

# Student Law Office

Annual Report 2013–2014



# Welcome to the Student Law Office



I am delighted that the Student Law Office has received the ultimate accolade this year, with Northumbria University winning the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize for the exceptional work of the Student Law Office. This award provides the highest level of recognition for the pioneering work of our Student Law Office. The social benefit of offering vulnerable people a free and accessible legal service is substantial while the student learning experience is authentic, challenging and rewarding. I am delighted that we now have the royal seal of approval.

This was not the only accolade – the Student Law Office continued its success with another win at the Law Works and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards, confirmation of the valuable work undertaken by our students and staff.

As the Student Law Office goes from strength to strength, it continues to provide excellent preparation for legal practice and career development, as well as a having a hugely positive impact on the community, an essential part of our service.

We have continued to develop in the arena of clinical scholarship, with our 12th successful International Journal of Clinical Legal Education conference, this year in the Czech Republic, and the rolling out of the linked open access journal, disseminating current thinking on clinical legal education.

My thanks to staff, students and legal partners for their contribution to the work of the Student Law Office, and I look forward to another successful year.

**Kevin Kerrigan**  
Executive Dean Northumbria Law School

# About the Student Law Office

## What is the Student Law Office?

The Student Law Office (SLO) is Northumbria Law School's multi award-winning pro bono law clinic where students, under the supervision of qualified staff, offer a full legal service to members of the public. The clinic is a key part of our innovative four year MLaw degree course which integrates the professional skills of the Legal Practice Course into a Masters level degree. We have 24 members of academic staff – a mix of qualified solicitors and barristers, plus one caseworker, two administrators and a trainee solicitor. Students take on real cases and provide a full legal service, conducting interviews, researching, advising, drafting and, in suitable cases, providing representation. Their work is closely supervised, but normally all client contact is through the students.

## What preparation do students have before entering the Student Law Office?

Students take part in an SLO program in year 3, where they practice interviewing clients and develop an awareness of the office systems and their own professional responsibilities. In Year 4, they join the live client program, and this accounts for around 40% of their final year mark. Assessment is by means of a personal file, which is a portfolio of the work they have completed during the year, in addition to two reflective pieces, looking back at their own development during the year.

## What about Legal Practice Course skills?

Students are assessed for competence in writing and interviewing as part of the Legal Practice Course during their time in the SLO.

## Who else can take part in the Student Law Office?

The SLO experience is also available as an option on the full time Legal Practice Course and the Bar Professional Training Course, although places are limited.

## How do I contact the Student Law Office?

For further information please e-mail us at [la.studentlawoffice@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:la.studentlawoffice@northumbria.ac.uk)

We are proud of the contribution made by the SLO to the local community, offering free advice and assistance to many who could not otherwise afford this.

# Facts and figures 2013–2014

## Students involved in the Student Law Office:

Year 3 – 196  
Year 4 – 176  
Elective students – 12

## Cases:

New enquiries – 767  
New and existing cases conducted – 294

## Compensation recovered for clients:

£131,766.70  
No. of staff involved – 24

## Areas of Law:

- Civil litigation including consumer and CICA appeals
- Crime and criminal appeals
- Employment
- Housing
- Welfare benefits
- Planning
- Family
- Business and Commercial

## Our community partners:

- Age UK
- Shelter
- Victim Support
- Ben Hoare Bell Solicitors
- Newcastle Library



# Awards

## Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education

We were delighted that Northumbria University was announced the winner of the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education, for the work of the SLO.



*(Left to right) Oliver Lovett, Monika Fortuna, Lauren Hayes, Alice Carr, Carol Boothby and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Andrew Wathey*

The Queen's Anniversary Prize is the highest form of national recognition for higher and further education open to a UK academic institution, and is given in recognition of work judged to be of outstanding excellence and with positive impact. It is a biennial award scheme which is part of the UK's national honours system. The assessment and decision process is overseen by the Awards Council of the Royal Anniversary Trust, which submits its final recommendations to the Prime Minister who in turn advises The Queen.

Northumbria University's Chancellor, Lord Stevens of Kirkwhelpington, the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Professor Andrew Wathey, and the Executive Dean of Northumbria Law School, Kevin Kerrigan, attended the ceremony at Buckingham Palace, together with Carol Boothby, Director of the SLO. They were accompanied by five students, Ben Crystal, Oliver Lovett, Monika Fortuna, Lauren Hayes and Alice Carr. Whilst at the Palace the students met with HRH Prince Philip who asked about the type of work that they were involved with in the SLO.

Oliver Lovett said: "While this was an unforgettable experience for us personally, the award is a measure of the hard work, dedication and commitment from all the students, lecturers and support staff involved in the SLO – past and present. I hope it will raise awareness of the invaluable experience law students can gain through

clinical legal education and allow the SLO to continue to provide access to justice to many more clients in the future."

