

# NLS Legal Annual Report 2021/22



**Law Firm of the Year**  
**LexisNexis**

Legal Awards 2022



**NLS Legal**  
Nottingham Law School



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NLS Legal is Nottingham Trent University's teaching law firm and forms part of Nottingham Law School's progressive approach to legal education and training. Nottingham Law School (NLS) is one of the leading providers of academic and professional legal education with an outstanding reputation in the delivery of innovative courses. Nottingham Law School is one of the largest law schools in the UK, with over 150 staff and in excess of 3,000 students.

As part of NLS's commitment to the delivery of transformational legal education and its commitment to supporting access to justice, NLS set up a fully regulated law firm – NLS Legal (formerly the NLS Legal Advice Centre) in 2015 as a major milestone in the development of the NLS's pro bono advice clinic, which was first established in 2002.

NLS Legal, an exempt charity, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and holds an Alternative Business Structure (ABS) licence from the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The model has parallels to the teaching hospital model traditionally seen in the medicine discipline context providing the opportunity for our students to obtain valuable work experience and develop their practical skills alongside their studies. The firm was the first of its kind when it became regulated in 2015 and such a model remains rare in the higher education sector.

Legal advice, assistance and representation is provided on a not-for-profit basis to individuals and organisations that cannot access legal aid or afford legal representation across a large range of service areas, providing a vital service to the community.

NLS Legal is based within Chaucer Building, City Centre campus, providing a professional and confidential space for clients, staff and students. The firm operates both in person and remotely. The current facilities were officially opened in 2014 by Dominic Grieve QC, MP (then Attorney General).

NLS Legal is multi award winning and in March 2022 received the 'Law Firm of the Year' Award at the national LexisNexis Legal Awards.

Please note – The information and data within this report covers the period 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022.





# Executive summary

## Welcome to our Annual Report 2021/22 – it has been another exciting and eventful year!

I am really pleased that we have now completed our re-brand to **NLS Legal**. The new name is much more reflective of our law firm status and recognises the firm's progression and development over the last few years. Importantly, the re-brand has been fully embraced by our students (and former students).

My personal highlight of the year was being crowned '**Law Firm of the Year**' at the LexisNexis Legal Awards 2022. We were facing tough competition as the other shortlisted candidates were all large national and international firms but, in keeping with our firm ethos, the underdog won the day! We were also delighted to win '**Best Contribution by a Small or Medium Firm**' at the LawWorks Pro Bono Awards 2022 and a **NTU Team Excellence Award** in the Enriching Society category this year. It is always a pleasure to celebrate our successes with the team and these achievements motivate us to keep innovating.

We launched two new service areas this year – our new full-service family law offering and a new pro bono service for prisoners. The new family service is helping to address a huge unmet legal need in our local community, and it is also a popular area of law with our students. The service has already achieved some outstanding and life changing results (read more at page 21). The new pro bono service for prisoners has brought some new and interesting strands of work to the firm, most notably it has ignited us to shine a spotlight on the injustice that is the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) regime, which continues to indefinitely incarcerate and detrimentally impact many individuals, despite the fact IPP's were abolished in 2012.

I am also really proud of our Compliance Support Placements file review initiative that launched this year (see page 22). The students, all first years, undertook comprehensive file reviews, providing them with valuable insight into legal practice and instilling in them the importance of regulatory compliance, best practice and effective case management. The students met with the supervising lawyers to provide feedback on their reviews, which we found was an excellent way to build accountability, confidence, and resilience – all crucial employability skills. As we have seen a rise in the number of cases where the SRA have sanctioned junior lawyers for regulatory breaches, we see this initiative as playing an important role in providing our students with the skills and confidence to speak out and raise matters with those in more senior positions.

Our service continues to be more demand in ever and the access to justice gap is widening due to the cost-of-living crisis. We therefore remain committed to doing all we can to provide assistance and support to those in need. Fortunately, we will be increasing our staff base in the 22/23 academic year, helping us support more clients and offer more student opportunities.

I take this opportunity to thank the University for their continued unwavering support and commitment. In particular, I would like to thank **Jenny Chapman, Executive Dean** of NLS, the **Board of Governors**, the **Vice Chancellor**, **Professor Edward Peck CBE**, the **University Executive Team** and the NLS Legal's **Board of Directors** and **ABS Management Board**.

I do hope you enjoy reading the report!

**Laura Pinkney**  
Head of NLS Legal



## Acknowledgments

NLS Legal would not exist without the innovative vision and the generous financial assistance provided by NTU. In particular, we would like to thank the University's **Board of Governors**, the **Vice Chancellor Professor Edward Peck CBE** and the **University Executive Team** for their commitment and support to NLS Legal.

We would also like to express our deepest appreciation to: **Richard Bagley, Paul and Lynne Bowden**; and **Linda Hunter** for sharing and championing our vision, supporting us in various ways over many years, and whose very generous financial donations have enabled NLS Legal to provide new student opportunities and expand our vital services to the community. We are truly grateful.

Sincere thanks to **Santander Universities UK** who have continued to provide vital funding to support our service. This year, the funding from Santander supported the launch of our new pro bono service for prisoners and enabled us to upgrade two of our meeting rooms to improve our ability to facilitate remote hearings and online appointments, which was vital development for us and enhances our service and facilities for our clients, students and staff.

Thank you also to other individuals who have made donations to support our continued work – your kindness and generosity is immensely valued.

In addition, our achievements would not be possible without the numerous firms, organisations and charities that we work with and that form part of our referral network.

Our sincere thanks to:

AskUS Nottingham  
Bipolar Lift  
Business and Intellectual Property Centre  
Citizen's Advice Nottingham and District  
Citizen's Advice Broxtowe  
Derbyshire Law Centre  
Environmental Law Foundation  
Free Representation Unit  
Hate Crime Unit  
Improving Lives  
Jonathan's Voice  
LawWorks  
NBV Enterprise Solutions Ltd  
Nottingham City Council – Welfare Rights Service  
Nottingham County Council – Benefits Team and i-work  
Nottingham Law Centre  
Nottinghamshire Law Society  
Nottingham Women's Centre  
Ropewalk Chambers  
St George's Community Centre, Netherfield  
Support Through Court

We also want to say a huge thank you to the students that work with us. Our students continue to make us proud, impressing us with their talent, dedication and enthusiasm.

## Funding and governance

The staff budget for NLS Legal is supported by NTU and NLS and forms part of NLS's overall staffing budget. NLS Legal also receives funding from private donors and commercial organisations. We are immensely grateful to the generous financial support of a number of individuals and organisations which have supported further expansion of the firm.

NLS Legal Ltd (trading as NLS Legal) is a company limited by guarantee with its sole member being NTU. NTU covers the costs of all the property, assets, staffing and other services required by the firm.

The ABS Management Board and Board of Directors for NLS Legal are:

**Professor Cillian Ryan**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor International

**James Lacey**  
NTU Director of Finance

**Rebecca Jenkyn**  
NTU Head of Governance and Legal Services

**Joanne Cenic**  
Finance Business Partner and NLS Legal's Compliance Officer for Finance and Administration

**Jenny Chapman**  
NLS Executive Dean and NLS Legal's Compliance Officer for Legal Practice and Money Laundering Reporting Officer

**Laura Pinkney**  
Head of NLS Legal

# Data summary

We dealt with 199 cases this year, across nine different service areas, a 32% increase from 2020/21, with the most significant rises across our crime, Intellectual Property (IP) and Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) services. Our Trade Mark Attorney also supported an additional eight people via the CITMA free IP advice clinic service.

As anticipated, we saw a significant increase in new enquiries, which rose by 17% from last year. This year we were able to accept 12% of enquiries – this was the same percentage as last year as, although we dealt with more cases, we also received significantly more enquiries. For those we are unable to accept, we do provide signposting information, providing an individual response wherever possible.

We dealt with roughly the same number of Free Representation Unit (FRU) cases this year, with representation being provided at a total of 29 Social Security and Employment Tribunals, compared with 28 last year.

We were delighted to secure over **£300,000** in compensation, settlements and benefits for our clients this year, bringing our cumulative total to date to an impressive **£5.8million**. Our FRU cases accounted for around 60% of the total financial awards secured.

We were once again able to offer a large number of student opportunities this year, a total of 735 (intra and extra-curricular). This is a slight decrease from the 777 opportunities last year (-5%). However, we increased the number of students that we worked with – 619 students, compared with 583 students last year, an increase of 6%. The number of opportunities exceed the number of students as some students were able to take up multiple opportunities, working

across different projects or services.

We were delighted to see that, once again, those students undertaking client activity with NLS Legal, outperformed their peers, with an incredible 91% achieving a first or 2:1 in their degree, compared with 69% of all NLS students. As you can see from the graph at page 9, this is a consistent trend.

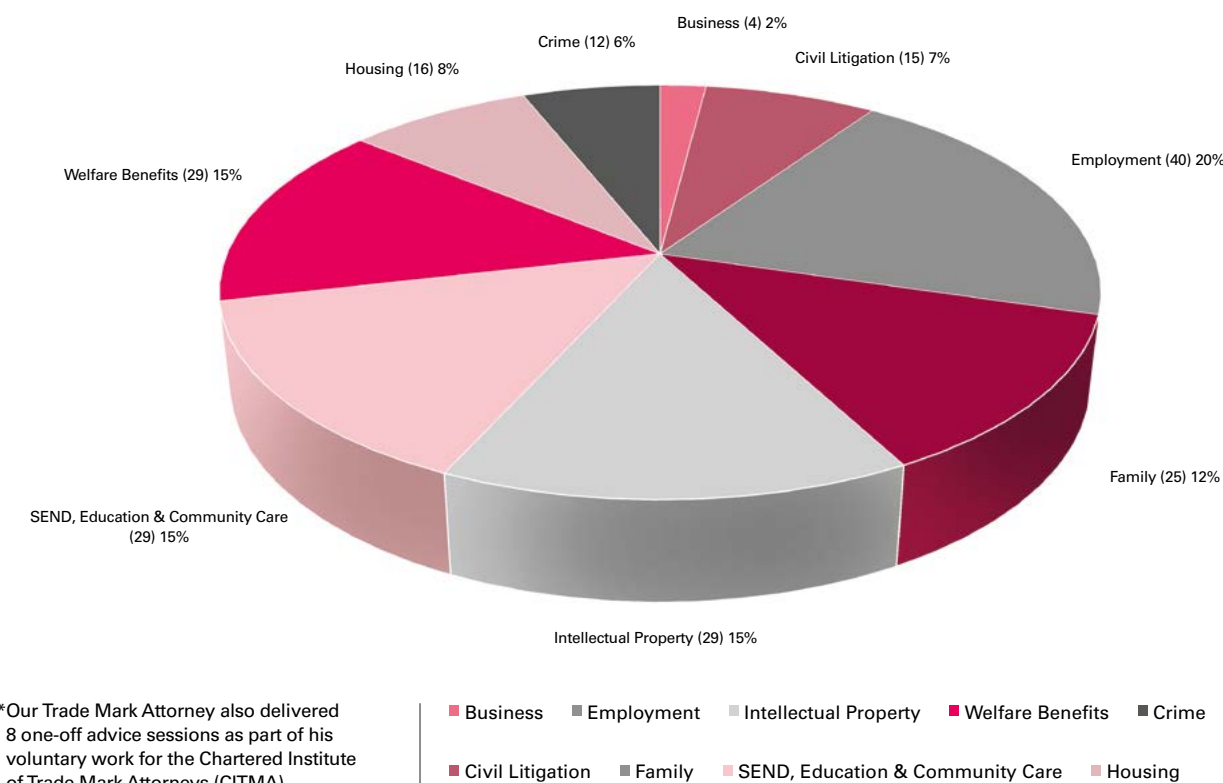
In addition, we are committed to improving equality and diversity and ensuring we provide work experience opportunities to those currently under-represented in the legal profession. In the last academic year, 36% of undergraduates and 41% of postgraduates were from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, 17% of undergraduates and 20% of postgraduates declared a disability, and 43% of undergraduates and 40% of postgraduates were from black and other ethnic minority backgrounds.

