

Academic year 2024/2025



ROYAL
HOLLOWAY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

Legal Advice
Centre

Gazette

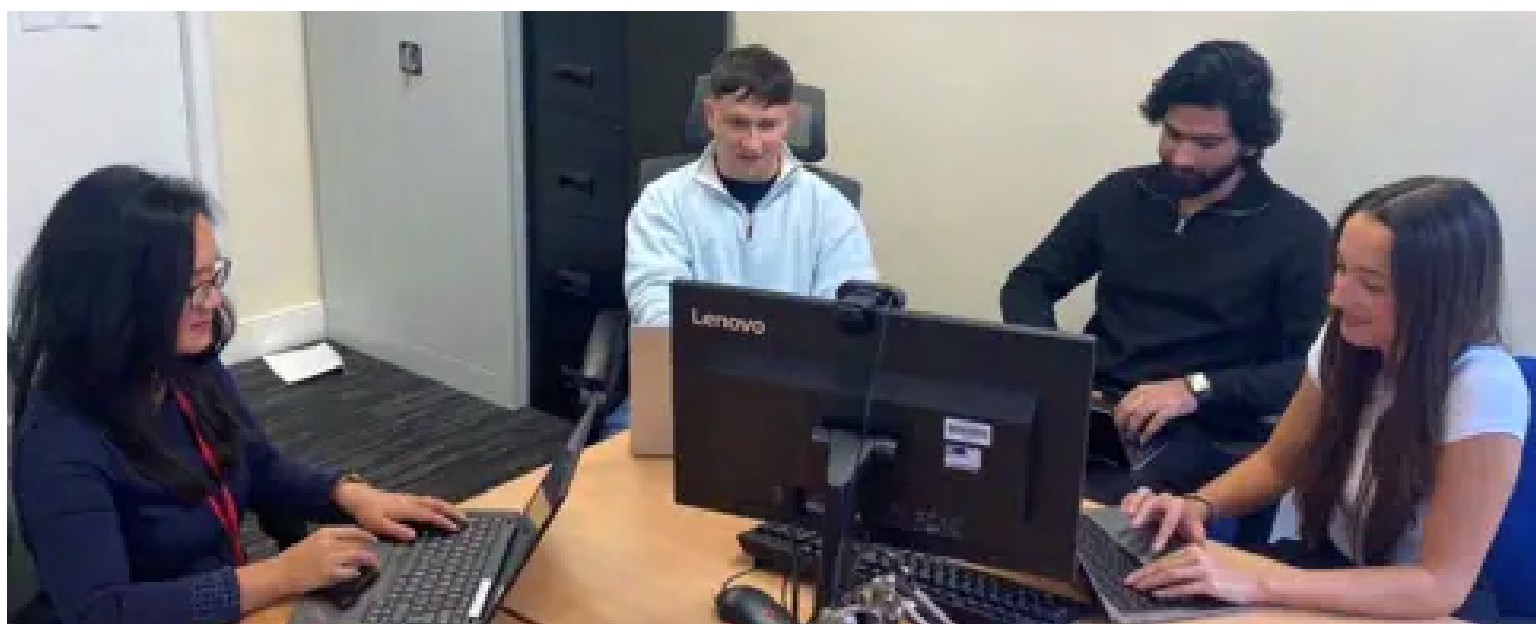




Legal Advice
Centre

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Welcome from the Director

Royal Holloway University | Academic Year 2024–2025

Welcome to the Royal Holloway University Legal Advice Centre Gazette.

This publication highlights the achievements of the Centre during the 2024–2025 academic year. At the heart of our work lies a clear mission: to promote access to justice while providing our students with meaningful, real-world learning experiences. By working directly with clients, our student advisers gain qualifying work experience, develop essential legal skills, and gain valuable insights into the realities of legal practice. They learn to manage client matters from start to finish, deepening their understanding of the responsibilities that come with a career in law.

Growing in Reach and Impact

This has been a year of significant growth and innovation for the Centre. We have expanded our services to include Personal Injury and Wills & Probate, enabling us to support a wider range of clients. With the support of our partner law firms and the dedication of our volunteer solicitors, we have provided free legal advice to clients who may otherwise be unable to access it. This year, we opened 53 client matters.

Public interest in the Centre continues to grow. From January to December 2024, we received approximately 326 enquiries, followed by approximately 200 enquiries between January and June 2025.

Student interest in joining the Centre has been exceptionally high this year, with a record-breaking 440 applications received. This reflects the Centre's strong reputation and demonstrates that students recognise the benefits of volunteering with us.



New Partnerships

This year, we are pleased to welcome Baker McKenzie as a new partner to assist with our pro bono work, particularly within our StreetLaw Programme. We are also strengthening our relationship with Thackray Williams Solicitors. I appreciate how busy private practice can be, and I am extremely grateful to all our existing and new partner law firms for their generous support.

Launch of the StreetLaw Programme

A major highlight of the year was the successful launch of our StreetLaw Programme. Students participated in weekly training and supervision sessions throughout the year before delivering interactive legal education workshops in schools and community settings. These sessions aim to demystify the law and make it more accessible to the public.

Special thanks go to Dr Sahar Maranlou and Dr Millicent Ele for their dedication and hard work in making this programme a success.

An International Reach

This year, our work extended internationally through a collaborative learning initiative with Volodymyr Dahl University in Ukraine. We were delighted to share insights into how our Centre operates and look forward to exploring opportunities for future collaboration.

Contributing to the University of Sanctuary

I was honoured to present to the panel assessing Royal Holloway's application for University of Sanctuary status. The panel expressed interest in the work of the Legal Advice Centre, and I am proud that our contribution played a part in the university receiving this important status.

Supporting the Widening Access Scheme

The Centre has also contributed to the Royal Holloway university's Widening Access Scheme this year. Our student delivered StreetLaw presentation, and I presented a seminar to participating sixth form students. It was encouraging to see that both sessions were well-received and appreciated.



Connecting with the Legal Profession

Throughout the year, our students benefited from numerous opportunities to engage with experienced professionals:

- Tim Oliver OBE, Leader of Surrey Council and a solicitor, joined us for a virtual discussion where he shared insights from his legal career and offered valuable advice.
- Retired judge Her Honour Judge Anne Molyneux MBE visited our clinic sessions, offering generous encouragement and support to our students.
- Anahita Zandi, Amy Barnard, and Anjuma Mukith from Thackray Williams Solicitors visited us on campus to share their professional experiences and career advice. Their visit inspired several of our students to apply for training contracts with the firm.

The Centre is not just about providing legal advice. It is a platform for students to network, ask questions, and learn directly from legal professionals in a supportive environment they might not otherwise access.

Work Experience Placements

The Centre supported four students in securing work experience placements with our partner law firm, Circe Law, and a further two students with the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association. As we all know, gaining legal work experience is incredibly competitive. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Circe Law and the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association for placing their trust in me to recommend our students for these placements. These valuable opportunities mean a great deal to our students and to the Centre, and we are truly grateful for your continued support.

What's Inside This Edition

In this Gazette, you will find:

- An overview of how our Centre operates
- Highlights from the year
- Reflections and blogs written by our students
- Photographs capturing our work
- Testimonials from students and clients

Thank You

Thank you for your interest in the Centre. We hope you enjoy reading about our work and the positive impact it continues to have on our students and the wider community we serve.

Thanh Pham, FHEA
Director, Supervising Solicitor and Lecturer in Law

About Our Legal Advice Centre



Our Missions

Empowering Communities Through Free Legal Advice

We are dedicated to promoting access to justice for all by providing free initial legal advice to those who need it most.

Our students gain invaluable practical legal experience, enhancing their employability while fostering a deep commitment to ethical practice and social justice.

AREAS OF LAW

We offer free initial legal advice and information to members of the public in the following areas:

1. CONTRACT, CONSUMER, AND GENERAL CIVIL LITIGATION

Contractual disputes, consumer issues, and small claims.



2. LANDLORD AND TENANT

Disrepair and issues with landlords and tenancies.



3. FAMILY LAW

Divorce, child contact arrangements, ending a civil partnership, cohabitation disputes, financial matters, and maintenance.



4. PERSONAL INJURIES

Road traffic accidents, defective product claims, accidents at work, and public place injuries.



5. WILLS & PROBATE

The general probate process, the importance of a will and the intestacy rules, the process of creating/registering a Lasting Power of Attorney.



6. GENERAL INFORMATION

Referrals and signposting for areas where we do not provide advice.



Our Legal Advice Centre has the following professional partnerships, and is grateful for the support and assistance it receives:



Partnerships & Patrons

- [LawWorks](#)
- [Duncan Lewis Solicitors, London](#)
- [Horne Engall and Freeman solicitors](#)
- [Creighton and Partners](#)
- [Zakia Khalid, Freelance Solicitor](#)
- [Circe Law](#)
- [Hodge Jones & Allen](#)
- [Baker McKenzie](#)
- [Afghanistan & Central Asian Association](#)
- [Thackray Williams Solicitors](#)
- [Councillor Tim Oliver, OBE](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#)
- [Her Honour Judge Anne Molyneux, MBE](#)





What Students gain?

What Do Students Gain from Working at the Legal Advice Centre?



01 Networking Opportunities:

Connect with legal professionals, partner firms, and peers, expanding professional contacts.



02 Practical Legal Experience:

Apply theoretical knowledge to real client cases, enhancing understanding across various areas of law.



03 Core Skills

Development of Core Legal Skills
Improve interviewing, legal research, drafting, case management, and client communication skills.



04 Reflective practice

Through reflection, students build a habit of continuous learning that is essential for personal growth and future professional development.

What Do Students Gain from Working at the Legal Advice Centre?



05 Qualifying Work Experience:

Gain work experience that counts towards solicitor qualification under the SQE route.



06 Feedback

Receive guidance and constructive feedback from qualified solicitors, fostering continuous improvement.



