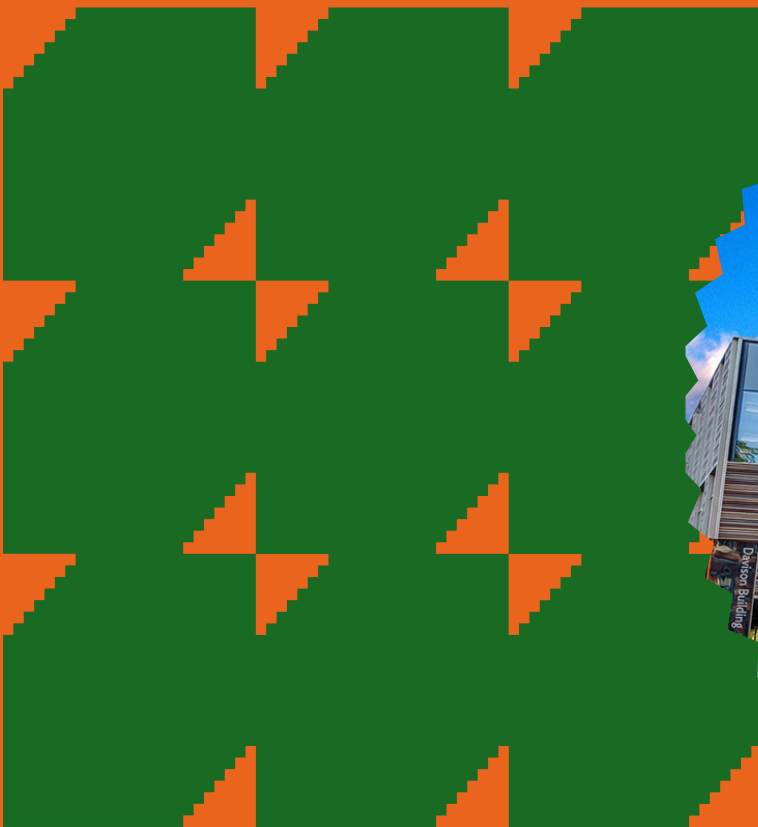


The Legal Advice Centre Gazette



Academic Year 2025/2026





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Director's Foreword

Welcome to the 2025-2026 Royal Holloway Legal Advice Centre Gazette and Annual Report. This publication reflects on another successful year for the Centre, highlighting the achievements of our students, the support of our partners and the impact of our work in advancing legal education, community engagement and access to justice.

At the heart of the Legal Advice Centre is a simple yet powerful mission: to improve access to justice by providing free legal advice to those who might otherwise be unable to afford it, while enabling students to develop their skills through practical legal experience. Every client interview, piece of legal research, advice letter and community presentation offers students the opportunity to apply their academic learning in a practical setting. In doing so, they develop not only the legal knowledge, confidence and practical skills needed for their future careers, but also the empathy, professionalism and ethical awareness that underpin excellent legal practice.

This year, our Legal Advice Clinic opened an impressive 86 cases, supporting clients across a wide range of legal issues, including consumer disputes, contract law, landlord and tenant matters, family law, personal injury, and wills and probate. Students were given the opportunity to work on cases from beginning to end, undertaking conflict checks, conducting client interviews, preparing attendance notes, carrying out legal research, drafting advice letters and referral briefs, and ultimately bringing matters to a close. These experiences provide an invaluable insight into the realities and responsibilities of professional legal practice.

Beyond the clinic, our students have continued to make a meaningful contribution to the wider community. Through our StreetLaw programme, community legal education initiatives and widening participation activities, they have helped individuals and community groups better understand their rights and responsibilities. These initiatives demonstrate that legal education is not only about preparing future lawyers but also about empowering communities and promoting greater access to justice.

Another highlight of the year has been the success of our Moot Court Programme. For students aspiring to a career at the Bar, opportunities to develop advocacy skills before experienced legal professionals are invaluable. We were particularly privileged to welcome Her Honour Judge Anne Molyneux, formerly of the Central Criminal Court, the Old Bailey, who generously shared her expertise and provided detailed feedback on students' submissions and oral arguments. The experience challenged students to think critically, advocate persuasively and develop a deeper understanding of courtroom practice. Few law students have the opportunity to present legal arguments before a judge with such distinguished experience, making it a truly memorable and formative experience for those involved.

One of the greatest privileges of leading the Centre is witnessing the development of our students throughout the year. Many begin their journey understandably apprehensive about meeting clients or presenting to an audience. Over time, they grow into confident and capable professionals who demonstrate sound judgement, resilience and compassion. Their growth is one of the most rewarding aspects of the Centre's work and a testament to the transformative opportunities that clinical legal education can provide.

The impact of those experiences is best expressed by the students themselves. Throughout this Gazette, you will find reflective blogs and articles written by both current students and alumni. Through their own words, they share the challenges, achievements and lessons that have shaped their journeys. Together, their reflections provide an authentic insight into life at the Legal Advice Centre and illustrate how clinical legal education can transform confidence, broaden perspectives and shape future careers.

None of our achievements would be possible without the commitment and generosity of our supervising solicitors, academic colleagues, patrons, alumni, partner law firms and community organisations. Through their expertise, mentorship and support, our students benefit from exceptional learning opportunities while our clients receive advice delivered to the highest professional standards. I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who continues to support our work.

I am immensely proud of all that has been achieved this year, and I look forward to building on these achievements in the years ahead.

Thanh Pham

Director, Royal Holloway Legal Advice Centre

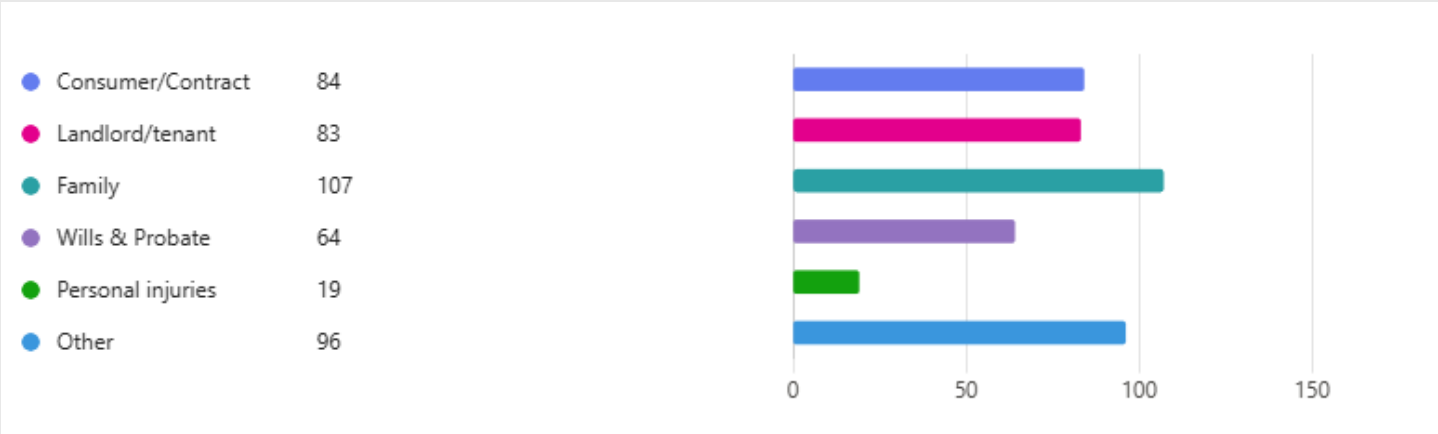




Key Statistics

Client Engagement

- 381 client enquiries were received via our online enquiry form during the academic year 2025/2026.



- Enquiries were also received through a range of other channels, including email, telephone voicemail, and referrals from partner organisations.

Casework

- 86 cases were opened and managed by the Centre, providing students with opportunities to develop their legal research, client interviewing, and case management skills under professional supervision.

Case Type	Cases	Percentage
Family	27	31.4%
Consumer Contract/Civil Litigation	25	29.1%
Landlord & Tenant	19	22.1%
Wills	13	15.1%

Personal Injuries	2	2.3%
Total	86	100%

Number of cases referred to partner law firms:

- CirceLaw: 7
- Duncan Lewis: 2
- Hodge Jones and Allen: 2

Student Applications

The Legal Advice Centre received a total of **411 applications** from students seeking to participate in its programmes during the academic year, demonstrating the continued popularity of the Centre.

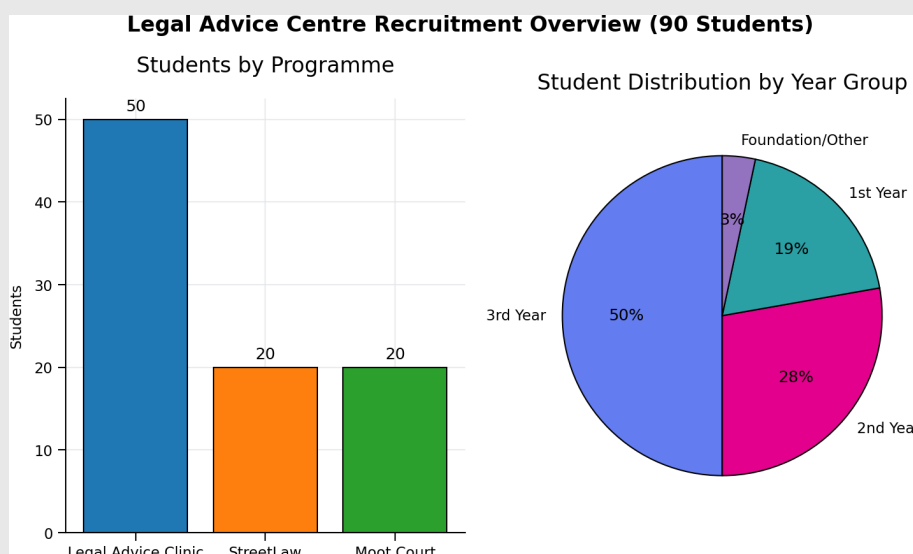
Applications were received from students across all stages of study:

- **Foundation Year:** 10 applications (2%)
- **First Year:** 156 applications (38%)
- **Second Year:** 127 applications (31%)
- **Third Year:** 114 applications (28%)
- **Other:** 4 applications (1%)

Total Applications received: 411

Students Accepted

A total of **90 students** secured places across the Legal Advice Centre's programmes.



Professional Development Opportunities

- Three students secured work experience placements with one of our partner law firms, gaining invaluable insight into legal practice and enhancing their employability.
- One student successfully secured a paid full-time role with a partner law firm.

Student Support and Supervision

- **30 one-to-one supervision sessions** were delivered by the Director to support Student Advisors in their work on client matters and to enhance their professional development.

Client feedback



The following client testimonials offer valuable insight into the impact of the Legal Advice Clinic throughout the academic year. They showcase the Centre's commitment to delivering accessible legal support and helping clients gain clarity, confidence, and practical solutions during times of uncertainty.

"I would also like to thank you for being so supportive and helpful. It is very gratifying to be heard and taken seriously, especially when such a situation is unfolding."

Client R.B

"I am truly grateful to your entire team for taking the time to review my complaint and for the considered advice shared. Your assistance has been invaluable, and I deeply appreciate your collective efforts."

Client E.O

"I felt heard and listened to. I was also deeply impressed by the level of support and knowledge demonstrated by the students. They were professional, empathetic and sincere in their desire to help me and they no doubt bring this energy to every client they meet with. This service is a lifeline to students who need help and feel alone and unable to manage the complexities of these kinds of situations. I would recommend this service to any and everyone."

Client R.B

"Thank you very much for your thoughtful advice. I found it extremely helpful, particularly as it was so clear and supportive to someone without extensive knowledge and resources in legal matters. I

appreciate the time and care you put into my case.”

Client M.S

“I had a great experience with Royal Holloway's Legal Advice Centre. The students were knowledgeable, attentive and asked all the right questions, taking time to understand my situation, while the supervising solicitor was reassuring and highly professional. I left feeling informed and much more confident about how to move forward.”

Client G.A

“Thank you for your recent advice letter. The guidance provided has been very helpful in clarifying possible next steps. I appreciate your time and assistance.”

Client R.C

“Just wanted to say a huge thank you to you all for putting together the advice letter. It has been super helpful and given me confidence in pursuing my claim.”

Client C.H

“We want to thank you for your availability and for the thorough advice letter you shared with us. We really appreciated the clear information; it will serve as a guide as we navigate this situation.”

