



## Law Clinic

Annual Review 2019/20

Doing more with law

In 2019/20, 98% of students said they had a positive experience working in the Law Clinic, with 8 out of 10 saying it had improved their employability, confidence and awareness of societal issues.

## Doing more with Law

This year has been a particularly challenging one. Like many other organisations, we needed to respond to COVID-19 and rapidly adapt the way we deliver our services and support our students. But we did it. Spurred on by the very real needs of our clients, we embraced the chance to innovate and quickly established a virtual version of the Law Clinic that gave students the freedom to work on cases wherever they were in the world - and continue to realise justice for their clients.

As a direct result of the pandemic, there was a significant increase in clients looking to us for advice and guidance on employment, landlord and tenancy issues. Our actions were no longer local. Clients were less geographically restricted; distance became less important and we could be more flexible in terms of what we could take on.

In the wider legal community, all hearings and tribunals were being heard virtually via telephone or video conferencing. This presented new challenges for students – particularly in terms of feeling that they were doing things ‘blind’, unable to gauge reactions to their arguments or use positive body language to express the authenticity of the client’s appeal. I was immensely proud to see students replace their own concerns about a new way of doing things with a determination to resolve the issues impacting their clients’ lives.

Unfortunately, work with our community partners was more difficult to support with an online offering. Our outreach work is there to help the most vulnerable in the community – and often that means people that are homeless, in abusive relationships, or simply so overwhelmed by a situation that reaching out to our services feels too difficult.

This year we have put a lot of effort into defining how we shape our work so we can continue providing support to those that most need it, when they need it, while at the same time developing the skills of the students.

[A recent report by Kies Consulting](#) asked what stops high potential junior lawyers from becoming high achievers. We believe that the majority of their observations are addressed and satisfied through the University of Bristol Law Clinic experience - and shared in this annual review.

Ultimately, 2020 has been a character defining year for all of us. Our support team, who made it possible to move swiftly to a virtual environment. Our clients, many of whom have faced incredible hardships and found the resolve to keep going. Our partners, who continue to do such fantastic work under difficult circumstances. And our Alumni, whose funding of our interns this year has never been needed more.

Above all, 2020 has seen our students face their own fears and uncertainties and go on to do more with law than they ever imagined possible in the name of justice.

Thanks to all  
John Peake, Law Clinic Director

**“I was immensely proud to see students replace their own concerns about a new way of doing things with a determination to resolve the issues impacting their clients’ lives.”**



## Case Study: Sensitive Lawyering

For Karen San Juan, the culmination of 10 month's work on a particularly sensitive social security and child support tribunal, culminated in a single hearing. Alongside case partner, Leila Ghannam, Karen had become deeply invested in its progression and outcome. Due to lockdown, the case was heard via telephone.

“I felt a lot of pressure. Undertaking a hearing by phone meant I wasn't able to navigate anyone's facial expressions or body language. However, the situation drove my confidence to speak up and value the importance of active listening. Delivering my closing statement was my favourite part - finally able to address the judge and panel members directly and argue in support of my client. It was an invaluable learning experience that makes me proud to be part of the Law Clinic.”

Karen San Juan, LLB 2019 (First-class Honours)

During 2019/20 Law Clinic students worked on 312 cases and dealt with 492 enquiries.

## The experience: beyond the text books

“Being part of the Law Clinic offers so much more than putting theory into practice. It helps us develop advocacy, research, and analytical skills at a nascent stage of our legal careers. It also gives us empathy, life skills, an understanding of professional conduct and business acumen – and very definitely an ability to think on our feet!”

Malavika Ramanand, Law Clinic Student Director, 2019/20

### Cultivating empathy

Working with outreach partners provides students with key business skills. It enables them to understand what it means to balance the priorities of two organisations and develop a business model that delivers the best solution for the client. It also opens up an element of reporting back, reviewing delivery and being accountable. With partners such as [Bristol Drugs Project](#), [MIND](#) and [CLIC Sargent](#), outreach work also cultivates empathy as a force for social transformation. Inquisitive individuals who take time to listen and understand other people's lives are better placed to challenge prejudices and stand up for the vulnerable. Although we needed to adapt our drop-in service this year in response to COVID-19, the Student Committee has been driven to evolve the service to provide support to those most in need. Find out more about the clients we work with. [Watch our playlist](#).