07 Ethical and Professional Awareness

Learn about client confidentiality, conflict of interest, and professional conduct in practice.



08 Confidence

Confidence and Employability:
Build confidence through direct client interaction and develop a professional mindset highly valued by employers.

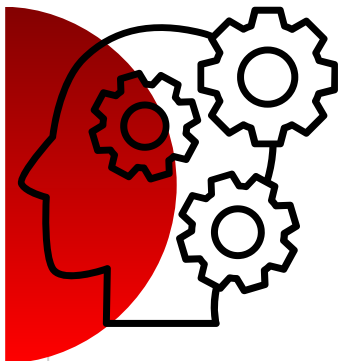
Testimonials from Student Advisers



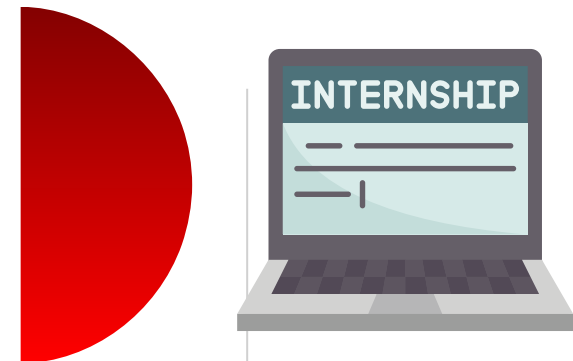
“The LAC is an excellent opportunity to develop adaptability skills and enhance the ability to think critically and respond quickly in dynamic situations with clients.”



“The LAC provides me with a multitude of valuable opportunities to observe how legal professionals engage with clients, assess their needs, and apply legal knowledge in practical scenarios, beyond my formal education.”



“Working at the LAC has been a prerequisite to the development of my critical thinking skills. If you are seeking to build confidence in your ability to think quickly and retain information accurately, this is an ideal opportunity for you.”



“I am emailing you to express my gratitude for selecting me as a Student Advisor at the Legal Advice Centre. As a result, I was able to secure a three-month legal internship with a law firm. It's unlikely that I would have got it if you hadn't allowed me to learn from you and the first-hand experience working with clients. For my third year, I would also love to be a part of the Legal Advice Centre.”

CLIENT FEEDBACK

Client K.B, October 2024

"Thank you for your time today to address my ongoing legal case.

The students appeared very confident and professional and asked appropriate and relevant questions which made the interaction smooth and pleasant."

Client C.H, December 2024:

"Thank you very much for this post-interview letter, the valuable information contained within, and for the effort you and the students have gone to on behalf of this case. Apologies I did not respond sooner, but I can confirm I read these notes (several times) ahead of the mediation, and they were a great help. In particular, I used the countersue points to strengthen my negotiating position."

Client A.A, February 2025:

I wanted to share an update with you. I've now heard back from the deposit scheme, and they have awarded me the majority of my deposit following my rebuttal and arguments—so, essentially, I won!

I also just wanted to take a moment to thank you and the team. Your support, advice, and simply being heard made a huge difference. Please do pass on my gratitude to everyone—sometimes, the underdog wins! I have no doubt they'll all go on to become incredible lawyers, fighting injustices everywhere one day. :)





🔴 CLIENT FEEDBACK

Client AD, March 2025

“Thank you for your email and all the hard work you have put into the letter. I was at a real loss, and this has provided me with helpful next steps to hopefully resolving the problem.

I really appreciate the time, effort and kindness shown from the team. I wish all the students the best in their future studies.”

Client MG, March 2025

“Many thanks for your work and your letter, really appreciate your advice. Kudos to the students involved, I'm no expert but the quality of their work is remarkable.”

Client RP, April 2025

“Thank you so much for your time in listening to me and assessing my matters.

I truly appreciate the effort and attention you've given to my concerns. “

53 CLIENT MATTERS

STUDENTS BLOGS

**In Their Own Words: Student Reflections on the Legal Advice
Centre**



[Back to team](#)

JENA NORRELL

Student Profile

What is your full name?

Jena Norrell

What year of study are you currently in?

Final Year/Graduating.

What degree programme are you studying?

Law with Criminology.

What job offer have you received, and with which firm or organisation?

Private Client Paralegal at Amicus Law.

Legal Advice Centre Experience

When did you join the Legal Advice Centre?

My first year I joined the LAC.

What motivated you to apply?

I was eager to gain legal experience during my time at university, particularly because I had no prior experience. I was also drawn to the opportunity to assist real clients from the public, which made the experience even more meaningful.

What kind of cases or legal areas did you work on?

I worked on landlord/tenant issues, disputes with contractors (building work e.c.t) private client (a will dispute issue) and family law issues (divorce).

What key legal or transferable skills did you gain from the experience?

During my experience, I was involved in opening and closing cases, carrying out client care, and received GDPR training, which emphasised the importance of data protection in legal practice. I learnt how to communicate professionally with clients, conduct conflict checks, write attendance notes, carry out legal research, and draft letters. I also observed how to liaise with other firms and had the opportunity to sit in on a client meeting involving someone I had referred from the Legal Advice Centre. This experience helped me develop key skills including effective communication, teamwork, and the ability to work independently. I also gained experience in legal drafting, client interviewing, and took on a leadership role by supporting new starters.

Beyond casework, how did the Centre support your personal or professional development?

The Legal Advice Centre has supported me in more ways than I can put into words. Thanh has been the most supportive mentor and cheerleader I could have asked for — always responsive to emails, offering one-to-one supervision, and never making any question feel too silly to ask. She consistently provided thoughtful, constructive feedback that helped me grow. Thanh has supported me through moments of self-doubt and has always believed in me — even during times when I questioned whether I should pursue a career in law at all. Without the LAC, I wouldn't have had the faintest idea about the basics and foundations of being a paralegal. The Centre is brilliantly designed to mirror the workings of a real law firm — from writing attendance notes to using professional legal vocabulary — which has helped me stand out in so many ways. I've also met some incredible people who share my interests. I made some fantastic friends, including my best friend, and connected with a diverse range of students across different year groups. It's also been an excellent opportunity for networking with other law firms and establishing connections.

Opportunities and Supervision

What specific opportunities did the Centre offer you? (e.g. client contact, legal drafting, training sessions, placements, networking)

The LAC gave me the incredible opportunity to undertake a month-long work placement at one of its partner firms, Circe Law. During this time, I was able to shadow solicitors and a trainee solicitor, gaining valuable insight into what the next steps in my legal career might look like. I even had the chance to sit in on meetings with the CEO, which provided me with meaningful experience that significantly strengthened my CV. Coming from a family with no legal background, this opportunity meant the world to me — I was genuinely moved to tears when Thanh told me I had been chosen to be recommended to Jade.



Circe Law

Wills | Probate | Trusts | Property
www.circelaw.co.uk

How did the supervision sessions – particularly those with Thanh – support your development or career planning?

The supervision sessions have been a real game changer – tell me where you can get the chance to have a one-to-one supervision session with a solicitor, especially someone as experienced and supportive as Thanh. You can't! We had constant access to this and her knowledge. Her background and guidance have been invaluable to my development.

Impact and Reflection

Now that you've entered legal practice, which skills or experiences from the Centre have proven most useful?

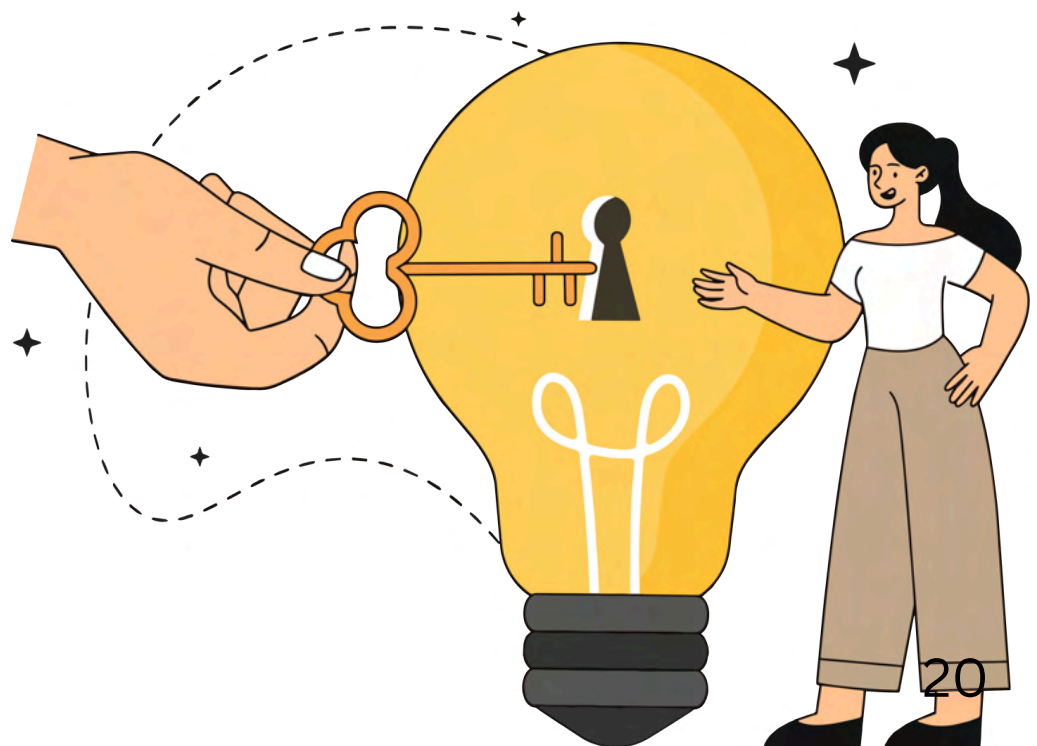
One of the most valuable skills I've gained is developing my legal vocabulary and understanding the foundational aspects of legal practice – such as knowing what an attendance note is and having the opportunity to draft advice letters supported by legal research. I would have been completely lost without this experience.