Client G.D

Legal Advice Clinic

Student Reflections and Experiences

Aline

Why I applied to the LAC:

I applied to the LAC because I wanted practical experience that lectures and seminars just can't give you. Mainly, I wanted to get better at communicating. Talking to an actual person about their actual problem is a completely different skill from writing an essay or answering a problem question, and I wanted to test that side of myself before starting a Master's and, eventually, going into practice.

Client Interviewing Skills:

Interviewing real clients taught me that researching the law itself is usually the easier part to talk about. I think the harder part is getting someone comfortable enough to actually tell you what's going on and help. I learned to ask open questions and always reassure them that their issue is valid and that we understand their problem can feel emotional. I noticed that when giving clients room to explain things in their own words first, they felt more relaxed, and I ended up with much more useful information than if I'd just fired through a list of questions.

Active Listening: I listened well during sessions and managed to avoid planning the next question while the client was still talking. That's usually when I catch the small details that turn out to matter. Where I could've done better was in earlier sessions, when I was more focused on getting through a mental checklist of questions and occasionally missed some information they were telling me because I was already thinking about what to ask next.

Working With Real Clients:

I believe that working with real clients changed how I understand legal practice. Problem questions in the course are self-contained, but real clients bring everything in at once. Sometimes the facts are blurry, the situation is confusing, and it doesn't fit neatly into any one specific area of law. It taught me that good legal practice isn't just about knowing the law. It's about untangling someone's situation, working out what's actually relevant, and explaining it back in a way that makes sense to them.

Managing Client Emotions:

When clients were distressed or overwhelmed, I tried to stay calm myself, since I noticed that it set the tone for the whole session. I always acknowledged how they were feeling and made sure they knew we were taking their issue seriously.

Legal Research Skills:

Westlaw and my course books were my main starting points, and I cross-checked with other sources

to make sure I actually understood the area before relying on a case or statute. What worked well was keeping a clear research trail so I could justify every point I made. What I'd improve next time is being more efficient at the start. I think I read too broadly before narrowing in on what was actually relevant, when I could've tightened my search terms much sooner.

Team Collaboration:

In my group of four, I naturally became the note taker, making sure we had an accurate record of what clients told us to refer back to later. That said, I didn't stick purely to that role. Even in my first session, when I was technically meant to be observing, I ended up speaking and contributing to the interview, which showed me I was more comfortable taking an active part than I'd expected.

Supervision Experience:

My supervisor made a real difference to how I worked. Her feedback pushed me to be more organised, to structure my notes and research more clearly, and to be more deliberate in how I communicated, both with clients and when explaining things back to the team. The sessions were always very enjoyable, and I'll forever be grateful for this opportunity.

Professional Communication:

I noticed I developed a different communication style depending on who I was talking to. I tended to be more reassuring with clients, more precise with supervisors, and more open and collaborative with peers. Learning to adjust tone and language for each audience was one of the most practical things I've taken from the LAC.

Ethical Awareness:

I didn't personally run into any ethical issues during my time at the LAC, but the training on confidentiality and conduct kept me aware of what to watch for, so I'm confident I'd know how to handle anything properly if it came up.

Use of Case Management Systems:

Using the LAC email account, MID numbers, and SharePoint made confidentiality feel real rather than just a rule we knew we had to follow. Referring to clients by MID number instead of name, and knowing exactly which systems I could and couldn't discuss client information on, made me much more conscious of professionalism in everything I wrote up.

Handling Uncertainty:

When I wasn't sure of an answer, I told the client honestly that we'd look into it and come back to them, rather than guessing. I'd explain that it would be addressed properly in the follow-up letter once we'd completed our research. That meant I could go away, check the law properly, and respond with something accurate rather than rushed.

Confidence and Growth:

My confidence has grown a lot since joining the Centre. At the start, some sessions felt daunting and

intimidating, mostly because there was so much to keep track of and because it was a real person. However, after some time, they became very manageable and enjoyable.

Impact on Future Career:

The LAC showed me that I genuinely love client interviewing. It's the part of legal practice I find most engaging by far. It's also given me the chance to network and learn from people already working in the field, which has shaped how I think about my Master's and the direction I want my career to take.

Your Proudest Moment:

My proudest moment was giving my first introduction on my own. It sounds small, but stepping into that role independently was a real turning point for my confidence, and it made me realise how much I'd actually developed since starting.

Advice for Future Student Advisors:

I'd tell next year's cohort not to hold back, even early on. Speak up in sessions when you can, ask questions in supervision, don't just sit back and observe when you could be getting involved. The more you engage from the start, the faster your confidence and skills will grow.

Libby

My name is Libby and I joined the LAC as a third-year LLB law student after seeing Thanks email advertising the opportunity. I had been unsuccessful in several other attempts to gain work experience and saw this as my last opportunity as a final year student to gain meaningful work experience. I was so excited when I discovered I had been offered the position and was eager to get going, I didn't realise then quite how meaningful it would be.

As a student advisor I learned the process involved in client meetings, it has boosted my employability greatly as I have gained many relevant skills. I am now well versed in the preparation before client meetings, including reading the clients documents and completing conflict of interest checks. Post meeting procedures meant that I also learned how to complete post-interview letters, advice letters and referral forms. My

familiarity with these forms will put me above applicants who do not have such valuable knowledge. I hope to go into family law when I am qualified, this is something that working with the LAC cemented for me. I dealt with a variety of matters from probate to property, but I was lucky enough to primarily deal with family law matters. Being able to experience what it will be like to work with family law clients made me confident in my decision. It gave me a great sense of fulfillment to be able to help those in need. Clients are human, law textbooks cannot teach you the empathy and patience, opportunities like this are the most valuable thing a law student could be offered.

The best part about my experience was the opportunities I had to make mistakes and try again, after a couple of failed attempts and some helpful advice from a fellow advisor, I was able to lead interviews and mastered the introduction section of the client interview. Thanh has perfected the art of recruiting the most patient and understanding advisors, without my colleagues support I would have felt out of my depth. The fact that you are all in it together, thrown in at the deep end, helps you to quickly adapt to the situation and act professionally. You quickly gain confidence with the clients and learn how to vary the way you communicate based on each person. Most clients do not understand the complexity of legal language, so you must change the way you speak about legal concepts to ensure you get the right information off clients. This is a skill you could not learn from anywhere other than practical experience like working with the LAC.

I am a bit of a boring student; I was never really interested in societies or going to university events, but volunteering with the LAC made me feel closer to the university. It made me feel a lot closer to the legal profession, as if it was something I could really see myself going into, rather than it just being an option. If any student is in a similar situation or is just generally unsure about joining the LAC or what they may want to do after graduating, I would have to argue the LAC is the best community you could join. You are given the opportunity to work with such a variety of matters that you could find something you really love.

Prior to working with the LAC, I could count the number of interviews or meetings I had had on one hand. After the LAC that number has over doubled, I am significantly more confident in online meetings and speaking with strangers and professionals in an employable way. It is important that if you are chosen to be a student advisor that you absolutely seize the opportunity for all it can give you. Make time in your schedule to complete every aspect of a case, write every advice letter, make good use of the precedents given to you and jump at every chance to step in for advisors who have had to pull out of meetings. Treat it like a job with consequences if you don't complete the work. You won't find experience as convenient, helpful or inviting as working with the LAC, it gives you a chance to make mistakes, to rely on others and to gain insights without being removed from the SRA register.

Applying to work with the Legal Advice Centre is the best decision I have ever made, as a student and as a lawyer.

Hayden

Introduction – Why I Applied and Training

I initially applied to the Royal Holloway Legal Advice Centre ('LAC' henceforth) – as many do - hoping to gain work experience and an insight into the world of legal practice. I had heard from course mates that the position would be appealing to employers also and so going into my final year of study I thought this would be especially important. However, I can say with certainty that the experience I received was far beyond my expectations, both in terms of what I gained, but also what I could give.

Initial training covered a range of practice areas, which were taught in online classes given by practicing professionals. Most importantly however, since there was an understanding that we would do the majority of our learning on the job, we also engaged in skills sessions which taught us how to find the information we would need. These covered the use of tools like Lexis Professional and the LAC's case management system. In this sense, there is a requirement of some independence that comes with working at the LAC, that includes finding information and completing pre- and post-interview tasks, however this should not be confused with there being a lack of support available. Both supervisors Thanh and Alex are immensely attentive and always happy to provide feedback and support whenever needed.

Working With Clients and the Skills I Have Developed

Learning on the job like this is especially important in a field such as law, and some skills like working with clients are best learnt under these conditions. Working with real clients was one of the greatest pleasures of working at the LAC, but also one of its greatest challenges, and I think this is reflective of legal practice generally. On many occasions clients often presented an issue to be one thing, however upon the interviewing stage it turned out to be another. This is not to say that the clients are to blame, but it is a reality of working with people who are not versed in the profession. As such, one skill I developed was to read between the lines of what clients told me, listen attentively to the facts, and draw my own assessments rather than taking theirs at face value.

As well as drawing information, I learnt through practice to remember clients are more than the legal puzzles presented in problem scenarios during our degrees'. Given my limited legal experience before the LAC, I found myself in the beginning taking the 'academic', analytical approach towards clients, which on reflection, I feel might have come over as cold or unempathetic. In time, and through working with a vast array of clients (from entrepreneurs to those in care), I learnt to adapt my approach to the needs of the individual and be mindful of the gravity our case may have in their lives.

My biggest mistake however, can be attributed to a simple miscommunication with a client. Here, despite using technically accurate terminology, during interviewing the client took one of my questions as an accusation of tax evasion and acted less than pleased accordingly. I apologized for any miscommunications and looking back the situation is more funny than embarrassing; however I have also learnt an unforgettable lesson in the importance of clear communication and reacting well to confrontation.

Regardless, I am glad to have made all of these mistakes as I believe they have helped me to develop strong interviewing, and communication skills more generally, which will be transferable regardless of my career choice.

Any issues I had were also often outshone by the privilege it was to work with clients while at the LAC. My proudest moment working here was through helping a new family navigate a tenancy dispute where they had been mis-sold a property. While this was in essence merely a contract misrepresentation claim, for these clients it was whether their young children had the chance to play outside, and whether they could afford to move somewhere that offered this. After providing advice we received a kind email from the client telling us how helpful we were, and this made all the hard work worthwhile.

Aside from those mentioned, working at the LAC also provides opportunities to develop teamworking, professional writing and organisational skills. Given the volume of advice letters I have now written I would assume I am ahead of most other graduates in this area. Furthermore, the work I have done and received feedback on while at the LAC can be used as a guideline and precedent when entering legal practice.

Looking forward – the Impact On My Future and Advice for Future Advisors

The impact working at the LAC has had on my future is undoubtedly huge. Despite only working here for a year I have gained exposure to legal practice in a variety of practice areas. I have had opportunities and obtained skills I otherwise wouldn't have at University, and had some fun along the way too. As mentioned in the introduction, I think my time here will also pay dividends regarding my career prospects, which is an added bonus. I am very glad to have worked at the LAC and would wholly recommend it.

For those considering whether to apply to the LAC this year my advice would be to go for it. For my two years prior to joining, I had heard of the LAC but was concerned about whether I was prepared or knowledgeable enough. The truth was however that I wasn't any more or less ready by 3rd year than I

was in my first. As mentioned, the training is comprehensive and the team are very supportive and will ensure you feel comfortable.

For those set on taking part, I would advise you to make the most of it. It is an invaluable opportunity that not everyone has, and so I encourage you to take as many clients as you are able, and to enjoy the journey.

Stephane

1. Personal Introduction

My name is Stephane, and I am a third-year Law student. I chose to join the Legal Advice Clinic because I wanted to experience what it is like to apply legal knowledge in a real-world setting rather than only studying legal principles in lectures. I also wanted to develop practical skills such as interviewing clients, conducting legal research, and drafting advice while contributing to a service that helps people who may not otherwise have access to legal assistance.

2. Your Clinic Experience

The clients I worked with presented a range of civil legal issues, requiring us to identify the relevant areas of law before researching and preparing advice under the supervision of qualified solicitors.

One of the most memorable aspects of the Clinic was meeting real clients for the first time. Unlike hypothetical university scenarios, the clients' situations had genuine consequences, which made me appreciate the importance of accuracy, professionalism, and empathy.

Working in a group was a valuable experience. Each member brought different strengths, whether in legal research, organisation, or drafting.