**“You hear clients’ stories and you really start to understand and empathise with the concerns and struggles they go through. It really builds you as a person.”**

Michelle Leong Wai Ching, Law Clinic Committee member

### Managing workloads

An important element of the Law Clinic provision is the ability to deliver services over the summer – which became ever more important this year to help deal with a back log of cases following lockdown. With funding from our alumni, we have been able to establish paid-for summer internships, providing students with an opportunity to focus fully on their Law Clinic activities whilst on a break from their studies. It also provides them with real insight into the life of a general practice lawyer. This year more students were able to be involved, delivering the service virtually and providing guidance and advice from London to Malaysia.

**“Pro bono reflects the best of our profession and I’m delighted to see so many, who are at the beginning of their training, so enthusiastic about it. It’s great to see so many innovative and diverse projects which are part of these awards...on behalf of the Government I want to say a huge ‘thank you’ to all of you.”**

Attorney General The Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP at Law Works and Attorney General Student ProBono Awards 2020

### Being innovative

Delivering pro bono services will naturally attract individuals with a passion for social justice. The very nature of pro bono work also requires a certain level of innovative thinking and entrepreneurialism. Striving to reach those most in need of legal support means identifying gaps in provision that reach beyond our own Law Clinic. This year the Law Clinic's Inquest Service, launched in November 2019 to support those unable to access legal representation in the face of an investigation into their loved one's death, was a runner up for 'Best New Pro Bono Activity Award' in the prestigious LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards 2020. [Read the related news story](#).

Matt Bennett was the student lead on the Inquest Service project: [Watch Matt's introduction to the service](#). The initiative also gained national coverage on the [BBC](#), [the Metro](#), [The Times](#), [Legal Cheek](#) and more.

A close-up portrait of Ryan MacMahon, a young man with dark, wavy hair and a light beard, wearing a white collared shirt and a grey sweater. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

## Case Study: Wellspring Settlement

The Law Clinic's outreach work provides students with an opportunity to venture outside of the University campus to help some of the most vulnerable communities in our city. Students are encouraged to identify, develop and manage the relationships with our community partners, which sees them gain skills and knowledge that positively impacts how they navigate life after university.

In 2019/20 students set up a project with the Wellspring Settlement, a community initiative based in one of the most deprived wards in the UK. The Wellspring Settlement enables the community to actively participate in positive, life-affirming activities and offers a unique space for residents to learn, create, develop, socialise and fulfil their potential. Here, Law Clinic students provide a regular drop-in service alongside careers experts, debt specialists and small business advisors.

Incoming Student Director and the 2019/20 Outreach Manager, Ryan MacMahon, supported the set up of the Wellspring Settlement and explains why its approach to collaborative working is so important – for both the community and for student development.

**“The collaborative approach of the Wellspring Settlement sets it apart from other outreach projects. At the end of each drop-in session all the partners get together to discuss individual cases and identify how some could be better helped with a combined package of support. This extends the myriad of benefits students already get from outreach in important ways - introducing commercial awareness and an opportunity to contribute as an equal in meetings with professionals.”**

**Ryan MacMahon, Incoming Student Director and the 2019/20 Outreach Manager**

This year the Law Clinic consisted of 232 students who gave over 18,000 hours of pro bono support to those that would otherwise be unable to afford legal advice.

## Our partners: Learning from the best

“This year, students have understandably expressed concerns about the job prospects that will be available to them once they graduate. However, they have also demonstrated a curiosity and creativity about what the future holds. This is something Osborne Clarke applies to help clients look to key challenges including the future of work, digitalisation and the need for decarbonisation. Embracing future challenges will lead to students who are ready to succeed. Being adaptable, creative, understanding how different aspects of law can flex and shift, and how clients’ needs transform is what will make them stand out.”