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Angela Hildrith and Roger Rayner, two former clients who very kindly agreed to appear in our video celebrating our receipt of the award. The video can be seen at: [northumbria.ac.uk/queensprize](http://northumbria.ac.uk/queensprize)

## Another Win!

The SLO continued its hugely successful year of awards with another win at the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards 2014. Students and staff travelled to the House of Commons where Attorney General Dominic Grieve MP QC presented them with the award for "Best Contribution by a Law School".

This is the third time we have won this award (2008, 2010 and now 2014), a feat that is unmatched by any other law school.

Elaine Campbell, Solicitor Tutor, said: "Along with our previous wins this was the 10th time we have been nominated in the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards, and we are delighted with the prestige and recognition it brings for the students and the Law School. It is further confirmation of the value of the work undertaken by the SLO, the learning benefits our degree programmes offer to students and the free legal support the Law School as a whole provides for local communities."

Paul Newdick CBE QC, Chairman of LawWorks, said that the judges had praised Northumbria's exemplary record in its commitment to innovative degree programmes. Northumbria Law School, they said, leads the way in its integration of legal theory and practice, underpinned with an unparalleled level of support to those in need of legal assistance.



*(Left to right) Dominic Grieve, Dawn Nellist, Victoria Gleason, Elaine Campbell, Rebecca Mattinson, Greg Phillips, Joel Potts*

## Student Law Office compensation for clients passes £1 million mark

2013/14 has been a landmark year for the SLO. Not only have we been honoured to be presented with two highly prestigious awards, we were also delighted to announce that the Student Law Office has recovered more than £1 million in compensation for its clients since 2005.

One of our clients recently remarked: "We are confident we would not have received a penny without the support of our student advisers...at all times these two ladies were friendly, professional, enthusiastic and confident. ...if they are typical of the quality of Northumbria University Student Law Office students, then you have much to be proud of."

## UK visits

### A visit from the Government's senior law officer

In April 2014, Attorney General Dominic Grieve QC MP met law students from Northumbria as part of a visit to the Student Law Office and the regional offices of legal charity LawWorks.

His trip came just weeks after we won "Best Contribution by a Law School" in the annual LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards 2014.

Mr Grieve said: "LawWorks and the legal profession across the North East must be congratulated on the excellent pro bono work they carry out on behalf of local communities. I was also delighted to visit the Student Law Office here at Northumbria and was extremely impressed by the dedication, enthusiasm and quality of work. The students should be proud of their achievements and I hope that they continue to carry out pro bono as they move forward in their future legal careers."

Kevin Kerrigan, Executive Dean at Northumbria Law School, said: "The Attorney General's visit here today is further recognition of the value of our clinic-based Student Law Office. As part of their degrees, the students provide vital legal services to the community while developing a deep understanding of law, justice and professionalism. The experience can give them a clear career advantage over others, and the legal assistance they provide transforms the lives of those they help."

### Catherine McKinnell MP

On 13th January 2014, Newcastle North MP, and former Northumbria Law School student, Catherine McKinnell visited Northumbria University, Newcastle, to see the work being undertaken in the Student Law Office. During the visit Ms McKinnell met with students and

lecturers from the SLO and saw examples of the free legal services and advice they provide.

Not long before Ms McKinnell's visit, we had heard that we had been awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize. Ms McKinnell said: "This is a richly deserved award and I congratulate Northumbria University. The Student Law Office is clearly excellent preparation for legal practice and career development, and it makes a hugely positive impact for vulnerable people in the region by offering them a free and accessible legal service."

Kevin Kerrigan, Executive Dean, said: "We are delighted to welcome Ms McKinnell here today and to introduce her to some of the students and academic staff behind the Student Law Office. Our Queen's Anniversary Prize was the only one awarded in relation to law this year and it carries a level of prestige that the whole university is immensely proud of."



*Student Law Office students meeting with Catherine McKinnell MP (centre)*

### Baroness Newlove

Community reform campaigner and activist, Baroness Helen Newlove, hosted a high profile public lecture on 10th February 2014 at Northumbria Law School and requested an impromptu visit to the Student Law Office to look at the facilities and discuss the work we do. She spoke to student Callum Thomson about the crime work he is involved in and discussed the work of the office with Carol Boothby.