One of the main challenges was identifying the key legal issues from a large amount of information provided by clients. Initially, it was easy to become focused on unnecessary details. By working closely with my teammates and discussing the matter during supervision sessions, I learned how to isolate the legally relevant facts and structure our research more effectively.

The supervision sessions were particularly valuable. Our supervisors challenged our legal reasoning, highlighted issues we had overlooked, and encouraged us to justify our conclusions with authority. Their feedback improved both the quality of our legal analysis and my confidence in applying the law to practical situations.

If I were to participate again, I would be more proactive during client interviews by asking more targeted follow-up questions. I realised that obtaining complete and accurate information at the outset makes the later stages of research and drafting much more efficient.

3. Skills & Learning

The Clinic significantly strengthened my interviewing, legal research, drafting, teamwork, and communication skills. I became more confident in researching unfamiliar areas of law, analysing complex factual situations, and producing advice that was legally accurate while remaining understandable to someone without legal training.

Working with real clients fundamentally changed my understanding of legal practice. I realised that being a lawyer is not simply about knowing the law but about listening carefully, understanding clients' concerns, and providing practical solutions that meet their individual circumstances.

The Clinic also reinforced the importance of professional responsibility. I gained a greater appreciation of confidentiality, ethical decision-making, and recognising the limits of the advice we were able to provide. Maintaining professionalism throughout the process was essential to building client trust.

Perhaps most importantly, I learned how valuable clear and accessible legal communication is. Even the strongest legal analysis has limited value if the client cannot understand it. This experience taught me to avoid unnecessary legal jargon and explain legal concepts in plain English.

4. Impact & Professional Awareness

Although our role was limited to providing supervised legal advice, I believe our work made a meaningful difference by helping clients better understand their legal position and the options available to them.

The experience also highlighted the significant barriers many people face when trying to access justice. Financial constraints, limited legal knowledge, and the complexity of legal procedures often prevent individuals from obtaining the support they need.

Through the Clinic, I gained a greater appreciation of the social role lawyers play, not only in resolving disputes but also in improving access to justice within the community.

5. Personal Reflection & Advice

The aspect I enjoyed most was working on real legal problems and seeing how academic knowledge translates into practical advice. It was rewarding to know that our work could genuinely assist someone facing a difficult situation.

I would strongly encourage future students to join the Clinic. It offers a unique opportunity to develop practical legal skills, build confidence, and gain experience that employers highly value. Students should make the most of supervision sessions, ask questions, and actively contribute during client interviews.

The biggest lesson I will take away is that successful legal practice depends on much more than technical legal knowledge. Effective lawyers must also communicate clearly, work collaboratively, exercise sound professional judgment, and always keep the client's needs at the centre of their work.

Alex B

My name is Alexandra. I have currently finished my undergraduate degree in Law with French. After discovering the legal advice centre, I was determined to become a part of it as the chance to work with real clients and learn valuable skills seemed like a great opportunity for someone like me with a desire to become a solicitor. The types of legal issues I dealt with were of a variety, including a contract dispute, wills and probate matters and a commercial matter. In the matter concerning wills and probate, I was able to further my interest in the subject and realise that it is something I would like to pursue in my career, and for that I am so grateful for the opportunity to have experienced a solicitor/client type relationship in this regard. I found working in groups to be a very fun experience, meeting new people and learning the value of working together which proved to be essential where one person has missed out an important question or where someone falters due to nerves.

Certain challenges I found concerned the writing of the post-interview letter which was a new experience for me and difficult but overtime I learnt, with the help of the Legal Advice Team, how to write such a letter and feel confident in doing so. In this respect, I really valued the help of Thanh and Alex particularly, who always made us feel supported but also providing us with the opportunity to learn from our own mistakes and find our own voice.

If I was to take part in the clinic again, I would ensure that my organisation and ability to contribute was at a higher standard. Having only realised this opportunity existed in third year, I struggled to balance checking my emails, keeping up with academic reading and preparing for assessments. Upon reflection, I would improve my time management and also if known, taken part in the LAC in my second year or first year even where I may have had the opportunity to partake in more sessions when they were offered out.

This may be true, however I have learnt valuable skills also. The LAC is certainly responsible for an increase in my self-confidence and ability to communicate clearly and effectively. Perhaps the most significant value was learning how to present myself in client meetings, balancing the need for professionalism with empathy and clarity. Learning also how to communicate in different ways, understanding that one way of speaking or getting information across does not work for all and sometimes adjustment is needed.

I have really learnt the value of pro bono work in my time at the Legal Advice Centre, and its essential role in providing legal advice to those who would struggle to afford legal advice in its usual form. I am so grateful for this opportunity and would encourage law students with an interest in becoming a solicitor or even those who aren't certain to apply as the clinic can be an enlightening experience as to whether this career path is or is not for you.

Reanna

Royal Holloway Legal Advice Centre: Lessons beyond my degree -By Reanna

As a third-year law student, the Royal Holloway Legal Advice Centre has been one of the most rewarding parts of my degree, giving me hands-on experience with real client work ranging from divorce matters to landlord and contract disputes, to name a few.

Working with clients facing genuinely difficult circumstances taught me the importance of balancing empathy with careful, objective legal analysis. Over time, I became much more confident in conducting client interviews and identifying the relevant legal issues in a given situation. I also had the opportunity to learn from two dedicated solicitors, Thanh Pham and Alex Allan, as well as my peers, observing the varied approaches to legal issues, which has been valuable for my own development.

Beyond client interviews, I developed practical skills that lectures do not teach. I learned to draft post-interview and advice letters, structuring complex legal information in a way that was clear and accessible to each individual client. Getting the law right is one thing, but learning to present it in the right format, with the right language, for a real person in a difficult situation, is something you can only learn by doing.

I would strongly recommend any student considering a career in law to get involved in the Legal Advice Centre early in their degree and make full use of the opportunity. I wish I had done so sooner, as it is an experience that shapes both your skills and perspective in a way few other opportunities can.

My Honest Reflection on Volunteering at the Legal Advice Centre – So Hyun

I joined the Legal Advice Centre during the second year of my Law with International Relations degree. I chose to volunteer because I wanted to develop my legal skills, gain practical experience, and prepare myself for a future career in the legal profession.

Most of the clients I worked with had disputes involving their landlords. Having studied contract law in my first year, I was able to apply the legal principles I had learnt to real-life situations. Seeing how the law operates in practice helped me understand my studies on a much deeper level.



One experience, in particular, had a lasting impact on me.

During a client interview, I asked a question that I believed was relevant to the case. Afterwards, my supervisor, Thanh Pham, encouraged me to reflect on whether the question had actually been necessary. That conversation made me realise the importance of careful preparation, organisation, thorough research, and checking the facts before meeting a client. Without volunteering at the Legal Advice Centre and receiving Thanh's guidance, I would not have developed this level of self-reflection or understood how much thought goes into effect in client interviewing.

The biggest challenges I faced was researching the legal issues raised by clients and drafting advice that met the standard expected by our supervisors. Drafting legal advice requires precision and attention to detail, and although it was challenging, it was one of the most valuable skills I developed throughout my time at the clinic. If I were to volunteer again, I would spend even more time practising my legal drafting and making full use of the supervision sessions. I would actively seek as much feedback as possible because every piece of advice from my supervisor helped me improve. Thanh Pham was always constructive, identifying both my strengths and the areas where I could continue to develop.

The Legal Advice Centre taught me many valuable lessons, but the most important was the importance of time management. Although this may sound like common sense, unexpected situations can arise, such as a team member becoming ill, meaning you may need to step into a client meeting at short notice. Being organised, prepared, and able to adapt quickly is essential.

Working with real clients was initially intimidating, but it significantly improved my communication skills, professionalism, and ability to work effectively as part of a team during client interviews. Throughout my time at the clinic, confidentiality was consistently emphasised. We were taught never to discuss a client's case outside the appropriate setting and, when working together, to refer to clients by their case number rather than by name. I also learnt how to carry out conflict checks, something I had no experience of before joining the clinic but now recognise as an essential part of legal practice.

One of the most rewarding aspects of volunteering was seeing the positive impact the Legal Advice Centre had on clients. Legal advice is not always accessible because of the costs involved, so being able to provide free legal assistance to those facing difficult situations demonstrated the importance of improving access to justice. It also gave me a realistic insight into what life as a solicitor could be like. Beyond developing my legal knowledge, I learnt the importance of patience, empathy, active listening, and maintaining professional boundaries when supporting clients through challenging circumstances.

Overall, I believe anyone who volunteers at the Legal Advice Centre will gain invaluable experience. Regardless of any career you hope to pursue, the clinic develops essential skills including organisation, time management, legal research, drafting, client communication, professionalism, and teamwork skills that applies to many careers. With the support and guidance of experienced supervisors, volunteering at the Legal Advice Centre is an experience that I would highly recommend to any student who want to gain valuable experience.

Simmy

Why the LAC is more than just a Law Clinic

One of the things that makes the Legal Advice Centre (LAC) really valuable is that it's not solely about the legal work. While working on cases and developing practical legal skills is a big part of the role, there are also numerous wider benefits that come with volunteering. For me, one of the most valuable things was the support and guidance you get through one-to-one meetings with the Director Thanh Pham.

You can have a wide range of conversations in these sessions. I personally book meetings whenever I need advice on something 'law' specific – like module choices, thinking about career options, or when I feel a bit unsure about what my next steps should be. It's not always about specific LAC work or cases either, it's just about having space to ask questions and get clarity when things feel uncertain. They are very relaxed and led by you so you are able to cover whatever you want.

I've found it really useful to speak to someone who can give a different perspective. It's so helpful to talk things through with someone who understands the academic side of law and what the legal profession is actually like in practice. Having both of those perspectives makes such a difference because you aren't just getting generic advice; you get insight from someone who has experience working in a commercial law environment and also understands the academic side of things as well.

A big aspect of the benefit is how personalised the support is. University can feel quite overwhelming at times particularly when considering deadlines and options for the future – it's easy to overthink things or not know what to do next. Having one-to-one conversations are really helpful to break that down. You can talk through things properly, and you always come away with clear points/actions to think about that you might not have considered before.

A good example of this for me was choosing my third year optional modules. I have always been very interested in criminal law so I had only considered looking at criminal law modules. After speaking with Thanh, she advised me to keep my options open a bit more and not restrict myself too early. At the time it felt quite simple, but it changed the way I approached my choices, and I'm really glad I took the advice on board.

The LAC is a really supportive place when it comes to discussing future steps and career ambitions. The atmosphere in meetings is always relaxed and it doesn't feel formal or intimidating – I've always found it to be more conversational than formal and you can be honest about what you are feeling/thinking. You can talk at your own pace and cover whatever you need to like academic concerns, career plans or options on what to do after uni.

Before joining the LAC, I was quite set on the idea of becoming a criminal barrister, but had never really thought about other career paths. Through chatting with Thanh, I was introduced to other areas of law that I hadn't really considered before e.g. White Collar Crime. This didn't change my interest completely, but it has definitely broadened my understanding of the different pathways available.

Career related discussions in the LAC can cover so many aspects such as work experience, vacation schemes and future career plans. I personally have found by having these discussions early, it gives you something to work towards and makes the whole process feel a lot less overwhelming. Instead of trying to make sense of conflicting and often not even relevant advice online, you can talk things through properly and get a clearer sense of direction.

I also think the LAC stands out because of the way support is given to student volunteers. It's quite different from a usual study space. Instead of being focused on general guidance, it gives you exposure to real legal practice (through client work). This means that from early on in your legal career, you are able to experience more practical and career-focused work than you would in a standard academic environment. It is also a collaborative and supportive space – we have never been expected to figure out things completely alone. There is always guidance throughout and you learn as you go. It's the best of both worlds: a step towards a professional legal environment but with university support. It is built around real legal work and professional learning rather than purely academic revision. It definitely has a much more 'professional workplace' feel than a quiet study area.

Once you get involved in the LAC, there are so many different opportunities that come with it. The main is your involvement with client cases (completing things like legal research, client interviews, attending training), but you also get access to a range of networking opportunities with some really interesting people e.g. Judges and alumni now in professional legal roles. These are definitely useful for building confidence and communication skills. There are also opportunities provided for work experience at partner law firms which is super valuable for law students!

For me, one of the most valuable things about the LAC is that it helps students find strengths and interests they didn't necessarily know they had. Some people find they enjoy client interaction more than expected, or others realise they prefer research and writing advice letters. It gives you the chance to explore things early.