Can you share a moment during your time at the Centre that was particularly meaningful or rewarding?

I couldn't possibly choose just one moment. Being able to help someone who feels completely lost – who doesn't know where to start or what they might be facing if a claim is made against them – that's truly rewarding to me.

How did your experience help build your confidence in working with real clients or taking on responsibility?

I had never been in a legal setting before, so with Thanh's supervision, we were able to explore how to communicate effectively with clients. We also received training on GDPR and client care, which are essential in legal practice, so this was incredibly helpful.



Employability and Careers

Were there any interview questions where your experience at the Legal Advice Centre helped you stand out?

Oh yes! My favourite one... can you do a good attendance note! It's even mentioned in my work bio my time at the Legal Advice Centre. My boss also appreciated that I had experience with GDPR, which is something solicitors receive significant training in.

Did your time at the Centre help shape or confirm your career aspirations?

My time at the LAC gave me valuable insight into what client meetings involve — how they are conducted and the preparation required. Through a referral from Thanh, I also had the opportunity to work at Circe Law, where I gained a clear understanding of the day-to-day responsibilities of junior lawyers and paralegals. Experiencing both environments firsthand was incredibly helpful in confirming that a career in law was the right path for me after university.

The LAC played a pivotal role in preparing me to work with real clients. Without that experience, I would have felt completely lost when it came to client care and client meetings. I learned how to effectively communicate with different types of clients and how to address them appropriately. The techniques I learned from Thanh continue to guide me today as I support solicitors in their client meetings.

Advice for Future Students

What advice would you give to law students considering joining the Legal Advice Centre?

You've absolutely got to join the LAC — it'll lay the groundwork for your future, boost your confidence with clients, give you access to opportunities you wouldn't normally get, and there's even a solicitor (Thanh) right there when you need support or have any questions. You get the chance to make mistakes, ask the 'silly questions,' and really understand how a firm can work before entering the legal sector. If you're lucky enough to be chosen to join, my best advice is to make the most of it. Do the work, get involved, and learn as much as you can from Thanh — you won't regret it!

Why do you think opportunities like this are important for students pursuing a legal career?

I can't even begin to explain how hard it is to get any kind of legal work experience these days. Before starting uni, I faced rejection after rejection trying to land something for the summer before I started. That's why the LAC honestly feels like a hidden gem for law students — it's the treasure of the university. If you get the chance to join, treat it like gold. Experiences like this don't come around often.

Zuzanna Miernik

Introduction: A Transformative Experience

As a second-year Law with Criminology student, my first year at the Legal Advice Centre has been a transformative experience that has enabled me to bridge academic theory with real-world legal practice. I engaged with a wide range of legal areas, including contract law, wills and probate, and tenancy law, particularly focusing on landlord and guarantor agreements. Under the guidance of my supervisor, Thanh Pham, I developed critical legal and professional skills. This experience has led to exciting opportunities, including two summer placements. One is with Circe Law, an award-winning firm specialising in wills and probate, where I will undertake a one-month placement in August. The other is with the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, where I will support individuals on probation.

Developing Legal Knowledge through Client Cases

Over the course of all my client cases, I explored different areas of law, each requiring detailed research, practical problem-solving, and client-centred advice. In contract law, I focused on guarantor agreements, researching liability and contractual validity, and drafting advice letters that balanced legal accuracy with client needs. In tenancy law, I deepened my understanding of shared tenancy arrangements, landlord obligations, and deposit protection schemes, ensuring advice was accessible and legally sound. My work in wills and probate introduced me to inheritance tax developments and digital probate procedures. This was supported by training from Circe Law and careful preparation of referral materials to ensure smooth client transitions.

Taking Responsibility and Leading Interactions

My responsibilities extended to conducting conflict-of-interest checks, scheduling and leading team meetings, interviewing clients, and drafting professional correspondence. A particularly formative moment was taking part in a client meeting observed by Her Honour Judge Anne Molyneux MBE on 26 March 2025. Her feedback highlighted the importance of combining professionalism with authenticity, a lesson that has remained central to my approach, particularly when advising clients facing stressful legal issues. These experiences contributed significantly to my development in line with the Solicitors Regulation Authority's Statement of Solicitor Competence, particularly in ethics, client care, and work management.

Overcoming Challenges and Enhancing Core Skills

The cases I worked on also presented challenges that helped shape my development. In tenancy matters, I initially relied too heavily on academic sources such as legislation, when more practical resources like Lexis+ and official government websites would have been more effective. Furthermore, managing relationships with multiple third parties reinforced the importance of thorough conflict checks and ethical diligence.

Balancing Empathy with Professionalism

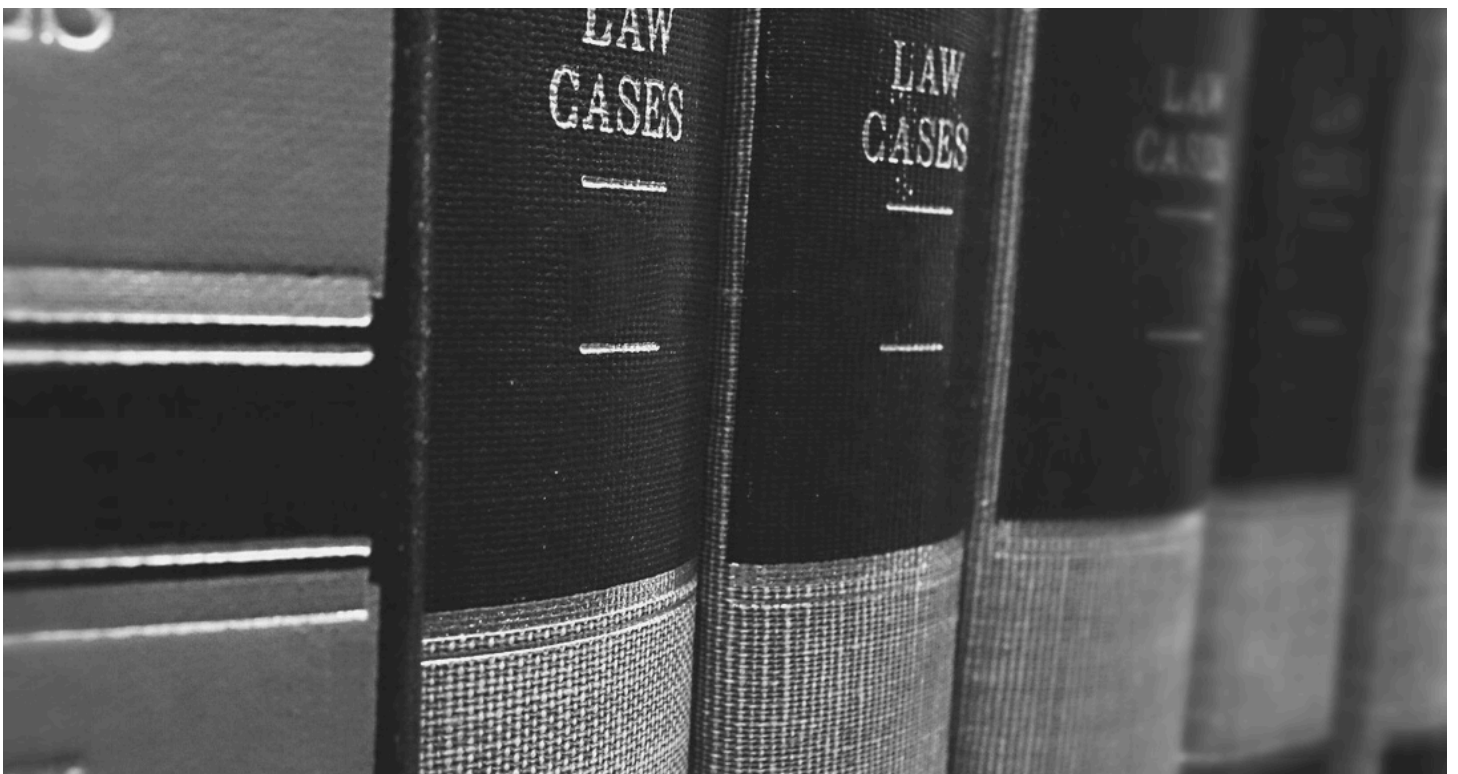
Maintaining a balance between empathy and objectivity was another key area of growth. In contract cases, clients often faced adverse consequences due to inflexible legal frameworks. Remaining compassionate without compromising legal accuracy was a challenge that required conscious effort. Looking ahead, I intend to continue developing my legal research efficiency through advanced Lexis+ training, improve the quality of my note-taking during interviews, and strengthen my critical thinking skills to respond effectively to unexpected situations.

Mentorship and Professional Development

Thanh Pham's mentorship has been instrumental in my professional growth. Through reflective feedback sessions, I gained clarity on my strengths, such as confidently applying legal knowledge in tenancy cases, as well as areas for improvement, such as initial hesitation in leading client interactions. With her encouragement, I took on more responsibility, including leading client introductions and contributing more proactively during interviews. Her support also enabled opportunities such as observing a wills and probate client meeting led by Jade Gani at Circe Law, where I gained valuable insights into professional client engagement and interview techniques.

Conclusion: Laying the Foundation for a Legal Career

This past year has strengthened both my legal knowledge and my professional skillset. As I prepare for my upcoming placements with the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association and Circe Law, I feel confident in my ability to apply the knowledge and skills I have gained. The Legal Advice Centre, along with the mentorship of Thanh Pham, has laid a strong foundation for my future in the legal profession. I am excited to continue building on this experience as I take the next steps in my career.