We were also delighted to see a significant increase in mature students and postgraduates from overseas volunteering with the firm, a 5 percentage point and 28 percentage point increase respectively. Whilst we cannot be certain of the reasons behind this, the move to hybrid working is likely to have played at least a factor in this. Hybrid working provides increased flexibility to our students so that they can volunteer remotely, helping those that are unable to physically attend the office and/or allowing those with caring

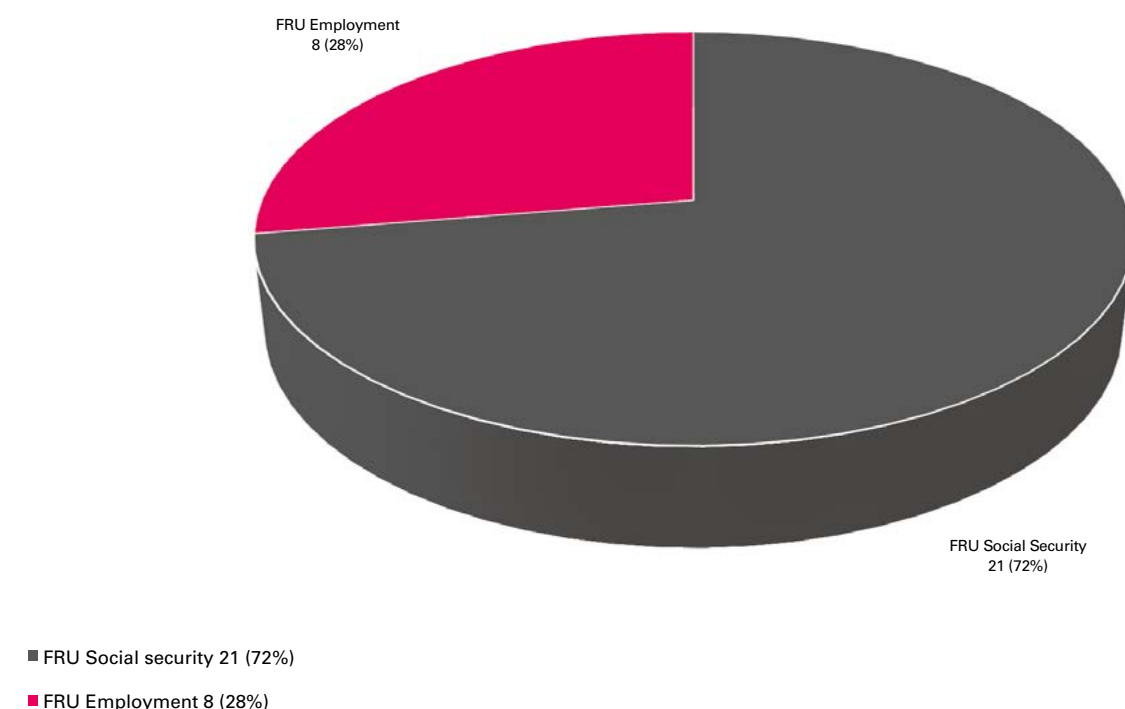
responsibilities to volunteer flexibly around their other commitments.

One of the most motivating parts of our job is receiving positive feedback. In addition to the client and student feedback featured at pages 32-35, we are proud to report that, based on our student feedback survey data, 74% of students that responded to the survey stated that the presence of NLS Legal and associated pro bono opportunities was the main reason or an influencing factor in their decision to study at NTU and 100% of our students said they would recommend volunteering at NLS Legal to future students. In addition, 100% of the students that responded said they would be putting their role as student volunteers on their CV or LinkedIn profiles, demonstrating the importance the role of NLS Legal in enhancing our students employability. Based on our client feedback survey data, 100% of the clients who completed our client survey said our service was 'excellent' or 'good', and 100% stated that they 'would recommend our services' and 'would use our services again'. In addition, the graph at page 11 highlights the impressive number of key employability skills developed by our students.

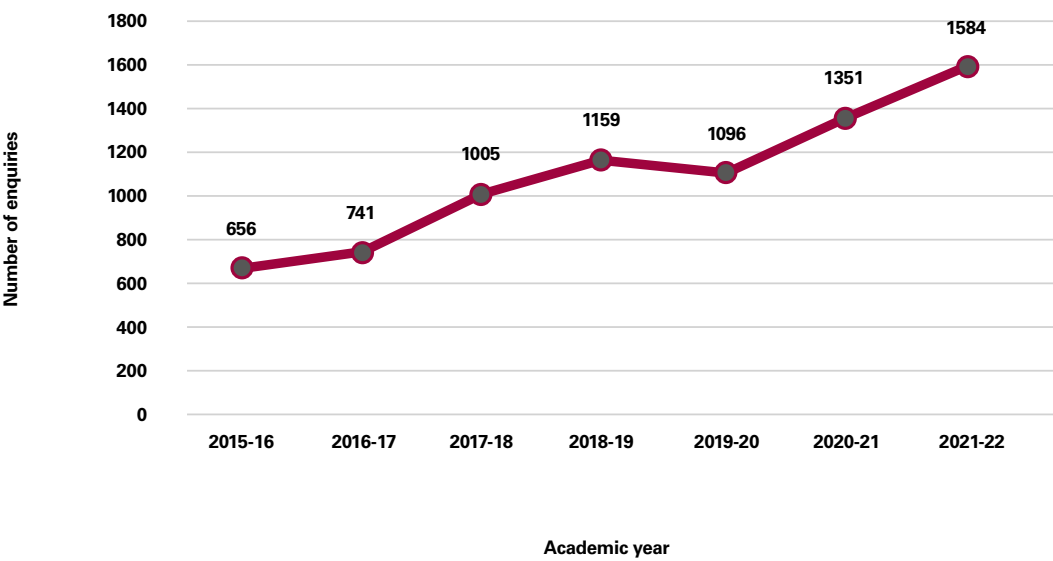
## Number of Cases 2021/22 (199)



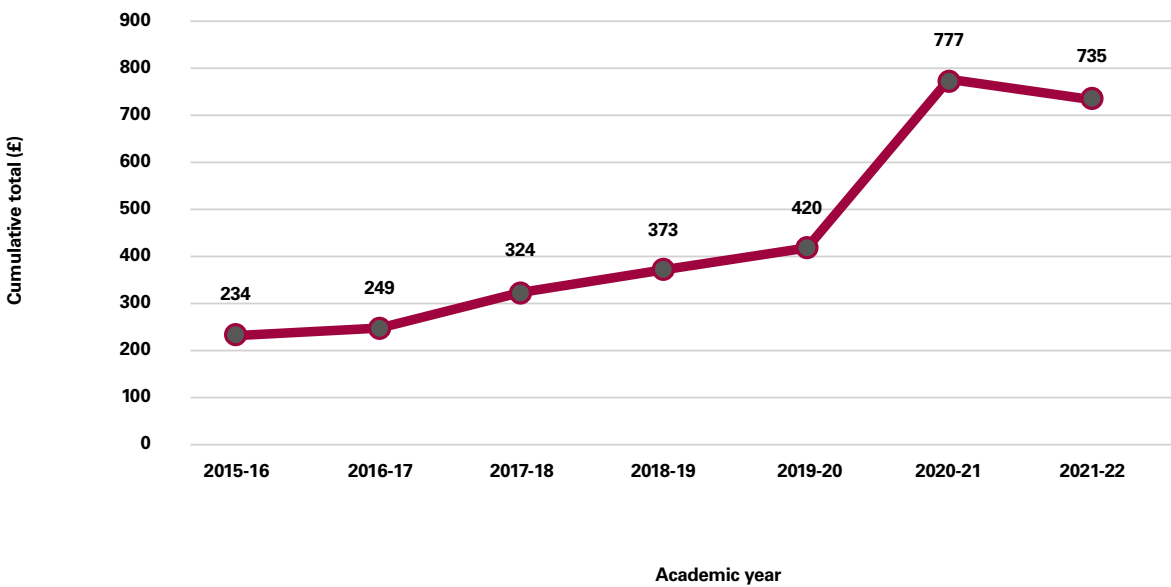
## Total Free Representation Unit (FRU) cases 2021/22