*Callum Thomson with Baroness Newlove*

## Guy Opperman MP

Guy Opperman MP visited us on 27 September 2013 and was shown around our state of the art building, including the Northumbria Law School court room by Paul McKeown. Mr Opperman is the MP for Hexham. He was called to the Bar in 1989 and spent 20 years as a Barrister. Guy was named "Lawyer of the Week" by The Times in 2007 and was awarded the Bar Pro Bono Award by the Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith QC, for his voluntary work on behalf of victims in Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals. In 2009 the Attorney General, Baroness Scotland QC, presented him with a Pro Bono Hero award in the House of Commons for his work on preventing hospital closures.



*(Left to right) Paul McKeown with Guy Opperman*

## Criminal Cases Review Commissioners

We were delighted to be visited by three Criminal Case Review Commissioners this year. Alexandra Marks, David Smith and Andrew Rennison spent time with SLO students currently working on criminal appeals, explaining the work of the Criminal Cases Review Commission and finding out from students about the work they do in this area.



*SLO students with the Commissioners, Chris Sayers and Kevin Kerrigan*

## Senior Crown Prosecutor visits the Student Law Office

On 7 May 2014 Paul Simpson of the Crown Prosecution Service visited the SLO. He delivered a fascinating presentation to SLO students about the preparation involved in, and the evidential difficulties surrounding, the prosecution of those alleged to be involved in organised crime and major drug dealing. The students found it so intriguing that the questions and answers session at the end took as long as the presentation itself!

## International visitors

### Visit from SIM University

As part of their visit to the School of Law on 30 October 2013, representatives from the Ministry of Law and SIM University spent time in the Student Law Office, in order to find out more about the pedagogy and practice of clinic. Carol Boothby and Jonny Hall outlined the clinical teaching and the role of students in providing legal advice, and provided sample materials.

Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, President of SIM University thanked all those involved in the visit to the School, saying 'Congratulations on what you have achieved in your integrated programme'.

The Ministry of Law is considering proposals for the establishment of a new local law school in Singapore with a focus on attracting mature students through a part-time programme structure that would train prospective lawyers keen on practising specifically family and criminal law.

### Professor Stephen Billett

On 18 November 2013 we were delighted to host Professor Stephen Billett, Professor of Adult and Vocational Education at Griffiths University who was accompanied by Professor Megan Quentin-Baxter, Professor of Health Professions Education and Director of Health Education at Newcastle University. Professor Billett was the keynote speaker at last year's International Journal of Clinical Legal Education conference in Brisbane. Jonny Hall and Carol Boothby discussed a range of topics such as the role of vocational training within clinical law programs.

### Visit by academics from Marsaryk University

The SLO hosted academics from Marsaryk University, Czech Republic, on 26th June 2014 for a visit funded by the Czech Pro Bono Alliance.

Jaroslav Cituji said: "On behalf of our group I would like to thank you for a wonderful day in Newcastle. It was really inspiring and I hope that we will be able to implement at least a something of what we have seen and talked about during our stay."

## Comings and goings in the Student Law Office

### Welcome

We were delighted to welcome Rebecca Parker, William Ralston, Christopher Mitford, Amanda Newby, Chloe Horrocks and Victoria Gleason as supervisors in the SLO this year, and new administrator Geraldine Page.

Many congratulations to Joanne Clough on the birth of her daughter Erin, and Emma Shaw on the birth of Henry.

### MLaw student trainee Natalie Baldwin

Natalie Baldwin will be completing her MLaw student traineeship at the end of August, and will then be a qualified solicitor. Natalie joined us in June 2013 and the majority of her case work has been in relation to housing, business and employment law under the supervision of SLO Solicitor Tutors. She also spent time on placement at Gateshead Council where she worked in both the conveyancing and commercial contracts departments and also worked closely with the planning team. Natalie said: 'I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Student Law Office and whilst I am a little sad to be leaving, I am very much looking forward to being qualified and starting my legal career.'

## Student Law Office news and events

### National Pro Bono week – success again for “Law in the Library”

In November 2013, as part of National Pro Bono Week, the SLO and the LawWorks North East Pro Bono Hub provided a number of drop-in sessions at Newcastle City Library. Members of the public were able to drop into the library and receive advice or referrals from qualified solicitors on a range of legal areas including consumer disputes, housing, family and business. National Pro Bono week activities are led by Solicitor Tutor, Paul McKeown, who said: “Law in the Library continues to be successful event facilitating access to free legal advice to members the local community on a range of legal issues. The partnership with Newcastle City Library means that the service can be delivered to those who may not ordinarily be able to access legal advice.”



*Students promote the National Pro Bono week events at Newcastle Library with Solicitor Tutor Paul McKeown and Executive Dean Kevin Kerrigan*

### SLO students put forward convincing case to regional law firm

The SLO advocacy competition was a resounding success again this year. Head of dispute resolution at Gordon Brown Law Firm, Jonathon Stokes, took on the employment judge’s role during the competition where pairs of students take their turn to represent the claimant or respondent in an employment-based litigation scenario.