Zuzanna

The Legal Advice Centre: The Experience That Shaped My Legal Journey

When I first met Thanh in my first year at Royal Holloway, it was during my Professional Legal Skills module. From the very beginning, I admired her approach to teaching. Rather than focusing solely on legal theory, she created a learning environment centred around practical, hands-on experiences that reflected the realities of legal practice. It was the first time I truly appreciated how the law operates beyond the classroom, and it quickly became one of my favourite modules because of its real-world application.

Inspired by that experience, I applied to join the Legal Advice Centre (LAC) in my second year. To be completely honest, I almost did not apply at all. Like many students, I struggled with imposter syndrome and genuinely believed that I would never be successful. Receiving the offer to join the LAC was therefore both surprising and incredibly rewarding. Looking back now, it is undoubtedly one of the best decisions I made during my degree.

Over the following two years, the Legal Advice Centre became one of the defining experiences of my university education. I had the privilege of working alongside an exceptional group of student advisers who continuously challenged and encouraged one another. Every case presented a new opportunity to learn, and every client reminded me why practical legal education is so valuable.

The experience transformed my understanding of my academic studies. Concepts that had previously existed only within textbooks suddenly became real. Advising clients required me to analyse complex legal issues, conduct thorough legal research, communicate clearly, and apply the

law to individual circumstances. It strengthened my legal writing, interviewing, teamwork, problem-solving, client care, time management and professional judgement in ways that no traditional classroom assessment could replicate.

Thanh was my primary supervisor for my first year at the LAC. Her patience, encouragement and ability to challenge students to think critically were instrumental in my development. There was also something particularly meaningful about discovering that we had both grown up in Feltham. Knowing that someone from a similar background had built such an inspiring legal career gave me confidence that I could do the same. Throughout my time at university, she remained a constant source of encouragement and support, always willing to share her knowledge while genuinely investing in the development of every student she supervised.

In my first year I collaborated on tenancy and landlord disputes, allowing me to develop a practical understanding of property law (a module I was taking that year). I also advised on contract law matters, where I learned the importance of carefully applying legal principles to often challenging factual situations.

However, the area I enjoyed most was Wills and Probate. It was fascinating to explore an area of law that combines technical legal principles with highly personal client circumstances. The experience proved invaluable when studying Equity and Trusts, allowing me to connect academic concepts with real-life legal practice, furthermore I would gain experience in this the following summer...

In my final year at the Legal Advice Centre, my work became increasingly focused on divorce matters. These cases were often layered, emotionally sensitive and legally complex, frequently involving several interconnected areas of law. In this year Alex joined the Legal Advice Centre, and she supervised all of my cases. Alex's guidance was exceptional. She approached every matter with remarkable patience, wisdom and professionalism, creating an environment where students felt comfortable asking questions while continuously striving to improve. Her support helped me navigate increasingly complex legal issues and further strengthened my confidence as an aspiring legal professional during my very busy final year at University.

The opportunities available through the Legal Advice Centre extended far beyond client advice. I represented the Centre at university volunteer fairs, speaking with prospective students about the invaluable experience it offers and encouraging others to become involved in pro bono work.

The LAC also opened doors that I never imagined possible. Through the Centre, I had the opportunity to work with the Afghanistan & Central Asian Association (ACAA) on a Ministry of Justice rehabilitation programme in Feltham; the very community where both Thanh and I grew up. Being able to contribute to a project that supported individuals within my local community was incredibly rewarding and reinforced the importance of access to justice beyond traditional legal practice.

The Centre also gave me the privilege of completing a placement with Circe Law, an award-winning Private Client firm. Before joining the placement, my exposure to Wills and Probate had come largely through client matters that I had referred from the Legal Advice Centre. Those experiences sparked my interest in Private Client law, making the opportunity to work alongside Circe Law's team particularly exciting.

During my month-long placement, I became immersed in the practical realities of Private Client work. I assisted with legal research, drafted client correspondence and legal documents, developed my understanding of GDPR compliance, attended client meetings and gained exposure to areas I had never previously studied, including Probate sales, property transactions and Inheritance Tax. Above all, I experienced firsthand what exceptional client care looks like. Every member of the team demonstrated empathy, professionalism and an unwavering commitment to supporting clients through some of the most significant moments of their lives.

I can confidently say that none of these opportunities would have been possible without the Legal Advice Centre.

As I graduate with a First-Class Law degree, I recognise that my academic achievement tells only part of the story. The confidence I have developed, the practical legal experience I have gained, the professional relationships I have built and the career opportunities I have been fortunate enough to receive all stem from my involvement with the Legal Advice Centre. I owe an enormous amount of where I stand today to Thanh. Her belief in students, her commitment to practical legal education and her unwavering support have had a lasting impact on both my university experience and my future career.

The Legal Advice Centre is, in many ways, the face of Royal Holloway's Law Department. It demonstrates the University's commitment to combining academic excellence with meaningful community engagement and practical legal education. It deserves enormous recognition for the impact it has on students, clients and the wider community alike.

One of the aspects I admire most is how the Centre operates. It makes excellent use of the resources available while maintaining exceptionally high standards of client service and student development. The structure of the LAC is unlike any other module I studied during my degree. It bridges the gap between university and professional practice in a way that lectures and seminars simply cannot. I really do hope that it receives the continued funding and trust into Thanh's vision of the LAC.

If I could offer one piece of advice to students considering applying to the Legal Advice Centre, it would be this: do not let imposter syndrome stop you. I almost convinced myself that I was not good enough to apply. Had I listened to that voice, I would have missed the single most transformative experience of my university career. The LAC did not simply teach me how to apply the law; it helped shape the kind of legal professional I aspire to become.

Work Placement at Circe Law – Katie

This summer, I had the opportunity to spend time on a work experience placement with Circe Law, made possible through the Legal Advice Centre's partnership with the firm.

Part of my work at the Advice Centre involved helping clients access the right support, and Circe Law has been one of our trusted referral partners. Being able to sit in on referral calls to clients gave me a sense of what the firm does, but it was only once I was sitting in their offices that I began to properly understand the detail and care that goes into their work, and how the private client sector operates.

Over the course of the placement, I was given hands-on responsibility rather than being left to simply observe. I drafted and sent correspondence to clients, answered calls, and sat in on client meetings. One of the most memorable parts of the experience was witnessing the signing of Wills; seeing first-hand how a document that carries so much personal and legal weight is prepared, explained, and finalised with a client.

Spending time immersed in probate work in particular gave me a much clearer picture of what the process actually involves: the sensitivity required when dealing with clients who are often navigating difficult personal circumstances, the precision needed in the drafting itself, and the day-to-day running of a firm that takes both of those things seriously.

What stood out wasn't just the practical experience, but also the environment itself. Circe Law is an all-female firm, and that has clearly shaped its culture. It cultivates an empowering setting, holding itself to the highest professional standards whilst simultaneously making sure every individual, myself included, feels respected and valued. It's a firm that has managed to put the human back into law, and that is something I deeply admire.

I am incredibly grateful to the whole team at Circe Law for the opportunity and the trust placed onto me from day one. This placement gave me a much richer understanding of the private client area than I ever could have gained from reading about the processes alone, and it reinforces just how valuable our collaboration with Circe Law is for the clients we refer to them.

None of this would have been possible, though, without Thanh and the Legal Advice Centre. It was Thanh who encouraged me to put my name forward for this placement and referred me with a level of confidence in my ability that I'm not sure I always had myself. She saw the potential in a student that didn't study Law and never allowed me to feel like that was a set-back for a career in this field. Over the past two years, Thanh has been an enormous source of support, guidance, and opportunity for me at Royal Holloway, and I owe a great deal of my growth here to her. I am beyond thankful for everything she has done, with this placement just the tip of the iceberg.

Being part of the LAC and gaining opportunities like this has reshaped the trajectory of my career and instilled in me a new-found confidence in what I can achieve. Thank you to both Thanh and Circe Law for allowing me to grow as an individual, both personally and professionally.

Deena

Your professional background - your name, the roles you have held since graduating, and your current role

My name is Deena Skaria, and I have held the role as a Legal Affairs Intern at Afghanistan & Central Asian Association (ACAA) until recently.

Your degree and year of graduation

I graduated in 2025 with an LLB Law with Politics.

What motivated you to join the Legal Advice Centre

During my time at Royal Holloway, I was drawn to the Legal Advice Centre (LAC) because of the opportunity it gave for students to engage with law beyond the curriculum. I wanted to understand not only how legal principles operate in theory, but how they affect individuals navigating complex and often stressful situations. Working as a Student Advisor provided that exact perspective, and it remains one of the most formative experiences in shaping my approach to legal practice.

Any memorable cases, training sessions, supervision, or moments that shapes your understanding of legal practice

To name only one memorable moment from LAC would prove to be very difficult as every case and interaction was valuable. However, one experience in particular shaped my understanding of professional responsibility. The client approached the Centre with expectations beyond the scope of what we, as student advisors, could provide. Managing this situation required careful judgement, particularly given the sensitive nature of the circumstances.

Through supervision and feedback from my supervising solicitor, I developed a clear appreciation for the importance of managing client expectations from the outset. I learned that effective legal support is not only identifying potential solutions, but also establishing

appropriate boundaries while maintaining professionalism, especially when dealing with sensitive matters.

Skills developed during your time at the Centre

I developed several skills during my time at the Centre. One of these was my ability to legally reason. During the several client interviews that I took part in conducting along with my fellow volunteers, we would be bombarded with several amounts of information by the client (lots of which would be insignificant to the case). It was our job to ensure thorough notes were taken during each session and to apply analytical skills post-interview. I definitely developed a keen eye on identifying which facts were relevant to the case, interpreting laws from such facts, and then proceeding the relevant legal avenues that would benefit the client.

In addition, legal research was paramount to our roles. Each session meant we would delve into another relevant policy so that we could successfully provide comprehensive advice to be drafted into post-interview letters to be sent to the client. We would be guided to most apt legal databases and sources of information, not only by our supervisor, but also the knowledge from each other. We also greatly strengthened our approach to client interaction. This would be verbally through the structured interviews we would partake in, as well as digitally through the emails and letters we would send clients, in compliance with LAC policies. Lastly, I developed the ability to receive and apply feedback given during the one-to-one supervision sessions.

Ways in which the Centre helped clarify or shape your career aspirations

The Centre has played a key role in reinforcing my commitment to pursuing a legal career by demonstrating the practical impact and responsibility that comes with client-focused legal work.

Your experience obtaining work experience with ACAA through the Centre, including how we supported you

I was first exposed to an opportunity for a Legal Affairs Intern role at ACAA via an email from Thanh and the LAC. I applied and was able to secure the position with Thanh's assistance

and a referral from my Personal Tutor. I noticed that the legal skills that I fostered at LAC were directly transferable to my Legal Intern role. This included my ability to conduct legal research, client interviewing, and interpersonal skills. ACAA reinforced and matured this skillset that I already gained from LAC, for instance the legal research knowledge I developed were directly implemented when I needed to refer clients from ACAA to the relevant non-governmental organisations, charities, or policies that would aid them.

Advice you would give to future students

I would strongly advise all future students to definitely be curious about, and take the initiative to apply to LAC, as the experience is indispensable, the network you build is immeasurable, and the opportunity to learn under the guidance of qualified solicitors is invaluable. The skills, confidence, and professional insight gained through the Centre provide an excellent foundation for a future career in law.

Kisshorri

I graduated with an LLB in Law from Royal Holloway, University of London, and I am currently pursuing opportunities within the legal field while continuing to build practical experience. Alongside my studies, I have worked as a private tutor and remain actively engaged in developing my legal skills through work experience and professional programs.

I was initially motivated to join the Legal Advice Centre because I wanted exposure to real legal work beyond the classroom. While academic study provides the foundation, I was eager to understand how law runs in practice, particularly how solicitors interact with clients, manage expectations, and apply legal principles to real-life situations.

One of the most meaningful aspects of working at the Centre was the opportunity to engage with real clients. Speaking directly with individuals who needed legal aid made the experience both challenging and rewarding. It highlighted the human side of law, clients were often navigating stressful or uncertain situations, and being able to support them, even in a small way, was incredibly fulfilling. It also reinforced the importance of empathy, patience, and clarity when communicating legal advice.

I frequently referred to my experience at the Centre in job applications and interviews. Employers are particularly interested in practical experience, and the Centre gave concrete examples of client interaction, teamwork, and problem-solving. It allowed me to show not only my legal knowledge but also my ability to apply it in a professional setting. During my time at the Centre, I developed a range of essential skills. These included client interviewing, legal research, drafting clear and concise advice, and working under supervision. I also strengthened my ability to manage time effectively, balance multiple responsibilities, and keep attention to detail. Most importantly, I developed confidence in communicating legal concepts in a way that is accessible to clients without a legal background.