My Year at Royal Holloway Legal Advice Centre: Accessibility, Adapting, and Advice By Charlie Appleton Pilbeam

As an undergraduate law student, the quest for work experience seems never-ending. Few organisations offer student client-facing roles, with experience focusing mainly on researching and behind-the-scenes work. This makes it challenging for undergraduate law students, like myself, to gain experience in the skills you can't learn in a classroom, like client interviewing, working with vulnerable clients, and professional communication tailored to the understanding of the client. Thankfully, this is not the case at Royal Holloway Legal Advice Centre. In my first week volunteering, I was already preparing information and questions for a client meeting. In that same week, I was part of a small team interviewing the client, supervised by Ms Thanh Pham, and after the meeting, writing up attendance notes and drafting consolidation notes for the client. In my first two days, I was preparing questions, interviewing clients, adapting to unexpected information and technical problems, and drafting legal documents.

Interviewing the clients themselves was sometimes challenging, but always rewarding, as I learned quickly, there are many reasons clients approach a legal advice centre: some need specific advice, some need emergency help regarding their houses and children, and others just need someone who they feel will listen. At the LAC, we provide all of these as student advisors and assist clients in what are often very vulnerable moments. It struck me in my time at the LAC that I had never really considered why people approach legal advice centres for help. The obvious answer is that they need advice on matters to do with wills, tenancy and housing, and other specific legal problems, but I now know that for many clients the answer is more complex than that.

Both interviews I conducted as part of a small team supervised by Ms Pham were online, and, of course, technical issues impacted our ability to conduct them. In the world of modern law, adaptability has never been more important, and now adapting to a client's understanding of technical platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom is equally as important as adapting to unexpected information in an interview.



An experience that will stay with me from my time at the Legal Advice Centre was the second client I assisted, an adult with special needs. Accessibility to the law and legal advice has always been something about which I have been passionate, and I was able to build on my previous experience with vulnerable clients to help curate this interview to the needs and understanding of the client. The importance of this cannot be understated, and above all, I am proud to have worked at an organisation that provides accessible and appropriate advice, where possible, to clients with special needs. In addition, I was able to learn from the way that Ms Pham assisted the client, which impressed upon me the importance of tailoring interviews and advice to the client. This experience reaffirmed my understanding of the importance of legal advice that is accessible for all, something I intend to strive for throughout my career in law. This may be a somewhat unorthodox professional goal, but one I believe is essential to the modern legal sector.

However, it is not simply the opportunity for client interviewing and legal research that is offered at the Legal Advice Centre. In February, we were given the opportunity to attend a talk by Tim Oliver OBE about the reality of pursuing a career in the legal sector. Tim brought his experience in law and local government to impress the importance of a holistic approach to legal experience. He spoke on the opportunities offered by charities and how breaking free of the 'legal bubble' of firms, corporate organisations, and chambers can actively assist prospective lawyers in achieving positions such as training contracts and pupillages, due to the client-facing roles offered in many charities. He later spoke on the positive impact he noticed in students' confidence and knowledge, due to the wealth of client experience that can be gained from working at such charities. At the Legal Advice Centre, there are plenty of opportunities to work for charities, for example, the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association, for whom I also worked in 2024. It was interesting to speak with Tim, and he was very helpful during the Q&A session that followed, where I asked questions about the importance of commercial awareness and volunteering. Tim linked this again to building a wealth of experience, not simply legal experience, that can then strengthen applications and interview performance.

Working at the Legal Advice Centre has done a lot more than provide me with legal experience. It reaffirmed my commitment to accessibility in law, taught me the importance of continued open communication with clients, and has given me realistic structures for legal research. Once a week for 6 months, I have had the opportunity to prepare client documents, conduct interviews supervised and assisted by Ms Thanh Pham, and build my legal network by talking to experts in the sector. I think that Wednesdays will always be 'LAC Day' for me, and I am very proud to have worked assisting clients at Royal Holloway Legal Advice Centre in my final year at university.



Charlie Potter

I began volunteering for the Legal Advice Centre during the start of my second year of university. Since then, I have worked on a number of interesting cases spanning a wide range of legal areas. My role as a volunteer legal advisor was therefore to conduct client interviews, research a number of areas of the law, draft post-interview letters, and provide general legal advice to our clients.

What I enjoyed

There have been many aspects of working at the LAC which I have enjoyed, such as the varied nature of the work and the independence given to the student advisors. As every case is different, the work is never monotonous or dull, and it provides an excellent opportunity for students to see what areas they enjoy working practically in. Additionally, the students are given a lot of freedom and independence, which is an aspect I particularly liked as it is very much like professional work. This also encourages the students to work differently and approach cases in various ways, allowing them to develop their own style and personal touch to the role.

Skills & Career Impact

Regarding employability, my experience as a legal advisor for the LAC has been incredibly important when looking for internships, vacation schemes, and postgraduate jobs. It has provided me with a lot of the skills which employers look for when considering candidates for legal roles, such as legal research and drafting, attention to detail, and adaptability. However, some of the most important skills I have picked up are the so called 'soft skills', which are difficult to learn without direct exposure. These include aspects such as client interviewing, clear communication, and navigating sensitive topics gently. Being able to develop these skills in a practical sense has been extremely beneficial for my employability. For example, in my second year of university, I successfully applied to a Vacation Scheme with a regional law firm, which boosted my CV and exposed me to the profession in a real-world sense. More recently, I have accepted a Training Contract with a law firm in Cambridge to commence in 2026. I believe that being a part of the LAC played a large role in securing these positions, particularly the Training Contract. As well as practical skills, I have also improved my interviewing skills. The confidence that I had gained through my time at the LAC undoubtedly helped, which allowed me to convey my thoughts and knowledge across clearly and effectively.

I

I believe that being a part of the LAC played a significant role in securing these two positions, as it provided me with plenty of experiences to draw upon during both the application and interview stages. In particular, for the TC interview, I believe I stood out from other candidates as I had already gained valuable experience that equipped me with the key skills needed for the role. Furthermore, the confidence I had during the interview to discuss the LAC was likely due to the frequent client interactions I had, which allowed me to go into the interview confidently. The skills I gained were therefore transferred into regular interviewing, which demonstrates the value of the experiences the LAC can provide.



Simmy Babbra

What they don't teach you in Lectures: My Experience at the Legal Advice Centre

As a first year law student, the prospect of giving legal advice to real clients with real issues can seem daunting. It definitely felt that way for me when I applied to the Legal Advice Centre (LAC). However, I wanted to challenge myself – and that's exactly what I got from my time volunteering there. I can confidently say it has been one of the most rewarding and exciting parts of my law degree so far.

Gaining meaningful legal work experience as a student is notoriously difficult, given how competitive the field is. The LAC, however, gave me the opportunity to work on a range of legal matters, including tenancy disputes, will disagreements and claims against large corporations for misrepresentation (some of the cases I have worked on). There's something uniquely impactful about stepping out from the lecture theatre and into real client meetings – you adapt quickly to the responsibility of helping real people with real problems. That shift made everything feel more meaningful and pushed me to do my best. It is also an excellent talking point when applying for internships and work experience, as it demonstrates practical experiences with genuine legal issues.

What I found most valuable was the hands-on nature of the work. At first, it was intimidating: interviewing clients, researching their cases, and drafting advice letters. But with the support of the team and our supervising solicitor Thanh, along with practice, I began to feel like I was actually doing the work of a lawyer – not just studying it. Working in a team made the process less overwhelming and far more enjoyable.

Client cases varied widely, offering exposure to many areas of law. The work involved seeing a case through from start to finish (giving legal advice or referring the case to a partner law firm). As student advisors, our role began with assessing the situation – reviewing the documents provided and conducting preliminary legal research to understand the case and related precedents. We then conducted the client interview, dividing responsibilities among the group and gathering as much information as possible. This stage often required a great deal of empathy, as clients were frequently anxious or distressed.

Following the interview, the 'real' work began: researching legal issues and drafting a detailed advice letter to guide the client on their next steps. If we were unable to assist, we referred them to one of our many partner law firms for further advice. We were also allowed to sit in on calls with these firms and take notes – an invaluable opportunity to observe how real law firms approach complex cases. This also helped develop key transferable skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.



One of the most memorable moments for me was meeting Judge Anne Molyneux. I was admittedly nervous – it’s not every day you receive feedback from a judge on your case work, especially one whose career path mirrors your own aspirations. But she was incredibly kind and insightful. Her feedback encouraged us to consider broader ethical and practical dimensions to the case. This meeting was just one of many opportunities offered through the LAC. We also had the chance to network with solicitors from firms like Thackray Williams, members of Runnymede council and many others. These all provided exposure to various legal practice areas and were really interesting and inspiring.

The practical knowledge and skills I have gained from my time at the LAC have been truly invaluable. The environment has been incredibly supportive and Thanh has been an amazing mentor – always approachable and willing to offer guidance. I have also had the pleasure of meeting and working with some amazing people. I have made great friends through the LAC and we have supported one another in a space where we have all been able to learn.



Reflections as a Legal Advice Centre volunteer- Jenish Pun

I am privileged to have been an LAC volunteer at Royal Holloway.

Looking back on my application for this position, I had to be creative in marketing myself due to my lack of legal experience.

I referred to my time as a cleaner where I cleaned the campus accommodations before the start of term. Cleaning rooms in groups showcased my teamwork skills, which was helpful in the LAC as I had no trouble with sharing responsibilities, such as who takes the attendance notes, who does the introduction, and who asks what questions through colour coding.

In a full-circle moment, as I write this, I'm temporarily a cleaner on campus again but after all the students have left. I will not elaborate further for the wellbeing of readers, but the state of some kitchens and bedrooms...

Additionally, my communication and people skills as a waiter were put to the test when interacting with clients. At the LAC we dealt with real people with real issues, so it came to no surprise that situations could get emotional. By conducting the appointments alongside a supervising solicitor, Thanh Pham, I now feel more confident in saying the right things when conversations become difficult and to reassure clients in a supportive but professional manner.