The students argued their case in an Employment Tribunal set-up hosted by Northumbria University and, after hearing from all the representatives, Jonathon decided that the winner was Eleanor Storey.

Gordon Brown, which has offices in Newcastle and Chester-le-Street, sponsored the competition and provided prizes for the top three places.

Jonathon said: “The student advocacy competition is something I always look forward to – I much prefer being in the judge’s seat than being the one speaking to the judge!

“The things I look for are the students’ understanding of their scenario, evident research material to support their argument and all presented in a manner which is clear, confident and engaging. I ask some challenging questions at the end so it’s always good to see how they are able to think on their feet.

“It’s certainly a worthwhile experience for those who get involved, preparing them in part for real life situations, and I personally find it extremely interesting to see how the students of today have developed compared to my era of education.”

### Client Feedback

“[I wish] to express my gratitude for the professional and diligent manner in which my case was pursued by...the SLO. I found the service to be every bit as good as that offered by more traditional professional services firms and would happily recommend [the SLO] to another firm. The service was efficient, effective, courteous and patient. Most of all it is client-focused, which is probably the starting point in anyone’s career.”



(Left to right) Amy Murray, Eleanor Storey, Robert Whitman, Rory O'Boyle, Jonathon Stokes (Gordon Brown Law Firm LLP), Samantha James and Kate Lynch

### Courtroom skills training for social workers

SLO students took part in a joint training event with social workers from Gateshead Council. Students took the role of cross examining barristers, challenging the social workers, to provide experience of giving expert evidence in court, providing valuable preparation for the real thing. The event took place in the Northumbria Law School court room, giving an added element of realism. Thanks to Joanne Whitehead, solicitor at Gateshead Council, and her colleagues, for working on this highly successful event.

### Marshalling with District Judge Earl

On 25 February 2014 SLO students Lisa McGrady, Philip Singleton, Hannah Burton, Sophie King, Ashley Evans and Shareeka Girrach spent a very informative morning in the company of District Judge Stephen Earl as he worked through a list of cases at Newcastle Magistrates' Court. Thereafter the learned judge took the time to explain to the students his reasoning in respect of the various decisions that he had made that morning.

### Inspiring Entrepreneurs: In the Den with the Dragons

On 19 November 2013, all of the Business & Commercial firms attended a live link up event with the British Library at the Newcastle Business and IP Centre to celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week 2013. The British Library had brought together a panel of formidable infamous Dragons including Kelly Hoppen. The panel discussion was streamed live from London and the students were able to tweet questions to the panel and listen to their answers. The event was also attended by local entrepreneur Donna Kerr-Foley who appeared on Dragons Den and received investment from the Dragons for her business The Running Mat. She spoke about her time on the programme and how the Dragons had helped her take her business to the next level.

### Streetlaw

Our Streetlaw and Streetlaw in Schools projects have continued this year with 31 students from the GDL, LPC, BPTC and years 1-3 of the MLaw degree taking part. Streetlaw is a community legal education project aimed at providing information to individuals and organisations about legal rights and responsibilities. This year students prepared and delivered a total of 10 presentations or workshops. Many of these took place at Queen Elizabeth High School where students educated pupils about knife crime. Other presentations included a range of topics such as dealing with unsolicited communication from companies and health and safety obligations.

These projects allow students to develop their research skills and legal knowledge as well as improve their presentation and interpersonal skills. Feedback from the school and organisations involved has been very positive as has feedback from the students who took part with one commenting 'I really feel like I accomplished something today, even if it was just the ability to maintain the interest of a group of 16 year olds for an hour, so I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity, and I hope this project carries on so that other people get the same opportunity'.

### Launch of the Personal Support Unit in Newcastle

The PSU Newcastle officially opened on 16 April 2014 at Newcastle Combined Court to provide support and assistance to litigants in person in civil and family proceedings. The PSU made a total of 431 client contacts in the period April – July 2014. The service is run in partnership with Northumbria University who provide student volunteers, networking opportunities and space to carry out training, as well as part-funding the service. Clients have also been referred between the Student Law Office and the PSU.

The PSU have recruited 22 student volunteers from Northumbria University and it is expected that more will take the opportunity to volunteer in the new academic year.

Clients have also found the service offer by the PSU to be useful throughout the court process:

*"They completely put me at ease prior to hearing, guided me through the court building and gave me confidence by attending the hearing with me."*

*"Fantastic service, more than helpful. Very understanding. Excellent."*

### Shelter

For the last 6 years, we have run a joint project with Shelter, with students researching and advising clients on more complex housing queries, whilst gaining invaluable experience in the area of housing law. We dealt with 30 housing enquiries during this year through this scheme.