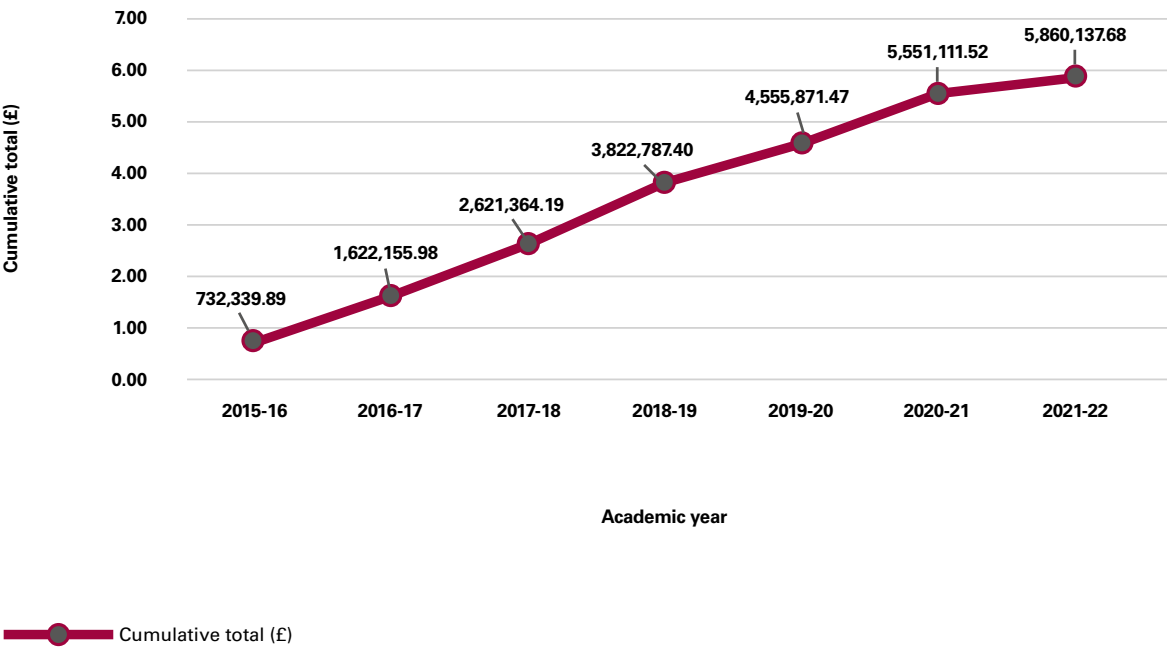
Total number of enquiries received



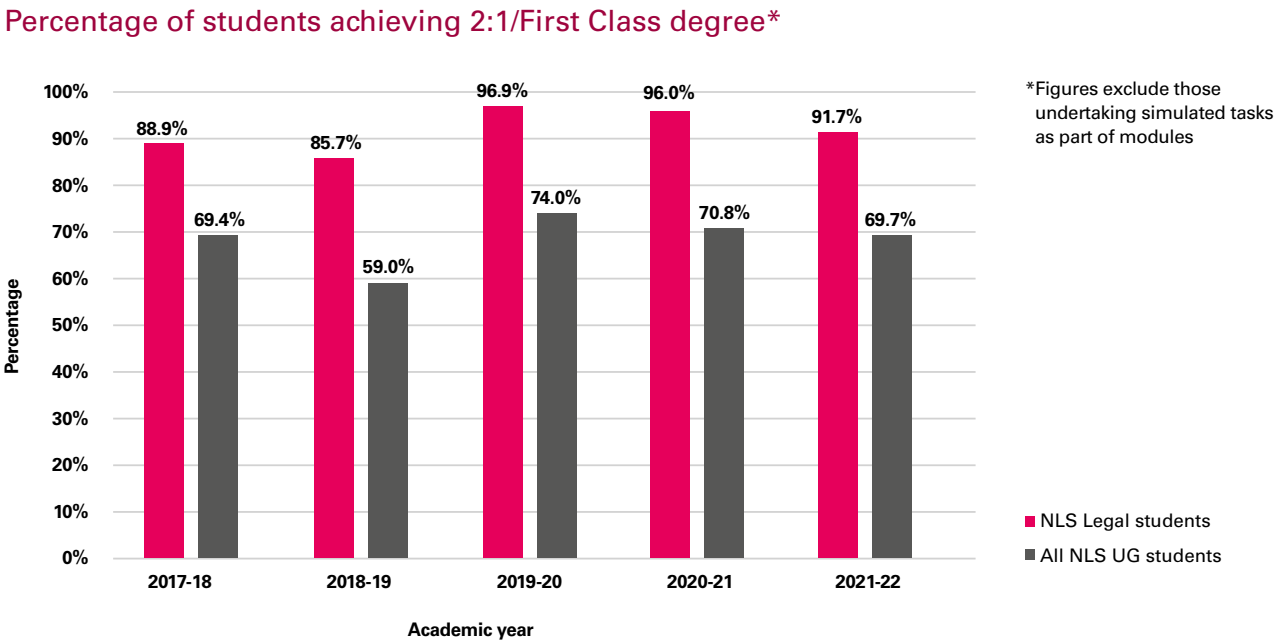
Total number of opportunities for students to work in NLS Legal activities (intra and extra-curricular)



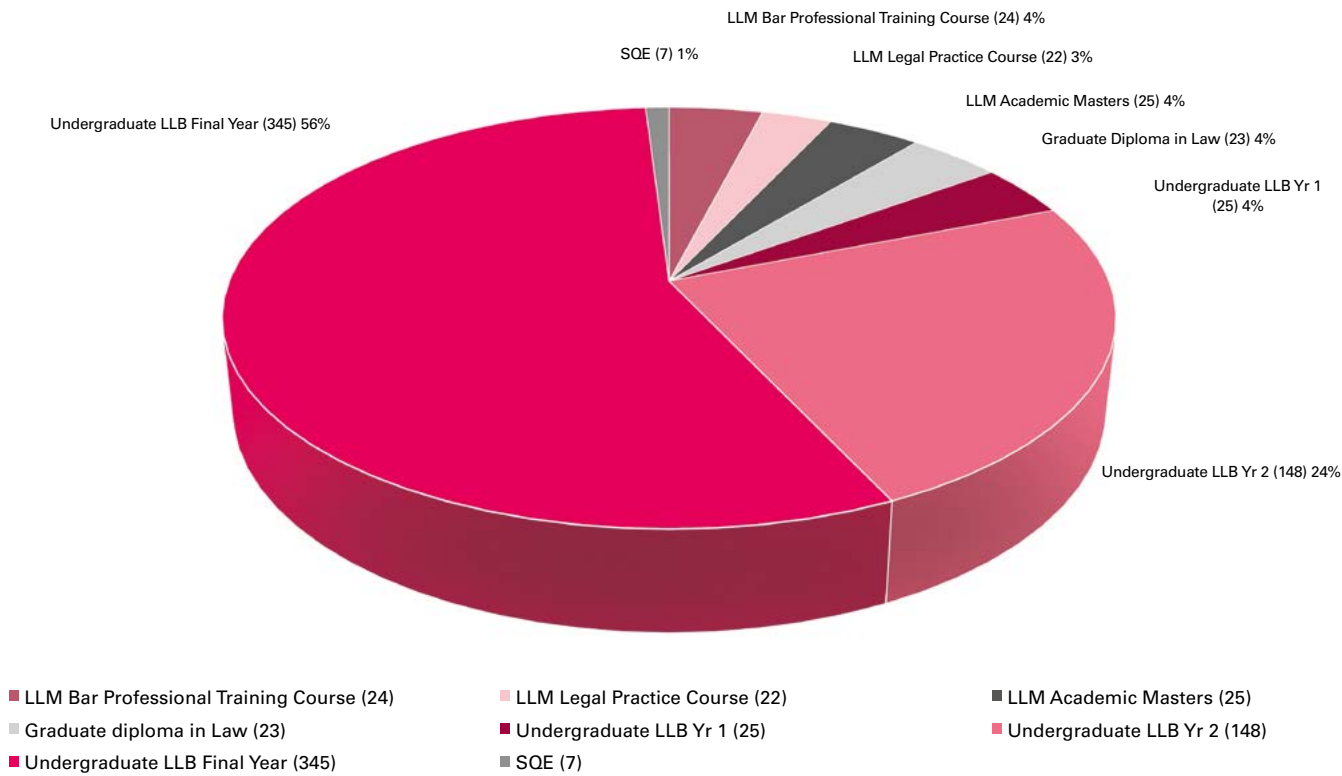
Total financial awards secured for clients (cumulative total £)



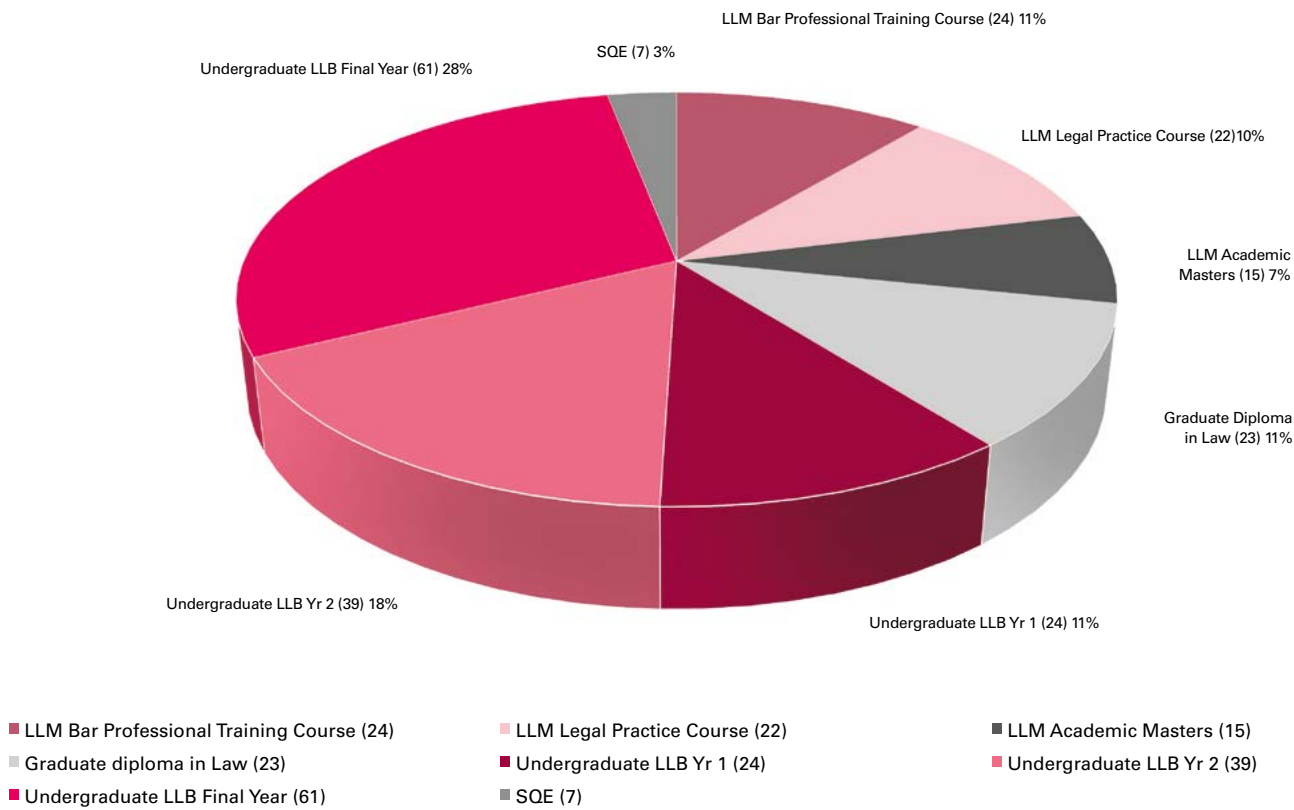
NLS Legal students 2017/18 to 2021/22 achieving a 2:1/First Class Degree, compared with the underlying NLS student population