These skills have directly supported me in my professional journey. For example, my ability to communicate clearly and confidently has been invaluable in both interviews and professional interactions. The experience also gave me a stronger understanding of professional standards and the importance of accuracy, which are crucial in any legal role. Certain moments during my time at the Centre were particularly impactful. Client meetings stood out as they required me to think on my feet while staying composed and professional. Supervision sessions were also extremely valuable, as they provided constructive feedback and insight into how experienced practitioners approach legal problems. These experiences deepened my understanding of what it means to practice law responsibly and effectively.

Overall, my time at the Legal Advice Centre significantly improved my confidence and shaped my approach to problem-solving. I learned to approach legal issues methodically, consider alternative perspectives, and always remain client focused. It also helped me confirm my ambition to pursue a career as a solicitor, as I gained a clearer understanding of the skills and mindset required in practice. For future students, I would strongly encourage making the most of this opportunity. Be proactive, ask questions, and fully engage with both clients and supervisors. The experience you gain will not only enhance your legal knowledge but also help you develop the practical skills and confidence that employers value highly. The Legal Advice Centre was a defining part of my university experience, and it has played a significant role in shaping my career path. I am grateful for the opportunity and would highly recommend it to any student considering a career in law.

Azzurra

Current Role and Career Path

My name is Azzurra. Since graduating, I have completed a Master's degree in law alongside the SQE and have worked in a range of in-house legal roles. I am currently working as a Legal Negotiator at an investment bank, where I focus on drafting and negotiating financial agreements.

Degree and Year of Graduation

LLB Law, 2020–2023

Why I joined the Legal Advice Centre

I joined the Legal Advice Centre (LAC) in my second year of university. While I was enjoying studying law, I was particularly keen to gain practical legal experience alongside my studies. The LAC offered an opportunity to apply legal knowledge in a real-world context while also developing essential professional skills.

I also valued the chance to support members of the local community in need of legal assistance. The combination of practical experience and meaningful impact made the LAC especially appealing.

Most memorable aspects of working with real clients

Attending client interviews was one of the most memorable aspects of my time at the LAC. I particularly enjoyed the preparation process, which included reviewing case materials, formulating questions, and approaching each interview with a clear structure to gather relevant information effectively. This experience helped me develop key skills beyond academic study, including building rapport with clients, communicating clearly and confidently, and explaining legal concepts in accessible terms.

I also found drafting attendance notes and advice letters highly rewarding. These tasks strengthened my ability to consolidate information gathered from client interviews and legal research into clear, professional written communication tailored to the client's situation and level of understanding. In addition, working with supervising lawyers to identify legal issues and potential solutions further developed my analytical and research skills.

Utilising my LAC experience after graduation

After graduating, I frequently drew on my LAC experience in applications and interviews. It provided a strong foundation that I could confidently reference when demonstrating my commitment to a legal career. I recall discussing this experience in an interview for a career commitment scholarship, which I was subsequently awarded and used to support my Master's degree and SQE preparation.

My LAC experience also enabled me to demonstrate key competencies sought by employers in the legal field, such as effective written and verbal communication, attention to detail, and the ability to work with both clients and legal professionals in a practical setting.

Conclusion

Overall, my time at the LAC was an incredibly valuable and rewarding experience. It enhanced both my legal and professional skill set while giving me early exposure to client-facing work. I would strongly encourage students at Royal Holloway to get involved, as it is an excellent opportunity to develop practical skills, build confidence, and make a meaningful contribution to the community.

Mariama

About You and Your Career Journey

Since graduating, I applied to countless jobs throughout the summer and kept getting rejection after rejection. It was very difficult to experience so much rejection right after finishing my education. Instead of feeling down, I decided to apply for a volunteer role as a Generalist Adviceline Adviser Trainee at Citizens Advice, which ended up being the best decision I made. The transferable skills I gained in my role are always a topic of conversation in my interviews, as I speak with clients and give advice on a range of issues.

Alongside my volunteering, I landed a job at a café, which gave me some much-needed independence and just something to do as I was very stressed about the future. Working there taught me that there are many different paths to take to reach your goal. During my time there, I was able to travel and relax while still applying for legal roles.

I recently started a role at a university as part of their campus team. As the university focuses on law, I decided to apply as the career progression and transferable skills were very appealing to me. I hope to gain useful and practical experience that will guide me onto my next role. I am now looking forward to what the future may bring as my current dream role is to be part of the legal profession.

Reflection on Your Legal Advice Centre Experience

My biggest motivation to join the Legal Advice Centre was the opportunity to work with real people and gain practical experience. Working with a supervising solicitor meant I gained real insight into what working in the legal profession would look like. It taught me how solicitors engage with clients and all the behind-the-scenes work that goes into working as one. I developed client interviewing and legal research skills which were transferable to my volunteer role at Citizens Advice. I learnt the importance of and how to apply GDPR to real-life situations.

Thanh was amazing at supervising and giving feedback, as she had office hours where you could speak with her about how to improve and played a very supportive role. She encouraged us to take initiative when on calls with clients and really allowed us to build our confidence.

Skills and Professional Development

The most valuable skills I developed at the Legal Advice Centre were confidentiality and professional communication. These skills are incredibly valuable as I ultimately aim to work in the legal profession. The skills I gained through the Centre made my volunteering effortless as I was one of the few volunteers who had experience with confidentiality and professional writing.

Employability and Career Development

I used my Legal Advice Centre experience in both my applications and interviews; many of the roles I applied for wanted skills I had gained from the Centre. My work there made interviewers curious about my experience; interviewers enjoy asking the question, 'Can you give me a real-life example of when you ...?', and due to my work at the Centre I would always be able to tell them about my role and my responsibilities. This made me realise how valuable my experience was in developing my practical and interpersonal skills.

Impact and Looking Back

In terms of my overall university experience, my time at the Legal Advice Centre was beneficial and worthwhile. It didn't take up a significant amount of time, yet it gave me insight into the real world and an interesting perspective on how solicitors make a difference in people's lives. It enhanced my experience by providing a practical element alongside my studies, which were mainly content-based. I think pro bono and clinical legal education are extremely important as they showed me the importance of giving back to the community by supporting people.

Advice for Current Students

Apply for the Legal Advice Centre. The number of transferable skills you will gain is countless; companies want someone with experience more than they want someone with a degree, specifically relevant experience. Even if working in law is not your goal, having this experience will elevate your CV and make you more appealing to any company. I would encourage students to work hard on writing letters of advice and getting together before a call with your client to brainstorm questions you want to ask them.

Dr Alex Allan

I started at Royal Holloway as a Lecturer in Law in August 2025, and almost immediately started work with the LAC as a supervising solicitor. This required me to renew my practising certificate for the first time in several years, which was a little nerve-wracking! Throughout the first and second terms, I saw on average two clients per week, allocated by Thanh who triages all of the enquiries that come into the LAC. The work involved discussing interview preparation with the team of student advisors, supervising the client interview itself, a post-interview discussion and supervising the preparation of post-interview and advice letters.

Working at the LAC brings with it many benefits for the student advisors. Meeting with and advising real clients gives them an unrivalled glimpse into the work that many lawyers do on a daily basis, and into how the law affects people's everyday lives. Meeting and advising real clients is not easy, but the student advisors I have worked with rose to the challenge. They have also shown empathy and understanding towards the clients, many of whom come to the LAC with difficult or personal issues. Researching and preparing advice letters not only allows students to develop their legal knowledge, but it allows them to think about how the law is actually relevant to a particular client and the practicalities of how that client might deal with their situation.

From a personal perspective, working with the LAC has been one of the most enjoyable and rewarding things I have done since joining Royal Holloway. It has been a unique opportunity to work closely with students, to see how much work they put into each client matter, and how their skills have developed throughout the year. I have also appreciated being able to be part of such a crucial service to the community, in circumstances where access to justice is an increasingly urgent problem and legal advice is prohibitively expensive for many. I am looking forward to continuing to work with the LAC next year.

I would like to say a huge thank you first to Thanh, the Director of the LAC, who has been brilliant throughout this year in helping me navigate and understand the requirements of my role as a supervising solicitor. The popularity of the LAC, and the range of activities that take place throughout the year, are a testament to her dedication and hard work. Secondly, thank you to all the students that I've worked with this year for their enthusiasm and commitment and for making the work so enjoyable. I look forward to seeing what the LAC and its students can achieve next year.

Volunteering Fair

The Legal Advice Centre was pleased to participate in Royal Holloway's Volunteering Fair, where student advisers represented the Centre and engaged with members of the University community. The event provided an excellent platform to promote the Centre's work, highlight its impact on clients, and share the valuable skills and experiences gained by student volunteers. It was a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of the service, recruit future volunteers, and celebrate the important contribution the Centre makes to both student development and access to legal support.



Question & Answer Session with Her Honour Judge Anne Molyneux MBE

We were honoured to welcome **Her Honour Judge Anne Molyneux MBE** to the Royal Holloway Legal Advice Centre for a special question-and-answer session exclusively for Legal Advice Centre students.

We are grateful to Judge Anne for her generosity in volunteering her time and sharing her experiences of the legal profession, her career journey and her work within the courts. The session provided students with an opportunity to gain insight into different career pathways and to reflect on the skills, experiences and resilience required to develop a career in law.

Student feedback demonstrated the value of the session, particularly the opportunity to hear directly about Judge Anne's experiences and to gain a broader perspective on careers within the legal profession.



STUDENT FEEDBACK

“There is not one set path in law, you can do lots of different things.”

“The advice given regarding gaining experience from any available opportunity was a valuable insight. A piece of advice that stuck with me was to ensure that you block out everyone’s opinion on your judgement.”

“It was interesting to hear Judge Anne's journey into the profession and her stories from the Old Bailey. It was nice to hear her varied career path and was of particular interest as it's not often you hear from a Judge.”

“That despite setbacks and different paths I can still reach my career goal.”

“Hearing Judge Anne’s thoughts on the changes to the legal profession, including with technology and AI, gave me a more positive outlook on the future of my career.”

“The advice given by Anne about women in the legal profession was invaluable as well as her experiences.”

STUDENT IMPACT

The feedback highlighted several key areas of value for students:

- Career development: Students gained a broader understanding of the range of pathways available within the legal profession.
- Professional resilience: Students valued advice about gaining experience, navigating setbacks and remaining focused on their own career goals.
- Insight into legal practice: The opportunity to hear about Judge Anne’s experiences provided students with perspectives that complemented their academic and practical experience at the Legal Advice Centre.
- Women in the profession: Students particularly valued hearing about her experiences as a woman working in law.
- The changing profession: Discussion of technology and artificial intelligence encouraged students to consider the future of the legal profession and their own place within it.

The session was a valuable contribution to the professional development and career awareness of Legal Advice Centre students, giving them the opportunity to engage with an experienced legal professional and reflect on their own aspirations within the profession.

Question & Answer Session with a Legal Advice Centre Alumnus

The Legal Advice Centre is committed to maintaining strong connections with students beyond their time at Royal Holloway. It is always rewarding to see former students flourish in their professional careers and to reflect on the contribution they have made to the Centre during their studies.

This year, we were delighted to welcome back **Amar Bawa**, who returned to Royal Holloway to deliver a question-and-answer session for current students. Amar shared valuable insights into career development, the legal profession, and life after graduation, drawing on personal experiences and professional expertise. The session provided an excellent opportunity for students to gain practical advice, ask questions, and learn from the successful career journey of a former Legal Advice Centre volunteer.

Events such as these highlight the lasting impact of the Centre's community and the importance of fostering connections between current students and alumni.



1. Introduction & Background

- Could you start by introducing yourself — your name, your current role, and where you're working now?

Hey, my name is Amar, I am currently a Trainee Legal Adviser for His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service. I run the Magistrates Courts sitting around the Thames Valley Area which includes Oxford, High Wycombe and Milton Keynes.

- What does your day-to-day work as a trainee solicitor involve?

Excitingly, there is no typical day for me really. My week changes up based on what courts are required to run. At the moment, I would get into work around 9am and take a look at the list of cases in my court that day and prepare them so I know what is happening with them and any advice I may need to give.

