



Nottingham
Law School
Nottingham Trent University

Nottingham Law School Legal Advice Centre

Annual Report 2021

Nottingham Law School
Legal Advice Centre



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Nottingham Law School (NLS), Nottingham Trent University, is one of the leading providers of academic and professional legal education with an outstanding reputation in the delivery of innovative courses. We are one of the largest law schools in the UK, with over 100 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 - the Nottingham Law School Legal Advice Centre Ltd ('the Centre') in 2015 as a major milestone in the development of the NLS's pro bono advice clinic first established in 2002.

The Centre, an exempt charity, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Nottingham Trent University 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 both the UK, and the international, higher education sectors.

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

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

The Centre is multi-award winning and recently received the 'Best Contribution by a Law School' Award at the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards 2021.

Please note – the information and data within this report covers the period 1 October 2020 to 31 August 2021.



Report by Head of the Legal Advice Centre

Welcome to our Annual Report 2021

As I reflect on a year spent delivering our services almost wholly online, I am exceptionally proud of our achievements this year. I am delighted that we were able to launch a new housing service in October 2020, which could not have been timelier as the moratorium on possessions came to an end in 2021. Demand for this service has been extremely high and it has been hugely rewarding to be able to assist those who would not have been able to access legal advice and representation without our service. Full details and case studies can be found at page 10.



In December 2020 we were delighted to win Nottinghamshire Law Society's 'Contribution to the Community Award 2020' and in May 2021 we achieved 'Best Contribution by a Law School' at the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards. The Chair of our Student Pro Bono Committee, Molly Brown, was shortlisted in the 'Best Contribution by an Individual Student' category at the same awards. We were also exceptionally proud of being shortlisted in the 'Access to Justice' category at The Law Society Excellence Awards 2021. We also achieved our largest ever financial award this year, securing a judgment in the County Court of over £600,000 for our clients.

My personal highlight was being invited to speak at The Law Society of Alberta's Annual Retreat, Canada, where I discussed our innovative approach to addressing the access to justice gap whilst providing our law students with practical supervised training. My thanks to Jordan Furlong, Alberta Law Society

President, Darlene Scott QC, and her fellow Governors for their kind invite – if only it could have been in person! The conference appearance was as a result of being referenced in Jordan Furlong's Report on 'Lawyer Licensing and Competence in Alberta', in which the Centre was described as the "most successful example of a teaching law firm today".

I was also hugely proud to watch two of our students, Molly Brown and Saadia Bacchus, present at an international student conference. The conference, hosted by Bristol Law School, attracted over 200 delegates from across the globe. Our students are most definitely our best ambassadors and it was a real pleasure to hear Molly and Saadia share their experiences in a fantastic presentation.

As I write, I look forward to returning to the office and to seeing my colleagues, clients and students in person once again. I have been really proud of how my team and our students have supported our clients and each other during this time.

The challenges have lasted much longer than expected but, as we emerge from the pandemic, we come out of it stronger and even more determined to continue the positive and life changing work we do.

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 Centre's Board of Directors and ABS Management Board.

This Annual Report is dedicated to Professor Martin Hunter, who sadly passed away in October 2021. Martin has always been one of the Centre's biggest supporters and shared our vision for bridging academia and practice. He was an outstanding and innovative solicitor and barrister, an inspiration and much loved by all those that knew him. He will be truly missed.

Laura Pinkney
Head of NLS Legal Advice Centre
Written in October 2021

Acknowledgments

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

We would also like to express our deepest appreciation to: **Richard Bagley, Paul and Lynne Bowden**; and **Martin 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 the Centre 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 special educational needs and disability rights services and to **DG Legal** for provide legal consultancy services on a pro bono basis.

In addition, our achievements would not be possible without the numerous firms, organisations and charities that we work with. Our sincere thanks to:

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
Self Help UK
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, and we continually impressed by their talent, dedication and enthusiasm.

Funding and governance

The staff budget for the Centre is supported by the University and NLS and forms part of NLS's overall staffing budget. The Centre also receives funding from private donors and business organisations. We are immensely grateful to the generous financial support of a number of individuals and organisations which have supported further expansion of some of our service areas.

Nottingham Law School Legal Advice Centre Limited is a company limited by guarantee with its sole member being Nottingham Trent University. The University covers the costs of all the property, assets, staffing and other services required by the Centre.

The ABS Management Board and Board of Directors for Nottingham Law School Legal Advice Centre Limited are:

Professor Cillian Ryan
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Head of College of Business Law & Social Sciences

James Lacey
NTU Director of Finance

Rebecca Jenkyn
NTU Head of Governance and Legal Services

Joanne Cenic
Finance Business Partner and the Centre's Compliance Officer for Finance and Administration

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

Laura Pinkney
Head of NLS Legal Advice Centre

Nottingham Law School Legal Advice Centre

The Centre's services

We provide advice, assistance and representation in a number of service areas, including business, civil litigation, employment, family, housing, intellectual property, special educational needs and disability, victim's rights and welfare benefits. Our new housing service launched this year and we have also significantly developed our intellectual property service, following recruitment of our Trade Mark Attorney.

The impact of Covid can be seen in the enquiries we receive and cases we are dealing with. We have seen an increase in enquiries from those facing eviction or redundancy and from struggling small businesses and those needing employment or welfare benefits advice as a result of long Covid. On a more positive note, our Business and Enterprise and IP services have been able to support those wishing to launch new businesses, with the pandemic proving to be the motivator in many cases.

We detail over the following pages our various service areas, providing examples of case studies:

Our service areas:

Business and Enterprise Law Service (BELS)

The BELS service provides 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, corporate distress and County Court litigation.

The BELS service continued to develop over the course of the year. The non-contentious element continued to advise on business start-up matters, provided to the Centre's clients and also through the outreach project at Loughborough University. The contentious element has also picked up considerably, with some high value County Court work complementing the usual flow of small claims relating to business disputes and, increasingly, some consumer claims relating to vehicles and property.

Predictably, issues relating to the pandemic dominated the service in this year. Cashflow issues appeared and remained and, although enforcement action was generally paused under the government regulations, we did see an increase in problems with the sale and supply of goods and services as well as significant pressure in sectors where work simply cannot wait, such as with property development.

Notable cases:

2020/21 saw the BELS service pivot slightly into the construction sector, where we were successful in obtaining county court judgments for two clients who had suffered from poor standard of work to their premises. The first required a full rebuild of the building (a residential house which houses a longstanding charity client), where we obtained judgment for over £600,000. The second involved securing compensation for the cost of additional and remedial works, and that judgment was in excess of £34,000. These cases were particular highlights for the year, which also saw our usual mixture of advising on small claims and commercial start-up matters. One of these required the BELS staff and students to learn more than they thought there was about commercial drone flying in England and Wales!



Employment Law Service

The Employment Law Service provides employment law 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 up-to-date employment policy and procedure handbooks.

The government's furlough scheme continued to have impact in the sector. Whilst furlough has helped keep a lot of people in employment that would have undoubtedly lost their job if no such scheme existed, we are seeing enquiries increase as the scheme is wound down and as the Covid restrictions for businesses have started to lift.

"...my fight over automatic unfair dismissal from [the employer] was a very traumatic time which we demonstrated and won, I thank you all."



Notable cases and assistance:

The employment team enjoyed securing their highest ever financial award, with the client being awarded over £30,000 in a dispute related to alleged disability and dismissal.

One of our most rewarding cases this year involved representing a client in an unlawful deduction of wages matter as part of our Free Representation Unit (FRU) service. The case was notable as the client was very anxious about her hearing and highlights the importance of representation, not only to ensure our client was afforded high quality legal advice but also the role we play in providing the client with both practical and emotional support. Whilst the case was relatively straight forward in terms of the legal principles involved, due to a lack of co-operation from the Respondent, a great deal of preparation was needed before the hearing. Without our assistance, the client would have had difficulty in gathering and presenting evidence to the Employment Tribunal. A bundle and skeleton argument were assembled by us on behalf of the client, and this was presented to the judge. The judge found in favour of our client, awarding some £1,600. There was a great deal of positive emotion once the result of the hearing was explained to the client, and she was very grateful for our assistance.

Also as part of our FRU service, we represented a client in their claim for unfair dismissal and unlawful deduction from wages. The employer had insisted our client was made redundant and that the correct pay had been made. The case was conducted remotely, on account of the pandemic. The Tribunal found in our favour and determined that our client had been unfairly dismissed. Our client set out at the end of the matter that:

"...my fight over automatic unfair dismissal from [the employer] was a very traumatic time which we demonstrated and won, I thank you all."

Our employment solicitor, supported by our students, also delivered free legal seminars focusing on Covid-related issues, in collaboration with national charity Self Help UK.

Welfare Benefits Service

The Welfare Benefits service advises clients on entitlement to benefits and continues to work in conjunction with the national charity Free Representation Unit (FRU), to provide representation at Social Security Tribunal appeal hearings. The service continues to develop, expanding to include advice and representation on more complex matters, such as Tax Credits, a notoriously complicated area of law.

As a result of the impact of the pandemic on the Tribunal and on the wider welfare benefits system, we saw a 45% reduction of cases this year compared with last year. Notwithstanding this reduction, the service still managed to secure over £340,000 in benefits for our clients. The Welfare Benefits Supervisor and our students represented 17 individuals before the Social Security Tribunal and achieved an impressive success rate of 82% (compared to a national average of around 67%). The Centre secured an average benefit entitlement of over £26,000 per case.