A particular instance was when we dealt with a family case in which the male parent was in fear of losing custody of his child. In the background, he mentioned being abused by his partner which came as a shock to us and was difficult to respond to, not putting too much attention into it as it was peripheral to his goals. Thanh addressed the issue well, as she asked questions to understand the context further and provided avenues of support he may want, providing good client care.

I said I was confident in my legal research skills, but the training provided by the LAC improved it further by teaching us about finding practical guidance tailored to a client instead of a law examiner through Lexis+. When looking back at some advice letters, I felt I flexed my academic muscles a bit too much as some clients may not be interested in the *Caparo v Dickman* case for negligence, for example. However, I was sure to provide enough general guidance in my advice letters such as explaining the court processes and providing links for the required forms and further websites relevant to their issues.

I ultimately succeeded in my goal to improve my client interviewing through the real-life exposure to clients, as did my drafting in legal advice due to the training the LAC provided.

With assessments piling up later into the year I honestly felt my organisation weakened as it became harder to balance the LAC with final year university, football and a part-time job. This showed in my standard of work which I felt worsened due to not spending enough time on the later cases. An area of improvement in the future would be to prioritise tasks in terms of demand and to set reminders on deadlines.

Ultimately, an important reason why I joined the LAC was because our belief of legal aid being more accessible beyond financial barriers aligned, which I am proud to say I have contributed to in a limited capacity. By no means am I saying that the LAC has cracked the code on legal inequality, but adopting a defeatist mentality helps no one. A small step forward is better than staying static.



Amna Sikandra Ahmad

I joined the Legal Advice Centre in my final year of university so I could gain some practical legal work experience. I was a little on the fence about a particular career choice in law because I assumed I would not enjoy the casework solicitors are required to compete. Yet, just after sitting on my first two cases, I realised I placed too much emphasis on the “document” aspect of it and that I enjoyed one part in particular: engaging with the clients. At first, I found it difficult to speak to them on a personal level, often robotically reading my prepared questions as organised lists. After meeting with my supervising solicitor, I received invaluable advice to treat the clients as an actual conversation because providing a human touch is essential to building rapport. I began really listening to the issues my client’s had and sympathised with them, rather than focusing on the list of questions.

My most memorable moment was when I opted to do the opening introduction to the client, explaining what the LAC is, how the initial appointment would work, and what the next steps might be. I was very nervous before the meeting, but I put the guideline we were provided in my own words, memorised it, and found that I presented it very well. This helped me improve on two skills I felt I needed to work on. First, taking initiative. The legal industry is very competitive which means it is essential to take opportunities when they first appear. I struggled with this because I am always happy to be a team-player, let another person take the lead, especially if I was nervous about the task. This time however, I decided to make the first decision, and felt confident to voice my thoughts and work on future cases. It also increased my interviewing and public speaking skills as prior to this, I never really had much experience working with actual clients, on real cases. For the first time, I put the legal knowledge, research, and drafting skills I gained throughout my course, to practical use. Being introduced to the differences between legal theory and practical legal work was very transformative to my legal career, as I realised there was still a lot for me to learn. For example, the civil procedure rules that I vaguely recalled from first year were relevant in almost every case where the client wished to make an application to the Court. I discovered that instructing clients on the fees or types of forms they would need to complete was just as important as providing them with advice on the law pertaining to their case.

The biggest thing the LAC has given me is passion. Before, I considered a solicitor would be the next step of my legal career largely because it made the most sense and was practically more attainable than that of a barrister, for instance. This experience gave me something I not only enjoyed but actively wished to pursue. Even if I found writing the advice letters challenging or if I was unsure about some of the research, I really cared about my clients’ issues. I wanted to provide them with the best I could give them, especially since legal advice can be quite expensive. Not once did I find the casework boring or tedious; finding an area of work that I actually enjoyed was the best experience for me.

For future LAC student advisors, the best advice I would give is to really engage with the work and opportunity given to you. Have regular meetings with your supervising solicitor, as they can provide you with more than just information about your cases, but practical advice on your career. If you are unsure about what you want to do, whether law is right for you, the LAC is the best place for you to make that decision.

Legal Advice Centre Blog Post – Sophie Davison

Introduction

I started working at the Legal Advice Clinic in October 2024 and I have learnt so much and gained many skills working as a Student Advisor. I have had the opportunity to handle my own case work and collaborate with other student advisors to prepare for and conduct client interviews across a wide range of legal issues. I have developed many key legal skills that will be essential to my future in law, including completing legal research and leading client interviews.

Different areas of law

Since starting at the Legal Advice Clinic, I have explored many interesting areas of law and learnt so much about legal issues impacting people in the local community and students. I have enjoyed learning more about the rights and responsibilities of landlord and tenants, how tenancy deposit schemes operate, and how to help clients reclaim their deposits. I have also learnt about issues that I hadn't encountered in my studies at university yet, such as lifetime trusts in a will before learning about this in my Equity and Trusts module. Furthermore, I have enjoyed working on family law matters and consequently working as a Student Advisor has reinforced my wish to pursue a career working in private client work. Working at the Legal Advice Clinic has given me the opportunity to put what I have learnt at university into practice and gain real experience on how to help individuals with often emotional and time sensitive legal issues.

Skills

During my work at the Legal Advice Clinic, I have developed many skills that will really help my future career in law. As student advisors, we received essential training on the areas of law we encounter at the Legal Advice Clinic, including contract, tenancy, and family matters, as well as advice on how to act professionally, respectfully and sympathetically towards clients. I have conducted thorough legal research to prepare for client cases and construct client advice letters. I have gained confidence speaking to clients and learnt how to be adaptable to different client situations, such as in more sensitive client matters. I have learnt how to conduct a professional client interview and ask relevant questions to understand the client's objectives in seeking legal advice. I have developed my teamwork skills as I work collaboratively with other student advisors in my case to discuss the client case and prepare interview roles ahead of the client interview meeting.

Opportunities beyond the Legal Advice Clinic

Not only does the Legal Advice Clinic provide me with the opportunity to practice client interviewing, but as student advisors we are also given the opportunity to partake in talks and insight sessions with legal professionals. We recently had the opportunity to hear from Tim Oliver OBE (<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=2190>) and it provided us student advisors with the opportunity to hear about his experiences directly and ask questions relating to this. Tim Oliver, former CEO of Parabis Group, is a solicitor and award-winning entrepreneur, and has held important roles in charities, local government, and healthcare. It was interesting to hear about the charity work Tim is passionate about, including his work as a trustee of a charity, how he got this role and what is involved. I also found it interesting to hear about his experience in litigation, such as his expertise in negligence cases, as he reiterated the importance of looking and anticipating what the court will do and determining the percentage of success. It really helped to hear his advice on standing out in applications, and the importance of getting involved in volunteer work as this is something I'm passionate about.

Furthermore, I have appreciated the opportunity from the Legal Advice Centre to collaborate with my volunteering at the Trussell Trust (<https://www.trussell.org.uk/>) as a volunteer at my local food bank. I have been able to advertise the services of the Legal Advice Clinic to my food bank clients so that they can access free legal services for issues many of the charities client's face, such as in housing or family related legal matters. Having access to legal advice can be limiting to those who can't afford to contact a law firm, so having access to the Legal Advice Clinic is an important service our clients can use to seek free legal support. I have really appreciated the support from the Legal Advice Clinic's supervising solicitor Thanh in facilitating this collaboration, and how I can utilise my work as a student advisor to bring in clients and provide support for those I see at my local food bank.

Conclusion

To conclude, I have enjoyed working in my role as a Student Advisor at the Legal Advice Clinic. It's been a great opportunity to see the legal issues students and the local community face across such a wide variety of legal matters that I have had the chance to work on. I have developed so many skills and this role has provided me with confidence and clarity in starting a career in law. I couldn't be more grateful to be given such an invaluable experience to work at the Legal Advice Clinic as I have learnt so much about law in practice, developed my legal skills, and gained confidence to act with professionalism in client settings.



By Noah & Esha

Handling cases at the Legal Advice Clinic (LAC) can be best described as managed unpredictability. This volatility is only heightened when additional complications arise during the process.

In one recent case, it seemed every potential obstacle to creating the best outcome for our client and the LAC that could arise did, as our team of three students and Thanh Pham (our supervising solicitor) encountered several unexpected challenges. The largest of these were communication issues, technical difficulties with SharePoint documentation access, and a client with significant emotional involvement. This case further was complicated post closing-letter, during the referral to one of the LAC's partner law firms. Ultimately, this case taught us valuable experience and tangible understandings of legal teachings along the way.

Reflecting on this case has significantly shaped how we approach client matters moving forward. This case was our first client - incredibly interesting, but with demanding circumstances. However, the complexity of the case encouraged us to engage more collaboratively within the team; setting up an additional pre-meeting conversation, which ultimately benefited both our development and the LAC's service delivery. This also reinforced the importance of preparation and adaptability as key strategies for managing uncertainty in client case interactions, helping reduce issues as they arose.

Giving legal advice often means that you meet the client at a point where they are feeling stressed, frustrated, or feeling as though a personal injustice has occurred. This experience has shaped my approach moving forward, as I am now more mindful of the emotional aspect of client cases. However, I have learnt it is also important to recognise that unfortunately, the LAC has limitations on our capacity for support, and there are instances where



the only legal remedy is costly and lengthy court proceedings, which may not be the outcome clients hoped for.

Conclusion:

At the end of the day, the experiences that we have had at the LAC have taught us various valuable lessons such as personal growth, and work experience.

Overall, our time at the LAC has been an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience. We enjoyed the process and had fun working together as a team, which made the journey even more memorable



By Polat Cavusoglu & Alayka Hussain

We recently had the privilege of attending a presentation by the team from the “Pro Bono” Legal Clinic at Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University. This meeting brought together staff and students from Royal Holloway’s Legal Advice Centre (LAC) and the Ukrainian clinic for a compelling exchange of experiences. What followed was a thought-provoking discussion on legal education, access to justice, and the creative possibilities that emerge when different legal cultures come into dialogue.