At 9:30am I go into the court room and meet the Prosecution and Defence advocates for the day and discuss if there's any particular issues I need to be aware of or vice versa. At 9:45am I meet the Magistrates in their retiring room and go through the list of cases, highlighting anything that may be difficult or unusual for them to deal with. Then from 10am to 1pm I am in court hearing cases - in the case of trials I run the court room, assist any Defendants who don't have a lawyer and at the end of the trial, I advise the Magistrates on points of law, the same way a Judge in the Crown Court directs the Jury. Once the Magistrates have made a decision, I complete the court's admin.

At 1pm we break for lunch for an hour and then I'm back in court from 2pm until 4:30pm for the afternoon's cases but sometimes we finish earlier, sometimes we finish later, (the latest I've been in court is 7pm but this is very rare) it all depends how fast we can get through the work. I'm fortunate enough that I don't need to take any work home so I have the evenings to myself and then it's back in court the next day.

- How long have you been in your trainee role, and which area of law are you focusing on?

I've been a Trainee Legal Adviser doing Crime for just over a year and I'm fortunate enough that the Magistrates' Court deals with every kind of criminal offence in the first instance (more serious crimes get sent up to the Crown Court but they still start with us). We also have some civil applications from the local council that we deal with and as a Trainee Legal Adviser you can also go into Family Law at the Magistrates' Court.

2. Experience at the LAC

- Tell us about when you joined the Legal Advice Centre (LAC). What motivated you to get involved?

I joined the LAC while I was at uni because I wanted the chance to do something practical with the law I was studying in class. I also wanted to build my skills because I knew I'd need to in order to do well in practice.

- What kinds of cases did you work on during your time there?

I dealt with a range of things including consumer rights, housing law and family law. I remember dealing with a few cases where people were sold faulty goods. Also I had a housing law case where a person was refused from having a medical assistance dog because the landlord did not allow 'pets'. It really felt like we were helping people by using our legal skills and this felt very rewarding.

- Which skills or experiences from the LAC have proved most valuable in your career so far?

By far my ability to interview clients. I remember when I first started I felt so nervous taking calls and asking questions - specifically, I felt really uncomfortable when there was silence so just ended up talking and talking and talking without actually really saying anything. I got feedback that it's ok to have a pause to make notes or to collect your thoughts, and in terms of being nervous - the person coming to the LAC is probably more nervous and is here because they want our advice so definitely won't be looking down on you! That really helped at the time and is something I still take with me today.

- How did it feel to return to the LAC, this time not as a student but as a trainee solicitor speaking to current students?

It felt surreal as when I was sat in the students' place, I had no real idea of what I would do after uni, specifically the fact that I ended up in Criminal Law when I thought I was set on staying as far away from Criminal Law as possible. It also reminded me how quickly you get thrown into the working world once you finish your undergraduate degree, also something I hadn't really appreciated at the time!

3. Transition to Professional Practice

- In what ways did your LAC experience help you secure your trainee position?

It gave me an early, realistic view into what it can be like doing law in practice and the skills you need to do so: specifically the ability to speak up and take control of situations, even if you're feeling incredibly nervous! That really helps in interviews for training contracts as well as when you're practising law.

- What was the biggest challenge in moving from student work to professional practice?

The way that my free-time just disappeared. I was not prepared for that. I was very fortunate that at RHUL, and then when I did my LPC, I took on all the opportunities I could to develop my skills doing extra volunteering and courses. These are things I definitely wouldn't have the time to do now but I'm so grateful I was able to do them while I was a student.

- How did the LAC prepare you for advocacy and client interaction in your current role?

It was the first time to really practice speaking to clients and the fact that I started so early, meant I had a lot of time to develop my skills to where they are now. Because my job involves doing so many things at once like controlling the court room, knowing the law, knowing what to say - the fact I've had the practise doing advocacy means it's one less thing for me to worry about getting right.

4. Reflections & Advice

- What advice would you give to current LAC students about making the most of their time there?

Make the most out of every opportunity that comes your way, even if you're not sure about it. The worst that can happen is you might realise it's not for you, but still walk away with excellent experience - the best that can happen is you give yourself a head start in improving your skills as a lawyer!

- How can students translate their LAC experience into career opportunities?

A lot of the time it's about the skills that you don't think about - volunteering at the LAC shows you can hold responsibility, that you can take charge of unfamiliar situations, that you can manage yourself and your own work. The skills you will gain will apply into any career, law or otherwise.

- Looking back, what do you wish you had known when you were in their position?

To be honest, just more about what life would be like after uni and what the roles available are. Some advice which I think I would have benefited from hearing at the time is probably to keep an open mind with where your career may end up. It's important to have a plan of where you want to be but let that plan change if it needs to.

6. Looking Ahead

- What are your career aspirations beyond your trainee role?

I'm very fortunate that in my role there are a few different routes I can take after I qualify - I can stay in my current role and potentially work up to becoming a manager, I can work towards becoming a Judge with my experience at court, I can join a firm with my experience of the law. I've not made my mind up yet but my long-term end-goal would be to have my own firm eventually!

Simmy

As part of my time at the Legal Advice Centre, I had the opportunity to attend a guest lecture by RHUL alumnus Amar Bawa. This session was one of many arranged by supervising solicitor Thanh Pham and allows us students an insight into the many career paths available within the legal profession.

Amar works within the court service. This is an area I am particularly passionate about and having observed a few court cases myself, I found it truly engaging to see how the concepts we learn are applied in real scenarios. I was excited to hear more about Amar's career path and how he decided on a career in the court service.

During the session, Amar shared his journey from being a student at the Legal Advice Centre in 2022, to becoming a Court Advisor for High Wycombe Magistrates' Court. It was really interesting to hear his reflections on his time at the LAC, and how it shaped his early professional development. He spoke about how working with clients and providing advice helped him build his confidence, improve his communication skills and develop a foundational understanding of legal issues, something I can relate to. Already in my two years volunteering at the LAC, I feel my communication skills and confidence have come a long way and I can see how the practice and experience gained will be invaluable when entering the workforce.

Amar gave us an insight into his current role as a court advisor, where his responsibilities include providing advice to magistrates on points of law and researching complex legal issues (amongst many other things!) to ensure accurate and informed decision-making. He also mentioned that his position has allowed him to support a variety of cases, including some with high-profile celebrities – which is always exciting to hear about. He explained how this role can be a good stepping stone for aspiring Judges – something that resonated with me as I have considered pursuing this path in the future but wasn't previously aware of this route. I really valued the opportunity to hear from Amar as it was not a role I had much knowledge on before but now am considering for the future!

Hearing from alumni who have successfully navigated the transition from university graduate to a legal career makes the future feel less daunting and allows you to consider paths you may not have before. As a law student, you are often overwhelmed with all the possible directions for the future but talks like this show that there is no 'cookie cutter' route to becoming a lawyer. It has definitely given me lots to think about for my future career aspirations.

The talk with Amar was extremely insightful and reinforced the importance of the opportunities given at the Legal Advice Centre in preparing students for professional legal practice through hands-on experience.

Thank you to Thanh Pham for arranging such an insightful session and to Amar for taking the time to share your experiences with the 2025/26 Cohort of LAC student advisors.

Royal Holloway University Law Society Career Fair

The Legal Advice Centre was pleased to be invited to participate in the Royal Holloway Law Society's Careers Fair during the academic year. The event provided an excellent opportunity for our student advisers to engage with fellow students, share their experiences of volunteering with the Centre, and highlight the valuable skills and practical legal experience gained through their work.

The Careers Fair also enabled students to network with representatives from a wide range of law firms, and legal organisations, offering valuable insights into career opportunities within the legal profession. The event was a highly successful and rewarding experience, helping to raise awareness of the Centre's work while fostering connections between students and the wider legal community.



RamanEEK

As a Student Adviser for the Legal Advice Centre, being able to participate in Royal Holloway's annual Law Fair was a rewarding opportunity, as it allowed us to give students an inside look into how we operate. I got to speak to the attendees about the process of completing work to help us advise clients and how it helped us develop crucial skills such as legal research, client interviewing and organisation.

It was so encouraging to see so much interest from students who had applied or were considering applying next year because it reminded me of how important the LAC is in connecting academic study with real-world application.

Royal Holloway Law Society × Legal Advice Centre Client Interviewing Competition

The Legal Advice Centre collaborated with the Royal Holloway Law Society in hosting a Client Interviewing Competition during the academic year. The competition provided an excellent opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate their client interviewing, communication, and legal analysis skills in a realistic professional setting.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our volunteer solicitors from Octopus Legacy, June and Aletia, who generously gave their time to attend the event and act as judges. Their expertise and professionalism were invaluable in ensuring the success of the competition.

Participating students benefited greatly from the detailed and constructive feedback provided by the judges, which offered valuable insights into effective client care, questioning techniques, and professional practice. The event was a highly rewarding experience for all involved and provided students with an excellent opportunity to enhance key skills that are fundamental to a successful legal career.



Simmy

In March, I had the privilege of representing the University's Legal Advice Clinic in the Law Society x Legal Advice Centre's client interviewing competition. Besides from offering some fun and friendly competition, the event was an interesting (and slightly nerve-wracking) experience.

Hosted by the Law Society, the event saw 2 scenarios, with myself and Katie going up against a Law Society team in the family law scenario. What made it particularly challenging was that we were given an unseen client matter and only 15 to prepare relevant questions before going into the interview. It was quite challenging to organise our plan in such a short space of time but our experience from the LAC was incredibly valuable.

The interview itself involved working with an actor playing the client (Sara's acting was really realistic and made the situation feel like a real client interview). Our goal was to draw out as much relevant information as possible while also making sure that our client felt supported and listened to. All of this was observed and assessed by two external Judges, June and Lydia (both private solicitors), which definitely added some extra pressure!

My teammate Katie and I relied on the training and support we've received from Thanh and the LAC over the years. We followed a similar structure to our usual interviews and aimed to guide the conversation to ensure we got the relevant information whilst still assisting with the clients' concerns (this was also adapted to meet the more time-pressured setting). Although it felt different from typical LAC client interviews, it was really valuable to practice.

Gladly, our practice served us well and Katie and I were awarded Best Duo Team for the family law scenario. It was great to see different interviewing styles and understand how others approached such scenarios!

I also really valued the opportunity to hear feedback from the Judges. It was insightful to get an external perspective on our technique and to understand what worked well and where we could improve for the future.

A big thank you to Jude and Mara from the Law Society for organising an event that was both a valuable career tool and also good fun. Definitely an experience I would recommend to anyone looking to build confidence and develop their client interviewing skills"



Katie

Taking part in the LAC x Law Society interviewing competition was incredibly rewarding. Walking away with Best Duo (thank you to Simmy) and Best Student made it all the more memorable.

The format was demanding by design. We received our briefing fifteen minutes before meeting the client, leaving little time for anything other than focused, purposeful preparation.

Our client was distressed and the challenge was not simply identifying the legal issues with sensitivity but also simultaneously watching the clock. It made an interesting change to our usual format for interviewing clients and allowed us to practice how we would engage with them under time and observation pressures.

The experience reinforced the importance of probing for details. Clients do not always recognise what is legally significant. Learning to pursue those finer points gently but persistently, without losing the clients trust, felt like a genuine skill developed in real time.

The competition gave us room to learn and grow as aspiring lawyers and despite the challenge it was really enjoyable.



StreetLaw Programme



We have had a highly successful year delivering the StreetLaw Programme. Throughout the year, students received training from Legal Advice Centre (LAC) staff and guest speakers from Citizens UK, developing both their legal knowledge and public engagement skills. Students also benefited from feedback sessions delivered by our partner law firms, helping them refine their presentations and strengthen their communication and teamwork skills.

As part of the programme, students designed and delivered legal education presentations to a range of community groups and audiences, including the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association, participants on the Widening Access Scheme, and staff and students at Royal Holloway University of London. Through these activities, students gained valuable experience in translating complex legal concepts into clear, accessible information for diverse audiences.

Students on the programme were also given the unique opportunity to participate in a knowledge exchange session with a housing attorney and a federal judge in the United States.

The programme enabled students to develop a wide range of transferable skills, including legal research, public speaking, presentation delivery, client-focused communication, and community engagement. They also gained a deeper understanding of the role of law in promoting social justice and empowering communities through legal education.

Read more about the programme and the students' achievements in the blog posts below.