During the pandemic, our student volunteers have been able to take instructions, prepare submissions, and conduct advocacy before the Tribunal on a completely remote and paperless basis. We also saw the beginnings of a return to in-person hearings which gives our student volunteers the opportunity to develop skills to conduct hearings in all settings, a valuable experience for their future careers. It has also enabled the Centre to reach more vulnerable clients who would ordinarily not be represented in these matters.



Case study:

As part of our Free Representation Unit (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 DWP had reviewed our client's application and made no award. Due to the pandemic, it was necessary to take instructions, prepare submissions, and conduct advocacy before the Tribunal all remotely. The client's appeal was successful, and they were awarded the 'Daily Living' component of PIP at the 'standard' rate, and the 'Mobility' component of PIP at the 'enhanced' rate for an ongoing period, which is very rarely awarded. This success secured approximately £63,000 in benefit entitlement for our client. The client's support worker provided us with the following feedback: *"I have just spoken with [the client] who you supported with the PIP tribunal hearing yesterday and she was full of praise for you. She said that you were lovely and extremely helpful and gave her lots of support."*

Housing Law Service

The Housing Law Service was established in October 2020 and quickly developed a client base throughout the Nottinghamshire and wider East Midlands area. The service is directed towards assisting those for whom legal aid funding is not available and runs alongside our welfare benefits advice service in seeking to resolve the root cause of what are often interlocking problems. As a result, we have seen a direct correlation in clients seeking advice in a different service area of the Legal Advice Centre and also engaging with the housing service. These interlocking issues can be seen in the decrease of possession cases while the 'eviction ban' was in force, but a rise in rent arrears cases after the end of the furlough scheme.

The service provides advice to tenants on a range of issues including disrepair, rent increases, defending possession proceedings, deposit disputes and homelessness. We can also offer representation for tenants taking cases at the property tribunal and the county court. This representation and advocacy service is an area that we hope to expand on throughout the next academic year.

Despite being a new service, there has been a high volume of housing enquiries received by the Legal Advice Centre, of which 24 were taken on as more complex issues running over longer periods of time as well as those with tight deadlines; we have drafted, filed and served a defence within 36 hours of receiving the initial enquiry and our first case which started in October 2020 recently settled at the court door on the day of the trial.

Our students are involved with all aspects of client work, from the start of the case to the conclusion, giving them experience of interviewing clients, research, drafting letters of advice and submissions to the other side and the court. We are often against social landlords with vast resources who instruct large national firms and leading barristers. We also undertake non contentious work such as assisting those fleeing domestic violence and families or those with disabilities seeking more suitable housing.

This model also allows students from all backgrounds to gain vital experience of the legal sector in an area of law which is not often taught on academic modules, thus exposing the lawyers of tomorrow to social justice as an area of practice from the start of their careers.

We understand that this is the only fully pro bono service providing a housing casework service with this level of representation within the Nottinghamshire City and County areas. The service delivery model reflects the fact that the service started at the height of the pandemic and takes account of the limited resources of our clients. We are able to offer face to face, online and telephone appointments and as a result we are able to adapt to a wider range of clients at short notice. We have seen an increase in queries from those who have been diagnosed with agoraphobia and obsessive compulsive disorders who have struggled to access advice due to the need to attend an office to sign or deliver paperwork, for example.

The service has also established links with numerous local charities and provides holistic advice to their clients through casework assistance, undertaking outreach appointments and delivering webinar training with Self-Help UK.

I just wanted to say how thankful we are that you helped us through this process, without you I don't think we'd even have a start date. Thank you will never be enough, it's been a long slog but the end is in sight.

Case studies:

We represented a client to defend possession proceedings after they received an eviction notice following the death of their parent, who had been the only named tenant on the tenancy agreement. The client had been ineligible for housing benefit to assist with payment of the rent and had no other income with which to maintain such payments.

We provided advice to defend against a threatened unlawful eviction and represented the client through several hearings to the final trial in the county court, resulting in the rent arrears and other costs, totalling approximately £10,000, being reduced to £354 in addition to securing long term housing for the client. This outcome was particularly important for this client as he was very young and did not wish to risk having a county court money judgment registered against his name, which would have prevented him from taking out a loan in the future. The client provided the following feedback:

'Thank you so much for all your help the past 9 months. I honestly don't know where I'd be without you!'

We also assisted a client with representation at a hearing where she was seeking a Rent Repayment Order against a rogue landlord who had failed to comply with the necessary safety regulations. We represented the client at very short notice, having accepted initial instructions from six days before the final hearing. We received supporting evidence from the local authority's environmental health department and succeeded on all grounds claimed. We also secured just over £5000 of returned rent to our client in recognition of the fact that the landlord had both breached the relevant health and safety regulations, and that he had been harassing our client throughout her tenancy at the property in question.

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 that they are entitled to and that are most suitable in their particular circumstances.

Having launched this service in the academic year 2018/19, the service has continued to develop during 2020/21, securing specialist provision and special school placements for children and young persons across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

There are a number of issues, both systemic and topical, which are currently affecting provision for

those with SEND considerations. For example, delays caused by local authorities failing to comply with statutory timescales regarding Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and the issuing of EHC Plans delaying parents and families in them being able to exercise their rights of appeal. In addition, the pandemic has had adverse impacts on health and social care assessments with the result often being that there is more limited evidence available to professionals and to decision-makers. Finally, in the face of severe financial pressures afflicting local authorities across the country, SEND funding is being cut in many areas

and this is leading to a withdrawal of some specialist provision. It is hugely rewarding to be able to support clients in these matters.

'I just wanted to say how thankful we are that you helped us through this process, without you I don't think we'd even have a start date. Thank you will never be enough, it's been a long slog but the end is in site (sic).'

We are grateful to **Santander Universities UK** for providing us with financial assistance to launch this service and for their ongoing funding in relation to training and development resources.

Intellectual Property (IP)

Having launched a newly expanded service in 2020 following recruitment of a fully qualified Trade Mark Attorney, this service has continued to expand this year. The service is targeted at individuals, sole traders and small start-up enterprise requiring IP advice relating to trade marks and copyright.

We saw a substantial growth in number of assists and enquiries and numbers of opportunities for students to assist with commercial IP matters this year, in part due to the pandemic leading to many people launching new products and businesses. Particular highlights from this year included conducting our first IP litigation matters and also our first IP mediation case, all producing successful outcomes for our clients. We also filed our first trade mark registration acting as our client's representative, filed our first Invalidation Action at the UK Intellectual Property Office, and defended our first trade mark oppositions against large multinational companies.

New for this year, our Trade Mark Attorney, with the support of our junior staff members and student volunteers, has also delivered a number Free Advice Clinics as part of the Online Advice Clinic scheme administered by the Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA). This is a one-off advice service offering free initial advice on IP related matters, with the opportunity for further assistance to be provided by the Centre, where there is a need for ongoing pro bono advice.

The service has also delivered free legal seminars to both members of the community and to NTU Product Design students.

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 is excellent to be able to expand our IP services, complementing our academic and practitioner course offerings.

Family Law Service

This year we launched a monthly family law drop-in service, advising clients on divorce and separation, matrimonial finances, children matters and domestic abuse. This service was conducted remotely, with clients being able to access legal advice from their own homes. In addition, many of our Outreach cases involve family law issues, often involving domestic abuse. Our family solicitor provides supervisory input to these cases, over and above the dedicated family law drop-in sessions. The service dealt with a total of 26 matters this year.

Due to the large unmet legal need in this area, we will be extending our family offering for the next academic year.

Notable cases:

We assisted a sole-trader in enforcing their trade mark registration against a much larger, represented, company. The team provided assistance from the outset of the dispute, providing assessments of the chances of success, corresponding with the other party and ultimately drafting the agreement which saw the large company have to rebrand. This ensured that the client was able to continue trading as they had seen a downturn in business following the infringement issue.

In another case, a start-up client was faced with a challenge to their trade mark application and use by a large house-hold name. The team were able to provide the client with options for defending their application against the third party and were able to reach a settlement agreement which preserved the client's application and permitted their uninterrupted use of their mark. This meant that the client did not have to pull their existing stock from the market and rebrand; which would have incurred them significant financial loss and likely folded their business. The client feedback in this case exemplifies the impact of this service:

"[I] hope others have the confidence to get legal advice when dealing with threats from big companies."

Victims' Rights

Launched last year, 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.

Other projects and services for the academic year 2020/21

Community Outreach Advice Services

Nottingham Women's Centre and St Georges Community Centre

We provide a free advice clinic, 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 clinics run fortnightly throughout October to March. Whilst the sessions would usually take place at the respective community centres, this year they were all conducted remotely due to the pandemic, either over online video conferencing or by telephone.

Our two student Project Leaders, each supported by up to a further six students, assisted 28 individuals as part of this service this year, providing supervised advice and assistance across a large range of areas including family, employment and housing.

Virtual internships

Having introduced Virtual Internships as a response to the pandemic last year, 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 18 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 prepare them for life post-study. Our students receive a post-completion certificate for their efforts.



Intra-curricular activity

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

Placement students

Further to the decision by NTU to increase internal placements as a result of the pandemic on our students, we were delighted to welcome two placement students, George Greenfield and Matilda Kapala, this year instead of the usual one. George and Matilda provided extensive support to the Centre during their third year on placement as part of their LLB (Sandwich) Degree.

George provided valuable assistance into the small claims County Court matters, where he was often the main point of contact with the Court and the client. George has also led on instructing tracing agents to discover the whereabouts of elusive proposed defendants, which has been great help in launching court proceedings to recover money for our clients. George also provided key input into the Centre's record-breaking financial award case, a property dispute matter that led to our client being awarded over £600,000 in compensation.

