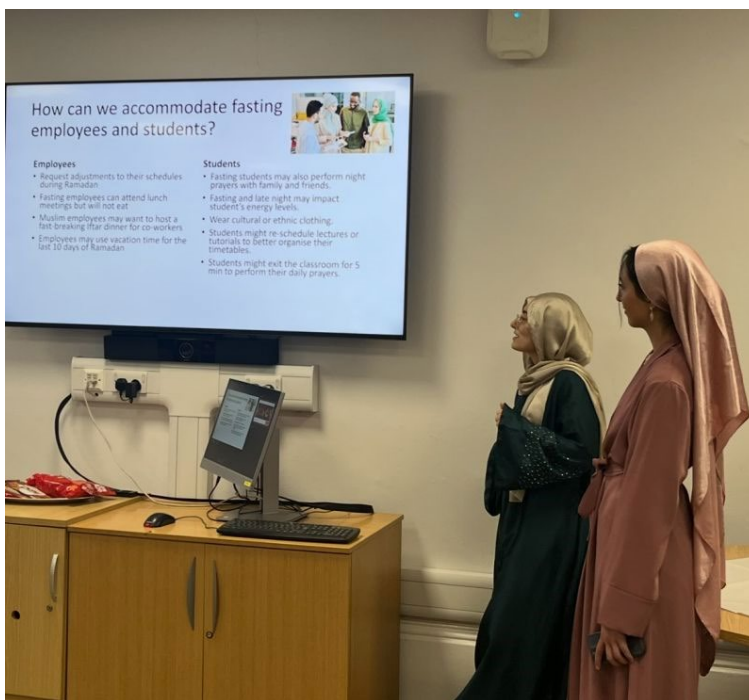
- 337 students involved in pro bono activities
- 146 students gave direct legal advice
- 445 student opportunities created

Client Impact ⚖️

- 420 clients advised through clinic services

Fundraising & Social Impact 💰

- £400+ raised for access to justice and charitable causes



Students Jasmin Saury and Nimra Muhammad Abdurahmanova present at the Clinic's Iftar dinner during Ramadan

Spotlight on the Pro Bono Projects

Legal Advice Clinic

In the Legal Advice Clinic, law students give free legal advice to the public, supervised by qualified solicitors.

We work on campus, online, and in the community.

Students who take part in Clinic activities have opportunities to develop a range of professional skills including legal research, interviewing, giving advice, professional writing, teamworking and problem solving. Students report that the client contact in particular gives them more confidence in themselves and their abilities, and a better understanding of what life would be like as a junior lawyer.

It has been a busy year. The immigration clinic launched, and all the other services have continued to grow. We launched collaborations with BWS and Shakespeare Martineau, making use of their specialist expertise to complement what we can do in-house. This gives students the opportunity to work with lawyers in their law firms, as well as on campus or in the community with us. We have hosted events, including a panel event with the Leicestershire Junior Lawyers Division, and a 'Meet and Greet' event to introduce the clinic to the new Head of Law School. Our new Celebration Committee held our first Iftar dinner during Ramadan. We also raised money for a local town prone to flooding, in aid of the Clinics Global Action Day.



Chloe Shipley from BWS solicitors and Poonam Chudasama, Clinic supervisor, discuss the family law collaboration

Projects which collaborated with the Clinic to do client work

Legal Support Students

The Legal Support Students support unrepresented court users in the courts in Leicester. They are trained to attend Court as McKenzie Friends, supporting parties in their family hearings. This is essential work, originally requested by the court in 2017, in response to the increasing number of unrepresented litigants following drastic cuts to legal aid.

Students learn about family law and the court process, and see law in action in the Court. They develop the ability to think on their feet and solve problems.

Windrush Compensation Project

The Windrush Compensation Project raises awareness of the Windrush Scandal and supports potential claimants who want to find out whether they are eligible for compensation under the Windrush Compensation Scheme for the hardships they have suffered. If so, students on the project support them to gather their evidence and make a claim, supervised by qualified solicitors.

This helps students to think like a lawyer, and understand how to meet clients' needs when dealing with sensitive and often traumatic details.

The students took part in Home Office Advocacy training workshops this year to improve their casework skills, and they took part in some fundraising for the African Caribbean Centre.