Julian Hemming, partner and co-chair of Osborne Clarke’s International Employment Law Group

### Starting to think like a lawyer

Osborne Clarke is an international law firm established in Bristol in 1748. Whilst it has moved its headquarters to London, it still refers to Bristol as its home city and is committed to supporting students in the Law Clinic. It provides an annual training session to help students prepare for the transition from student to practitioner. This year, training was conducted by Julian Hemming, partner and co-chair of its International Employment Law Group, and supported by the firm’s latest trainees to provide insight into early years in a law firm. The firm has a sector-led approach, delivering expertise in diverse areas of law – and prides itself on being future-focused.

### Getting ready for court

The Law Clinic has a long-term relationship with the Personal Support Unit at Bristol County Court. Alongside this, students engage as part of the Clinic’s LiP Service project providing advice and guidance to litigants in person. Litigants can be referred back to the Law Clinic where students provide practical and emotional support to people in stressful situations, needing legal representation as they face court proceedings. Students help by listening to clients’ issues, organising their paperwork, helping them fill out forms, and accompanying them into court hearings when necessary. Throughout, students are supported by the Law Clinic’s academic practitioners, providing the guidance and support they need to maximise the opportunities available to build their knowledge of county court and family court procedures.

### Understanding diverse needs

This year we extended our outreach work, building on established programmes such as Community Law, Bristol Drugs Project, CLIC Sargent, and MIND with the introduction of new initiatives with the [Wellspring Settlement](#) and [One25’s Peony project](#). In a normal year, this would see Law Clinic students come face-to-face with vulnerable people living in some of the most deprived wards in the UK through our drop-in services. This year, we took referrals remotely. The skills students need to navigate the circumstances of these clients go way beyond that of understanding the law and its application. In previous years, to help students acclimatise to the sensitivities of working with individuals whose lives had been negatively impacted by addiction, terminal illness, domestic violence and mental illness, our partners had provided training prior to students commencing work with them. This year, with lockdown making this more difficult, the trainees became the trainers, with students that had already gone through the training programmes sharing their experiences, knowledge, and advice with those joining the teams.

“Last year I worked on Peony, a project with One25. I was part of a case that helped a mother gain full custody of her children. I enjoyed this work so much that this year I am one of the Outreach Managers and overlook an entire team,” Zoe Cama, Law Clinic Committee member



During 2019/20, Osborne Clarke provided training to help acquaint Law Clinic students with the essentials of being a legal adviser. The session also provided useful insight into Osborne Clarke and their areas of work.

**“The Osborne Clarke training encouraged me to consider how to approach vulnerable clients in a sensitive and respectful way, as well as reflecting on methods to communicate information that may be difficult for my client to hear. I have no doubt that the skills I have learnt will aid me in my current case as well as in my future career.”**

Susie Burley, outgoing Student Vice Director. Susie works on the Litigants in Person (LiP) project. [Watch her introduction to this area of work.](#)

95% of Law Clinic Students graduate with a 2.1 or above. One in three secure a first.

## Taking the next step: Inspiring alumni

Law Clinic students graduate fully equipped to fulfil their career aspirations, in or outside of the law. Whether a student aspires to work in the legal profession or beyond – their time at the Clinic will expose them to a diverse range of legal areas so they can make informed decisions about their future. This year, many of our graduates returned to support the next generation of Law Clinic students, providing insight and advice for their next steps. We caught up with some of them to see where their journey with us had taken them.

### **Giving back: Oliver Foudah, Fourth Seat Trainee at Allen & Overy**

On leaving the Law Clinic, Oliver continued his involvement in pro bono work at Allen & Overy and has been working on a pilot project in partnership with anti-poverty charity Zacchaeus 2000 Trust (Z2K) since he first started there. The project involved assisting individuals who had their disability welfare benefits cut following a re-assessment by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Four years later, he is managing the project alongside an associate in Allen and Overy's litigation team. Z2K's clients have a staggering 92% success rate at tribunal level. For Oliver this represents an experience that really does change peoples' lives.