At Dahl University, the Pro Bono clinic is embedded within the formal law curriculum, operating as a “clinical laboratory” where students gain practical legal training as part of their degree. This integration enables students to develop critical skills such as legal research, client interviewing, and document drafting through structured and sustained engagement. At the same time, Royal Holloway’s LAC is a more recent innovation and extracurricular initiative. While it offers a valuable educational experience, it does so outside the formal curriculum and typically focuses on providing one-off legal advice to members of the public across areas such as housing, contracts, and family law.

The Ukrainian clinic, meanwhile, directs its services toward more vulnerable populations including internally displaced persons and victims of conflict, addressing complex humanitarian and rights-based legal challenges. Despite the differences in institutional integration and client focus, both clinics share key features: student-led pro bono work, a dual commitment to education and service, and a belief in the transformative power of clinical legal education.

One particularly inspiring practice from the Ukrainian clinic is their “Consul-touch” simulation, a structured role-play in which students rehearse handling difficult client consultations. While our LAC offers training, we do not currently have a comparable formalised mock consultation programme. Introducing monthly simulation sessions, perhaps with the involvement of drama students as role-play clients, could enhance our students’ confidence, adaptability, and professionalism. Similarly, the Ukrainian clinic’s participation in national client counselling tournaments is a reminder of the value of competitions in sharpening advisory skills and fostering professional excellence. We might explore launching a friendly inter-clinic competition or supporting students to enter established contests.

Beyond practice, the Ukrainian clinic encourages its students to engage in academic legal research and to present their findings at conferences. This dimension, where practical experience feeds into scholarship, offers a model we could emulate by tracking emerging trends in our casework and developing research outputs around them. Doing so would strengthen the

LAC’s academic contribution and give students a broader intellectual framework for their client work.

Our exchange also highlighted the value of technological innovation. We were especially intrigued by the Ukrainian clinic’s use of AI tools, particularly the so-called “AI dolls,” to support training and service delivery. We look forward to a planned follow-up workshop that will explore this technology in greater detail, with a view to piloting similar initiatives at Royal Holloway.

In the future, our collaboration might expand to explore virtual reality simulations, AI-supported legal research, or the development of chatbot systems for appointment bookings and frequently asked questions.

Perhaps the most important outcome of this exchange is the prospect of sustained collaboration. Rather than treating this as a one-off event, we hope to build a long-term partnership between our clinics. Ideas include biannual virtual meetings, themed workshops on topics such as client interview techniques or clinical technology, and the creation of joint bilingual resources for displaced Ukrainians in the UK. A buddy system connecting students from both clinics could further enrich the exchange, allowing them to share perspectives on their respective legal systems and reflect on cross-border legal concerns, all while respecting client confidentiality.

This partnership, shaped by the Twinning initiative that brought our institutions together, promises mutual benefit. We have much to learn from the Ukrainian clinic’s creativity and resilience, and we also recognise that Royal Holloway’s stable infrastructure and access to resources may offer valuable support in return. By treating each other as “sister clinics,” we can co-develop tools, projects, and innovations that reflect a shared commitment to justice, education, and global solidarity.

Above all, this exchange has underscored the importance of responsiveness, innovation, and social engagement in clinical legal education. By adapting and building on what we have learned, we hope to strengthen not only our students’ experiences but also our impact on the communities we serve



**VOLODYMYR DAHL
EAST UKRAINIAN
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**



**Legal Advice
Centre** 38

BY KATIE ETHELLES

I recently had the privilege of being invited as a guest speaker by Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University, as part of their academic cooperation with Royal Holloway. This collaboration is part of the Science for Ukraine UK initiative, which is a mentoring programme designed to support Ukrainian universities and academics affected by the ongoing war.

The programme brought together students and academic staff from two different countries, creating a space for encouragement and the exchange of different services and ideas. Being able to contribute to this initiative, however modestly, was incredibly meaningful to me. It highlighted the importance of having international outreach in order to find support through difficult times.

As a representative of the Legal Advice Centre, I was proud to share how the clinic empowers students to take an active role in delivering pro bono legal advice, working alongside qualified solicitors, student advisors like myself gain invaluable hands-on experience. It was fulfilling to be able to reflect on my journey and to share our work with a global audience. The discussion reaffirmed my belief in the importance of access to justice and the value of our work, especially in contexts where systems are under more pressure. The meeting has reminded me that it is not just about sharing knowledge, but also about listening, learning, and standing in solidarity with others who are working hard to make a difference in their own communities.

I'm very grateful to the organisers and attendees of the event and hope to be a part of further collaboration in the future.

Clients feedback

- *"The students appeared very confident and professional and asked appropriate and relevant questions which made the interaction smooth and pleasant."*
- *"Thank you very much for this post-interview letter, the valuable information contained within, and for the effort you and the students have gone to on behalf of this case. Apologies I did not respond sooner, but I can confirm I read these notes (several times) ahead of the mediation, and they were a great help. In particular, I used the countersue points to strengthen my negotiating position."*
- *"I wanted to share an update with you. I've now heard back from the deposit scheme, and they have awarded me the majority of my deposit following my rebuttal and arguments—so, essentially, I won! I also just wanted to take a moment to thank you and the team. Your support, advice, and simply being heard made a huge difference. Please do pass on my gratitude to everyone—sometimes, the underdog wins! I have no doubt they'll all go on to become incredible lawyers, fighting injustices everywhere one day. :)"*
- *"Many thanks for your work and your letter, really appreciate your advice. Kudos to the students involved, I'm no expert but the quality of their work is remarkable."*

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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MAGNA CARTA LECTURE 2025

BY SOPHIE DAVISON

On Monday 9th June 2025, I had the opportunity to be a guest speaker at Royal Holloway University of London's Annual Magna Carta Lecture 2025. I presented about my work at the Legal Advice Centre and drew the link between the work we do and the themes of the Magna Carta, including the importance of social justice and the impact of the rule of law in issues facing our local community, such as tenancy and family matters. I also spoke about the interpersonal and legal skills I have developed since I started working at the Legal Advice Centre, including conducting legal research and client interviews and developing my team work skills as I collaborated with other student advisors. I expressed my appreciation to Thank to have been given the opportunity to network with and gain valuable work experience at law firms, as well as assistance in collaborating with my volunteering as a food bank volunteer to advertise the free legal services of the Legal Advice Centre to my food bank clients.

It was fascinating to hear from The Baroness Prentis of Banbury and her lecture on 'The rule of law in a changing world', bringing fascinating insights that we had the opportunity to ask questions about in a Q&A session and socially afterwards. She spoke eloquently about her personal experiences working in government and commitment to upholding the rule of law, and gave consideration to the rule of law in current global affairs and the importance of international criminal law.

Reflecting on this lecture, I am proud to say I participated in such a prestigious event and gave a speech on my work in social justice that I am so passionate about. I developed my public speaking skills to speak in front of such a large audience and communication skills to network and answer questions regarding the Legal Advice Centre and my personal experiences. Without the Legal Advice Centre, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to take myself out of my comfort zone and speak with confidence, something that I would never have imagined myself doing a few years ago. I feel very appreciative about the opportunities the Legal Advice Centre has given me and more at ease to begin my legal career from the experiences and skills I have developed along the way.



Finley Roswell



Sophie Davison

Sophie Davison's Speech at the Magna Carta Event:

I am Sophie and I'm a third year law student at Royal Holloway University.

I started working at the Legal Advice Clinic in October 2024 and I have learnt so much and gained many skills working as a Student Advisor.

Different areas of law – I have had the opportunity to handle my own case work and collaborate with other student advisors to conduct client interviews across a wide range of legal issues impacting the local community, such as in tenancy, contract and family matters. I have been able to put what I have learnt at university into practice and gain real experience on how to help individuals with sensitive and urgent legal issues.

Skills – I have developed many key legal skills that will be essential to my future in law, including completing legal research, leading client interviews and constructing client advice letters. I have gained confidence speaking to clients and developed my teamwork skills as I work collaboratively with other student advisors to deliver the best outcomes for our clients.

Opportunities beyond the LAC – I also have appreciated the opportunity from the Legal Advice Centre to collaborate with my volunteering at the Trussell Trust as a volunteer at my local food bank. I have been able to advertise the services of the Legal Advice Clinic to my food bank clients so that they can access free legal services for issues many of the charities client's face, such as in housing or family related legal matters.

I have really enjoyed working as a Student Advisor at the Legal Advice Clinic as I have learnt so much about law in practice, developed my legal skills and help give back to the local community facing a wide variety of legal matters.



2025 Legal Advice Centre Student Advisor of the Year award!



Student Advisor of the Year 2025: Sophie Davison

Each year, this award is given to a student adviser who has demonstrated exceptional commitment, professionalism, and contribution to the Legal Advice Centre. The selection process involves a careful evaluation of several factors, including the number of clients advised, overall attitude towards case management, consistency in meeting deadlines, and the willingness to go above and beyond to support the Centre's operations.

Throughout the year, Sophie has excelled in all these areas. She has taken on every client allocated to her with diligence and professionalism, and she has readily stepped in at short notice to support other cases when fellow students were unavailable. Her casework has consistently been of a high standard, and she has ensured that all documents are completed and submitted on time.

What truly sets Sophie apart is her dedication to her professional growth. She actively sought feedback throughout the year and always applied it thoughtfully to improve her work, demonstrating a genuine commitment to developing her legal skills and knowledge.

In addition to her casework, Sophie played an instrumental role in promoting the Legal Advice Centre. She assisted in creating a new promotional leaflet and supported our collaboration with the Trussell Trust. Thanks to Sophie's initiative in organising meetings and facilitating this partnership, we are honoured that the Trussell Trust will now include our Centre as a point of referral for their volunteers on their newly developed app. This recognition would not have been possible without her dedication and hard work.