Windrush Home Office Advocacy Training in the Clinic

Against Violence & Abuse (AVA)

AVA students take part in family law drop-in sessions with the Clinic family law supervising solicitor at Shama Women's Centre, and New Dawn New Day.

The AVA research students have published blogs about relevant legal and socio-legal issues.

These activities gives students an insight into the demands of client-facing work, and provide opportunities to think about how to write about difficult issues in an engaging and understandable way, appropriate to their audience.

Student-Led Projects

Street Law

Street Law students come up with imaginative ways to get information about the law across to the public. This year, they have been focusing on podcasts and tiktok educational videos, raising awareness about saving water as part of the Clinics Global Day of Action in November, and fundraising.

Street Law students learn how to adapt complex legal content to suit different audiences, and develop research and public speaking skills. Street Law is supported by Nataly Papadopoulou.

Project Light

Project LIGHT supports vulnerable and homeless individuals in Leicester, helping at food kitchens, supporting local charities and support groups while producing educational and informative content for social media.

This year, the Project LIGHT team has contributed through donations to The Bridge Homeless Shelter, hosted a Headshots event with the Immigration and Asylum project, organised a Charity Games Night with university law societies, and created infographics to raise awareness about homelessness.



Pro Bono photography event to raise funds for charity

Miscarriages of Justice

The Miscarriages of Justice Project aims to aid prisoners who have maintained their innocence throughout their trial and conviction. The students raise awareness of justice-related issues on social media. This project is supported by Jessica Ritchie.

AMICUS

The AMICUS project supports the mission of the death row charity Amicus through both research, awareness raising and fundraising.

The research teams conducted third-stage case reviews, scrutinizing legal documents for error, inconsistency, or unfair representation in active AMICUS cases. The campaign team promoted awareness of AMICUS and legal rights across campus, engaging both law and non-law students through events, myth-busting content, and fact-sharing via social media. The AMICUS students also hosted a collaborative campus talk with AMICUS ALJ and led discussions examining the death penalty and its representation in modern media.

The Insight Project

The Insight Project inspires and leads young minds to discover their passion for law.

The students have been involved in the School Tasking initiative, linked to the comedy TV show Taskmaster, going into primary schools to deliver fun, engaging and very interactive sessions about the law. They have launched fundraising initiatives, including a school supply donation bank and a bake sale. Their podcast series continues to grow.



School Tasking logo

The SEND Project

The SEND project focused on accessible legal education, advocacy, and fundraising for IPSEA, the Independent Provider of Special Education Advice, a charity that offers legally-based information, advice, and support to help children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) get the education they are legally entitled to. This year, the students hosted two successful fundraising events, launched a podcast amplifying disabled voices, and shared legal research to promote awareness of SEND rights.

Senior Solutions Project

The Senior Solutions Project aims to empower seniors with the legal and social knowledge needed to navigate key challenges. This year, the students developed and distributed accessible pamphlets on elder abuse, helping seniors recognize signs, understand their rights, and access support.

Legally Green

The Legally Green Project raises awareness of environmental issues and engages the student body in climate change activism. This year, the students produced a leaflet for Global Action Day on the legality of magnet fishing, in collaboration with other projects. They organized Go Green Day, where they ran a stall in the SU, hosted a book swap and sale, and raised money for Greenpeace. The Legally Green project is supported by Steve Crawford.

Lawyers Without Borders

Lawyers Without Borders Student Division (LWOB-SD) contributes to the global efforts of international organisation Lawyers Without Borders by engaging in pro bono legal research and fundraising to support human rights and access to justice. This year, the project's focus was on fundraising for socially equitable organisations, including selling merchandise for Save the Children UK. This project is supported by Peter Cumper.

Immigration and Asylum

The Immigration and Asylum Project supports asylum seekers who lack the funds to make an asylum claim. Specifically, they help clients to look for new evidence to make a fresh claim. This helps students to think like a lawyer, and understand how to meet clients' needs when dealing with sensitive and often traumatic details.

This year, the students also hosted a photography event, and organized a seminar on converting BRP visas to eVisas under new Home Office guidelines. This project is supported by Alan Desmond.



Carlo Panara, Laura Bee, Claire Watson, Purba Audhora and Steve Evans celebrate the Clinic being named as a finalist in the Leicestershire Law Society Awards, in the Community Champion category



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