Welcome to the Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre

Our Legal Advice Centre embodies what our community, and social justice means to us as a Department. It was a moment of great pride for the Law Department when we won a national award for the best contribution to pro bono by a law school at the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards earlier this year at the House of Commons.

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers, partners, students and clients who helped make this possible. The Legal Advice Centre has gone from strength to strength this year hosting its first alumni event, creating an external advisory board, and being recognised through two Queen Mary awards; one in respect of its teaching work and another as a leader in the field of public engagement. We look forward to moving into the next academic year and welcoming a new cohort of students to work in the field of pro bono and public legal education”.

Penny Green
Head of Law Department

This year the clinic received national recognition, winning the award for Best Contribution by a Law School in the Law Works and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards.

We started two new clinics for 1-2-1 client advice, on Lasting Power of Attorney (The CHOICE Project) and providing Special Educational Needs advice, and saw a big increase in our community projects. These projects included the first advocacy project undertaken by Queen Mary Undergraduate Students in conjunction with the charity Zacchaeus 2000 (Z2K). The student team have already successfully won £52,000 worth of backdated benefits for clients in the Social Security Tribunal. A new LAC run optional module for students; Street Law, was also introduced to the LLB curriculum.

As we prepare for the upcoming academic year we look forward to welcoming a new wave of students, as well as undertaking a clinical exchange with the Hugh Wooding Law School in Trinidad and Tobago. Most importantly, we anticipate reaching the milestone of advising out 3000th client!
Statistics

| Total Number of Client Appointments this year | 354 |
| Total number of client appointments at the Legal Advice Centre since 2006 | 2873 |
| Social Welfare Benefits Secured | 51,891.20 |

**Client Postcodes:**

- East London: 42%
- South London: 16%
- North London: 19%
- West London: 6%
- Outside of London: 17%

**Student Opportunities:**

- The blog Project
- I am You
- SPITE for schools
- Support team
- First year note takers
- Extra curricular student advisers - 101
- Freedom Law Clinic - 60
- Z2K Collaboration - 8
- Street Law Module - 6
- The Practice of Law in a Clinical Environment (undergraduate module) - 20
Achievements

Queen Mary Law School were delighted to win the best contribution to pro bono by a law school at the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards this year.

The ceremony was led by Sir Robin Knowles and the Solicitor General. A special thank you to all our volunteer lawyers, students and clients.

The Legal Advice Centre were the Universities nomination for the 2019 Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence this year. Even though we were not a winner, we were absolutely delighted to be selected by the Principal and President Prof. Colin Bailey to represent Queen Mary.

The Centre was also recognised for its outstanding contribution to teaching, winning a Principles Prize at the Queen Mary Teaching and Excellence Awards.

Queen Mary has a long history of public engagement dating back to our origins as the People’s Palace in 1887. The Centre was therefore delighted to win the Richard Garriott Award at the Queen Mary Public Engagement Awards 2019.

“This service was provided on a pro bono basis and without such I would not have had the means or the confidence to approach a fee-charging employment practice.”

LAC Client

2821 CLIENTS SO FAR
#LACALUMNI19
We were also delighted to start two new community projects this year:

- **I am You** project is a ground breaking public legal education project which sees Queen Mary undergraduate students go into a local primary school to deliver a Street Law programme. They work with 10 and 11 year olds to talk about diversity, inclusion and celebrating difference, using fun and interactive teaching techniques to convey the principles of the Equality Act. [http://www.lac.qmul.ac.uk/community-projects/i-am-u/](http://www.lac.qmul.ac.uk/community-projects/i-am-u/).

- **Z2K** collaboration with Z2K enables undergraduate law students to attend social welfare tribunals and represent clients. We are expanding this work from next year to include a drop in clinic for clients to receive assistance completing ESA and PIP application forms, and to fix appointments in order to request a Mandatory Reconsideration where clients have been refused these benefits - [http://www.lac.qmul.ac.uk/community-projects/z2k/](http://www.lac.qmul.ac.uk/community-projects/z2k/).

In 2018-19 the LAC launched two new projects:

- The **CHOICE Project** offers free legal advice to clients on matters relating to lasting power of attorney and deputies. This is in addition to our long standing Wills and Probate advice service.

- The **Special Education Needs and Exclusions Project** provides families and/or carers with advice on their children’s Special Educational Needs (SEN). This ranges from advice on appeals, SEN school support and issues relating to funding or travel. The LAC is very grateful to all the new student volunteers who have worked on these projects over the last year.