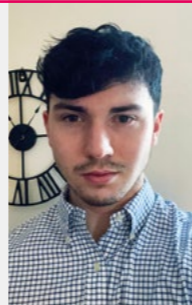
Matilda has been a great ambassador, making several successful public speaking appearances on behalf of the Centre including presenting at a national LexisNexis Employability Forum event and as part of our Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project with Campbell Law School. Matilda has also provided significant input into our developing Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and community care services and secured £25,000 for a vulnerable client in her first Social Security Tribunal case. Matilda also supported our Trade Mark Attorney, working on a number of our IP cases, including the Centre's first IP litigation case.

It is noted that George and Matilda conducted virtually their entire placement remotely. It is to their credit that they managed to achieve so much development and to contribute so much to the firm during what was a very highly challenging year.

George and Matilda talk about their experience:

George Greenfield

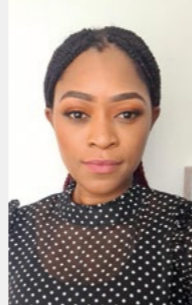
This experience has been beneficial in many ways. It allowed me to put myself in the shoes of practicing lawyers in various different areas of law and gain experience within that area. My main focus was within the Business and Enterprise Law Service. This experience is essential due to the competitive nature of law careers and to truly understand what law in practice is all about.



I would recommend being involved with the Legal Advice Centre to any student, it provides a supportive environment with many talented lawyers to learn from. It's my belief that there are few opportunities to gain such a large range of knowledge as is possible with the Centre and to take on as much responsibility.

Matilda Kapala

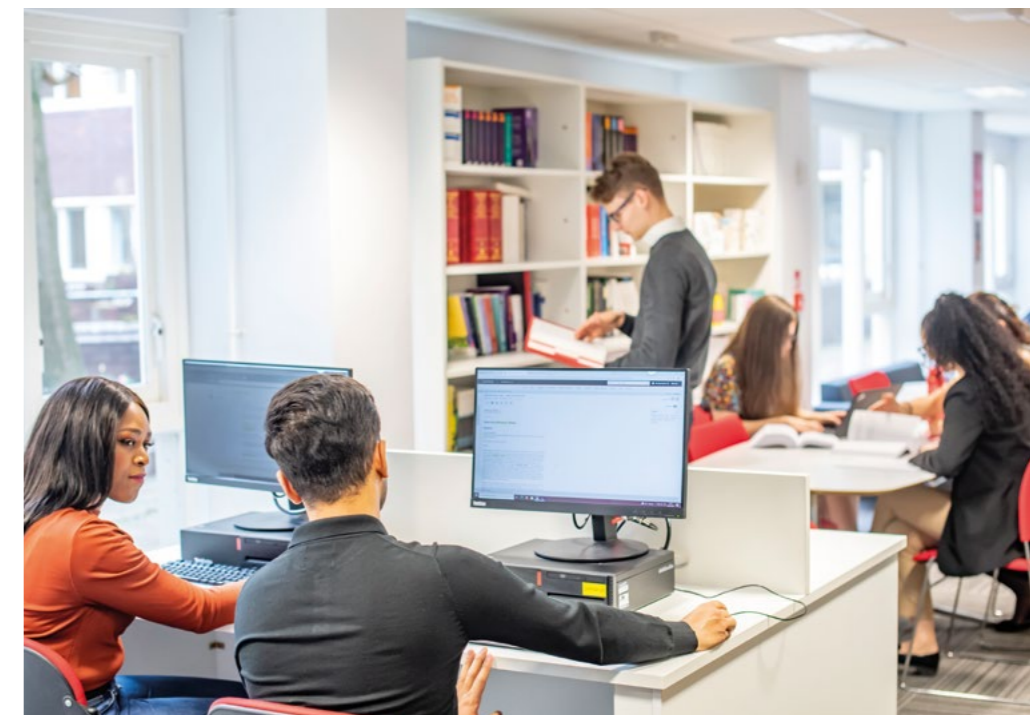
During my placement, I assisted with a range of administrative tasks such as contacting clients via email and telephone, arranging meetings, and reviewing client enquiries. These tasks helped me develop great verbal and written communication skills which are important in the Legal career. I also had the opportunity to assist with providing legal advice in the following service areas: employment, family, crime, welfare benefits, business, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) service and intellectual property law. Getting involved with different service areas gave me the opportunity to explore my interests and develop a wide range of transferable skills such as client interviewing, research, teamwork, time management, legal drafting. I was also able to improve my confidence and presentation skills by appearing as a speaker at a variety of events and being part of the Student Pro Bono Committee.



One of the highlights of my placement was gaining some advocacy experience assisting a client through a Social Security Tribunal hearing. This involved a meeting with the client, reviewing the hearing bundle, and drafting submissions. This was my first social security tribunal case and I secured £25,000 for a vulnerable client which was life changing for them. I found this experience incredibly rewarding and it solidified my interest in pursuing a career in law.

Due to the competitive nature of the legal industry, I think it's really important to gain as much legal work experience as you can which will help you stand out in applications and show commitment to pursuing a legal career.

The Centre also offers a number of intra-curricular opportunities, allowing students to undertake work experience with the Centre as part of their course or module.



Module activity

This year saw the introduction of two new modules that include elements delivered by the Centre, Applied Legal Knowledge (Criminal and Business Practice) and the NLS Legal Advice Centre module:

Applied Legal Knowledge (Criminal and Business Practice) ('ALK3')

This is a third year LLB module, Applied Legal Knowledge, which enabled 279 students the opportunity to work on cases that the Centre 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 client. The business task focused on insolvency and the criminal task involved advising a client on the Victim's Right to Review Scheme.

NLS Legal Advice Centre module:

This is a second year LLB module, offered to those students who were unable to secure a 10 week placement. This was introduced in recognition of the fact 10 week placements were harder to find this

year, due to the impact of Covid. We were keen to ensure that those students on the half-year module course, which front loads their second year modules to Term 1 allowing the students to undertake a 10 week module in Term 2, did not miss out on the opportunity to secure legal work experience. As part of this module, which also offered elements on public legal education and practical skills, we provided eight students with 30 hours of work experience.

Other module activity:

A total of 22 students completed their placement with the Centre, and with our partner organisation Support Through Court, as part of their Law in Practice module, this included both undergraduate and postgraduate students and we were able to ensure a further student completed her 10 week placement by offering a week's work experience when, for reasons beyond the student's and employer's control, her 10 week placement had to be cut short.

In addition, 111 students completed Employer Challenges with the

Centre. A total of 99 under-graduates gave presentations on ways that the Centre could develop its services to further fulfil unmet legal need in the Nottinghamshire community and support students and five LLM students undertook an insolvency challenge, which involved students presenting on recent changes in insolvency case law and preparing case reports for possible publication. A further seven students were able to use their volunteering as their Employer Challenge for academic credit. This was a significant increase from the number of Employer Challenges we were able to offer last year, with us more than tripling the number from 27 to 111 students.

Module activity increased by a huge 427% this year, increasing from 87 students last year to 459 this year, the increase largely due to the new ALK3 module and due to the increase in Employer Challenges. 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.

Lead Advisers and our Student Pro Bono Committee (SPBC)

Last year, we introduced a new initiative in order to recognise our most committed, experienced and talented student volunteers. We selected a total of 10 students from our 19/20 cohort, which was made up of over 340 students, to become our Lead Advisers. We invited all our Lead Advisers, who were continuing

their studies with us this year, to form our Student Pro Bono Committee. This made for a very proactive committee as all members have a detailed understanding of the Centre and our work and it enabled them to act as mentors and be a source of information and guidance for our other student volunteers. We are

hugely grateful to the SPBC for all their hard work and dedication.

Please see page 35 for details of all of our SPBC committee members and Lead Advisers and read the below report from this year's Chair, Molly Brown:

LAC SPBC, by Molly Brown, Chair of the SPBC (2020/21)

This year we moved online, but that didn't stop us from doing work in the community.

In 2020 the Student Pro-Bono Committee took part in many online events, such as the 'LawCareers.Net' Instagram takeover. On this day, we promoted both the Centre and Pro-Bono activity as a whole, to over 15,000 followers.



We also had the honour of presenting at Bristol Law Clinic's International Legal Convention. We broadcasted the work the Centre does, to over 20 countries. It was great to see the work being done across the globe to aid access to justice. As a result of the conference, we established relationships with Universities from different continents, creating exciting prospects for the future.

As the Chair of the Committee, I was interviewed by The Times Newspaper and questioned about the diversity and inclusion of the Centre. I focused on promoting the equality the Centre maintains at its core, with student volunteers being able to participate no matter what year of study or skill set. Many who are involved in volunteering in the Centre start

with little to no experience and end up graduating with jobs in the legal sector. This is something we wanted to highlight when promoting the Centre on any platform.

Following on from last year's successful open day, we hosted a virtual open day for the Centre. From guest speaker panels to CV workshops, we ran a scheduled day of online sessions. Students across the Law School faculty attended the event, which promoted the many volunteering opportunities available for students to partake in.

We saw an increase in student activity and engagement, with social media becoming focal to advertise the Centre's opportunities and placements. The Committee aimed at posting regularly on social media to generate excitement for volunteering recruitment.

We had a designated Social Media Officer to take charge of this initiative.