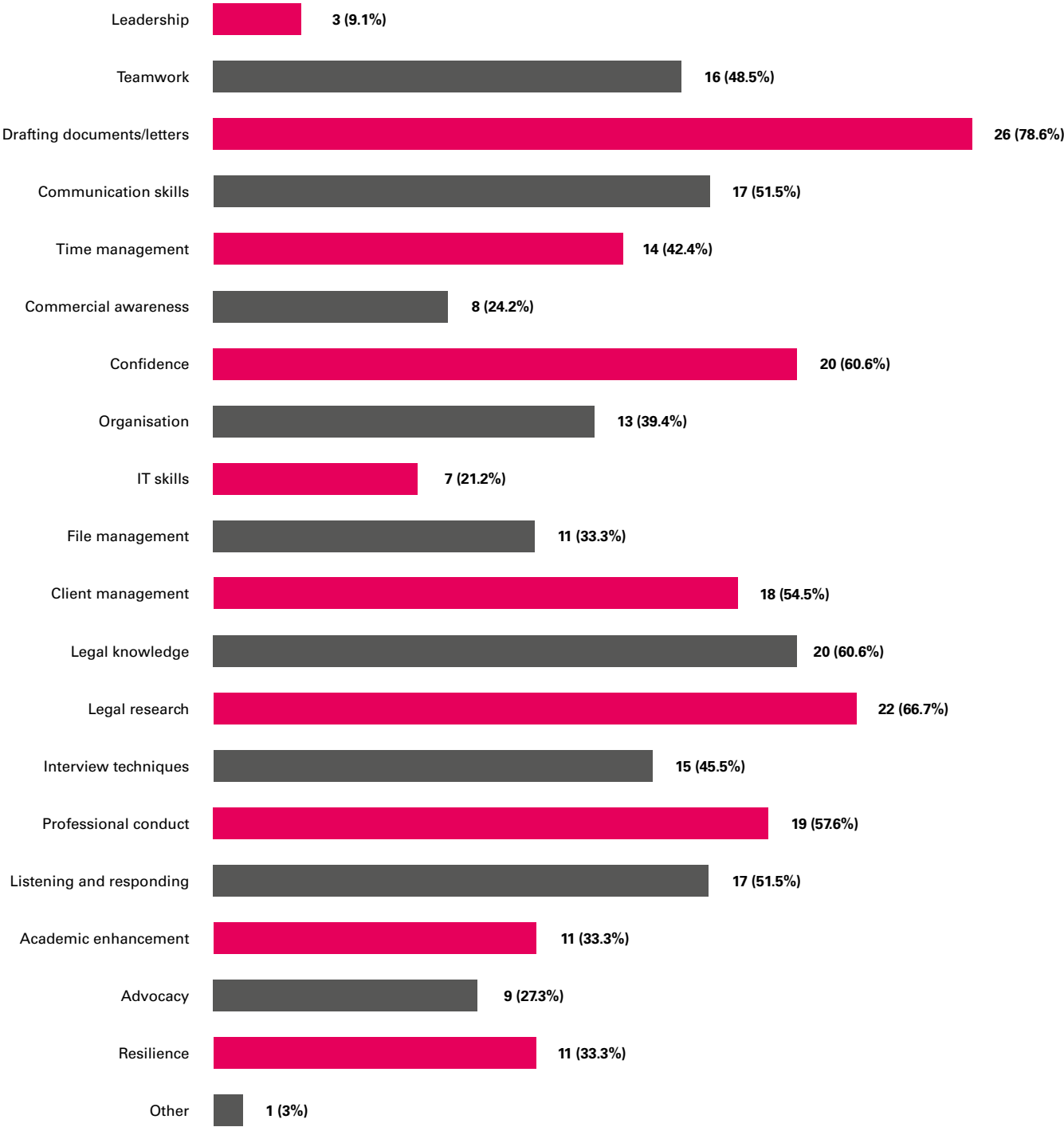
Students by course: intra and extra-curricular (619 students)



Students by course: excluding intra-curricular only (215 students)



The below graph represents the answers given in our 2021/22 student survey in response to the question: ***What are the most valuable skills that you have gained through volunteering at [NLS Legal]?*** The results demonstrate the large volume of skills developed as part of the student experience, with drafting, communication skills, legal research, confidence, professional conduct and client management amongst the more commonly chosen options:

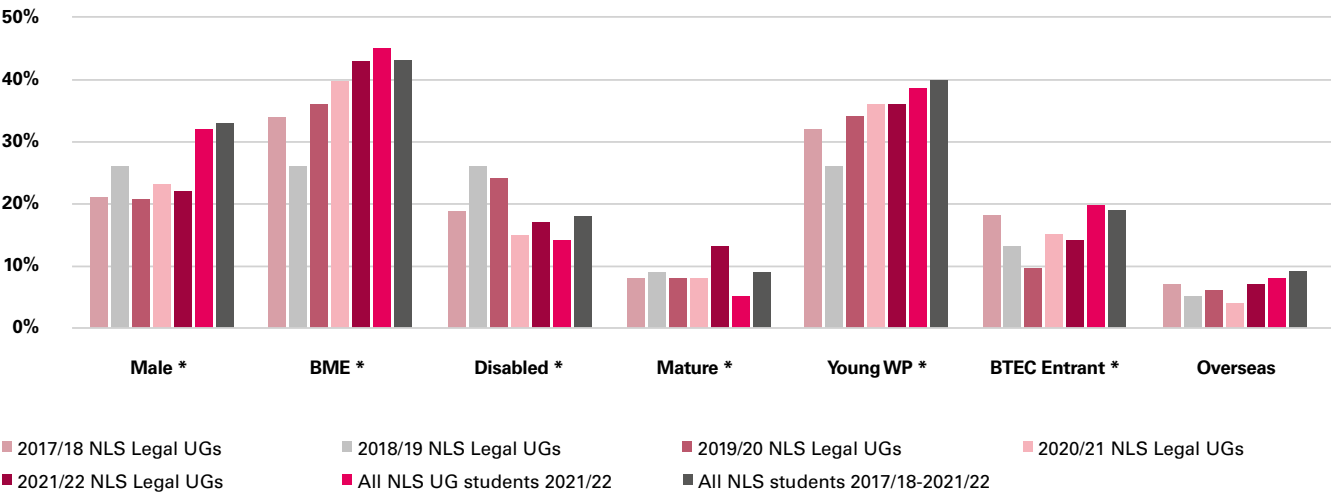


Muliti answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)



Figure 1: 2017/18 to 2021/22 NLS Legal Students participants by Success for All groups, compared with underlying NLS student population (undergraduate)

Success for All profile of NLS Legal Students - FT Undergraduates

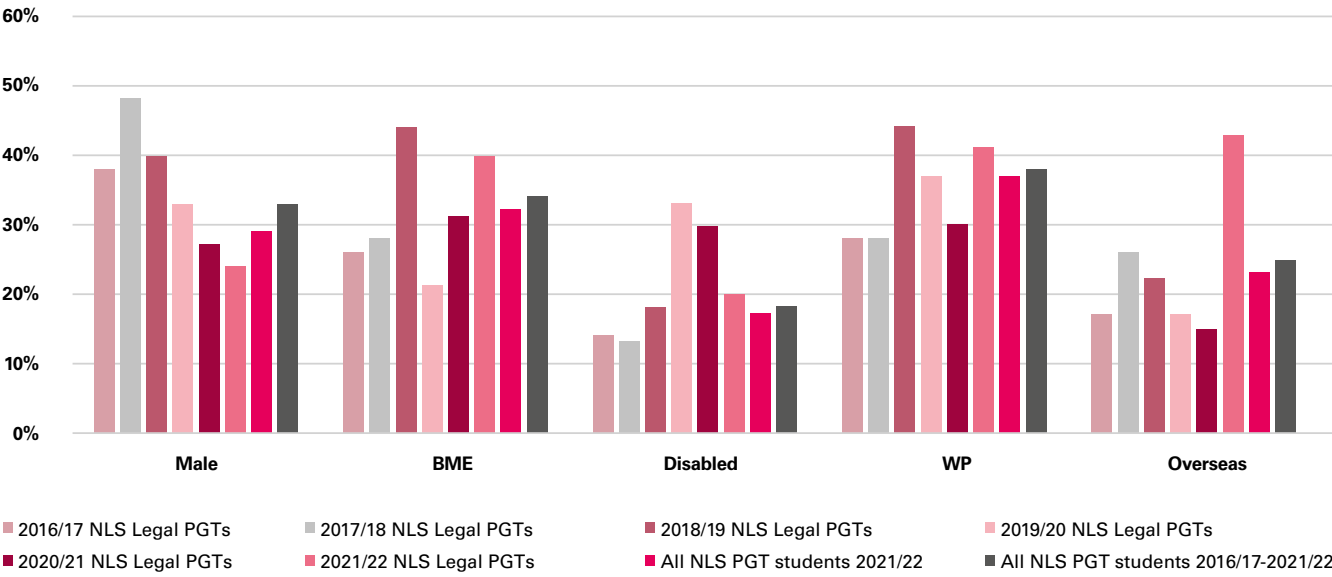


\*UK domiciled  
\*\*These figures exclude those undertaking simulated tasks as part of a module  
WP = Widening Participation. A student is considered WP if their home postcode is Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1 or 2

	Male	BME	Disabled	Mature	Young WP	BTEC Entrant	Overseas
2017/18 NLS Legal UGs	21%	34%	19%	8%	32%	18%	7%
2018/19 NLS Legal UGs	26%	26%	26%	9%	26%	13%	5%
2019/20 NLS Legal UGs	21%	36%	24%	8%	34%	10%	6%
2020/21 NLS Legal UGs	23%	40%	15%	8%	36%	15%	4%
2021/22 NLS Legal UGs	22%	43%	17%	13%	36%	14%	7%
All NLS UG students 2021/22	32%	46%	14%	5%	39%	21%	8%
All NLS UG students (2017/18-2021/22)	33%	44%	18%	9%	40%	23%	9%

Figure 2: 2016/17 to 2021/22 NLS Legal Students participants by Success for All groups, compared with underlying NLS student population (postgraduate taught)

Success for All - Postgraduate Taught



\*UK domiciled  
WP = Widening Participation. A student is considered WP if their home postcode is Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1 or 2

	Male	BME	Disabled	WP	Overseas
2016/17 NLS Legal PGTs	38%	26%	14%	28%	17%
2017/18 NLS Legal PGTs	48%	28%	13%	28%	26%
2018/19 NLS Legal PGTs	40%	44%	18%	44%	22%
2019/20 NLS Legal PGTs	33%	21%	33%	37%	17%
2020/21 NLS Legal PGTs	27%	31%	30%	30%	15%
2021/22 NLS Legal PGTs	24%	40%	20%	41%	43%
All NLS PGT students 2021/22	29%	32%	17%	37%	23%
All NLS PGT students (2016/17-2021/22)	33%	34%	18%	38%	25%

# Our services

We provide advice, assistance and representation in a number of service areas including business, civil litigation, crime, employment, family, housing, intellectual property, special educational needs and disability and welfare benefits.

Over the following pages we detail our various service areas and projects.