## Legal Advice Byker

Legal Advice Byker ran for the third consecutive year this year. Legal Advice Byker is run jointly by the Student Law Office and Ben Hoare Bell Solicitors LLP from February to May each year. Students studying on the Legal Practice Course at Northumbria University offer free one-off advice to members of the public under the supervision of qualified lawyers from Northumbria University and Ben Hoare Bell. The total number of clients seen to date has now reached 70 and there is still more capacity each year. If you are aware of someone who thinks that they might need legal help and who wants some initial advice before going further, then we will start taking enquiries at the end of January 2015.

## Symbiosis Law Summer School

The Law School welcomed 10 students from Symbiosis Law School in India for a summer school in July 2014. The first week of this two week programme was spent looking at the English criminal justice system and included a visit to Newcastle Crown Court and the opportunity to present prosecution statements and pleas in mitigation in our court room. The second week was spent in the Student Law Office where the students engaged in a simulated clinical programme focussed on developing lawyering skills. During the course of the week they took part in a number of activities demonstrating interviewing, legal writing, research and negotiation skills. They conducted a client interview and legal presentation.

The students gave excellent feedback and for many it was the first time they had engaged in clinical activities which they found challenging and fun.

## North East Expo

A group of SLO students keen to network with local businesses and law firms attended the North East Expo, held at Kingston Park Rugby Club, on 13th November 2013. They spoke to delegates and recruiters about their work in the Student Law Office. The keynote speaker was The Apprentice runner up, Neil Clough, who gave a powerful presentation on what motivates him, along with some tantalising hints of what goes on behind the scenes in the hit BBC show.



Students from our Business and Commercial firms ready to network

## Newcastle upon Tyne Law Society's Annual Dinner

Staff and students from the School of Law attended Newcastle upon Tyne Law Society's Annual Dinner on 14 November 2013 at Newcastle Civic Centre. The School of Law shared tables with solicitors from David Gray Solicitors LLP, the Crown Prosecution Service and Newcastle City Council. In addition, students had the opportunity to network with solicitors, barristers and the judiciary from around the region.

Eleanor Heerey, a student on the Legal Practice Course at Northumbria, was awarded a prize for the Best Performing Self-Funded Student on the Graduate Diploma in Law. Northumbria Alumni, Melissa and Hollie Walker were also awarded a prize for their performance on the LLB Exempting Degree.



SLO students with Carol Boothby and Paul McKeown

## "In Good Company!" at Newcastle Business and IP Centre

For the third year running, students from the Business and Commercial firms in the SLO delivered a free workshop for members of the public at the Newcastle Business and IP Centre (BIPC).

One of the students involved, Oliver Lovett, reported on the day:

*"On 13 December 2013 Aisha Akhtar, Paul Smith, Daniel Manton and I gave a presentation at the Newcastle BIPC. We work in a business and intellectual property firm providing free legal advice to members of the public. A large part of our work in the Student Law Office involves advising new and current business owners on the legal issues that they face when starting and running a business. In our session entitled 'In Good Company!' we covered the key issues that business owners need to consider when setting up a company and protecting their branding. These included: the advantages and disadvantages of setting up a company, how to set up a company, the duties of company directors, and the interaction between company names and trade marks. We provided practical guidance on how to navigate the incorporation process and provided real life examples to illustrate the importance of the advice that we were giving.*

*Several local business owners attended the workshop alongside staff from the BIPC. Following the presentation, they were invited to take part in a question and answer*

*session with ourselves and Elaine Campbell, our supervisor in the Student Law Office. This enabled us to build upon the information given in the session and to apply the issues we had covered to their individual circumstances. Where necessary, we invited those who attended to contact the Student Law Office for more detailed advice and assistance with the legal issues that their businesses face."*



*(Left to right) SLO students Oliver Lovett, Daniel Manton, Aisha Akhtar and Paul Smith*

### **Celebratory Dinner for Queen's Anniversary Prize**

On 27 March 2014, the University held a formal dinner to celebrate being awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Further and Higher Education. Distinguished guests from the region, our partners in pro bono, members of the University's Executive, law staff and SLO students attended the event held in the historic Sutherland Building. Pro-Vice Chancellor (Business and Engagement) Lucy Winkell read from the Royal notice of the award, whilst the award itself was displayed for all to see.

### **Law's 'brightest stars': Law Society unveils Excellence Awards finalists**

We were delighted that Lee Russell has been announced as a finalist as Junior Lawyer of the Year at the Law Society Excellence Awards. Lee, a solicitor at Ben Hoare Bell LLP, is a former SLO student and has been very involved with the Legal Advice Byker project. We congratulate Lee on this prestigious nomination.