Another initiative we launched was the Mental Health and Well-being Officer. In these difficult times, we wanted to offer support to students across the Law School who need a positivity boost. We had meetings with mental health charities to set up mental well-being training workshops for students to support each other and themselves, whilst in isolation.

Rounding off the year, we attended the virtual Law Works and Attorney General's Student Pro-Bono Awards. The Centre won an award for Best Contribution by a Law School. It was an event full of celebration and we were very proud to be representing such a highly commended firm.

Free Representation Unit

We continue to partner with the Free Representation Unit (FRU) and are proud to be the only FRU provider outside London. Our students, supported by Centre staff, represented a total of 28 individuals in Social Security and Employment Tribunal proceedings. Over £390,000 was recovered in benefits or awarded in settlements and compensation to our FRU clients.

Whilst providing a hugely beneficial service to the clients, and the tribunal, our students gain outstanding experience, including advocacy and client care skills. 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 Baldwin and Michael Reed, for providing training to our volunteers and co-ordinating the assessments.

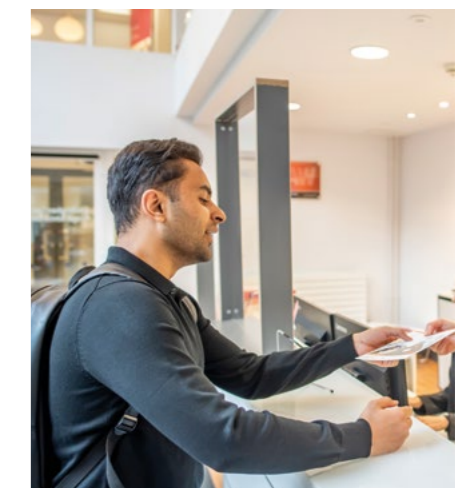
LawWorks

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. This collaboration and local network has proved especially helpful in light of the pandemic. We have also taken part in different information exchange sessions organised by LawWorks in areas such as "qualifying work experience: what clinics need to know" and "fundraising for clinics". Special thanks go to our East Midlands Clinics Support & Development Officer, Anne-Marie Dhillon, for her unwavering support.

Over £390,000 was recovered in benefits or awarded in settlements and compensation to our FRU clients.

Support Through Court

This year, 29 of our students volunteered with our partner organisation Support Through Court (STC). We are extremely grateful to Jo Wardle and to Manjit Rai and her team for the training and supervision provided to our students. Our students volunteering with STC, committed over 2300 volunteering hours, supporting over 1600 litigants in person in 2020/21, providing a vital service to our local community.



Pathways to Law

The Centre was 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 three students on the programme with work experience, with each student spending up to three 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.

Data summary

We dealt with 150 cases this year, across eight different service areas, with our Trade Mark Attorney supporting an additional 12 people via the CITMA free IP advice clinic service. This is a similar figure to the number of cases handled in 2019/20. In addition, we provided public legal education webinars to over 200 individuals and organisations this year on topics including employment, welfare benefits and special educational needs and disability.

As anticipated, we saw a significant increase in new enquiries, which rose by 23%. It is likely that this increase is in whole or in part attributable to the impact of the pandemic. Due to limitations around capacity and specialisms, we were only able to accept 12% of enquiries received. Despite being unable to accept the overwhelming majority of cases we do provide signposting information to all of those we cannot assist, providing an individual response wherever possible.

The pandemic continued to impact our FRU Social Security work and we continue to see a vast reduction in enquiries and cases, reducing by almost 50%, from 35 Social Security Tribunals in 2019/20, to 17 this year. Conversely, we saw an increase in our FRU Employment work, with case levels returning to those seen pre-pandemic, with numbers also doubling from 6 cases in 2019/20, to 11 this year.

We were delighted to recover £995,240 in compensation, settlements and benefits for our clients this year, bringing our cumulative total to date to an impressive £5.5million. This was in a large part thanks to our record judgment of £600,000 secured by our Business and Enterprise Law Service. This represented a change from previous years when the vast majority of financial awards would be recovered via our FRU Social Security work. It was also a 35% increase from last year.

We significantly increased the number of student opportunities this year, by some 85%, due to the increased intra-curricular activity, allowing over 580 students the ability to gain an insight into how the

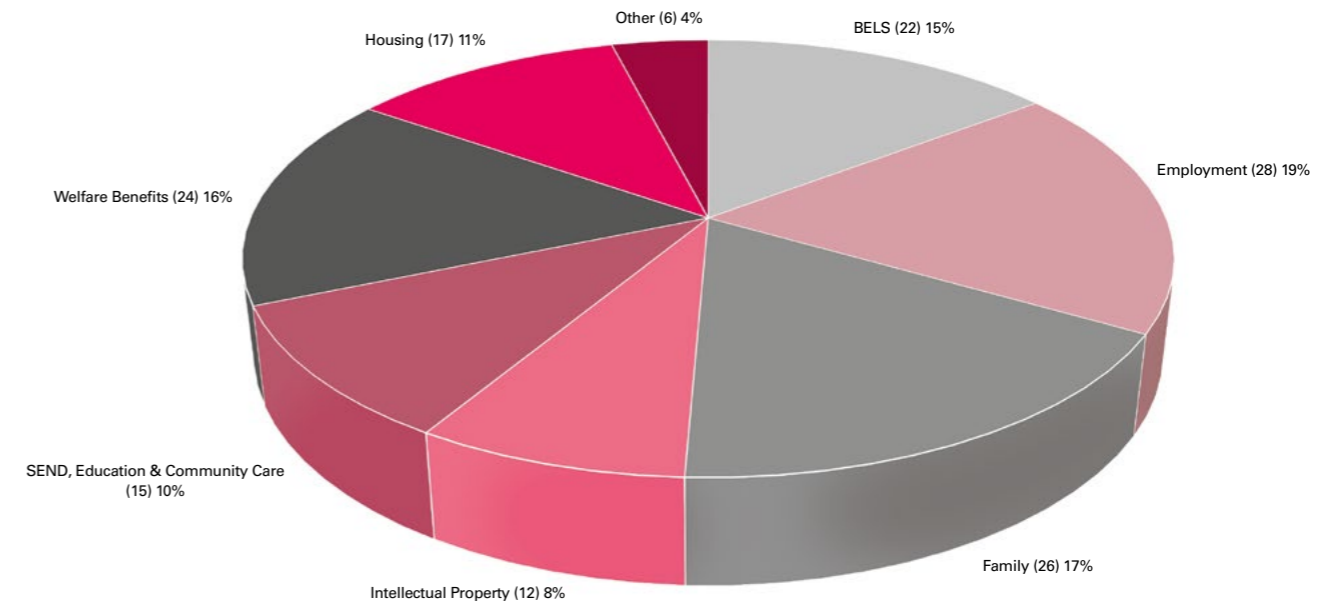
practice differs from the theory and helping them to develop vital practical skills in order to improve their employability.

We were delighted to see that, once again, those students undertaking live client activity with the Centre, outperformed their peers, with an incredible 96% achieving a first or 2:1 in their degree, compared with 70% of all NLS students. As you can see from the graph at page 21, 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 30% of postgraduates were from disadvantaged backgrounds, 15% of undergraduates and 30% of postgraduates declared a disability, and 40% of undergraduates and 31% of postgraduates were from black and other ethnic minority backgrounds.

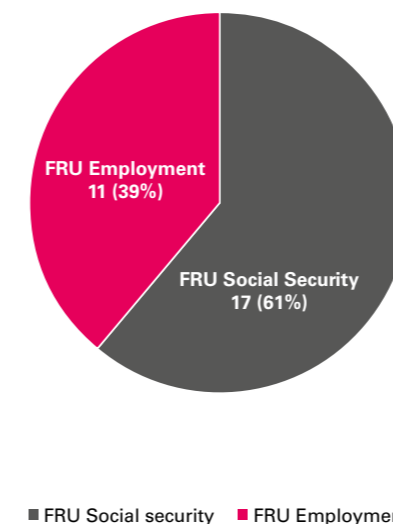
One of the most motivating parts of our job is receiving positive feedback. In addition to the client and student feedback featured at pages 28 to 31, we are proud to report that, based on our student feedback survey data, 70% of students that responded to the survey stated that the Centre was either a factor, or the main reason, for deciding to study at NTU and 100% of our students said they would recommend volunteering at the Centre to future students. Based on our client feedback survey data, 100% of clients that responded rated the service they received as 'excellent'.

Number of cases 2020-21 (150)

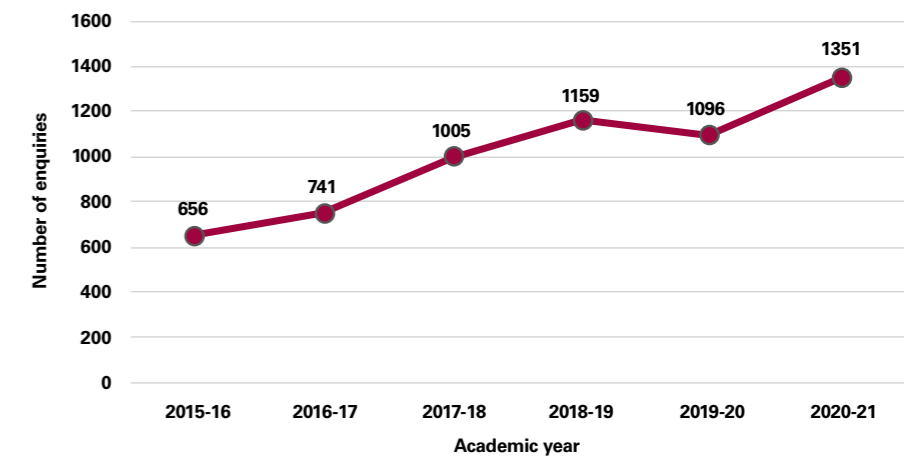


*Our Trade Mark Attorney, with the assistance of our student volunteers, also delivered 12 one-off advice sessions as part of his voluntary work for the Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA).