**“The work that I did with the Law Clinic really put everything into perspective and I became hugely appreciative of the incredibly fortunate position that we are in as students at the University of Bristol. This strengthened my desire to give back to a community in which so many are in need.”**

**“I enjoyed studying employment law during my undergraduate degree at Bristol University and was thrilled my role in the Law Clinic enabled me to bring an Employment Tribunal claim. It was an exciting experience and definitely played a role in my decision to apply to barristers' chambers that specialise in employment law.”**

### **At the bar: Serena Crawshay-Williams**

Serena had acted as a student adviser at the Law Clinic for two years. On advising an employment law claimant with an unfair dismissal claim she had the opportunity to type up witness statements, learn about disclosure obligations, and assist her client at a two-day hearing. She continued to explore this area of work prior to starting her pupillage at Old Square Chambers, working part-time as a research assistant for Professor of Labour Law, Alan Bogg, and as a legal intern for the employment law firm, Menzies Law. This balance allowed her to maintain her academic interest whilst assisting with employment tribunal claims.



### **In the City: Mariya Kolomiyets**

Mariya came to the University of Bristol with a burning desire to prove herself. The Law Clinic provided a platform to do just that. She was one of our first Law Clinic summer interns and was intrinsically involved in the set-up of our partnership with CLIC Sargent – an initiative that has had a significant impact on the community and on her own career. Having attended several assessment centres following graduation, she gained a winter vacation scheme at Norton Rose Fulbright, at the end of which she secured a training contract. [Watch the interview with Mariya](#) about her Law Clinic experience whilst she was here.

**“At contract assessment centres, interviewing partners would continually ask me about my Law Clinic experience. Being involved in pro bono tends to make lawyers good at identifying legal issues and delivering advice in lay terms, but also delivering bad news with compassion. Undoubtedly, my Law Clinic experience provided a robust foundation to my first steps in the City.”**

**“I’d managed to reach my fourth and final year of study without a clear idea of the area of law I wanted to work in. The Law Clinic started me orienting my search towards areas of law that I was more passionate about. Eventually I saw a suitable position in the criminal sector - a paralegal opening at a London firm’s criminal defence department. Following an interview, I was offered the job.”**

### **Criminal law paralegal: Dominic Hickey**

Dominic’s experience in the Law Clinic illustrates the importance of trying out different areas of law, and of taking the time to reflect intentionally on where a person’s real interests lie. Public law and criminal defence often take a back seat (or no seat at all) at law fairs and careers events, so many students don’t have an opportunity to experience what a career in that sector might be like. Working in the Law Clinic during his last year, and as a summer intern, provided Dominic with an opportunity to handle legal work across a breadth of different areas.



A photograph of three people standing in a stone archway. On the left is a man with glasses wearing a dark blue polo shirt and dark trousers. In the center is a man with a shaved head wearing a light blue checkered button-down shirt and dark trousers. On the right is a woman with dark hair wearing a leopard print sweater and dark trousers. They are all smiling and standing on a stone step in front of a red door.

**John Peake, Law Clinic Academic Director**

John Peake was appointed as the first Academic Director of the Law Clinic in 2014. Since then he has expanded the opportunities available for students to become involved in pro bono legal work – most recently embedding those opportunities in the curriculum with the introduction of a Clinical Legal Studies module. John is a Director and Founder of South West Law, a firm committed to social welfare work. He also works as a housing lawyer for North Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau and sits as a Tribunal Judge.

**Sumayyah Malna  
Teaching Fellow, Law Clinic**

Sumayyah is a qualified solicitor, previously working as a medical law solicitor for Bevan Brittan. She started with the Law Clinic in 2019, bringing with her an extensive knowledge of inquest work which led to the set-up of the Clinic's Inquest Service. Sumayyah's motivation for the initiative followed her time in practice where she found she was often attending inquests with families who were not legally represented while other parties often had solicitors, barristers, or both. This year we celebrated the arrival of Sumayyah's second child. Jennifer Morgan is covering her maternity.