StreetLaw international knowledge exchange

Dr. Jenny Logan

On 9 and 10 June, 2026, the Streetlaw housing group enjoyed a unique opportunity to present their research to a housing attorney and a federal judge in the United States. First up was Emily Rena-Dozier, who has worked as a tenants' rights attorney at Oregon Law Center for the last 12 years. Emily is the State Litigation Unit Attorney for Housing at the Oregon Law Center, where she advises and supports legal services attorneys in housing and appellate litigation. In 2021, she co-founded the Eviction Defense Project, which defends tenants with low incomes from eviction throughout Oregon. Emily also directs Oregon Law Center's appellate committee.

Emily works in legal services throughout Oregon, and has appeared before the Oregon Supreme Court and Court of Appeals on housing, domestic violence, and administrative law. Her cases have involved eviction defense, fair housing, civil rights claims against government agencies, protective orders for survivors of domestic violence, and administrative actions involving long-term care.

After the presentation, Ms. Rena-Dozier and the Streetlaw team had a lively discussion about social justice issues related to housing law, the differences between Oregon tenant protections and the new Renters Rights Act, and the pleasures and hardships of practicing plaintiff's-side landlord-tenant law ("you lose all the time," Emily cautioned: "the house always wins"). Emily taught us that the biggest problem facing tenants in the U.S. today is lack of affordable housing, as rent increases continue to outpace wage growth for most working people in the States.

The next day, the StreetLaw team presented to the Honorable Mustafa T. Kasubhai, a federal district judge for the District of Oregon. Judge Kasubhai began his law career as a worker's compensation attorney, and later became the first Muslim American to serve as a U.S. federal judge when he started on the federal bench in 2018. Nominated by President Biden in September 2023 and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in November 2024, Kasubhai is now the third Muslim American judge to receive a lifetime appointment, and the first Asian American Article III judge in his district. He also happens to be my former boss, and clerking for him was a highlight of my legal career.

Judge Kasubhai listened intently to the housing team's presentation, which was followed by an exacting round of questioning about the differences between U.S. and U.K. law, which the students ably engaged in. Kasubhai also imparted some wisdom for the students, cautioning them that there is no more important skill for a lawyer than to be able to think and to write, and that writing is a lifelong practice with no shortcuts (referring, not so subtly, to the problems of relying on AI: "If you want to build muscle," said the Judge, "you wouldn't have someone else lift weights for you").

In a partnership with the Student Union, the housing Streetlaw team will present their research and tips on communicating with landlords, deposits, repairs, and the new Renters Rights act to incoming Royal Holloway students this September.

Amber

My name is Amber and I am a second year Law Student at Royal Holloway and I was chosen to take part in the Personal Injury Street Law Group this year. This was my second year applying and it has honestly been such a beneficial and enlightening experience that I cannot wait to apply again next year.

As I mentioned I was chosen to work in the Personal Injury group this year and we were randomly assigned to these groups deliberately. At first, I found this slightly nerve-racking as it was a large group of people who I didn't know and a topic I did not at the time feel knowledgeable enough in to present on. Our supervisor Thanh explained that this random allocation was deliberate and was a replication of the way tasks are assigned in legal practice especially to junior lawyers who will be expected to work on anything they are allocated regardless of if they know the people or topics involved. It also helped to build communication and teamwork skills, both vital in any profession.

Throughout the year we were provided with my many carefully curated sessions designed to build our skill sets and prepare us for conducting legal research and presenting our work in a clear and precise manner. We had sessions with Citizens UK who helped us learn how to host "house meetings" a way to organise and receive feedback from the community, we had sessions by our Street Law supervisors Thanh, Jenny, Millicent and Sahar on understanding the community, providing public legal education, drafting letters and running effective workshops. We also had the opportunity to speak to Retired Old Bailey Judge Anne Molyneux who gave us some valuable advice and inspiring stories about her time as a Judge and as a young female lawyer.

My group did face a few challenges whilst researching and preparing our presentation; one of our members only turned up to one of our sessions and only reached out a week before our feedback meeting with a personal injury lawyer to inform us they were no longer participating in the programme. Whilst this was initially a bit disappointing this also gave us the opportunity to deal with a situation that can arise during any group work. We researched and constructed our presentation together through many teams meetings and this meant that we were all confident on the areas of personal injury law we would be explaining to the community and this combined effort allowed us to leave space for those of our group who we had not had much contact with if they decided they wanted to present, but also allowed us to confidently share the remaining workload when the numbers came down to the three of us presenting at the final stage.

This experience was the perfect taste of the real challenges and triumphs that you will face in the legal practice and was such a rewarding programme to take part in.



From the Classroom to the Community: My Street Law Experience

By Sabihah

My name is Sabihah and I am currently doing LLB Law with Criminology at Royal Holloway, entering my third year in September 2026. I am a Student Volunteer at the Legal Advice Centre, and this year I had the privilege of taking part in the Street Law Programme.

When I first got involved, I was excited but also quietly nervous. I have been competing in public speaking competitions since the age of eight, so standing up in front of people is not something I shy away from, but presenting legal content to a completely new audience, people with no legal background whatsoever, felt different. It was a new kind of challenge, and honestly, that is exactly why I wanted to do it.

Our group worked on consumer protection, an area of law that affects almost everyone in everyday life, which made it a particularly rewarding topic to present. It meant we had to think carefully about how to make the content feel relevant and immediate to our audience, rather than abstract or theoretical.

The most valuable thing I took from the programme was learning how to translate complex legal concepts into language that actually means something to the people listening. It is one thing to understand the law academically; it is another thing entirely to explain it clearly, simply, and engagingly to someone who has never encountered it before. There were moments where I could see the audience genuinely engaging, asking questions, making connections to their own lives, and those moments reminded me why access to legal education matters so much.

The supervision sessions were an invaluable part of that process. Baker McKenzie played a really important role in helping us shape our presentation, guiding us on how it should be structured and making sure the legal content was accurate and pitched at the right level. Our RHUL supervisors were equally instrumental, supporting us throughout the entire programme in ways I did not always anticipate. One thing that has stayed with me is what I learned about engaging an audience that is not responding or is struggling to follow along, the advice was to bring things to a lighter note, not in a way that undermines the content, but in a way that eases the tension and brings people back in. It made me reflect on my own experience as someone learning something new and how frustrating it can be when you do not understand something straight away, from keep needing to ask the same question. During our practice sessions, I was that person at times, who would go over the same points repeatedly and I become more conscious of how that experience feels from both sides. That kind of empathy, I think is what makes the difference between a presenter who delivers information and one who connects with their audience.

The experience that pushed me furthest outside my comfort zone was delivering our first presentation to a completely new group of people. Unlike presenting to peers or people I already know, this felt unpredictable. I did not know how they would respond, whether they would engage, or whether I was pitching it at the right level. But I focused on the presentation we had done and on connecting with the audience rather than worrying about how I was coming across. It went far better than I expected. It taught me something important, that resilience and adaptability are not just qualities you are born with, they are skills you build by putting yourself in uncomfortable situations.

One of the most challenging, and in hindsight, most formative, aspects of the programme was that by 2nd session, three of our five group members has stopped showing up altogether. From that point on, it was essentially the two of us carrying the presentation and preparation through to the end. It was not easy, and there were moments where it felt like a lot to take on. But reflecting on it now, I think it made the experience more meaningful. It tested my commitment, my resilience and my sense of

responsibility, not just to the programme, but to the audiences who deserved our full effort regardless of what was happening behind the scenes. I came away with a much stronger sense of what I am capable of when things do not go to plan.

What I enjoyed the most was the outcome, seeing it all come together and witnessing how the audience responded. Our presentation at the ACAA stands out. The audience were incredibly warm and welcoming, and their engagement made everything we had worked towards feel genuinely worthwhile. It is one thing to prepare and deliver; it is another thing entirely to feel that what you have done has actually landed with the people in front of you.

The experience has already proved its value beyond the programme itself. I have spoken about Street Law in multiple job applications this year, and it has given me concrete examples of leadership, communication, and commitment to access to justice that I would not otherwise have been able to draw on.

Participating in Street Law has reinforced something I believe strongly: that the law belongs to everyone, and that there is a real gap between the legal system and the people it is supposed to serve. Being part of a programme that works to bridge that gap, even in a small way, has been one of the most meaningful things I have done during my time at Royal Holloway so far. I would encourage any law student considering it to get involved, you will grow in ways you do not expect.



Vanessa Meurling

My name is Vanessa Meurling. I'm studying LLB Law and I was lucky to be chosen for the StreetLaw Programme in my third year. It's an incredibly competitive programme and I chose it initially to gain more experience, but what I gained by the end was so much more than that. I'm truly grateful I had the opportunity to take part in it during my final year as it definitely contributed to it in a positive way.

I was in the family law group and really enjoyed it, especially since it was one of my optional modules in second year. Despite me choosing family law in second year, I still ended up learning a lot through StreetLaw because it was so much more hands-on, which made it easier to absorb information. One experience that I feel stands out the most was being able to have the opportunity to network with Baker McKenzie. They had come in to sit in on some of the other groups' presentations, and we got to ask them questions, and I felt like this was an invaluable experience as a trainee solicitor had also come in and offered her insights. From this it's clear that the StreetLaw programme comes with many additional perks, and a great bonus is that it is such a great experience to be able to talk about in any future interviews!

Taking initiative is something this programme really requires but developing that skill through StreetLaw has been so beneficial in a real-world context. I've noticed a real growth in my ability to take initiative through my volunteering at the Legal Advice Centre I currently work for. It has also helped my confidence and given me more faith in my own abilities, which just goes to show how many transferable skills StreetLaw offers.

For me, one of the challenges I faced was managing my workload, especially as I was also part of a society at the time. It really helped that sessions were held on Wednesdays as I was able to dedicate that day entirely to Street Law, which made balancing everything much more manageable. Things became even easier once we started drafting our presentations. We were given plenty of time to work through them and receive feedback along the way, so there was never any pressure to have everything done at once, which made the whole process feel a lot more relaxed and enjoyable.

Something else that really shaped my experience for the better were the people in my group. We worked really well as a team and they were genuinely so lovely. There's not a better group of girls I would have preferred to work with; they genuinely made this experience better as it didn't feel like just a group randomly put together and we actually started to become friends too which made working together so much easier and more fun too!

Throughout this programme, I think one of the most important skills I developed was becoming more open to work with new people. The rest of the group were 1st and 2nd years, so I was initially a little hesitant as I was worried that I would feel like I was slightly out of place. But honestly that's one of the things I love about StreetLaw, the chance to work with people across different years. I'm really glad I had such a positive experience with the girls in my group because I can now genuinely say I feel excited about working with new people, whether that's in my current role or in any future employment. This may not be a usual skill to come away with, but for me it was truly the most meaningful one. Alongside that, my confidence grew a great deal too. Presenting to a completely new demographic in an unfamiliar setting was daunting at first, but that experience pushed me in the best way possible.

After completing the programme, I can honestly say it has influenced my career interests and I'm now thinking about pursuing family law in the future. A lot of that comes down to how much I enjoyed the topics we researched and how engaged I felt throughout the whole process. I genuinely feel that not only is the Street Law Programme rewarding for the community but it's rewarding for the individual taking part as well. It's really nice being part of something that helps people understand the law and their situations more and it feels rewarding to be able to help someone. It also definitely seemed to

have such a good impact on the group at the ACAA, which is the organisation we presented to, and you can clearly tell that they were interested in the accessible legal knowledge we provided and they seemed appreciative.

Overall, if I had to sum up, the things I enjoyed the most about taking part in Street Law was being able to gain valuable skills that would help me in the future and being able to meet such nice people along the way. One thing I would take away would be to be more open about new experiences and not to worry about it too much as the girls in my group were truly so welcoming and so was Thanh and our individual supervisor. It is genuinely such a wonderful experience, and I recommend it 100% to anyone considering applying as there is a lot of personal and academic growth possible through this programme.



Charisse

My name is Charisse and I'm studying Law with Criminology. Upon first hearing about the Street Law programme, it conceptually intrigued me, presenting itself as a hands on approach to trying to bridge the legal literacy gap within communities. This year, I was generously provided with the opportunity to take part in the programme, and was tasked with concentrating on consumer rights. Throughout the process from researching to creating our presentation of legal facts, with the help of supervisory sessions I was able to hone and develop my skills in gathering legal information and translating it into more simplified terminology, as well as, curating a professional yet equally engaging presentation.