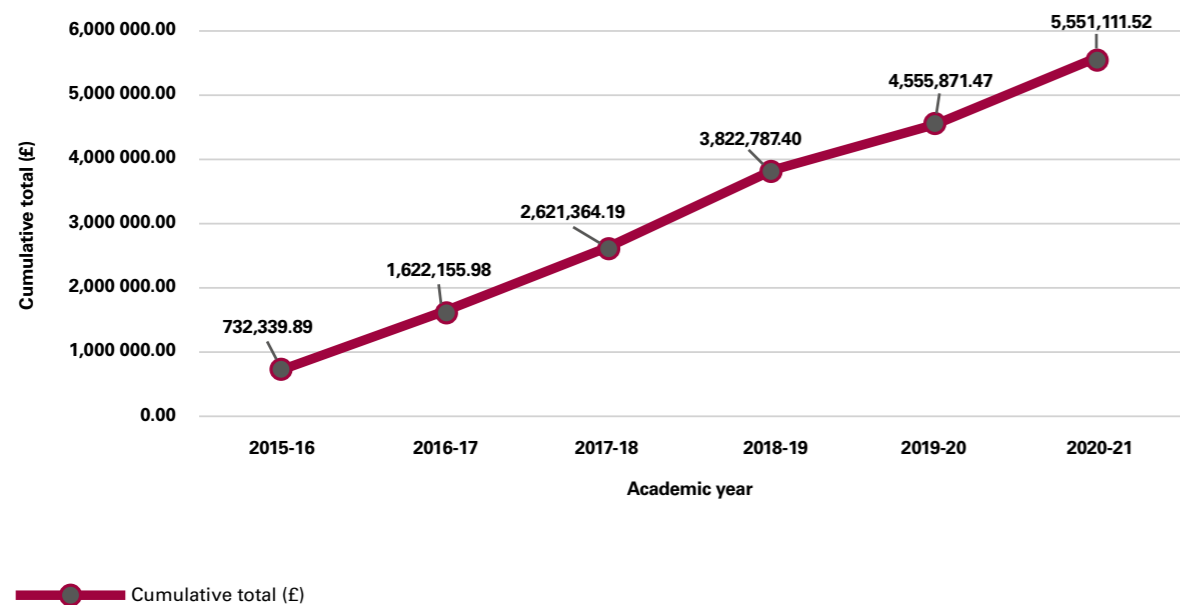
Total FRU cases 2020-21 (28)



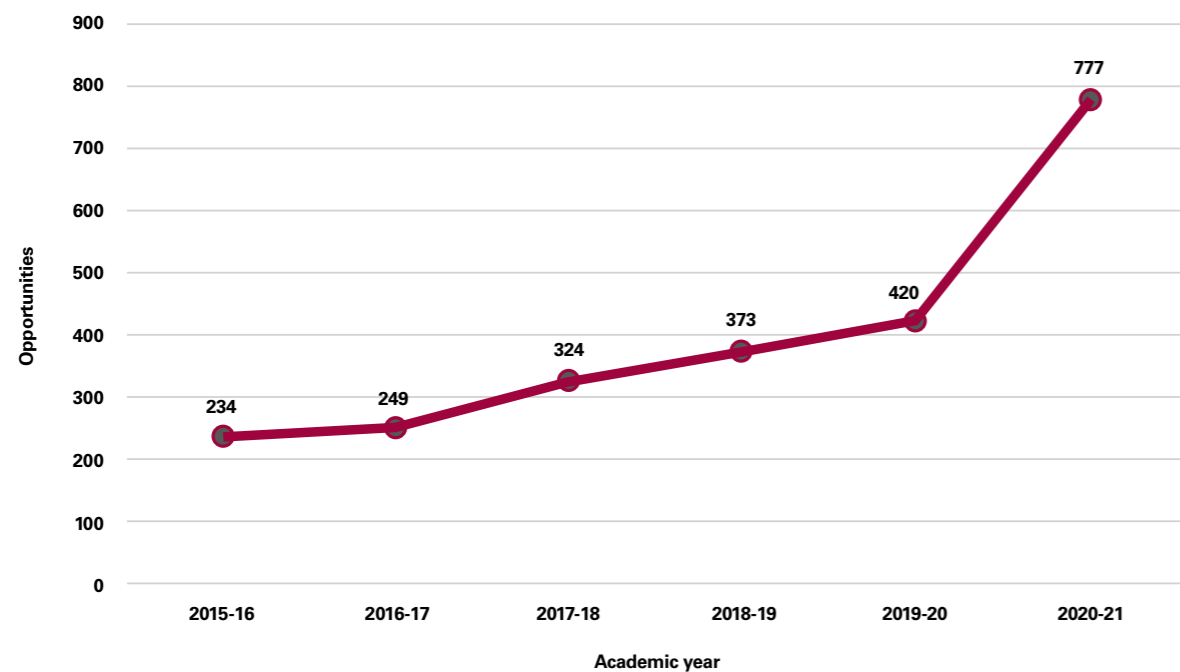
Total number of enquiries received



Total financial awards (cumulative total £)



Total number of opportunities for students to work in Centre activities (6 year trend)



Student volunteers by course (583)

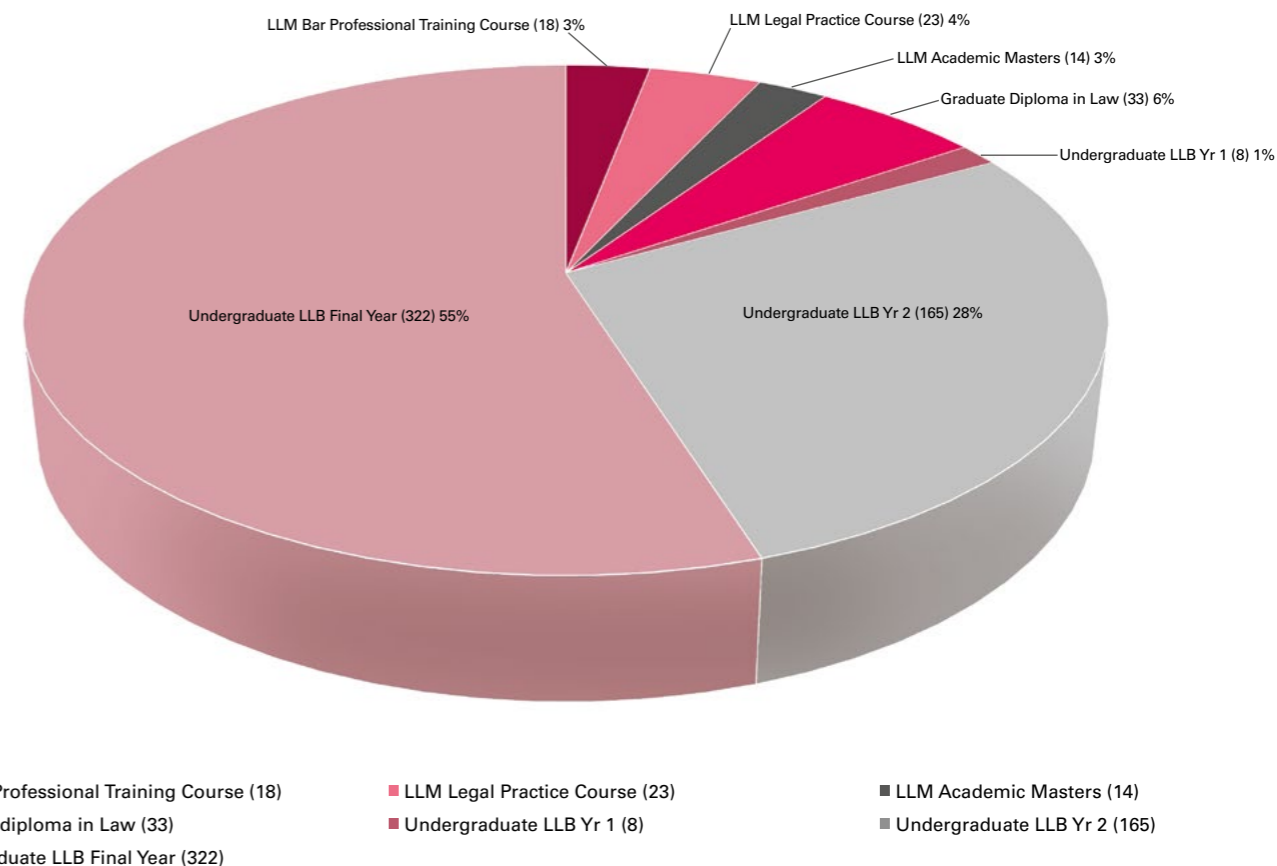
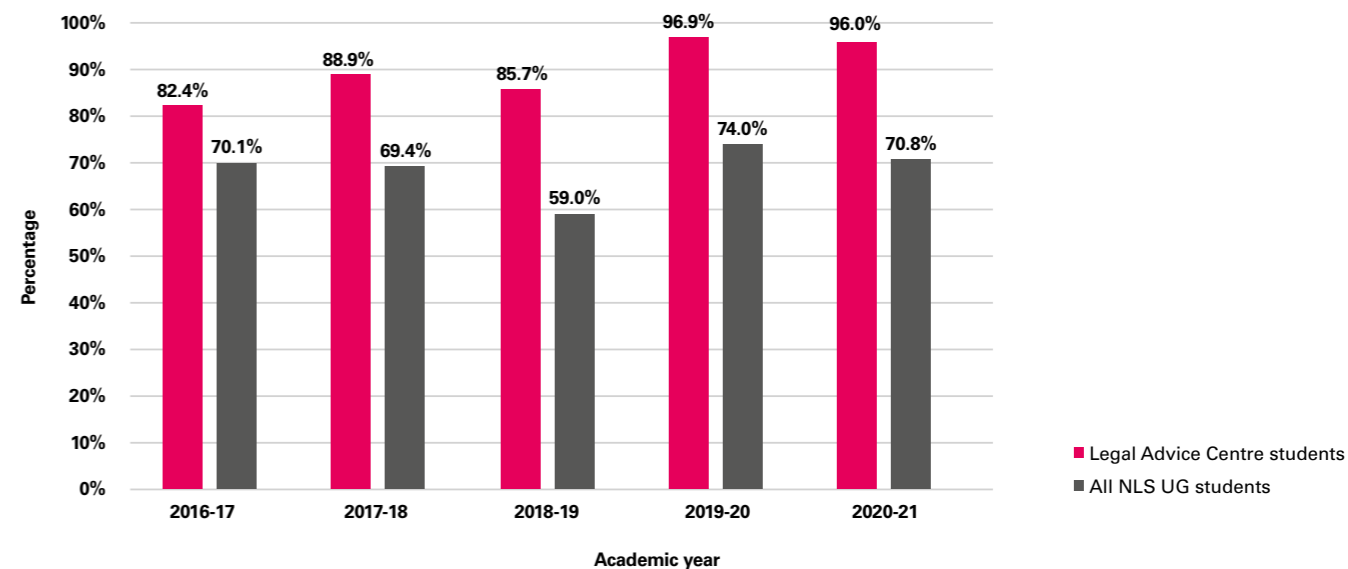