## Business and Enterprise Law Service

The Business and Enterprise Law Service operated under Ashley Fredericks from September 2021 until February 2022, at which point Ashley left NLS Legal to pursue a career in the Judiciary. We thank Ashley for his efforts in developing and running the Business and Enterprise Law Service and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

From February 2022, a number of our staff provided assistance with existing Business and Enterprise Law Service matters and in particular, as regards ongoing litigation files.

As in previous years, the contentious element continued to grow, year on year, with a variety of small claims relating to business disputes and consumer claims relating to vehicles and property.

The non-contentious element of the service continued to provide advice and assistance to individuals, charities, social enterprises, start-ups and SMEs on a wide range of commercial and contractual issues. This includes advice on company structure and governance, risk audits and corporate distress.

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## Case study

We acted on a case where it was asserted by our client that a vehicle they had been sold was not fit for purpose. The vehicle broke down on the journey to the client's home after making the purchase. The van had been intended for use in a fledgling business, a business that the client could not proceed with given the condition of the purchased vehicle.

The client had tried to reject the vehicle within 14 days of purchase to no avail. The seller offered to pay some money towards repairs, but the amount offered was significantly less than the quote the client had received for repairs. The client wished to move on from this dispute and, if possible, reach an early and amicable resolution. Ultimately, we assisted the client to settle the claim without need to attend a hearing. The client recovered a sum equivalent to more than 95% of the original amount spent. The client was relieved to be able to put the dispute behind them and move forward with their future plans.

## Future development

We are delighted to welcome Charis Wong to the firm from September 2022. Charis joins us from a local private practice firm, and specialises in civil litigation, commercial and company law. Charis has a long-held interest in access to justice, with previous pro bono experience. We look forward to seeing the service continue to grow and further develop under her supervision.



## Employment Law Service

The Employment Law Service provides advice to employees on a range of topics including unfair and wrongful dismissal, unlawful deduction of wages, discrimination and disciplinary matters. This includes representation in Employment Tribunal proceedings, as part of our Free Representation Unit service. The team also provides an Employment Handbook Service for employers, providing start-ups, SMEs, social enterprises, charities and other not-for-profits with an up to date employment policies and procedures handbook. On occasion, we provide advocacy support for charitable organisations at Employment Tribunals.

The service said goodbye to our popular paralegal, Jack Stuart, near the start of the year. Jack has now started his pupillage at Ropewalk Chambers. We were also grateful to the significant support provided by James Ball, who has now also departed to start his own pupillage at KCH Garden Square Chambers. We wish them both all the best with their pupillages.

This year, the service has continued to offer students the opportunity to get involved with our virtual internships, which offer a realistic experience of working on client cases. These internships tend to focus on a number of the practical issues that our volunteers will encounter as they progress into their legal careers.

*“I want to thank you and the rest of the team for all your hard work and persistence in our claim... We all appreciate your support and guidance and wish you the best of luck with the next step of your career.”*

## Notable achievements

The employment team has continued to enjoy success at the Employment Tribunal. Our volunteers have been involved with a number of unfair dismissal and unlawful deduction from wages claims. One of our most notable cases from this year involved student volunteers and junior members of the team working on a joint claim against an employer, where we were successful in securing over £14,000 for our clients. Our Placement Student, Jeev Bola, was the regular contact point for this joint claim. At the conclusion of the file Jeev was singled out by our clients in particular for his tireless work. Some of the feedback Jeev received is set out below:

*“Thank you so much, as always, for everything you have done in supporting and helping us. I’m so grateful for all that you’ve done.”*

*“I think I speak for everyone when I wish you all the best with whatever you are doing next, you’ve been fantastic, thorough, clear and professional since day one and made this whole process very easy to follow.”*

*“I want to thank you and the rest of the team for all your hard work and persistence in our claim... We all appreciate your support and guidance and wish you the best of luck with the next step of your career.”*

We are able to take on cases that may not be financially viable for other private practice firms to assist on. For example, we assisted one client with a claim for unlawful deduction from wages and owed holiday pay. Advocacy was conducted

by one of our GDL students and we successfully obtained an order for just over £1,000. These types of cases offer an excellent opportunity for our student volunteers in the experience they offer. This particular volunteer did outstanding work across a number of areas we practice. In respect of his experience of volunteering with us, he said:

*“As I’ve now left NTU I wanted to say a big thank you to you for all of the advice and support you have each given me. I really enjoyed volunteering with [NLS Legal] and it has really given me a good foundation to build on going forward.”*

## Welfare Benefits Service

The Welfare Benefits Service advises clients on entitlement to benefits and provides representation at Social Security Tribunal appeal hearings in partnership with the Free Representation Unit (‘FRU’). The service continues to develop, expanding into advising and representing at the Upper Tier in addition to the First Tier Tribunal. This expansion has been a highlight of the year and one which we hope to develop further in future years.

Similar to the national picture, our cases remained somewhat static compared to last year, and they have not returned to pre-pandemic levels yet. Notwithstanding this reduction, our staff and student volunteers represented 21 individuals before the Social Security Tribunal and with a success rate of 81%. The service still managed to secure over £200,000 in income generation, giving an average recovery total of approximately £10,000 per client.

The new hybrid way of working post Covid means we have adapted our service to make it more accessible to a greater number of clients and student volunteers. This means that we can facilitate case preparation, including taking instructions and drafting submissions, and conduct advocacy in person, remotely or a mix of both. This is an invaluable opportunity for our students in their future careers as it reflects the changing nature of the delivery of legal advice nationally. It has also allowed us take a more adaptable and accessible approach reflecting the needs of our clients.

## Notable achievements

As part of our FRU service, we represented a client in their appeal against a decision of the Department for Work & Pensions (‘DWP’) regarding their entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (‘PIP’).

The First Tier Tribunal allowed the appeal and made an award in our client’s favour, but for a short length of time meaning that they would have to reapply for PIP very soon. This was very distressing for our client as she had found the application and appeal process very stressful, and it had caused her mental health to deteriorate.

We took instructions, prepared an application to the Tribunal to appeal this decision and conducted advocacy at the appeal hearing. The client’s appeal was successful, and she was awarded both the ‘Daily Living’ and ‘Mobility’ components of PIP at the enhanced rate for six years. This success secured approximately £47,000 in benefit

entitlement for our client. The client was full of praise for our housing supervisor:

*“You know I think you’re a star and you can’t ever leave that job at least until I reapply for my (PIP). But, getting more time helped with my anxiety because I don’t have to go through the whole process again, so thank you.”*

As well as the results we secure for our clients, the other main motivation of our work is the support and experience we can provide to our students, as epitomised in the following feedback received from one of our student volunteers:

*“I wanted to email and say a massive thank you for all of your support and the opportunities you have given me the past two years. You have been so kind to me which has genuinely given me the confidence to believe I can do this!”*







## Housing Law Service

The Housing Law Service continues to focus on assisting those for whom legal aid funding is not available but who cannot afford to pay for a solicitor. This year the service dealt with 16 cases, including representation at court. We saw an increased demand for advice on eviction and possession matters as the 'eviction ban' was lifted after the pandemic.

In particular for the year 21-22, there has been an increase in demand for advice regarding Section 21 eviction notices received by tenants, rent and mortgage arrears cases and disrepair matters. In addition, this year we have been able to advise on matters falling within the remit of the Property Tribunal in addition to County Court matters. Overall, we have been able to take on more complex cases running over a longer period of time which has helped to ensure that our clients are supported throughout what can be very challenging time for them and their families.

Our students and junior staff are involved with all aspects of client and casework, which this year has overlapped into our Outreach services. Students have had the opportunity to develop skills in interviewing clients, conducting legal research, drafting communications to third parties and the other side.

## Case study

A client sought advice regarding a Section 21 eviction notice that their landlord had served on their household. The client was particularly concerned as they had young children with health conditions and no alternative accommodation available for their occupation.

At the initial appointment, we ascertained that the client's matter spanned several areas of law which were all interconnected. We were able to advise and assist the client over a longer period of time with their housing and welfare benefits matters and establish that the notice was not valid.

We advised the client and negotiated with their landlord to avoid the stress of the matter progressing to a possession hearing in the County Court. This would inevitably have caused a breakdown in the tenant – landlord relationship which was prevented, and the household remain living in the property to date.

In addition to this outcome, this matter allowed student volunteers and junior staff members to experience the importance of negotiations within a legal advice setting to understand the benefit that can be gained from considering the merits of all options available to the client; not all litigation matters have to go to court and it is useful for our students to see that resolving matters before proceedings will often be in the best interests of your client.

## Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)

This service provides assistance to families to help children with special educational needs and disabilities gain the educational provisions and support to which they are legally entitled.

Having launched this service in the academic year 2018/19, the service has continued to develop during 2021/22, securing specialist provision and special school placements for children and young persons across the country. The service dealt with almost double the number of cases it did last year.

Across the 2021/22 year, the service expanded into covering claims of discrimination in schools – with cases involving both disability and race discrimination being 'notable firsts'. As has been noted in previous years, the current fiscal challenges experienced by Local Government seems to significantly fall on SEND and Social Care provision.

*"We can't thank you and the team enough for all your hard work and expertise in this matter... Words don't seem enough, we are in your debt."*

## Crime

Our criminal service is divided into two strands, our Victims' Rights service and a newly launched service for prisoners based at Nottinghamshire prison, HMP Stocken:

### Victims' Rights Service

This service offers advice and assistance in relation to the Victim's Right to Review Scheme. This process provides victims the opportunity to challenge a decision by the police or CPS not to prosecute a suspect. We also provide victim focused advice in relation to criminal investigations and prosecutions.

### New pro bono service for prisoners

In November 2021 we launched a new pilot pro bono service for prisoners based at the male category B prison, HMP Stocken. We were able to provide advice on Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and also to those serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. Our housing and family services were also able to advise prisoners that contacted us via this service. A number of other prisoners were provided with signposting information and public legal education resources relating to issues such as immigration and civil matters. We are grateful to Santander Universities UK for providing funding for training materials linked to the launch of this service. To date, the service has helped 11 individuals.

## Case study

C is a young man with Autism Spectrum Disorder whose mainstream primary school place had broken down due to his complex sensory needs. NLS Legal was able to represent C's parents in an appeal before the First-Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), including attendance at a contested preliminary hearing before a Tribunal Judge. Following submissions made by NLS Legal, a negotiated outcome was achieved in collaboration with the Respondent Local Authority. C was able to take up his place at a special school setting in time for the start of the new academic year.

The service continues to receive very positive feedback, including the following:

*"We can't thank you and the team enough for all your hard work and expertise in this matter... Words don't seem enough, we are in your debt."*

## Case study

This year we assisted a client who had been a victim of 'revenge porn' offence. We were able to provide the client with advice and guidance around the reporting and criminal investigation process, as well as providing practical advice as to how to take steps to have the images removed from the internet:

*"The letter given is very helpful and detailed. I cannot thank all of you enough for giving the advice I needed and much support for me to get through this matter."*



## Intellectual Property (IP)

The Intellectual Property service has continued to grow in 2021/22 developing the range of services offered. The service is targeted at individuals, sole traders and small start-up enterprises requiring IP advice relating to trade marks and copyright.