**Omar Madhloom, Senior Lecturer, Law Clinic**

Omar has been essential in helping students deal with the pressures of working with vulnerable clients. His passion for combining the academic and the vocational stages of legal training has seen our Clinical Legal Studies module evolve to improve the way the students think about, and interact with, clients, further enhancing both their future employability and the service they provide for Clinic clients. Omar has also been instrumental in preparing the ground for an initiative for British ex-forces that started with the University signing the Armed Forces Covenant last year. (See update opposite)

“John Peake has been both dynamic and inspirational in his drive to create a truly collaborative project that engages students in their learning experience – and provides a much-needed service for the public.” Hugh Brady, Vice-Chancellor, University of Bristol

## The team: A supportive environment

“The Law Clinic’s academic team supervises student volunteers as they advise clients on a range of legal issues. We also support students engage in reflective learning while assisting their clients, connecting the academic and vocational stages of training so they can develop the multi-faceted approach to solving legal problems that top legal firms demand. Importantly, we are all practitioners with diverse experiences to share – and we are supported by an amazing administration team who are at the heart of our Law Clinic family. This year, feeling connected to the wider Law Clinic community has been essential and we are immensely proud of the role everyone has played to make that happen.”

Omar Madhloom, Senior Lecturer, Law Clinic

### Thank you Louise, Liz and Richard

This year our administration team has gone above and beyond to keep systems running and students motivated. From being the face of the Law Clinic for clients coming into our dedicated offices at 8-10 Berkeley Square and students’ first point of contact, to coordinating the migration of case files online to provide the foundations of our virtual offering. This year the team also introduced the first Law Clinic Bulletin, a weekly digital newsletter to help maintain a sense of belonging for students who were missing the vibrant hub of the Clinic – the office chats, meetings and the many celebrations of student successes on cases, personal achievements or as they secured jobs and training contracts.

### Update on Veterans’ Clinic

When academic members join the Law Clinic they bring a unique set of knowledge, skills and interests. The Veterans’ Clinic was established by Omar last year, and is currently in the process of forming a partnership with one of the main Armed Forces charity, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSFA). SSFA is a UK charity that provides lifelong support to serving men and women and veterans from the British Armed Forces and their families or dependents.

### Welcome, Jennifer Morgan

This year we welcomed Jennifer Morgan as a Law Clinic Teaching Fellow, covering Sumayyah’s maternity leave. As a CILEx-qualified lawyer specialising in immigration and asylum, Jennifer’s main areas of interest are human rights and refugee law, mental health-linked cases and cases involving gender-based violence. These issues in particular feed into the outreach work Law Clinic students undertake with partners – and the section of society most impacted by COVID-19.

“With responsibility in the Clinic for family, housing and employment law, I needed to hit the ground running with more enquiries than ever coming in on these issues as a result of lockdown. I’ve been hugely impressed with the students I’ve been working with in terms of their passion for ensuring access to justice on behalf of our clients.” Jennifer Morgan, Teaching Fellow, Law Clinic

Over 96% of clients were satisfied with the service and felt the outcome of their case was better as a direct result of the Law Clinic advising them.

## Thank you

“We are thankful to our members for their unyielding efforts in contributing to the local community. We are also thankful to our alumni network and our peers for their support. We appreciate your ongoing guidance and your generosity in funding this year’s internships. It was extremely valuable making it possible for us to support those in need, especially during these unprecedented times. A big thanks to our partners through the years, who have helped us aid many amazing individuals on their path to justice. Lastly, importantly, thank you to all our clients who have consulted us, and trusted us to accompany them on what can often be a difficult journey.” Law Clinic Student Committee, 2019/20

### Thanks to:

- The Clinic Student Committee. It is testimony to the Committee, ably led by Malavika Ramanand, that students have been able to continue providing a much needed service at an extremely difficult time for so many.
- The Law School and University, for its ongoing support of the Law Clinic, its staff and students.
- All our partners, with whom we share a mutual commitment to the local community.
- Osborne Clarke for its ongoing commitment to providing invaluable support to our students, so essential in preparing them for the cases they encounter.
- Our Litigants in Person Service (LIP Service) partners at University of Law and the University of West of England (UWE) Law Clinic.
- Our alumni donors for covering the costs of student interns so we can provide a robust year-long service.

“During my time as a summer intern, I worked on up to 20 cases at a time. This allowed me greater insight into a number of practice areas and experience of working with a volume of claims similar to that expected in many traditional legal settings.”