If you are a local primary school who would like to discuss being a part of this project, do get in touch at lac@qmul.ac.uk.
News

Other new activities in 2019 included

Our first year students took the opportunity to work with the Law Department team and produce accessible blogs on current legal news issues. Do take a look on our website – http://www.lac.qmul.ac.uk/community-projects/our-legal-blog/

A team from the Legal Advice Centre proudly joined with our friends from the North Kensington Law Centre to act as Legal Observers at the Notting Hill Carnival. There was an order in place under s. 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 meaning that usual stop and search criteria did not need to be applied. The LAC team watched and filmed police undertaking stop and searches. The footage was then made available to those who had been stopped as well as feeding into a wider strategy plan for event organisers about policing and safety at the carnival.
Student Engagement

"Every time I help a client in a case, I feel incentivised knowing the advice letter will assist them making the right decision to improve their situations."

**LAC student**

Dominie Patel won this year’s Queen Mary Plea in Mitigation Competition, kindly judged by HHJ Freeland QC and HHJ Baucher.

Zara Mahmood, an LAC student adviser, was chosen to speak at the Queen Mary 2030 Strategy Launch held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the spring. She talked passionately about the opportunities the LAC had given her and about the work that she, and the rest of the student team, had done in local schools with the I am You project.

The LAC held its first alumni event in May. It allowed us to recognise, through the award of an LAC fellowships, the outstanding contribution of William Wilson, Vitoria Nabas and Philip Ogden in the setting up and continued work of the Legal Advice Centre.

**Former Queen Mary Professor of Geography, Philip, and former head of the QM School of Law, William, both played crucial roles in paving the way for the establishment of the LAC. Vitoria received her fellowship in recognition of having provided a decade of supervision and support to student legal advisors in the area of immigration.**

It also provided a great opportunity to re-engage with our fantastic alumni as well as thanking our current crop of student advisers. We hope that the event will continue to grow in the years ahead.

Our Centre and Students proudly took part in the most successful ever Great Legal Walk and the Great Legal Bake this year, which raises valuable funds for the London Legal Support Trust. Thank you to everyone who walked, baked and ate!

**I enjoyed learning about how the law works in practice. Studying law at university and actually applying it in practice is very different, and without the LAC I maybe would not have learned this until I graduated. The LAC provides unique opportunities to students to develop skills that cannot be learned in lecture halls.**

**James Lowe**

**LAC student**

"I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone involved in helping me with this legal advice. Feeling shocked, distressed and confused, the team were extremely understanding and helpful in every way. When I wasn’t sure I understood something they made sure to go through everything until I understood clearly. They made me feel comfortable and at ease with the tricky situation I was in."

**LAC Client**
The Queen Mary Festival of Communities welcomed hundreds of local families to showcase the work we do. The Legal Advice Centre was delighted to take part.

On day one of the festival the team were situated in Stepney Green Park. Armed with canvassing materials and games we engaged with the members of the local community, promoting our Legal Advice Centre, raising awareness about image-based sexual abuse, and demonstrating how we teach the principles of the Equality Act 2010 in local primary schools. On day two of the festival, the team engaged children and adults alike to create a mural that represents the community. All attendees were invited to make a handprint and write their name and age, symbolising that we are all different but all belong to one community, Tower Hamlets.

Thank You

HHJ Simon Freeland QC  
HHJ Heather Baucher  
Ahmed Razzaq  
Akshay Sevak  
Prof. Alan Dignan  
Alan Schweber  
Alex Beresford  
Alex Bromley-Martin  
Alex Sussman  
Alexander Laing  
Alexander Whiston-Dew  
Alexandra Hague  
Alice Boydell  
Amelia Evans  
Ami Patterson  
Amy Palmer  
Anarkali Musgrave  
Anna Metadier  
Anna Walsh  
Anne Spratling  
Anne-Marie Trachmann  
Becca Hird  
Becca Naylor  
Brooke Glover  
Caroline Croft  
Catherine Nicholes  
Catriona Casha  
Charley Guile  
Chenelle Olaiya  
Chloe O’Brien  
Chris Breaks  
Chris Dykes  
Chris Eykel  
Chris Parrott  
Christina Chambers  
Christopher James  
Christopher Poole  
Chrystel Marinich  
Claire Don  
Connor Shevlin  
Dan Bryan  
Dan Mutton  
Daryl Cue  
David Josiah Lake  
David Nezri  
Diane Sechi  
Dinab Nanyakkara  
Dirghayu Patel  
Dominic Bullen  
Dominic Tyler  
Ed Adase  
Edel Eustace  
Elissa Da Costa  
Waldman  
Elsa Glauert  
Emily Balment  
Emily Daniels  
Emily Elliott  
Emily Elvin Poole  
Emily Greig  
Emily McMahan  
Emma Bell  
Emma Rehal-Wilde  
Farhan Nathwani  
Fiona Bareli  
Gautam Lamba  
Giles Bain  
Gregg Burrough  
Hannah Barton  
Hannah Bignell  
Hannah Kemp  
Hannah Redwood  
Harkiran Hothi  
Harry Eccles-Williams  
Harun Matin  
Hayley Davies  
Heidi Paget Brown  
Helen Dawson  
Humam Al-Jibouri  
Hunter Thomson  
Jack Palmer-Coole  
Jade Fawcett  
James Stammers