During our preparation, my partner and I unfortunately experienced a lack of productive participation from the rest of our group members, which ultimately taught us how to navigate trying to professionally encourage communication and convey deadlines to them firmly. When that was ineffective, we learned how to persevere and take initiative to complete the project together regardless. Overall, not only was the educational component of the programme incredibly enriching for my skill set, but the most notable moment for me was interacting closely with people from the local community during and after our presentation, most of whom due to a multitude of reasons such as language barriers had no access to legal knowledge about their rights. Sharing conversations with them afterwards was incredibly fulfilling, as it was rewarding to hear them express that they had a better understanding of how to deal with difficult situations that affected their consumer rights.



Haramun

My name is Haramun Dhindsa, and I am currently a second-year Law and Sociology student. I decided to take part in the Street Law programme because I wanted to gain practical experience outside of my studies and better understand how legal knowledge can be used to support and empower communities.

I was part of the Family Law group, and we delivered our presentation at the Afghan and Central Asian Community Centre. My particular focus was on domestic violence, and I was responsible for explaining the legal protections and support available to individuals experiencing abuse. This was a particularly meaningful topic to present because it highlighted the importance of making complex legal issues understandable and accessible to those who may need that information the most.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the programme was seeing how engaged the audience was and knowing that our presentation could have a real impact. Law can often seem intimidating or inaccessible, and Street Law showed me the importance of breaking down legal concepts into clear, practical advice that people can relate to and use in their everyday lives.

Working with my team also taught me a great deal about collaboration and communication. Preparing and delivering the presentation required us to work closely together, share ideas, and ensure that our information was both accurate and easy to understand. It was a valuable experience that strengthened my confidence in working with others and presenting in a professional setting.

The programme has had a significant impact on my personal and professional development. In fact, I currently work in a role within the legal industry, and I genuinely believe that my involvement in Street Law played a major part in helping me secure that position. During every interview, I spoke about my experience with Street Law and the skills I had developed through the programme.

One of the core values of the company I now work for is making legal advice accessible to everyone, and I realised that this is exactly what Street Law represents. The programme demonstrates that the law is not simply about legislation and case law; it is about people. It is about ensuring that individuals understand their rights and feel empowered to seek support when they need it.

Street Law also taught me the importance of empathy within the legal profession. Delivering a presentation on domestic violence and speaking to members of the community reminded me that behind every legal issue is a person with their own experiences and challenges. As future legal professionals, it is essential that we not only understand the law but also appreciate the human impact it has on people's lives.

Looking back, the biggest lesson I will take away from this experience is that legal knowledge is most powerful when it is shared in a way that is accessible and meaningful to others. Street Law has strengthened my communication skills, increased my confidence, and reinforced my belief that making the law understandable is an essential part of being a legal professional.

I would strongly encourage any student considering joining Street Law to take part. It is an incredibly rewarding experience that allows you to develop practical skills, make a positive contribution to the community, and gain a deeper understanding of the role that accessibility and empathy play within the legal profession.

The support was good and the group was fun to work with, meaning the end result was impactful. It was truly a blessing to be part of a programme that contributes to changes within society and I am forever grateful for the doors that Street law opened for me.



Bitania

My name is Bitania, and I was fortunate to secure a volunteer position with Street Law. I applied because I wanted to develop the critical and transferable skills essential for a career in law and other demanding professions. While these skills can be gained through other programmes, Street Law stood out because of its unique opportunity to work with charities, schools, local councils, and community organisations, allowing me to engage with a wide range of people rather than a single network. It also demonstrates a genuine commitment to community engagement and improving access to legal education, making it a particularly valuable and rewarding experience.

I was part of the Family Law group, where I researched and presented topics in family law to a local charity. Although the programme was rewarding throughout, several moments stood out.

The first was our initial meeting, where I met my team and discovered I had been assigned to Family Law. As a first-year law student who had not yet studied the subject academically, I initially experienced imposter syndrome and questioned whether I had the knowledge and experience to contribute effectively. However, this quickly became an opportunity to challenge myself and develop confidence through independent research and preparation.

The most significant moment was delivering our first group presentation. We presented key concepts of family law to a charity with the aim of improving public understanding of legal rights and processes. As some of the topics, particularly domestic abuse, were highly sensitive, it was essential to communicate the law accurately while remaining respectful and empathetic towards those who may have been affected.

The greatest challenge came later when I delivered the presentation independently. I had to reformat and refine the existing presentation while familiarising myself with sections that had previously been allocated to other team members, all within a limited timeframe. In addition, one team member was unexpectedly unable to attend the original group presentation, requiring the rest of us to quickly redistribute responsibilities and learn additional material at short notice. This experience taught me the importance of adaptability, taking initiative, and ensuring I was prepared to step beyond my allocated role whenever necessary.

Street Law strengthened a wide range of transferable skills that will be invaluable throughout my legal career. The programme significantly improved my legal research skills, as I had to independently research an area of law, I had not yet studied and ensure the information I presented was legally accurate and up to date. It also enhanced my ability to communicate complex legal concepts in clear, accessible language for audiences with no legal background.

My confidence in public speaking and presenting also grew considerably. Delivering presentations as both part of a team and independently challenged me to adapt my communication style, think on my feet, and remain composed when answering questions. The experience also reinforced the importance of teamwork, initiative, adaptability, and time management, particularly when unexpected changes required me to take on additional responsibilities at short notice.

Academically, the programme showed me that studying law extends far beyond learning legal principles, as I was exposed to the importance of applying legal knowledge to practical contexts and communicating it effectively to empowers others. Street law changed the way I view the legal

profession by demonstrating that the law is not only about resolving disputes but also about educating communities and improving access to justice.

Street Law will become one of the strongest examples I use in applications and interviews because it demonstrates a combination of legal knowledge, communication, teamwork, and leadership. It has also equipped me with a higher level of confidence to approach networking or interviewing future scenarios, positively effecting the trajectory of my journey into law. The programme also allowed me to consider a legal career in family law as I have realised the importance for me to feel as I am making a notable difference in the lives of those I would serve.

I believe our workshop improved made a positive impact on the community's understanding of family law by presenting legal concepts accurately making relevant informative topics accessible to the local community. Family Law often involving sensitive and emotionally challenging issues, so having provided clear and concise information we have empowered individuals to better understand their rights and the support available to them.

Street Law is important because it bridges the gap between legal knowledge and the wider community. It enables law students to develop practical skills while helping make the law more accessible to those who may not have the easiest access, thus, enforcing the notion that legal knowledge should be available to everyone.

The aspect I enjoyed most was seeing the direct impact that legal education can have on others as it was rewarding to know our actions allowed those that attended out sessions to make informed decisions in the future.

My advice to future Street Law volunteers would be to embrace every opportunity, even if you feel outside your comfort zone. You do not need to know everything from the outset; the programme is designed to help you learn and grow. The experience will develop your confidence, strengthen your professional skills, and provide examples that will continue to benefit you throughout your legal career.

Overall, I've learnt that the greatest of lawyers is not the one that has the most information, but rather the one that can effectively communicate it to the wider community, thus making a real difference.



Moot Court Programme

What is Moot Court?

Moot Court is a form of clinical legal education that simulates court proceedings, enabling participants to develop practical legal skills in a realistic setting. Students analyse complex legal problems, conduct legal research using primary sources, prepare written submissions, and present oral arguments before a judge.

The experience closely mirrors real court proceedings, with students presenting arguments before a judge, responding to judicial questioning, and receiving detailed feedback on their performance.

Objectives of the Moot Court Programme

The Moot Court Programme aims to:

1. **Empower Students** by equipping them with the knowledge and confidence to deliver clear, accurate, and practical legal education.
2. **Develop Key Skills** by fostering teamwork, communication, advocacy, public speaking, critical thinking, and legal research skills essential for future legal practice.
3. **Enhance Employability** by providing hands-on community engagement opportunities and developing transferable skills valued across the legal profession and wider workplace.

Highlights from This Year's Competition

This year, we were honoured to welcome an esteemed panel of volunteer judges who generously gave their time and expertise to support our students. We extend our sincere thanks to **Her Honour Judge Anne Molyneux MBE**, retired Old Bailey judge; **Mr Amar Bawa**, one of our distinguished alumni; and **Ms Kelly Wild**, Director at **Creighton & Partners**. Their insightful feedback and encouragement provided students with an exceptional learning experience and valuable exposure to professional legal practice.



Tehreem

My name is Tehreem and I am currently a third-year Law with Criminology student. I was chosen to participate in the Moot Court programme this year and it has been such a valuable experience. Looking back to the beginning of the programme, I was incredibly nervous because mooting was something I was not well-versed in. In spite of my growing anxiety about presenting in front of judges, I was also grateful for an opportunity that would broaden my understanding of courtroom advocacy, which is an essential part of being a lawyer.

My moot focused on a family financial dispute matter regarding joint property. I had not studied family law, and the moot challenged me to apply my property law knowledge acquired from my second year of studies to family law scenarios.

The biggest challenge I faced was ending up preparing and presenting independently just before the final competition. Whilst this was initially unexpected for me, it became one of the most rewarding aspects of my Moot Court experience. Managing every stage of the process was quite overwhelming at first and I doubted my ability to present on my own. However, although it required greater resilience and self-motivation, the experience itself reinforced my ability to perform under pressure and gave me a chance to put the skills Sahar and Jenny had taught in Moot Court sessions into practice. Most importantly, it showed me that I was capable of delivering a well-researched argument independently in front of court judges which was fulfilling on its own.

The judges maintained a meticulous approach towards the judging criteria for the competition, ensuring that each participant was tested rigorously. Participating in the programme gave me a much better understanding of what legal practice is really like. And, despite all the nerve wrecking questions asked by the judges, I was pleased that the work I put into the competition was recognised with the Best Team award.

If I could give one piece of advice to future participants, it would be to make the most of this opportunity. Don't worry if you're not confident in public speaking and research, because practice really does make perfect and the programme offers just that!

Sana

My name is Sana, and I have recently completed the Moot Court Programme with the Legal Advice Centre. I am currently studying LLB Law and have just finished my second year. I chose to take part in the Moot Court programme because I wanted to build confidence in the way I speak and articulate my ideas, and it provided the perfect opportunity to develop these skills in a practical setting.

My moot focused on Criminal Law, and the most memorable aspect of the experience was presenting in front of real judges and gaining first-hand insight into a courtroom environment. One of the main challenges I faced was adapting to the formalities of a professional moot, particularly learning how to address the judge and present arguments effectively. This required significant preparation and research, which initially felt difficult to grasp. However, working alongside my partner was incredibly reassuring, as it reminded me that I was not alone in the process. Collaborating on the case allowed us to support each other and build confidence together. The experience also gave me a deeper appreciation for legal professionals, as presenting under pressure and responding to challenging judicial questions can be both demanding and intimidating.

I have since used my Moot Court experience in applications for further work experience, highlighting the confidence and legal research skills I developed and can transfer into other roles. As an aspiring solicitor, I recognise that advocacy remains an important skill, and this programme reinforced the value of being able to communicate effectively and ensure that arguments are clearly understood. It also emphasised the importance of strong legal reasoning, particularly when responding to judicial questioning, where clarity and precision are essential.

What I enjoyed most about participating in the Moot Court programme was the opportunity to meet others in similar positions, learn from experienced tutors, and develop new skills in a supportive environment. I would advise future students to remain consistent and persevere, as the process can feel daunting at first, but confidence builds over time with practice.

The key takeaway from this experience is the invaluable opportunity to present before a highly respected judge, Judge Anne Molyneux, and the confidence that this experience has given me, regardless of the outcome.

Reflections from Our Judges

Her Honour Judge Anne Molyneux MBE

“On Wednesday I had the pleasure of taking part in the first ever RHU moot.

The problems were tough, the criminal one particularly so. The students rose to the challenge.

That they had agreed to take part was, in itself, a tribute to their commitment. A great deal of preparation had been undertaken, submissions carefully prepared, bundles copied and paginated.

The atmosphere on the day was electric. One by one the advocates rose and presented their arguments. Questions from the bench were dealt with calmly, court etiquette was observed.

The post hearing analysis ,when we all relaxed and enjoyed the moment which follows a job well done, was a great opportunity to meet the students and to learn about their plans for the future. Every one of us had learned and grown from the experience.

The moot is not easy. Presenting tricky legal arguments in front of your friends can be excruciating. However ,the sense of accomplishment which follows is priceless. The growth in confidence more than repays the effort and will stand the participants in good stead for their futures.”

Amar Bawa

“It was very impressive to see how well the students had prepped as well as the level of advocacy they displayed! A lot of the students did better than what I would actually see at court. The experience will definitely have been invaluable for their confidence by doing advocacy in a realistic setting.”



Acknowledgements

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