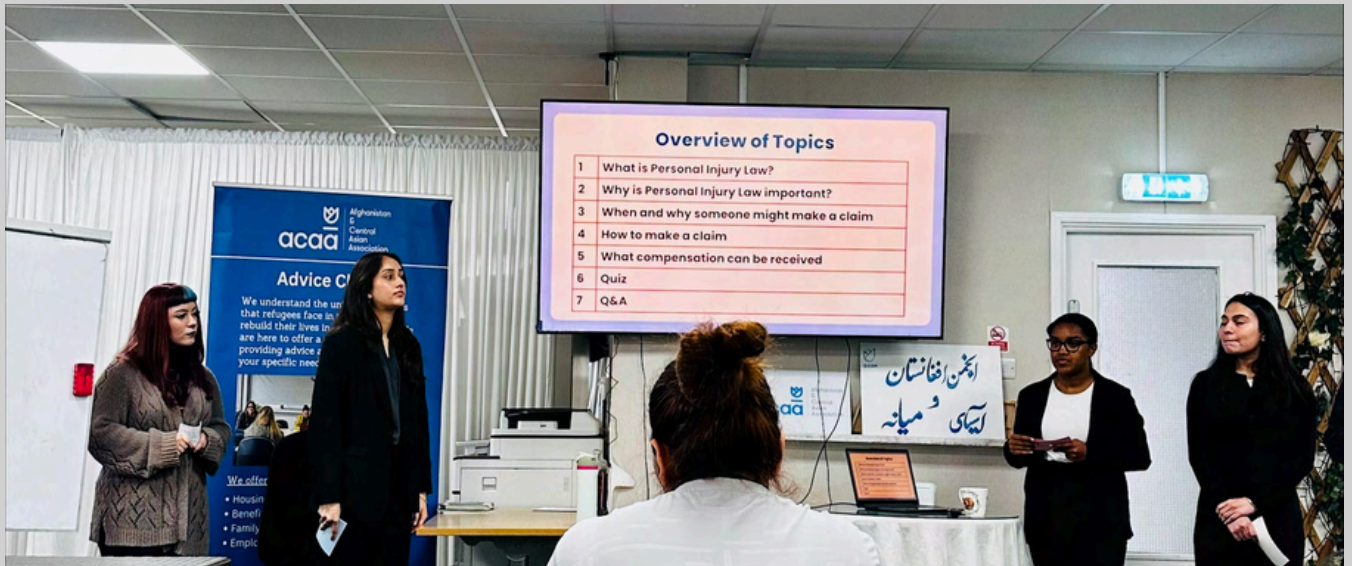
Sophie has been an invaluable member of the team this year. I always felt assured knowing she was involved in a client matter, confident that her work would be completed to a high standard and submitted promptly for my review before being sent to clients.

Congratulations, Sophie, on this well-deserved recognition. Thank you for your outstanding contribution and commitment. I have no doubt that you will excel in your legal career, and any law firm you choose to join will be fortunate to have you.

By Thanh Pham

STREETLAW

StreetLaw Programme



What is StreetLaw?

Street Law is an educational initiative designed to make legal knowledge accessible to the public. It involves students teaching practical legal topics to community members through interactive sessions, workshops, and presentations. The goal of Street Law is to help people understand their legal rights and responsibilities, navigate everyday legal issues, and engage with the legal system effectively. By bringing legal education to schools, charities, community centres, and other public spaces, Street Law aims to demystify the legal system and empower individuals with the knowledge they need to address legal challenges in their lives.

On the 9th June 2025, our students visited the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association to present their workshops to service users.



Afghanistan & Central Asian Association

Why should students get involved in StreetLaw?

Participating in Street Law provides students with hands-on experience by applying their legal studies in real-world contexts, effectively bridging the gap between theory and practice. It enhances crucial skills such as public speaking and teaching while allowing students to make a meaningful impact by educating community members about their legal rights and responsibilities. Involvement offers valuable insights into the diverse ways the law affects different groups, helps build professional networks, and instills a strong sense of social responsibility.



Phoebe Solomon



Hi! My name is Phoebe, I'm an about-to-graduate third-year Law with International Relations student and I was chosen to take part in the StreetLaw programme this year.

When I was first given the opportunity to take part in StreetLaw as part of the university's Legal Advice Centre, I felt a range of emotions. I was anxious as I knew that I would have to eventually overcome my fear of public speaking. I was hesitant as I knew that this was my final year and my workload was going to be more stressful already, let alone with an extracurricular volunteering project. I was hopeful for the benefits that the programme would give me once I graduated. And lastly, I was excited to embark on a new journey where I could make a real difference in the community alongside my peers who wanted to do the same.

As a collective, supervisors included, we worked so incredibly hard over the past year and I cannot be more grateful for the opportunity to work alongside everyone. From sixth forms to organisations that help people in disadvantaged circumstances, we as a collective have done exactly what we set out to do: bring change. We have had people wanting to study law because of our presentation and people eager to learn about the various aspects of law we spoke about. We have spoken to solicitors, who are incredibly impressed by our dedication to speaking with the community and creating a difference. If you do get the privilege to take part in the StreetLaw programme, be prepared to feel fulfilled. People may not even tell you directly but still carry it with you that whenever you tell someone something they did not know before, that's a difference already made.

Over the course of the past 9 months, I have learnt so much. Not just about the topics we covered, the skills we were given by experience and by being supervised by Thanh, Sahar and Millicent. It was a journey of learning and understanding myself as well. I learnt to be diligent when giving legal information to communities and that even a quadruple check is not too much. I learnt that whilst teamwork makes the dream work, sometimes you need to do some independent work to truly make the dream work. I learnt that fears of coming across as a bulldozer does not get you results and instead of seeing it as bulldozing, see it as taking the initiative. I learnt that communication is key, even when it's scary and you'd rather not open and respond to an email. I learnt that people from all walks of life gather to create change in communities.

Most importantly, I learnt to take every opportunity as it comes and enjoy them.

We were given the opportunity to work under three highly educated, wonderful supervisors who gave us invaluable advice and skills to carry for a lifetime. We were given the opportunity to work with and even create friendships with people we may not have ever come across in our three years at university. We were given the opportunity to speak with solicitors from firms who spoke so eloquently and were so knowledgeable that they set the standard for how we needed to sound in our presentations. We were given the opportunity to stand in front of dozens of people and give them informative, interactive and high-quality presentations. And if you ever get given the same opportunity, enjoy it.

As for me, I'm currently working in a family law firm. In an interesting turn of events, I recited the majority of the Family Law presentation my group completed for StreetLaw during my interview and I can almost guarantee this is what got me the job. That and a surge of confidence that I can also attribute to StreetLaw. If you had told me that my first-year Professional Legal Skills lecturer would have selected me for a programme that would lead me to secure my first legal role before even graduating, I wouldn't have believed it. But thanks to Thanh and StreetLaw as a whole, I've surpassed my personal and professional goals in a way that I could not have imagined!

So. In the words of Judge Anne (who we also got to meet and present to, hopefully she doesn't mind me name-dropping her), if you ever get the opportunity to work with Thanh, the director of the Legal Advice Centre, grab it! And if you ever get to be as lucky as I am and do Street Law, Judge Anne said it perfectly. Grab it!





ROYAL
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Afghanistan
&
Central
Asian
Association
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افغانستان
و
آسیای
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ROYAL HOLLOWAY'S LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE
PRESENTS...

STREET
LAW

MON 09
JUNE
2025 @ 12PM

PRESENTING TO YOU
AT THE
AFGHANISTAN &
CENTRAL ASIAN
ASSOCIATION
(ACAA)

WANT SOME FUN,
FREE LEGAL
INFORMATION? LOOK
NO FURTHER!

UNIT 9,
GRIFFIN CENTRE,
STAINES RD,
FELTHAM
TW14 0HS

JOIN US TO LEARN THE INS AND OUTS OF FAMILY AND
PERSONAL INJURY LAW WITH FUN, INTERACTIVE
PRESENTATIONS FROM ROYAL HOLLOWAY'S VERY OWN
STREET LAW STUDENTS!



WITH PRESENTATIONS FROM:
THE JUSTICE LEAGUE AND
BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT
(YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS!)

EMAIL: LAC@ROYALHOLLOWAY.AC.UK

Poster advertising the
presentation at the Afghanistan
& Central Asian Association

PRESENTATIONS AT ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY



Our students delivered presentations to staff, parents, and fellow students at Royal Holloway University. We were honoured to have Her Honour Judge Anne Molyneux attend both sessions.

Thank you, Judge Molyneux, for taking the time to watch our students present. Your presence was incredibly inspiring and encouraging for them, and they greatly valued the insightful feedback you provided.

It was a wonderful opportunity for our students to showcase their hard work and to receive such meaningful feedback from a highly respected member of the judiciary.



Supporting the Widening Access Scheme

On Wednesday, 25th June 2025, the Legal Advice Centre was invited by the Widening Access team to deliver presentations to students participating in the Widening Access Summer University Residential Programme at Royal Holloway.

The Widening Access Scheme at Royal Holloway aims to increase participation in higher education among underrepresented groups, including students from low-income backgrounds and those who would be the first in their family to attend university. This programme provides Year 12 students who meet widening access criteria with the opportunity to experience university life first-hand. Over two days, students stay in campus accommodation, take part in social activities, and gain invaluable insights through academic taster sessions designed to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations.

As part of this year's programme, StreetLaw student Alayka Hussain delivered an engaging presentation on personal injury law. Attention and participation were high throughout, with many students who entered the room unsure about studying law leaving with insightful questions about the subject and the law courses available at Royal Holloway.

Additionally, Thanh Pham delivered a presentation on Professional Legal Skills and Ethics, which generated strong engagement from the students. They showed genuine interest in exploring the ethical challenges faced by lawyers and the practical skills needed in the legal profession.