There was a growth in the number of more complex enquiries received with clients tending to require assistance across multiple different matters. This also resulted in increased numbers of opportunities for students to assist with commercial IP matters across a range of matters from transactional IP, trade mark prosecution and infringement.

Particular highlights from this year included filing and prosecuting a number of trade mark invalidation actions, our first ex-parte hearing before the IPO regarding trade mark validity, and the continued development of our trade mark filing practice to also include advice regarding trade mark selection.

We continue to receive enquiries through a number of sources including the Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA) Free Advice Clinics scheme. This is a one-off advice service offering free initial advice on IP related matters, with the opportunity for further assistance where there is a need for ongoing pro bono advice.

We have also continued to develop the public seminars we provide to both current students on the product design course but also local businesses. This also provided students with opportunities to develop their presentation skills, applying their knowledge to a commercial context.

To the best of our knowledge, we are the only law firm in England and Wales providing wholly not-for-profit advice from a qualified Trade Mark Attorney. In addition, as Nottingham Law School is a leading provider of IP courses, it has been good to continue to develop the IP services, complementing our academic and practitioner course offerings.

## Notable cases

We assisted a community group with a threatened trade mark infringement action and successfully defended the client against the allegations, cancelling the trade mark registration which was being threatened against them. This ensured they were able to continue their activities and avoided potentially complex litigation.

In another case we supported a local Nottingham business to secure trade mark protection for a new brand. This involved overcoming the initial refusal of the trade mark application by the registry at a hearing, successfully securing protection for the trademark unamended.

We also assisted a small start up overcome a challenge to their trade mark application for a soon to launch brand. This was against a larger company who were represented. This resulted in the trade mark ultimately proceeding through to registration following successful conclusion of the dispute. This meant that the client did not have to undergo expensive rebranding that could have threatened the viability of the business.

## Family Law Service

This year we launched a new full-service family law offering as we welcomed a full-time family law solicitor to NLS Legal. The demand for help in this area is overwhelming, and there is a clear unmet legal need due to the unavailability of public funding in many types of family cases. Many students also expressed a keen interest to gain family law experience, so this expansion has benefitted our student community, as well as the individuals who have used the service. The Family Law Service continues to grow, and we now advise, assist and represent clients in divorce, financial remedy and private law children matters. The service helped a number of individuals who would have been unable to afford private rates or get help elsewhere.

Specifically, the service helped a number of clients to secure child arrangements orders in the Family Court, cementing the arrangements with their children following the breakdown of their relationship. We represented clients in court proceedings and supported them throughout the process. We also assisted clients with financial remedy matters – dealing with the finances following the breakdown of a marriage. We did this both in and outside of the court process, securing favourable settlements for our clients. Our student volunteers ran client interviews, carried out legal research and drafted documentation on family cases.

## Notable achievements

The service has seen an interesting and varied mixture of work. In March 2021, our family law solicitor and student volunteers successfully obtained a Child Arrangements Order for a client in the Family Court, where the issues were hotly contested. We represented the client throughout the course of those proceedings and handled an extremely challenging litigant in person. We were successful and achieved a positive outcome for this client, which meant they were able to spend regular time with their children, having been denied this for two years prior to our involvement.

In May 2021 we represented a mother at a final hearing on a Children Act case, where she was seeking to reverse the court's earlier decision that her child should live with her father, not her. The client was vulnerable and had no other access to representation. With our advice and support, she built her confidence and gave evidence at the final hearing, in circumstances which were very difficult for her. We prepared the papers for the final hearing and obtained crucial medical evidence which the client would have struggled to obtain herself. The outcome at the trial was successful - the client obtained a Child Arrangements Order which specified that her child would live with her for around 60% of the time. This exceeded her expectations and was life changing for her and her child. The students working on the case had the benefit of experiencing such a positive outcome at trial and saw first-hand how valuable pro bono work can be. The client provided the following testimonial:

*"Katie helped me and my daughter beyond belief, in September 2021 I suffered a mental breakdown which led me to ask for help with my mental health and led to [my daughter] residing with her father, I suffered this for 8 months with not much help from any professional services until I asked Katie for help, she was literally my lifeline helping me with me with my case, she took all the stress off of me dealing with court and she helped me win my daughter back and prove I am a good mother! I will forever be thankful for Katie and her team and I will forever be in awe of the way she helped me win my case and prove everybody wrong."*

We also saw success in the financial remedies court: a client had been divorced for six years when she sought advice. Her ex-husband asked her to sign an outright clean break order, to confirm she would have no future claim over his assets. The client, a student, was initially prepared to sign this – she was vulnerable and simply wanted to move on. She also believed he had no money. We advised her to seek financial disclosure, so she could then obtain further advice as to what a suitable settlement might be. This process revealed the husband had assets, which were capable of being shared. Through negotiations we secured a financial settlement for her worth approximately £23,000. Without the benefit of the Family Law Service, the client may have signed the outright clean break order and forgone her rights.

The service also continued to provide one-off advice to a number of individuals and support the Outreach projects we undertake at Nottingham Women's Centre and the St George's Community Centre in Netherfield.





# Other projects and services for the academic year 2021/22



## Community Outreach Advice Services

### Nottingham Women's Centre and St George's Community Centre

We provide a free advice service, based at both the Nottingham Women's Centre and St George's Community Centre in Netherfield. This is a student led project and a long-term collaboration which we are proud to continue to offer. This one-off advice service provides clients with initial advice or, in cases involving areas of law outside of our service areas, signposting to other organisations and to useful resources. The free legal advice sessions run fortnightly throughout October to March. Our two student Project Leaders, each supported by up to a further six students, assisted 20 individuals as part of this service this year, providing supervised advice and assistance across a large range of areas including family, employment and housing.

## Administration and Compliance Support Placements

Our Administration and Compliance Support Placement is an excellent opportunity for first year students to become involved in the work of NLS Legal and gain confidence. This academic year, eight students worked with us on this initiative. This opportunity allows the students to learn first-hand how a law firm works, gaining invaluable skills for their future degree and career. They undertook administrative duties, including reception cover, and provided key support dealing with new enquiries, as well as supporting us with risk and compliance tasks, including undertaking file reviews. As a regulated law firm, risk and compliance are a key part of our day-to-day obligations and this opportunity provides valuable insight and skills that very few graduates would gain at such an early stage of their careers.

This year, the compliance support was especially helpful as students supported us reviewing files during the transition to our new case management system.

Dealing with new enquiries allows volunteers to have a better understanding of clients' needs and the service areas we cover. It also improves their communication skills, particularly around managing expectations and client care. Reception and administrative tasks are also key elements of our daily work that give students a very valuable insight of the running of a law firm and equip them with skills that employers value. We find this is a fantastic way to start volunteering in NLS Legal, with a view of undertaking further volunteering opportunities in later years. We are very grateful to our fantastic team, that did an incredibly helpful job.

## Virtual Internships

Having introduced Virtual Internships as a response to the covid pandemic, we continued to offer these again this year in order to support more students to gain legal work experience. This year, our virtual internships were completed by 22 students.

Virtual internships allow us to offer opportunities to all students, whatever their circumstances. The flexible way in which they can be completed ensures this is a very inclusive approach to volunteering opportunities. In addition, as virtual internships are increasingly used as part of law firm recruitment processes, it is a further way to improve the employability of our students and prepares them for life post-study. Our students receive a post-completion certificate for their efforts.

## CPS Student Scrutiny Panel

21 of our students, along with our two placement students, took part in a Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Scrutiny Panel. This initiative spanning over two days, provided our students with an insight into the work of the CPS. In addition, the students analysed a sexual offences case study and provided feedback to the CPS solicitor facilitating the session.

As well as the value provided to our students, this project enables the CPS to embed community engagement activity and supports improvements in casework quality, public confidence and the diversity of its workforce. A huge thanks to Chief Crown Prosecutor for CPS East Midlands, Janine McKinney, Senior District Crown Prosecutor and Head of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) for CPS East Midlands, Charlotte Caulton-Smith and Inclusion and Community Engagement Manager, Grace Moronfolu, for supporting this project and generously giving up their time to inspire our students.

## Mansfield & Ashfield

NLS Legal represents Nottingham Law School in the wider NTU project to support regeneration in Mansfield & Ashfield (M&A). We contribute to the M&A programme by delivering public legal education sessions to raise awareness regarding specific legal topics that have been identified as key issues for the M&A community. M&A residents are able to access our service, and during 2021-22, we helped 9 clients from the M&A area. Our SEND, Welfare Benefits and Housing services have worked with a group of 10 student volunteers to put together pre-recorded webinars on different topics that have been identified of interest to the community.

Having introduced Virtual Internships as a response to the covid pandemic, we continued to offer these again this year in order to support more students to gain legal work experience.



## Intra-Curricular Activity

In addition to offering extra-curricular opportunities, NLS Legal also offers a large number of intra-curricular opportunities, allowing students to undertake work experience with the firm as part of their course or module. This allows our students to gain academic credit for their work with the firm, whilst also developing their practical skills. We detail below our diverse variety of intra-curricular activity:

### Placement Students

Our 21/22 placement students were **Georgia Roe-Ely** and **Jeevanjeet Bola**. Both Georgia and Jeev provided significant contribution to the firm, supporting all of the various service areas and activity. They were fantastic to work with, produced very high-quality work and were hugely valued members of the team. We wish them all the best in the future studies and careers. Please do read on, to hear first-hand about their experiences:

*“Overall, my experience as a Legal Assistant at NLS Legal was beyond all expectation, and I feel truly honoured to have been a part of the amazing team and be directly involved in the work that they do.”*

### Georgia Roe-Ely



During my sandwich placement at Nottingham Law School Legal Advice Centre (now rebranded to NLS Legal) I had the opportunity to assist supervisors in all service areas: Employment, Family, Crime, Housing, Welfare Benefits, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Intellectual Property and Civil Litigation.

Working in a fully regulated law firm has developed my understanding of the law in practice. NLS Legal have given me an experience beyond what can be taught. I have had the opportunity to have direct client contact by observing and sometimes leading client interviews, legal drafting for advice letters and observing court and tribunal hearings.

As a pro bono service, the firm receives a high volume of enquiries and I have recognised how many people need legal advice in our local community but cannot afford to instruct a solicitor. During my placement, not only have I assisted in providing legal advice to our clients, but as Events Officer of the Student Pro Bono Committee, I organised a food bank collection for two organisations across Nottingham, to help the community during the Christmas period.

I have had the opportunity to share my student experience internally at events hosted by NTU, but also external events. I was asked to share my student experience at The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) event, discussing my placement experience and the NTU support available to students from non-traditional backgrounds.