Figure 3a: 2016/17 to 2020/21 Legal Advice Centre participants achieving a 2:1/First Class Degree, compared with the underlying NLS student population

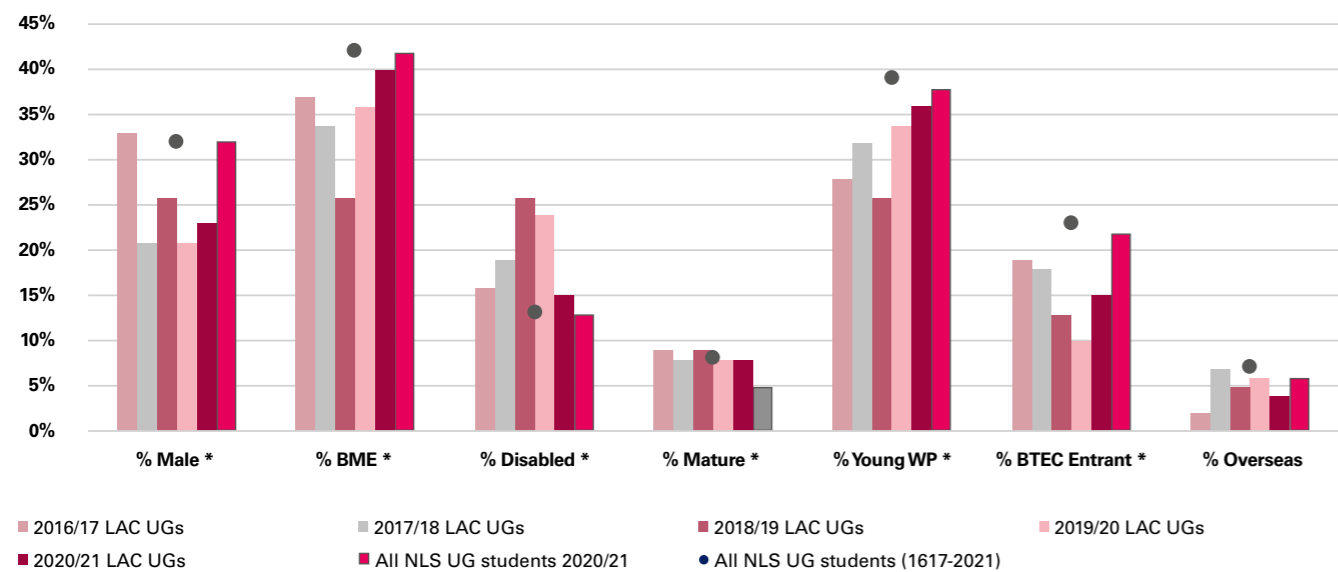
Percentage of students achieving 2:1/First Class degree



*Figures exclude those undertaking simulated tasks as part of modules.

Figure 1a: 2016/17 to 2020/21 Legal Advice Centre participants by Success for All groups, compared with underlying NLS student population (undergraduate)

Success for all profile of LAC students - full-time undergraduates**



**These figures do not include those undertaking simulated tasks as part of modules.

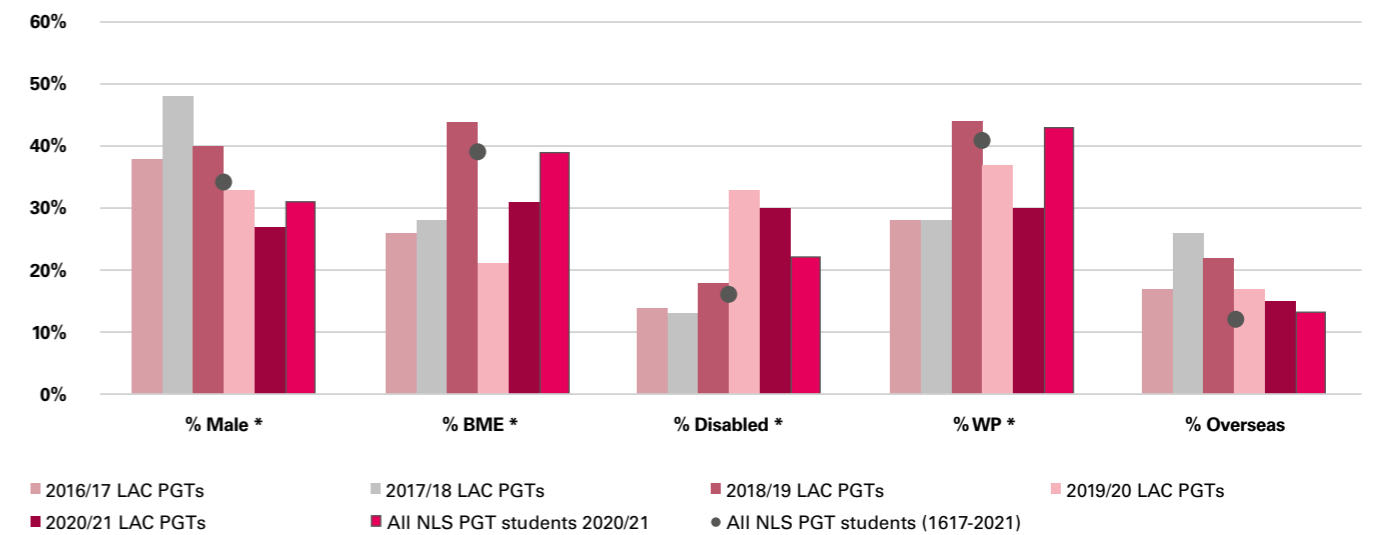
*UK domiciled

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	Mature	Young WP	BTEC Entrant	Overseas
2016/17 LAC UGs	33%	37%	16%	9%	28%	19%	2%
2017/18 LAC UGs	21%	34%	19%	8%	32%	18%	7%
2018/19 LAC UGs	26%	26%	26%	9%	26%	13%	5%
2019/20 LAC UGs	21%	36%	24%	8%	34%	10%	6%
2020/21 LAC UGs	23%	40%	15%	8%	36%	15%	4%
All NLS UG students 2020/21	32%	42%	13%	5%	38%	22%	6%
All NLS UG students (1617-2021)	32%	42%	13%	8%	39%	23%	7%

Figure 2: 2016/17 to 2020/21 Legal Advice Centre participants by Success for All groups, compared with underlying NLS student population (postgraduate taught)

Success for all profile of LAC students - postgraduate taught



*UK domiciled

	Male	BME	Disabled	WP	Overseas
2016/17 LAC PGTs	38%	26%	14%	28%	17%
2017/18 LAC PGTs	48%	28%	13%	28%	26%
2018/19 LAC PGTs	40%	44%	18%	44%	22%
2019/20 LAC PGTs	33%	21%	33%	37%	17%
2020/21 LAC PGTs	27%	31%	30%	30%	15%
All NLS PGT students 2020/21	31%	39%	22%	43%	13%
All NLS PGT students (1617-2021)	34%	39%	16%	41%	12%

2020/21 highlights

Awards

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

LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards 2021

- Winner – Best Contribution by a Law School
- Shortlisted – Best Contribution by an Individual (Molly Brown)

Law Society Excellence Awards 2021

- Shortlisted – Excellence in Access to Justice

Nottinghamshire Law Society Annual Awards 2020

- Winner – Contribution to the Community Award



A number of our talented students were also successful in winning awards and skills competitions:

The NLS Dean's Award for Outstanding Contribution – Molly Brown

NLS Richard Bagley Award for Outstanding Contribution to Pro Bono (Undergraduate) – Sophie Gibson-Leitch

NLS Richard Bagley Award for Outstanding Contribution to Pro Bono (Postgraduate) – David Illingworth

Alastair Munt Memorial Advocacy Prize – James Ball

International recognition

We were delighted to receive international recognition this year, when former lawyer and legal commentator, Jordan Furlong referenced the Legal Advice Centre within his report 'Lawyer Licensing and Competence in Alberta' prepared for Alberta Law Society:

In the report, Jordan described the Centre as "The most successful example of a teaching law firm today" (November 2020):

[The Report: Lawyer Licensing and Competence in Alberta](#) (see page 72)

As a result of the coverage in Jordan's report, our Laura Pinkney presented a keynote speech at the Law Society of Alberta's Annual Retreat as part of their 'Interviews with Innovators' showcase. The conference was attended by numerous practitioners and academics from across Canada. As well as the amazing opportunity to discuss the work of the Centre, it was really interesting to hear approaches taken by other law schools and organisations to tackle access to justice and prepare students for practice and how the Alberta Law Society and their peers take a proactive approach to building a high quality, resilient and sustainable profession.