### **Sole trading!**

The SLO has a number of firms which assist new and existing business. This year, we provided Neil Robinson of The Custom Underground, with its uniquely designed shoes, free legal advice and documentation.

With a growing consumer base seeking his bespoke products, Neil was keen to develop a tailored set of terms and conditions for his customers and was referred to the SLO. He said: "The Custom Underground has been really successful in quite a short space of time. I have had orders from the cast of The Only Way is Essex, members of dance group Diversity, and prominent UK DJs which has been amazing and really

helped raise the profile of my work.

"The nature of my business, with bespoke and made-to-order products, meant I needed tailored guidelines so I was referred to the Student Law Office at Northumbria University.

"The help I received from the team there was fantastic. They understood exactly what I was looking for and they were great to work with, helping me to create a set of terms and conditions that covered everything from personalised designs and intellectual property to pricing, payment, returns and refunds."

He explained: "I am really grateful to the Student Law Office – until recently I didn't even realise this type of service existed. It's brilliant that it can help people like me who are just starting out and don't have a huge amount of money to pay for these types of services. I would certainly recommend it and I won't hesitate to get in touch in the future as my business takes off."



*(Left to right) Neil Robinson, Elaine Campbell and Natalie Baldwin*

### **Industrial Law Society Lecture**

The SLO hosted an Industrial Law Society lecture by Casper Glyn QC entitled 'Whistleblowing: How to fight and win under the new law'. The lecture was well attended by local solicitors, barristers and Employment Judges.

### **Newcastle Law Centre – 35th Anniversary**

On 14 November 2013, the School of Law hosted an event to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Newcastle Law Centre. Speakers on the evening included James Welch, Legal Director of Liberty, and Julie Bishop, Director of the Law Centres Network.

### **Case study**

We successfully persuaded a claimant to stop action against our client in a dispute regarding a sports club

## Firm trips

Some of our firms embarked on trips outside of the office this year.

Members of Paul McKeown's firms had a team building day at Slaley Hall.



Tina Bond's firm had an invigorating walk along Hadrian's Wall.



## And finally.....

### Queen's Garden Party

Dawn Nellist, Programme Administrator for SLO, had the honour of being chosen, along with another three colleagues from across the University, to attend the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday 10 June 2014.



Dawn said: "I am so proud to have been chosen to represent the University at the Garden Party. I had a fabulous day, and have memories I will always treasure. It was amazing to see Her Majesty the Queen, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duchess of Cambridge and Princess Anne whilst having tea in their garden with them!"

### Case study

We prepared website terms of use, a privacy policy and terms and conditions of sale for a new online business, protecting the business from intellectual property and consumer issues which might arise in the early stages.

## Clinical Research

### LEAPS: Legal Education and Professional Skills research group

LEAPS is an inclusive collegiate research group intended to provide support, promote and enhance legal education. The group builds on the work of the Clinical Legal Education Research group and acts as a focus point for activity with plans to invite external speakers and to act as a space for research sharing. The research group is engaged on a number of enquiry projects which focus on how we prepare our students to engage with the law curriculum, the demands of the profession and wider issues of civic engagement and employability. A number of SLO staff are members of the group and presented papers/exhibited posters at the Northumbria Research Conference 2014.

### Running a legal clinic: facing the challenges and sharing best practice

In February 2014, we were delighted to host and deliver a free one day workshop aimed at clinicians, both those with existing experience in running law clinics, and those new to clinic and seeking ideas. Clinical legal education is growing in popularity – students see it as an engaging style of learning, as well as a way to increase their employability – and this workshop aimed to enable wide ranging discussion of the issues associated with running a clinic or experiential learning program. The workshop was funded by the Higher Education Academy as part of one of HEA Social Science's strategic priorities 2013 – 14 'Active and experiential learning in the Social Sciences'.

Carol Boothby outlined our in-house clinical program, as well as projects such as Legal Advice Byker, Shelter and Streetlaw. Discussion followed on key issues raised by delegates including clinic design, models of clinic, and supervision. Victoria Murray outlined the use of grade descriptors in clinic assessment and talked about issues such as fairness and transparency, objective marking, ensuring parity of experience, and Elaine Campbell looked at providing student feedback, with examples of the detailed written feedback provided to students.

The afternoon sessions were designed to provide an opportunity to look at and share "bite sized" clinic and research activities. We wanted to be able to raise and discuss a number of issues which would be useful to different models of clinic and this was an excellent way of being able to touch on areas which might be of interest. Elaine Hall started by highlighting opportunities for research and publication based on clinical teaching and learning and the platforms for publication including the 2014 IJCLE conference. Cath Sylvester and Carol Boothby followed this by looking at barriers to effective legal writing and their research into how the "fish" might see the "water". Rory O'Boyle and

Sarah Morse discussed the use of standardised clients in preparing students for live client experience. Richard Grimes, University of York, outlined how their degree, which is based entirely on problem based learning, worked. Elaine Campbell then shared her experiences on business law clinics, touching on issues such as acting for clients who may be able to afford to pay for legal advice.