Prior to my placement year, I had limited networking experience, as I did not know many professionals in the legal sector. However, this experience has been the best opportunity I have had so far in my academic career to build my professional network and secure other work experience opportunities as a result.

In respect of my career prospects, my placement experience has confirmed that I want a career in legal practice as a solicitor. One substantive area that piqued my interest during my placement was family law, particularly the work relating to child arrangement orders. I have been able to use my interest in family law when going into my final year of study, by focusing my Independent Legal Research Project on the medical competency of children and the role of parental responsibility intervention.

Overall, my experience as a Legal Assistant at NLS Legal was beyond all expectation, and I feel truly honoured to have been a part of the amazing team and be directly involved in the work that they do. I would encourage any law student, no matter their academic level, to apply for NLS Legal volunteering experience during recruitment periods, as there are appropriate experiences designed for different academic levels that can significantly contribute to one's practical experience to prepare them for a career in law.

### Jeev Bola



I found my placement experience to be both beneficial and enjoyable. During my placement I assisted on a range of administrative tasks such as logging client enquires, liaising with clients via email/telephone, and arranged meetings. Alongside this, I assisted on numerous client cases within each of the various services areas, namely:

Employment, Business, Welfare Benefits, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Intellectual Property law. Undertaking a variety of tasks (administrative/client facing) gave me the opportunity to develop a wide range of transferable and vital skills required for a lawyer. Such as independently researching a client issue, and tailoring your advice to the client situation in a pragmatic manner.

Over the course of my placement, I particularly enjoyed the increased level of responsibility I was given which gave me the confidence to effectively complete a variety of legal tasks, such as: drafting witness statements, letters of advice, settlement agreements, compiling court bundles, and corresponding with both the Tribunal and Court.

As the legal industry is competitive field, having some form of experience is vital to 'stand out from the crowd' and provide you with the knowledge and skills to form a successful legal career. I would recommend that any student get involved with the Nottingham Law School Legal Advice Centre (now known as 'NLS Legal'), as the supportive, friendly and highly talented team provide you with a great working environment to gain first hand legal experience.

*“Over the course of my placement, I particularly enjoyed the increased level of responsibility I was given which gave me the confidence to effectively complete a variety of legal tasks, such as: drafting witness statements, letters of advice, settlement agreements, compiling court bundles, and corresponding with both the Tribunal and Court. ”*

### Module Activity

As part of our commitment to integrating practical skills and work experience into a student's academic course, we offer a number of options that incorporate a practical element into their academic studies. This aligns with the NLS ethos to embed practical skills within every stage of the curriculum and in recognition of how experiential learning improves results and increases employability. This year, a total of 444 students took part in NLS Legal activity for academic credit. For each of the modules detailed below, the students prepare a reflective portfolio, reflecting on

the knowledge and skills developed as part of their practical experience, which is then assessed and forms part of their grade for the module:

#### Applied Legal Knowledge (Civil Practice)

A total of 34 students undertook an NLS Legal element as part of their Applied Legal Knowledge (Civil Practice) module. The NLS Legal element involved each student spending a minimum of 24 hours with the firm to provide the students with insight into civil practice areas that NLS Legal commonly deal with. In Term 1, the students were provided with an introduction

into social welfare, working on a NLS Legal case study. In Term 2, the students were provided the opportunity to work on a live client case. The students engaged in live client work by providing the supervising lawyers with support on a number of advisory and appeal matters drawn from NLS Legal's 'Social Justice' service areas: housing, SEND, and welfare benefits. The students undertook case analysis including reviewing appeal bundles, attendance notes, and correspondence before drafting letters of advice and/or Grounds of Appeal documents.

### Applied Legal Knowledge (Criminal and Business Practice)

This is a third year LLB module, Applied Legal Knowledge, which enabled 312 students the opportunity to work on cases that NLS Legal has dealt with (albeit with any identifying features redacted, and some features changed, in order to protect client confidentiality). It is designed as a mini work experience and provides the students with the chance to undertake tasks, such as drafting letters of advice to clients. The business task focused on insolvency and the criminal task involved advising a client on the Victim's Right to Review Scheme.

### NLS Legal Module

This is a second year LLB module, offered to those students who were unable to secure a 10 week placement, required as part of their course. As part of this module, which also combined additional academic content, we delivered housing law seminars and provided three students with 30 hours of work experience, ensuring that the impacted students were still able to undertake a legal placement.

### Other module activity

A total of 6 students completed a placement with NLS Legal, and with our partner organisation Support Through Court, as part of their Law in Practice final year LLB module. This provides the students with a minimum of 35 hours work experience.

In addition, 89 students completed Employer Challenges with NLS Legal (78 undergraduates and 11 postgraduates). The challenge involved the students working in groups to give presentations to our supervising lawyers on topics such as the ways that NLS Legal could develop its services to further fulfil unmet legal need in the Nottinghamshire community and support students and also surrounding 'commercial awareness' in the context of not-for-profit organisations.

### Student Pro Bono Committee

Our Student Pro Bono Committee (SPBC) comprises students who have excelled during the previous academic year and who had made a significant contribution above and beyond what is expected from a volunteer. They are invited to join the SPBC and also promoted to Lead Advisers. The SPBC helps us develop the firm, improve our service for both clients and students, raises awareness of pro bono and access to justice, supports other student volunteers, and promotes the firm during Open Days and other events.

This year, notable activity by the SPBC included organising a food bank collection for two charities across Nottingham to help those in need during the Christmas season. The SPBC collected a large number donations from students and staff that were gratefully received by the charities. David Illingworth, supported by the SPBC, put together a very helpful survey among NLS Legal volunteers regarding their engagement with the firm. David then collated the survey results into a report, which included recommendations as to how we can better engage with our student volunteers and, in particular, with our distance learner students.

The report and survey findings, which were presented by David at a NLS Legal Management Meeting was well received and hugely appreciated by the NLS Legal team, who discussed the recommendations and have been working to implement them in recruitment processes and when developing new projects. We thank David for his outstanding work. The SPBC was also of much help with our social media channels, helping with updates throughout the year and ideas to enhance our various social media platforms. A huge thank you goes to the SPBC on behalf of all the team for their help this academic year! Our SPBC members are listed at page 39.

### Free Representation Unit

We continued to partner with the Free Representation Unit (FRU) this year and are proud to be the only FRU provider outside London. Our students, supported by NLS Legal staff, represented a total of 29 clients in Social Security and Employment Tribunal proceedings. Over £180,000 was recovered in benefit entitlement and compensation to our FRU clients.

This collaboration allows our students gain outstanding experience, including advocacy and client care skills as well as bringing a huge benefit to the local community. Students are required to undergo substantial training and take assessments before taking on a case. Thank you to FRU CEO, David Abbott, and his team, in particular Emma Wilkinson and Emma Baldwin, for providing training to our volunteers and co-ordinating the assessments.

### Pathways to Law

We were once again delighted to provide continued support to the Pathways to Law programme this year. Pathways to Law is an initiative of The Sutton Trust supporting those aged 16 to 18 from disadvantaged backgrounds into careers in the law. It aims to widen access into the legal profession and improve social mobility. This year we provided five students on the programme with work experience, with each student spending 3 days with us gaining an insight into the day-to-day work of a law firm. In addition, in December 2019, we hosted a Client Interviewing Day alongside other NLS colleagues, providing 15 students with an insight into the communication skills needed in order to represent clients effectively.

### Support Through Court

This year, 25 of our students volunteered with our partner organisation Support Through Court (STC). Our students volunteering with STC, committed over 2040 volunteering hours, supporting over 1783 litigants in person in 2021/22, providing a vital service to our local community. Thank you to Jo Wardle, Charlotte Rook and the STC team for the continued collaboration and look forward to developing the partnership in 2022/23.

### LawWorks

We are a member of the LawWorks clinics network and continue our close collaboration with them. LawWorks is a charity working in England and Wales to connect volunteer lawyers and clinics with people in need of legal advice, who are not eligible for legal aid and cannot afford to pay and with the not-for-profit organisations that support them. We hold regular meetings with the East Midlands representatives (LawWorks East Midlands Hub), where we share experiences with other pro bono clinics, update each other on our projects and activities, and facilitate referrals of clients in order to make sure our pro bono work reaches as many individuals in need as possible. We supported LawWorks submitting stats for their annual report, as every year, and this year we submitted additional data for their Ministry of Justice report. Special thanks go to our East Midlands Clinics Support & Development Officer, Anne-Marie Dhillon, for her unwavering support.





# 2021/22 highlights

## Awards

We were really proud to receive a number of awards and accolades this year:

### LexisNexis Legal Awards 2022

- Winner – Law Firm of the Year

### Modern Law Awards 2022

- Shortlisted – Client Care Award

### NTU Team Excellence Awards 2022

- Winner – ‘Enriching Society’ category

### LawWorks Pro Bono Awards 2021

- Winner – Best Contribution by a Small or Medium Firm
- Shortlisted – Best New Pro Bono Activity: IP Service

### Nottinghamshire Law Society Annual Awards 2021

- Winner – Junior Lawyer of the Year (Callum Scott)

A number of our talented students were also recognised via the following NLS Annual Prizes:

The NLS Dean's Award for Outstanding Contribution – Matilda Kapala

NLS Richard Bagley Award for Outstanding Contribution to Pro Bono (Undergraduate) – Niamh Graham

NLS Richard Bagley Award for Outstanding Contribution to Pro Bono (Postgraduate) – Molly Broster

Law Firm of the Year

**LexisNexis**

Legal Awards 2022





## Public Legal Education, Conferences and other activity

Our staff and students work incredibly hard to promote pro bono work, clinical legal education and access to justice as well as delivering sessions to support careers advice.

**Pro Bono Week event:** On 5 November 2021, during Pro Bono Week, Callum Scott presented at an event organised in collaboration with FRU and The City Law School, University of London, to celebrate the Charity's 50th anniversary. The session was chaired by FRU's Chief Executive, David Abbott.

### NLS Virtual Law Fair:

On 25 January 2022, Katie Smith and Carlota Gonzalez Laynez attended the NLS virtual law fair. Around 25 students were in attendance at the session, and it was a great opportunity to let them know about the NLS Legal offer, how they can get involved, and to explain in detail the work we undertake in the firm.

### Product Design – IP lecture:

In February 2022, Peter Vaughan and Jane Jarman delivered a lecture on IP, followed by a Q&A session, to 56 Product Design students.

### International Clinical Education Symposium:

On 25 March 2022, our former placement student and current placement student, Matilda Kapala and Jeev Bola, attended the second online international Clinical Education Symposium organised by CLEO (Clinical Legal Education Organisation) and the Bristol Law Clinic. Matilda and Jeev delivered a presentation on 'the effect of the pandemic on pro bono and legal work experience'. Around 40 delegates were on attendance and we received great feedback from the organisers about their presentation.