Public Legal Education

Our dedicated staff and students delivered a total of 11 Public Legal Education Seminars to over 200 attendees, covering topics such as employment, welfare benefits, special educational needs and intellectual property. The seminars are designed to empower and raise awareness of legal rights and processes. Our paralegal, Jack Stuart, also delivered an ecclesiastical law webinar, using his legal knowledge and skills to provide guidance in an area of personal interest to help parishes navigate the rules around how to manage their churches and estate.

In addition, Ashley Fredericks, provided support to the charity, Law for Life, reviewing litigant in person guides that cover the new personal injury reforms around whiplash claims. The guides appear on Law for Life's excellent Advice Now website.

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. This year, our staff and students, presented at:

Bristol's Law Clinic International Clinical Legal Education Student Symposium (March 2021): Molly Brown and Saadia Bacchus (SPBC chair and deputy chair) presented

'The Benefits of Clinical Legal Education' at this international conference. The conference was attended by over 200 participants from across the globe and Molly Saadia received very positive feedback and comments from the audience. Presenters included student volunteers from Bristol Law Clinic, Bar-Ilan University (Israel), Universidad de Alcala (Madrid, Spain), and Bennett's University Law Clinic (India). Read Molly and Saadia's blog here: [Legal Advice Centre Student Volunteers Present at International Clinical Legal Education Workshop - Centre For Legal Education - Nottingham Trent University \(nlscl.org.uk\)](#)

LawWorks Clinics Network InfoExchange on Qualifying Work Experience (June 2021):

Laura Pinkney and Professor Jane Jarman appeared on the panel for this for LawWorks to discuss the implications of the SRA's introduction of Qualifying Work Experience on law clinics and other advice organisations.

LexisNexis Employability Forum (June 2021):

Laura Pinkney and Matilda Kapala presented at LexisNexis Employability Forum discussing the role of law clinics and how volunteering can enhance the student experience:

[Employability Forum – how law courses are putting legal theory into practice | LexisNexis Blogs](#)

Legal Cheek Employability Event (December 2020):

Laura Pinkney, joined by Ed Mosley of the NTU Employability Team, hosted a workshop entitled 'Experience, Skills and Education: How to write a successful application'. The workshop was very popular with over 300 students in attendance.

NLS SQE roundtable events – NLS hosted a series of roundtable events attended by law firms to discuss the introduction of SQE and its impact. Laura Pinkney, Professor Jane Jarman and Professor Jane Ching appeared on the panel and the event was chaired by Professor Paula Moffatt.



Media coverage:

Article in Legal Futures. Laura Pinkney discussing the impact of the pandemic on the demand for legal services (December 2020):

[Teaching law firm “busier than ever” with pandemic caseload - Legal Futures](#)

Article in The Law Gazette. Laura Pinkney talks about the impact of Covid-19 on Nottingham Law School Legal Advice Centre (February 2021):

[Covid-19 and its impact on a law school legal advice centre | Feature | Law Gazette](#)

Article in The Times. Student Molly Brown discusses her experience of working in the Centre and how the Centre influenced her decision to choose to study at NLS (February 2021)

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/campus-clinics-offer-taste-of-legal-life-tjxt8fx8x>

Policy reform

As well as facilitating access to justice to our clients, it is an objective of the Centre to assist in policy reform, particularly in areas affecting access to justice and vulnerable persons. Not only is this important in order to ensure a fairer justice system, it provides our students valuable insight into law making process and how to effect change.

Environmental Law Foundation:

Over the course of this year we were delighted to work in collaboration with the Environmental Law Foundation (ELF) and other universities to conduct research into the response and impact of local authorities' to Climate Emergency Declarations. A group of eight of our students, supervised by our paralegal Jack Stuart, spent several months obtaining information from numerous local authorities culminating in a report that was submitted to ELF to feed into their national research project. ELF's final report, to which our staff and students contributed, can be read here: [ELF-Local-urgency-on-the-Climate-Emergency-October-2021.pdf \(elflaw.org\)](#)

This project provided the opportunity for students interested in environmental law to obtain a detailed understanding into Climate Emergency Declarations and allowed them to partake in an important policy reform campaign that we hope will elicit greater action by the government and local authorities across the country.



Law Commission 14th Reform: Consultation Response

We submitted a response to the 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 dedicated staff and students delivered a total of 11 Public Legal Education Seminars to over 200 attendees, covering topics such as employment, welfare benefits, special educational needs and intellectual property.

Student feedback

Volunteering has given me a raft of real life legal work experience which is invaluable for future pupillage applications.

The most inspiring part of my study with NTU. Adding value to everyone, the university, the students, and the community.

I really enjoyed working in employment in the LAC and it motivated me to take the module for third year!

Thank you for all the experience I was provided with during my 10 week placement with the Centre, I believe I would not have been able to get where I am today without it.

Knowing that you have made a difference to someone who may not have been able to afford legal representation is beyond words!

“My placement experience with the LAC has been very interesting and insightful. I have learnt so many new things, thank you so much for your support and time.”

I've loved every second of being part of the LAC, I would like to thank all the staff and supervisors for making the experience so beneficial to students with no previous experience, like myself.

“Just a quick email to say thank you for letting me volunteer at the pro bono centre these last few years. I have learned a lot of useful skills that i have been able to talk about in my interviews, and most importantly really enjoyed it! ”

The staff at the LAC are very patient and happy to answer any questions and provide great feedback after every client interview. My knowledge and confidence quickly grew and I could see how I had improved from first to last client which was a really great feeling, thank you.

The volunteering at LAC has really helped me come on leaps and bounds - so thank you, I remain very grateful for the opportunity. Without the experience you've provided me, I probably wouldn't be where I am at today. So, I just wanted to thank you for giving your time up in the day to help me when I was volunteering.

Client feedback

“I just wanted to say how thankful we are that you helped us through this process, without you I don't think we'd even have a start date. Thank you will never be enough, it's been a long slog but the end is in sight.”

Thank you very much. This information is priceless and can help me move forward with the development of my business.

I am most grateful with the outcome; you handled the whole thing with great professionalism and I am very happy for your assistance with the matter.

Terrific, thank you so much for doing this on my behalf and keeping me in the loop with everything. Immensely professional with integrity and compassion :-))

Excellent service. Initially nervous, felt at ease quickly. Given knowledgeable, realistic advice.

“I wanted to express my gratitude to you for being with me in yesterday's mediation meeting and representing and supporting me all this time. It's a lot of your time you've given and I appreciate this.”

I'm delighted that you all are able to assist me and incredibly grateful with the support and everything you've done for me so far. I feel really blessed to have amazing experts on my side.

I spoke to Matthew Game & Katie Smith. Both Solicitors were extremely helpful and Katie was a font of knowledge and I greatly appreciate her assistance. This is a fantastic service Thank you so much.

Very reassuring chat. I felt comfortable. Someone who actually listens to me. I thank you so much.

Thank you to [Peter], Callum and Ashley for all the hard work and time you've put into my case so far. I can clearly see that you have thoroughly thought out and discussed all the options for me and are coming up with realistic solutions. I appreciate this and following [the] meeting with you all, I felt happier and reassured as always when we all speak. So thank you for this :-)

We were in a situation where we felt broken; emotionally and financially. The support we have received from Ashley and Jack has been truly invaluable. Their knowledge, support, levels of communication and efficiency has been outstanding. We definitely couldn't have done any of this without them and we will be forever grateful. A huge thank you for helping us piece our life back together.

I am very appreciative of the advice I received. Katie was easy to talk to. She gave clear advice which she followed up with an email to me the next day. Excellent service.

Testimonials from our former student volunteers

Elisa Cronier-Mackie



I always felt at ease at the Centre, as everyone working there is so welcoming, and truly want you to make the most of the opportunities available.

I am currently working as a Public Law and Community Care Paralegal at Instalaw Solicitors in Nottingham, with a focus on representing age disputed asylum seeking children. I achieved a 1st class Law LLB and a distinction in the LPC. The range of projects at the Centre attracted me to choosing Nottingham Law School to study my LLB. It is crucial to have a range of work experience alongside your law degree if you wish to have a legal role in the future, due to the competitive nature of the legal sector. I began volunteering in the Legal Advice Centre in my second year, after looking into the Outreach Advice Project.

