



University of Essex

Introduction to the Essex Law Clinic

Volunteer Hub Launch
December 2019



Overview

■ **Our Objectives**

- work towards social justice in general and enhance access to justice to those most in need
- instil in students the desire, values and skills to do so
- work closely with the community to identify and meet unmet legal need

■ **Our Activities**

- Provide free legal advice and limited forms of representation under supervision of staff (case work)
- Engage in wide range of non-client facing activities which enhance social justice such as public legal education, law reform and investigating miscarriages of justice (project work)

■ **Our People**

- Five academic members of staff and one administrator
- Over 200 current student volunteer members
 - c. 100 silver members (caseworkers and projects)
 - c. 110 bronze members (projects only)



Our model

- **Funded by the School of Law to:**
 - provide a practical educational experience for students, and
 - to serve the community's unmet legal need
- **Extra-curricular**
 - Student volunteers
 - Outside their legal studies
 - Introduction to social welfare issues and the culture of pro bono
- **Academic module**
 - Credit bearing module
 - In-depth training in casework skills and ethics
- **Student involvement in management**
 - Student directors
 - Firm managers
 - Project leaders
 - Subject coordinators

Case work

- ❑ **Free but not currently means tested**
- ❑ **Initial advice only**
 - ❑ Student-led
 - ❑ Supervised
 - ❑ Limited 'next-steps work', under development
- ❑ **On campus clinic (weekly, by appointment)**
- ❑ **Outreach clinics**
 - ❑ Jaywick Law Clinic
 - ❑ Colchester outreaches – Citizens Advice / Beacon House
 - ❑ Tendring Partnership (across schools in the Tendring district)
 - ❑ Outhouse East – LGBT+ issues in Colchester
 - ❑ Southend Social Work Hub (virtually and in collaboration with Social Work)
- ❑ **Partner organisations for priority referrals, eg**
 - ❑ Refugee Action
 - ❑ CARA
 - ❑ Metro
 - ❑ Beacon House



Case work

Areas of law

- Family law
- Housing (combined with Family = 70%)
- Employment law
- Consumer
- Wills
- Discrimination
- Welfare Benefits
- LGBT+

Excluded areas:

- Immigration
- Debt
- Criminal Law

Last year took on 131 cases (compared to 62 previous year – 111% increase)

Provided next steps in an increasing number of cases

- Family Law applications
- Advocacy with the council
- Ombudsman applications

Students can also shadow lawyers at Suffolk Law Centre, Refugee Action and on clinic pro bono nights



Projects

Housing Law Unit

- Public legal education
- Housing Law Resources project
- Beacon House

Family Law Unit

- Family Law Handbook

LGBT+ Unit

- HIV & the Law
- LGBT+ Rights

Social law and Policy Unit

- Southend Hub

Migrant and Refugee Unit

- Red Cross NPRF Casework
- Refugee Action casework support

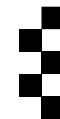
Law Clinic Projects

- Bitesize Law Radio Project
- Consumer Credit
- Law Reform
- Legal Aid/Access to Justice
- Miscarriages of Justice
- “Record Your Wishes”
- Streetlaw in Schools
- Welfare Benefits
- Women’s project



Future Direction

- **Law Clinic destined to grow in volunteer numbers**
 - Growing number of law students
 - Increased need for practical experience / changes to legal training – SQE
- **Increased community need for legal help**
 - Reduction in legal aid scope and provision
 - Reduction in free initial advice services
- **Keen to learn from other organisations**
 - Identifying need / gaps in provision
 - Working together to provide holistic service





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Thank you

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