Wide ranging discussion included obtaining insurance for clinics, assessing clinical work, advice-only as opposed to full representation, providing ongoing cover outside the academic year, how to get more clients, dealing with the workload generated by clinical work, the role of simulation, and whether clients should be means tested. The day highlighted the exceptional work that all clinics were engaged with and the ways in which both experienced and new clinicians could learn from one another.

### The European Network for Clinical Legal Education (ENCLE)



The second ENCLE conference took place in association with the 12th International Journal of Clinical Legal Education Conference in Olomouc, Czech Republic. Paul McKeown, Solicitor Tutor, who was elected to the board of ENCLE at the AGM in Warsaw met with other members to discuss the previous year's activities and budget and the network's exciting future plans.

### iLINC

iLINC (<http://lincup.eu/>) is a European Commission funded two year project designed to bring together and develop ICT law clinics throughout Europe. Queen Mary University London is the project lead and Northumbria is the only other law school in the UK to be granted Active Partner status. Other partners include University of Amsterdam, University of Leuven and Tallinn University of Technology.

Elaine Campbell, Solicitor Tutor, represented the Law School at the inaugural Best Practice Sharing Event in London between 8 -9 May 2014. She presented a paper on the work of the business firms in the SLO and held a Q&A session for those looking to set up similar schemes.

### Client Feedback

I would like to express my gratitude to two of your students, Johnny Coulthard and Fiona Hill. They successfully secured reimbursement of my additional expenses incurred after my flight to the Scilly Isles was cancelled. They were very professional, friendly, provided an excellent service and are a credit to the University.

The funding for the project is being used to create a portal with online videos, repository of templates, case studies, and interaction including exchange of information and client referrals. The partners are also conducting a survey on the needs/wants of SMEs. It is hoped that the network will lead to student exchange programmes, simultaneous events across Europe and the production of a White Paper based on survey data.

### Clinical Legal Education Organisation Conference 2013, Portsmouth

Rebecca Parker, Paul McKeown and Elaine Campbell attended the annual CLEO conference, held at University of Portsmouth, on 14 – 16 November 2013. Rebecca presented on 'Making partnerships work: the role of law schools, not-for-profit organisations and the legal profession'. Paul was part of a panel discussing "Clinics and their clients – from social justice to small business development'. Elaine presented 'Changes to the legal profession – the LETR and Legal Services Act 2007: implications for clinics'.

### 12th International Journal of Clinical Legal Education Conference (IJCLE), July 2014

Sarah Morse, Elaine Campbell, Rebecca Parker, Paul McKeown, Carol Boothby and Jonny Hall attended this year's IJCLE conference at Palacky University, Czech Republic.

The clinical legal education movement continues to push the boundaries, and this was celebrated in the conference's theme "Clinic without Borders". Many of our staff gave papers at the conference and chaired session streams. Papers included:

Paul McKeown and Sarah Morse: "A model of clinic – assisting litigants in person".

Jonny Hall: "How have we re-framed the curriculum? A critical and theoretical look at our decisions"

Rebecca Parker (with Sally Gill, University of Greenwich): "Rules of engagement: clinics and the legal profession"

Elaine Hall: "Lawyers for the 'public good' in the UK: conceptual and pragmatic issues for educators"

Elaine Campbell: "Feeding back: providing law clinic students with nourishing formative feedback"

Northumbria Law School also publishes the International Journal of Clinical Legal Education, a leading journal in the field of clinical legal education. During the conference, Editor Elaine Hall announced that the Journal was now fully online: [northumbriajournals.co.uk/index.php/ijcle](http://northumbriajournals.co.uk/index.php/ijcle)

The IJCLE also launched a twitter account: @ijcle

### 7th Global Alliance for Justice Education (GAJE) Conference

GAJE's 7th Worldwide Conference, held in December 2013, was hosted by the Jindal Global Law School of OP Jindal Global University (JGU) and the National Law University-Delhi (NLU-Delhi). It took place in two parts, with the first part (10-14 December) at the JGU campus outside Delhi in Sonapat, Haryana, and the second part (16-18 December) at NLU-Delhi in the New Delhi district of Dwarka.

Chris Simmonds and Paul McKeown attended the conference. Chris presented on "The Role of Justice Education in Promoting Community Engagement in Sustainable Development". Paul's paper was entitled "Marketing Pro Bono Work to Law Students".