I began volunteering at the Project, at Nottingham Woman's Centre. I advanced my legal skills such as client interviewing, legal research and drafting legal documents. I was handling sensitive cases, however never felt out of my depth as we were supervised and could always reach out

to the solicitors at the Centre. I always felt at ease at the Centre, as everyone working there is so welcoming, and truly want you to make the most of the opportunities available.

The following year I became Project Leader at the Outreach Advice Project, along with sitting on the Student Pro Bono Committee. The same year I was also Project Leader for the Law School Challenge, raising over £1200 for various charities. Volunteering at the Legal Advice Centre has significantly prepared me for working at a law firm. Not only has it enhanced my legal skills, but the extensive list of work experience it has added to my CV made it easier to obtain a job in the legal sector. I would recommend all law students at NTU to volunteer. You can choose to get stuck in with a long-term project, or just volunteer on one occasion. There is something for everyone!

My work in the Legal Advice Centre provided me with the fundamentals for life in legal practice.



Edward Gould

Edward graduated from NTU (LLB Law) in 2019 achieving a 2:1. He then completed the LLM Legal Practice Course part-time whilst employed, achieving a Distinction overall. Edward is currently employed as Legal & Contracts Advisor in the in-house Legal department at Briggs of Burton PLC, a process engineering company who execute projects internationally, designing and providing equipment for the brewing, distilling, pharmaceutical and food sectors.

I cannot recommend volunteering in the Legal Advice Centre enough.



Lauren Kilbride

Lauren graduated from Nottingham Trent University with a degree in Law (with Placement Year) in 2019. Lauren is currently finishing her LLM Legal Practice Course part-time and is currently a first-year trainee solicitor at Rotheras Solicitors.

There is big competition nowadays for a career in law. What the Centre offers to students at Nottingham Law School ('NLS') offers the valuable and unique practical experience that so many law firms look for in applicants for legal positions and training contracts.

I was fortunate to be involved with the Legal Advice Centre ('the Centre') from my first year as an undergraduate, by being selected for the Miscarriage of Justice Project. Following that first experience, I undertook my year-long legal placement at the Centre in 2017-18 as part of my degree, and this placement year was instrumental to my successes in future work experience and gaining my training contract.

Undertaking my placement year at the Centre allowed me to get involved in a number of areas of law by researching client scenarios, drafting documents and advising on matters in Intellectual Property, Family, Commercial, Landlord and Tenant and Social Security. I also became a Free Representation Unit representative in the Social Security Tribunal in my time at the Centre, which, also allowed me to have my own case files, draft submissions and represent clients in the Social Security Tribunal by advocating their case.

The staff at the Centre are an incredible support to you in your time there. They will always encourage and support you in your practical experience at the Centre, whichever project you choose to get involved with. Their extensive knowledges in their specialist areas allowed you to develop your studies and apply them to real world clients with their help.

I cannot recommend volunteering in the Legal Advice Centre enough, the skills I developed professionally and personally throughout my time at the Legal Advice Centre allowed me to push myself and successfully undertake other roles next to my studies including Vice Chair of the Student Pro Bono Committee and Vice President of NLS Law Society. I will always be thankful to the Legal Advice Centre for putting me in a great stead for a career in law as a solicitor, the experiences offered are second to none.

My work in the Legal Advice Centre provided me with the fundamentals for life in legal practice. I volunteered in the Centre from the first year of my LLB, advising on numerous cases throughout my time there. In the final year of my LLB, I completed my Free Representation Unit training and became a social security FRU Representative. I also became a member of the Student Pro-Bono Committee.

The Centre helped me to improve my soft skills such as communication

and teamwork, in addition to legal-specific skills such as letter writing, drafting, interviewing, research and attention to detail – all of which are key pillars in any future lawyer. This increased my confidence to approach legal issues and allowed me to use the theory learned during my studies in a practical environment. These skills not only put me in good stead for the courses I was studying, but also helped greatly with employability at the outset of my legal career.

The Centre's employees were both knowledgeable and supportive throughout my work there. I would recommend all Nottingham Law School students to volunteer with the excellent opportunities available at the Centre.

Raisah Rafiq



Raisah graduated from The University of Derby (LLB Law) with a first class honours and continued her legal education at Nottingham Law School completing the LPC/LLM, achieving a Pass with Commendation.

Student Volunteer (October 2018 – December 2018)

My work with the Legal Advice Centre ("Centre") started in a voluntary capacity whilst I undertook my studies of the LPC. My time spent as a caseworker in the Business and Enterprise Law Service was instrumental to my understanding of law in practice and commercial realities in a legal context. I gained direct experience by way of working on a case matter from start to finish, this included; client interviewing,

legal research, legal writing and production of legal documentation, all vital skills required to progress in the legal industry. My overall experience with the Centre was positive and incredibly beneficial to my professional development. I highly recommend students of Nottingham Law School to volunteer their time to the Centre and build on their commercial awareness of law in practice.

Graduate Intern (Legal Assistant) (August 2020 – September 2020)

After completion of my legal studies I was fortunate enough to work with the Legal Advice Centre in a greater capacity. This role entailed supporting the administration of the Centre alongside assisting the supervising lawyers working within the Centre. This role offered me with a greater insight into all of the legal areas covered by the Centre and how they operate. I assisted on a number of matters across the different sectors and was able to build on my existing legal knowledge.

In addition to refining my legal research and writing skills, this experience provided me with a greater comprehension of key performance indicators as I assisted in the compilation and

maintenance of new enquiries data. An understanding of client enquiries, and retention, is a quality that is expected and well sought out within numerous law firms. Beyond legal professional development and putting into practice the skills gained on the LPC, I was able to appreciate the value of client care and see first-hand the dedication the Centre placed on ensuring effective assistance of legal care for their clients. This was most paramount with the Centres vulnerable clients, for whom equal access to justice was emphasised.

Of most value was the profound sense of professional fulfilment I discovered within this role. Not only was this role instrumental in my professional legal development, and offered a greater understanding of my career interest in business law, it offered a greater sense of humanitarian purpose by way of pro bono work. The work carried out by the Centre is extremely vital to the community of Nottingham, and the opportunity to work alongside an excellent team who deliver an exceptional service to their clients is one of the many reasons why I recommend working with the Centre.

Of most value was the profound sense of professional fulfilment I discovered within this role. Not only was this role instrumental in my professional legal development, and offered a greater understanding of my career interest in business law, it offered a greater sense of humanitarian purpose by way of pro bono work.

Our team



First column, top to bottom:

Jenny Chapman (NLS Executive Dean and LAC Compliance Officer for Legal Practice), Laura Pinkney (Head of LAC), Ashley Fredericks (Business and Enterprise Solicitor), Mathew Game (Employment Solicitor), Katie Smith (Family Solicitor), Emma McGowan (Welfare Benefits and Housing Legal Caseworker), Callum Scott (Legal Caseworker)

Second column (top to bottom):

Jack Stuart (Paralegal), Jane Jarman (NLS Professor, Solicitor and LAC training principal), Peter Vaughan (Trademark Attorney), Carlota Gonzalez Laynez (Practice Manager), Melissa Bailey (Administrator), George Greenfield (Legal Assistant), Matilda Kapala (Legal Assistant)

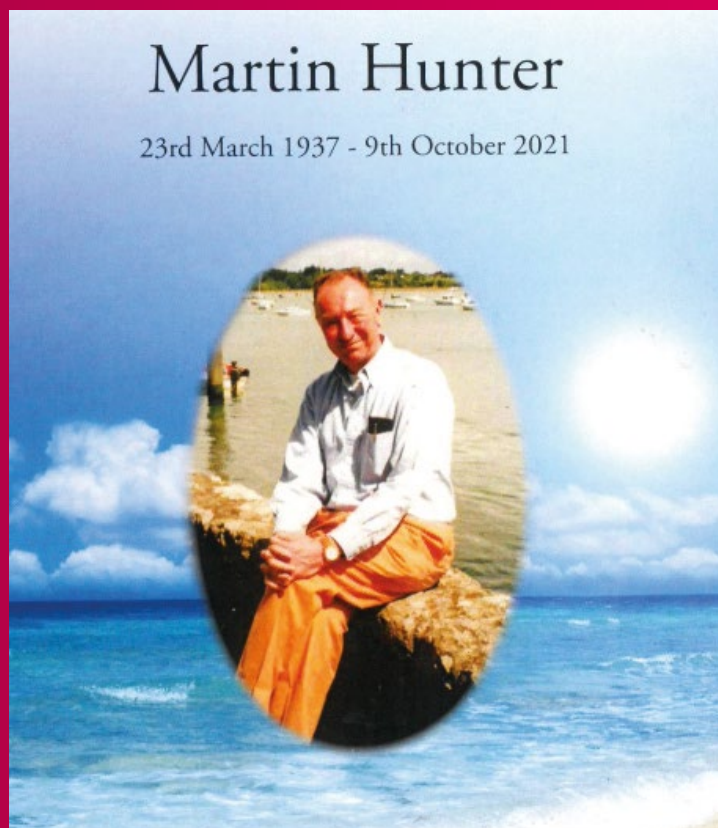
Support from the wider NLS and NTU community:

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

Our 2020/21 Student Pro Bono Committee and Lead Advisers:

Saadia Bacchus
Molly Brown
Elisa Cronier-Mackie
George Greenfield
Annete Kalombodza
Rakeem Kamara
Matilda Kapala
Shupikile Mastara
Simran Nijjer
Elinor Watts

This annual report is dedicated to the memory of



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