Amber Schumacher, Law Clinic Intern

### Client survey results

#### Over 96% of those interviewed indicated that:

- overall, they were satisfied with the service they received from the Law Clinic
- they felt that the outcome of the case was better as a result of the Law Clinic advising them

#### 100% of those interviewed indicated that:

- the initial contact with the Law Clinic was easy
- information given was easy to understand and students were informative
- they were kept up to date with case progress
- students listened to what they had to say
- they felt treated fairly at all times
- they would recommend us



“I was so hopeless before the Law Clinic took my case as I couldn’t afford a private solicitor. I’m so lucky to get legal advice without paying for it. The Law Clinic is doing a tremendous job helping people like me who are in very difficult and vulnerable situations. Thank you for taking my case, it was very complicated and it took a while. I appreciate being supported until my case closed. The students have been extraordinary helpful and the effort and extra time put into my case resulted in a good outcome.”

Client, Law Clinic 2019/20

“The role of law clinics is crucial. The costs associated with the legal system are designed in a way that it isolates people from its redress. Thanks to the support we received this year, we have been able to continue assisting in the accessibility of justice, while simultaneously experiencing legal practice first hand.” Malavika Ramanand, Law Clinic Student Director, 2019/20

## Future and finances

For the academic year 2019–2020, our expenditure grew to just over £225k. This represents increased investment in student interns, to supplement funds coming in from alumni, and our ongoing commitment to providing a year-round service. As part of that commitment, our ambition for next year will particularly focus on the further development of our outreach projects. It is through these that we are able to reach the most vulnerable in the community.

### Looking Forward from Incoming Student Director

As I look forward to the year ahead leading the Student Committee I am aware of many challenges, but also opportunities, facing us at the Law Clinic.

One of our most valuable services is the outreach work we do with various charity and non-profit partners across the city such as The Bristol Drugs Project, The Wellspring Settlement and Mind - to name just a few.

This year we are endeavouring to maintain these relationships while also balancing the crucial need to keep students safe. In order to achieve this we have already begun implementing virtual solutions to outreach work and hope to continue with innovative ideas, allowing us to reach those who need our help through virtual means, as will be necessary for the foreseeable future.

Another objective of the committee this year is to increase our efforts in utilising social media and publicity, to better communicate with the Law Clinic members and form a sense of community in the absence of being able to interact with one another in person as is ordinarily the case.

Despite these challenges, the Student Committee is determined to continue with the important work of the Clinic, and to bring innovative solutions to these novel problems.

Ryan MacMahon  
Incoming Student Director 2020/21

### Law Clinic Funding Requirements for 2020/21

To reach more people it is essential that we continue to increase our support of students through a balance of training, mentoring and ongoing academic support. We are therefore looking for funding for the following:

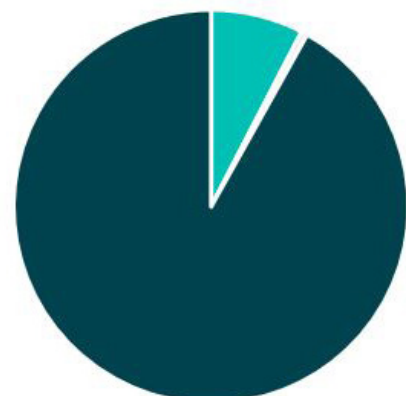
- £ 6,000: To help establish and provide ongoing support for our virtual Outreach projects so we can continue meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable communities in the City
- £ 5,000: To help fund a single intern\*
- £ 2,500: To fund a student training initiative
- £ 1,500: To cover running costs for Community Law
- £ 1,000: To cover running costs for our Veteran Law Clinic
- £ 650: Sponsorship of Volunteer of the Year award and event


\* A minimum of five interns are needed to cover both Easter and summer caseloads

If you are interested in supporting in this way please contact [john.peake@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:john.peake@bristol.ac.uk).

### Law Clinic Expenditure 2019/20

- Intern Fees (8%)
- Other Running Costs (1%)
- Fixed costs (91%)





“This year we have been balancing the need to keep students safe with continuing the invaluable work we do with our partner organisations. Outreach has always been about adapting our services to meet the requirements of others. Moving forward, we are determined to keep all our partnerships running. It is this work that reaches those who most need our support.”

Ayushi Angresh, Senior Outreach Manager 2019/20

Find out how you can #DoMoreWithLaw  
[bristol.ac.uk/law/domore](http://bristol.ac.uk/law/domore)



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