### CERT (Collaborative Engagement and Retention Team) event:

On 5 May 2022 Mathew Game and Katie Smith presented at this event following a student's invitation. It was a networking event and panel discussion with various speakers from various law firms and other institutions, addressed to Year 1 students. They talked to the students about the work we do at NLS Legal, opportunities for students to get involved and how it helps growing their careers.

### IKEP (Institute of Knowledge Exchange Practice) conference:

Laura Pinkney presented at the inaugural IKEP conference on 6 July 2022. Laura's presentation showcased NLS Legal as an example of innovative knowledge exchange discussing the firm's activity and how it positively impacts students by improving skills

and enhancing employability. Laura also spoke at a further session at the conference, joined by Support Through Court Fundraising Manager, Jo Wardle. NTU Associate Professor, Dr Liz Curran chaired the session which focused on the benefits of effective partnership and collaboration.

### CLE (Centre for Legal Education) annual conference:

Peter Vaughan, Mat Game and Jeev Bola presented at CLE's conference on 16 June 2022. They delivered a session on the effectiveness of Virtual Internships and Employer Challenges in enhancing legal education and training. Callum Scott and Professor Jane Jarman presented a session called 'Say my name' about the identity of those qualifying as solicitors via Equivalent Means and other non-standard training contract routes.

### A delegation from Campbell University

(North Carolina, USA) visited NLS Legal on 15 March 2022. It was a pleasure to host our VIP guests and provide them with an overview of the firm's activity.

## Media coverage

Two of our cases were featured in the "20 amazing case studies over 20 years" to mark the 20th year of Pro Bono Week (November 2021):

[Case study: students making a difference – Pro Bono Week UK](#)

[Case study: law schools making a difference – Pro Bono Week UK](#)

Article featuring student volunteer, Matilda Kapala, that appeared in the Nottingham Post (11 July 2022)

[Nottingham student gives free legal advice after winning own battle - Nottinghamshire Live \(nottinghampost.com\)](#)

Laura Pinkney appeared on Notts TV talking about the LexisNexis Legal Awards "Law Firm of the Year" award:

[Ey Up Notts, Wednesday 6th April](#)

Laura was also interviewed by BBC Radio Nottingham regarding our "Best Contribution by a Small or Medium Firm" award at the LawWorks Pro Bono Awards 2021.

## Policy reform

### JUSTICE project

Approximately 30 students took part on a project in partnership with JUSTICE, the national law reform and human rights charity. JUSTICE is currently researching remand decision-making in the magistrates' courts, investigating how to improve processes and outcomes in respect of lay magistrates' powers to remand individuals in custody. Our students attended bail hearings at magistrates' courts and collated data to be fed into the research project.

**Law Commission 14th Reform**, led by Professor Jane Jarman and supported by Peter Vaughan, Callum Scott and Emma McGowan. Our response centred on proposals to review automated decision making and justice in the digital age.

Our staff and students work incredibly hard to promote pro bono work, clinical legal education and access to justice.



# Client feedback

I'm writing to let you know I won. I beat the barrister on his own case law, representing myself. People like you helped me get there. Thank you.

“The service I received was excellent. Very high-standard and professional.”

“Thank you so much for making a family very happy.”

“Thank you so much for the great news. You are a fantastic lawyer!”

The 2 ladies that helped me from the start were amazing and very understanding of my mental health issues. Extremely approachable and Molly Broster was excellent don't know what I would have done without her assistance at court as it was a very emotional situation. I would also like to say thank you to the receptionist as if she wasn't so lovely I might have just walked out.

“Hi Mat, Thank you so much! Your support, and the hard work of the team have helped me navigate through this experience from start to finish and quite simply, I wouldn't have been able to proceed with the case without [NLS Legal] so thank you so much, I am so grateful.”

Great experience, very professional, detailed and informative each step of the way. Went above and beyond in my opinion. I am very grateful to Peter, Callum and Jeevanjeet for all of their help and support in securing my trademark for by start up business.

The legal representation we received from Callum Scott and team was beyond our expectations. We were kept informed throughout the process, advised and asked about our opinions. We would not have been able to afford the cost of fighting the Local Authority.

“Thank you so much, what an amazing service to be able to offer people. Without [NLS Legal], I would not have been able to take my case forward.”



# Student feedback

“Volunteering with [NLS Legal] was an invaluable learning experience - especially the FRU casework I have done. The opportunity to run with a live case through to the final hearing was very instructive.”

Matthew Game was fantastic and very instructive. This is certainly an opportunity I want to repeat as many times as I'm able.

“Dear Emma and Laura, I wanted to email and say a massive thank to you both for all your support and the opportunities you have given me the past two years. You have both been so kind to me which has genuinely given me the confidence to believe I can do this!”

“Thank you for your help and support throughout this year - I have found volunteering with [NLS Legal] an incredibly rewarding experience and one that has really helped prepare me for my new role.”

I am sincerely grateful as it is my first professional “legal” experience, and I was able to do so much by myself.

“[NLS Legal] provided me with a great chance to gain my first piece of work experience in a regulated Law Firm within my first year of university. This will be very beneficial going forward with my working career.”

I love volunteering at [NLS Legal]! It provides me with a setting that I can feel comfortable to learn in and ask for help. It gives me the opportunity to carry out real legal tasks in a supported environment. I have learnt so much about myself and how I have and can improve to be a successful legal professional!

# Testimonials from our former student volunteers



## Annete Kalombodza

Hello, my name is Annete Kalombodza and I am a LLB Law for Financial Services Graduate. I completed my law degree in September 2022.

### Experience at the centre

My first assignment at NLS Legal required me to draft an Employee Handbook. The aim of the handbook was to set out our clients employment policies, procedures and rules for an employee during the course of their employment. I drafted the Holiday Policy for our client, which required me to review the requirements of the European Union Directive.

During the height of the pandemic, I virtually continued to explore employment law. I volunteered to work on a discrimination and harassment case. Using our legal software, I was able to research the current law on discrimination and advise our client of the strengths and weaknesses of their case and their available legal remedies. This was a unique case as it was my first time interacting with a client virtually. I therefore had to learn how to build rapport with the client while operating in a virtual capacity.

NLS Legal has a range of available services that are available to the public. Therefore, I volunteered to work on a Welfare Benefits case. Alongside my supervisor we helped the client to understand the benefits that were legally available to their son.

### What I am doing now

Working in NLS Legal with my peers and the staff gave me the key skills that I needed in order to enhance my professionalism. I finished the 3rd year of my Law degree at Allianz (a leading international insurance provider). I am now a Trainee Executive Assistant to the Allianz Holding CEO.

I also sit on the Trustee Board for a charity called GRIT who run educational programmes at Nottingham Trent University. My legal journey has just started, and I will be applying to complete the SQE.

*“Working in NLS Legal with my peers and the staff gave me the key skills that I needed.”*



## Jack Hicks, Graduate Intern

I joined NLS Legal as a summer intern, it is an excellent place to get to grips with legal processes and procedures for any NTU students or graduates.

I would highly recommend the experience whether as an intern or volunteer as the staff are very friendly and the experience is great for anyone wanting to move forward within a legal career.

*“It is an excellent place to get to grips with legal processes and procedures.”*

*“NLS Legal is a unique opportunity which students at most other universities cannot take advantage of.”*



## James Ball

NLS Legal, formerly the Legal Advice Centre, is one of the jewels in the NLS crown which I have had the pleasure of both volunteering and working at.

As a BTC student, I volunteered to work with Mat and the Employment team, then, after completing the course, I carried out supervisory paralegal work and helped Laura run the Crime service area before beginning my pupillage.

As NLS Legal is a fully regulated law firm attached to the Law School, working there gave me a superb insight into the legal profession at an earlier stage than usual. Whilst my time at NLS Legal was spent predominantly in the Crime and Employment service areas, I was occasionally drafted in to assist other members of the NLS Legal team. Having the opportunity to work on live files, conduct interviews, represent clients at tribunals, and most importantly, learn from supportive and experienced professionals was beneficial to my personal and professional development.

Having recently gone through the pupillage application process, I understand the challenges of entering the legal profession. NLS Legal is a unique opportunity which students at most other universities cannot take advantage of. I would, therefore, recommend that all NLS students who are serious about and committed to pursuing a career in the legal profession apply to get involved in any of NLS Legal's projects.

*“I have no doubt it has aided me greatly in being called to the bar obtaining pupillage and later tenancy at my Chambers.”*



## Danielle St.Clair

During my time at the NLS Legal, I was trained as a Free Representation Unit Tribunal Advocate. This allowed me to appear in Social Security Tribunals, assisting clients in bring their appeals.

This experience was completely invaluable, allowing me to hone my written and oral advocacy skills whilst helping those in society who most needed legal assistance.

In addition to appearing multiple times in the Social Security Tribunal, my work in NLS Legal allowed me to carry out Employment Law Training with the Free Representation Unit, presenting an opportunity to engage with an area of law I did not study.

I was appointed as a Lead Advisor and became a member of the Student Pro Bono Committee. During this time I also was fortunate enough to be Co-Captain running the LawWorks Challenge for charity. I cannot overstate the impact volunteering at NLS Legal has had on my professional development. It allowed me to forge confidence and skill, gain contacts in the legal professions and led me into work experience I would have never otherwise have had the opportunity to carry out. I have no doubt it has aided me greatly in being called to the bar obtaining pupillage and later tenancy at my Chambers.



# Our team



## Top to bottom (left to right):

**Jenny Chapman** (NLS Executive Dean and NLS Legal Compliance Officer for Legal Practice)

**Laura Pinkney** (Head of NLS Legal)

**Mat Game** (Employment Solicitor)

**Callum Scott** (SEN Solicitor)

**Katie Smith** (Family Solicitor)

**Emma McGowan** (Welfare Benefits and Housing Supervising Caseworker)

**James Ball** (Paralegal)

**Jack Stuart** (Paralegal)

**Jane Jarman** (NLS Professor, Solicitor and NLS Legal Training Principal)

**Peter Vaughan** (Trade Mark Attorney)

**Carlota Gonzalez Laynez** (Practice Manager)

**Melissa Bailey** (Administrator)

**Rachel Williams** (Legal Assistant)

**Jeev Bola** (Legal Assistant)

**Georgia Roe-Ely** (Legal Assistant)

## Our 2021/22 Student Pro Bono Committee and Lead Advisers:

Jeev Bola

Molly Broster

Charlotte Melissa Clarke

Edmund Hector Davys

David Illingworth

Matilda Kapala

Denise Monteiro

Georgia Roe-Ely

Katie Thompson

Emily Webb

## Support from the wider NLS Legal and NTU community:

We are extremely grateful to our many other NLS and NTU colleagues, both academic and professional services, who support NLS Legal in a variety of ways.

“NLS Legal is one of the jewels in the NLS crown which I have had the pleasure of both volunteering and working at.”



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