We are proud to have supported this wonderful initiative. It was rewarding to know that our involvement helped spark an interest in legal studies among some young people who may not have previously considered this pathway.

The Justice League

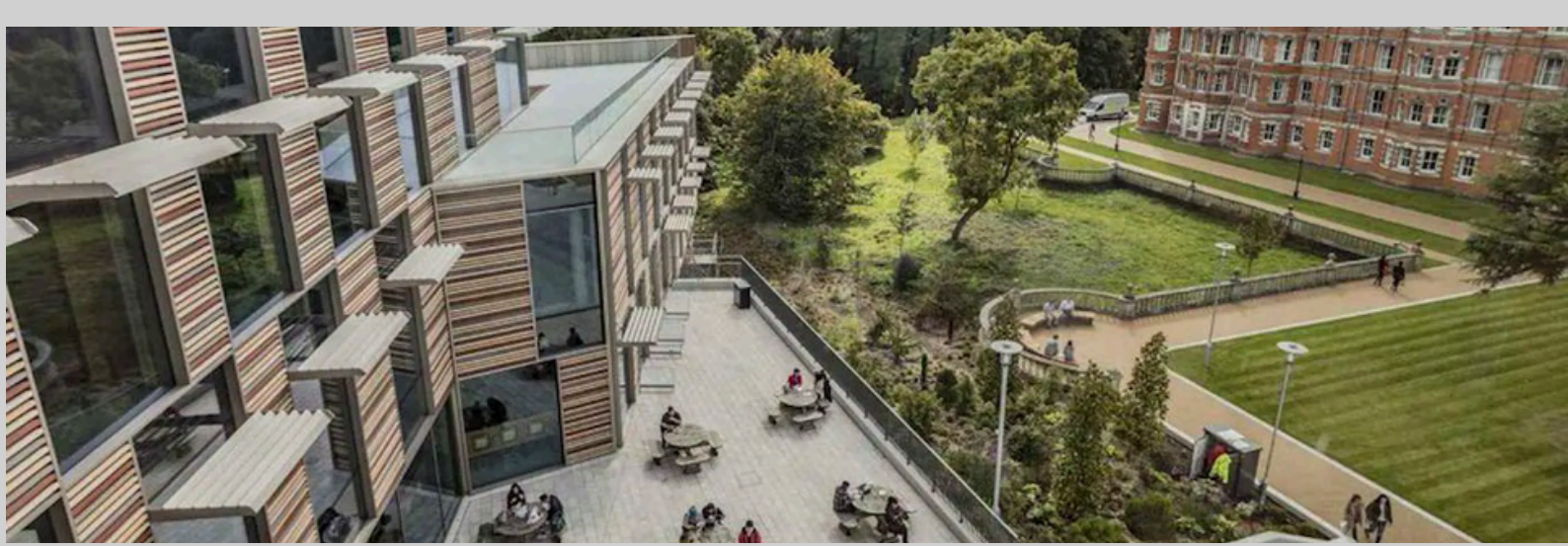
Beyond Reasonable Doubt



STREETLAW

We are grateful to George Abbot School, Guildford, for welcoming and hosting our students.





STREETLAW SUPERVISORS REFLECTIONS

Dr Sahar Maranlou

Street Law is a clinical legal education method designed to promote the public's understanding of the law. Ten Royal Holloway Law students collaborated as a team to provide legal information to the community, offering individuals a basic understanding of their legal rights and duties, as well as information about how the legal system works, specifically in two key areas: personal injury and family law. The programme effectively developed students' legal skills, including legal research, and communicating complex legal ideas in a manner that the public audience can easily understand. This programme has great potential to integrate into a credit curriculum, enhancing students' knowledge and skills by applying law through the clinical legal education paradigm.

Thanh Pham

When I planned the StreetLaw programme at the start of the academic year, my main concern was how to effectively market it to schools, charities, local communities, and both internal and external stakeholders, to ensure our students would have opportunities to deliver their presentations. I worried that I might recruit students and spend the entire year training, supervising, and refining their legal research, only to be unable to secure placements for them to showcase their hard work.

However, I was so pleased that throughout the year, many stakeholders were eager to support the programme, and our students were given ample opportunities to present to a diverse range of audiences.

One standout moment for me came after our presentation to service users at the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association, where a lady holding her baby shared that she was so inspired by our students' work that she now hopes to pursue a legal career herself and is exploring pathways to study law at university. It was also deeply moving to hear another audience member express that she felt empowered following our family law presentation, as she is a victim of domestic violence.

For me, this is one of the many reasons I created the StreetLaw programme – to empower all members of the community, especially those with limited legal knowledge, to know that help is available. It is also to inspire those who may feel that a legal career is beyond their reach due to their background or circumstances to believe that such a path is possible.

A Supervisor's Reflections on the Street Law Programme at RHUL, 2025

The concept of street law is a wonderful idea to make law accessible to ordinary members of the public in a very simple and practical way, thus enabling them to navigate everyday legal needs with confidence. It may have started in the US, but it is gradually spreading in the UK.

At RHUL, the street law programme was introduced as part of the Legal Advice Centre in 2025. This inaugural programme was started with 10 students at various levels of their law degree programme. The students were given initial training by the supervisors particularly on communication and presentation skills, the art of public speaking; group/teamwork, etc. The training also covered basic information on some areas of law often encountered in everyday life such as consumer rights, housing law (landlord/tenant issues), employment law, family law, personal injury law, and the importance of wills and probate.

This year, the students chose to work and present on Family law highlighting issues such as how you get married and get divorced, child custody/support, ownership of family homes, domestic violence etc; and personal injury law covering issues such as why personal injury law is important; which Court deals with personal injury cases; when, why, and how to make a claim; damages and compensation etc. There was a couple of mock presentations before the supervisors followed by feedback, and consultations with practicing solicitors and specialists in areas of family law and personal injury. Later, the students presented these topics to various audiences such as secondary school students (senior classes), parents and teachers; charities; the RHUL staff and students; etc.

Making law accessible to these broad range of audiences clearly aligns with the RHUL's mission to promote social justice, as a University of Social Purpose. Thus, the street law programme is a win-win situation for all involved – the students, the audiences and the University. I am happy to have contributed my time and knowledge, as a supervisor, towards the success of this programme, and will recommend that the law department continue with the programme.

Dr Millicent Ele
Legal Advice Centre Associate and Street Law Supervisor.



Selecting the Street Law Student of the Year 2025

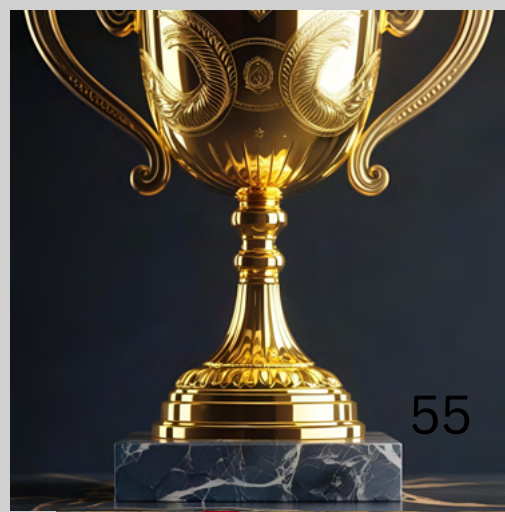
The Street Law programme at RHUL started in 2025. It has been a wonderful experience working with the group of 10 students chosen for the inaugural programme. We recognise and appreciate every student's input towards the smooth running and delivery of the programme. As was made known from the outset, a street law student of the year has to be chosen based on the independent and objective assessment of the supervisors according to the criteria presented to all participants at the beginning of the programme. In summary, these are:

Consistent dedication and reliability throughout the programme. These are shown by attendance to all meetings; active participation in meetings; consistent and prompt replies to messages; attendance to all presentations; having good grasp of the subject matter evidencing excellent research, preparation and attention to details; presenting with clarity and confidence; exhibiting leadership qualities among group members and actively coordinating group activities.

It was also considered a plus when a student goes the extra mile to ensure the programme runs well e.g., showing a desire and willingness to plan ahead, attending meeting with external solicitors and consultants and making sure the PPT slides are promptly updated; designing and producing poster for the presentations, and active in outreach efforts e.g., taking the initiative to contact local schools about the Street Law programme, Based on the above, the supervisors unanimously picked Alayka Hussain as the Street Law student of the year 2025.

A clear runner-up was Phoebe Solomon who also showed excellent commitment to the programme, attended the sessions with the solicitors and coordinated group activities for the family law group. Other students contributed in various ways.

Dr Millicent Ele



2025 StreetLaw Student Advisor of the Year award!

ALAYKA HUSSAIN

'Taking part in the Street Law Programme has been one of the best parts of my time studying law. I presented on Personal Injury Law to a range of audiences including students, charity users and local community groups. It really pushed me to explain legal concepts clearly and confidently, especially to people with no legal background. I also developed my public speaking and legal research skills and learned how to adapt content depending on who I was speaking to. Working with a team to put together and deliver our sessions helped me improve my organisation, teamwork and communication. Overall, it was a brilliant chance to use what I've learned in a real, meaningful way and make the law more accessible to others.'

Alayka Hussain





Contact Us

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Thank you for reading our Gazette.

If you are a student inspired by our work and interested in joining our team of student advisers, please note that recruitment opens at the start of each academic year. Keep an eye on your email and our website for announcements and application guidance.

Clients seeking advice or wishing to make an appointment can visit our website to complete the enquiry form or contact us directly at LAC@royalholloway.ac.uk. We're here to help.

We are also always eager to build new partnerships with law firms, charitable organisations, local schools, and community groups. If you are interested in collaborating, please get in touch. 

We look forward to welcoming new students, new partners, and continuing to support our community in the year ahead.