The Gandhi Memorial, India

### Student soundbites

The thing I enjoyed most about SLO was...

"Having independence taking on cases, although working under a supervisor, work on cases flowed... When cases were closed I had a real sense of achievement"

### Client Feedback

"Thank you for all your work you have been so incredibly helpful and pragmatic. Your advice was invaluable, your service exemplary again thank you".



### Additional conference papers and publications

#### Conference papers

Siobhan McConnell and Elaine Campbell "Commercial Awareness: what is it and can we teach it?" Northumbria Research Conference, May 2014

Cath Sylvester "Measuring Competence in Legal Education: A View From the Bridge", Association of Law Teachers Conference, Leeds, April 2014

Sarah Morse and Tamsin Nelson "Standardized Client: the way Forward for Teaching Law Students Interviewing Skills?", Association of Canadian Clinical Legal Education, Nova Scotia, Canada, 16-19 October 2013.

#### Publications

Carney, D., Dignan, F., Grimes, R. and Parker, R. (2014 – publication pending) The LawWorks law school pro bono and clinic survey 2012

Campbell, E (2014) "Regulating Clinic: Do UK Clinics Need to Become Alternative Business Structures Under the Legal Services Act 2007?" 20 International Journal of Clinical Legal Education 519

Kevin Kerrigan "Learning the law by doing" Criminal Law & Justice Weekly, Jan 2014.

Elaine Campbell "Do something for free?!": Why engaging with pro bono legal work might be the best thing you ever do at law school", The Student Lawyer: <http://www.thestudentlawyer.com>

## Student prizes and achievements

**The David Gray** prize for the student scoring the highest overall mark for the Student Law Office was awarded to Oliver Lovett.

**The Philip Plowden scholarship** for the student in a crime firm who scores the highest overall mark was also awarded to Rachael Fearon.

### The Woon Scholarships

Mr Wee Teng Woon, a Law School alumnus and long-time supporter of our law students provides a number of £1,000 scholarships to help fund student travel and expenses to participate in placements in law clinics or with law firms undertaking public interest work around the world.

Mr Woon who is based in Singapore built up highly successful legal and business interests since his graduation in the early 1980s. He has generously supported deserving students via the existing Woon



*Rebecca Mattinson and Joel Potts on their first day in Singapore*

Scholarship scheme and this award enables the School to expand further the opportunities available to its clinical legal education students.

The winners of the third annual Woon scholarships were Rebecca Mattinson and Joel Potts. They were awarded a placement in Singapore during August 2014. The picture above is from their first morning in Hong Lim Park before starting work. On their first day Rebecca was told she was at the High Court working on a Family law case the following day, with Joel in Court on the Wednesday! Both had a wonderful time and an experience they will not forget.

### SLO students commended by Circuit Judge

On 6th June 2014 SLO supervisor Christopher Mitford, who is a barrister, represented an SLO client at the Crown Court in Newcastle in respect of an application to vary a restraining order. The students working on the case were Hannah Burton and Sophie King. His Honour Judge Sloan QC, who presided over the case, commended the students on the quality of their preparation.

### Irwin Mitchell Scholarship

We thank Irwin Mitchell for their continuing support of this educational scholarship, which enables one third year student to undertake a 4 week work placement in a law clinic at one of America's top universities. Once again this was at City University New York (CUNY). In 2013 the scholarship was awarded to Johnny Coulthard.

### Student soundbites

The thing I enjoyed most about SLO was...

"The opportunity to develop my communication skills by communicating with clients, counsel, solicitors, opponents and support staff in a variety of ways"

## A final word from our Director



This has been an amazing year, with Northumbria University winning the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education, based on the work of the Student Law Office. It was wonderful to have the support and involvement of our students, with five of them attending the ceremony at Buckingham Palace, but many more joining us for celebration dinner with a range of colleagues from the legal profession and judiciary as well as other partners from the local community. Finally, we had a more informal student party, to which all students were invited, and a good time was had by all.

This momentous award was not our only accolade – winning the Attorney General's Pro Bono Award for Best Contribution by a Law School for the third time was another high, with staff and students attending the Houses of Parliament for the award.

I would like to give heartfelt thanks to our fantastic admin team, who provide support to staff and students, and also to the team of dedicated supervisors who ensure that students and clients receive a high quality experience.

A strong feature of the past year was the level of engagement by our students, many of whom volunteered for pro bono activities over and above their studies. I wish all our students well and hope they look back on their time in the Student Law Office as a worthwhile experience.

**Carol Boothby**  
Director Student Law Office



Copies of this publication are available in alternative formats such as braille, large print, tape or disk. In the first instance please contact Karen Newton (Disabilities Adviser) for details.

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