

Student Law Office

Annual Report 2016–2017





Welcome to the Student Law Office



This has been another successful year for the Student Law Office, with a panoply of awards and accolades recognising the achievements of students and supervising staff in providing thousands of hours of free advice and enabling members of the public to secure access to justice.

I have been privileged to lead the Student Law Office as Director for the last 8 years, during which time we have celebrated numerous successes, the most notable being the Queen's Anniversary Prize for the work of the Student Law Office. From May this year, I handed over the role of Director to my close colleague, Paul McKeown, an experienced supervisor recognised for his teaching excellence, who has also published significant work in the field of clinical legal education. I thank all our law clinic staff for their commitment and professionalism and look forward to seeing the Student Law Office continue to flourish in the coming years under Paul's leadership.

Carol Boothby

This year has seen me inherit the mantle of Director from Carol Boothby. I would like to begin by recognising the dedication that Carol has shown to the Student Law Office, not only as Director but as a solicitor and supervisor working in the office. Over many years, she has consistently provided high levels of service to both her students and clients making a positive impact on their lives. She has also provided excellent leadership and support to the Student Law Office team. I hope to continue to build upon the solid foundations that have been laid.

The Student Law Office continues to be recognised for its outstanding work and contribution to the community. This year has seen the Student Law Office awarded the Access to Justice Foundation Award. The achievements of the Student Law Office are not possible without the support of an outstanding team, again recognised this year through the Higher Education Academy's Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence. Further successes include Elaine Campbell, a member of the Student Law Office team, receiving a National Teaching Fellowship. The Northumbria Law School was shortlisted at the Solicitors Journal Awards in the Pro Bono Team and Legal Education Provider categories.

As we move forward, the Student Law Office will face numerous challenges stemming from changes within both Higher Education and the legal profession. However, I am confident that we are well placed to continue providing an outstanding experience for our students and clients.

Paul McKeown



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. 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.

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 2016-2017



Students involved in the Student Law Office: 345

Year 3 – **163**

Year 4 – **158**

Elective students – **24**

Cases:

New enquiries – **750**

New and existing cases conducted – **191**



Compensation recovered for clients:

£74,927.57

Number of staff involved:

23 supervisors,

2 administrative support staff



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 City Library
- Newcastle and Gateshead Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Newcastle Personal Support Unit

News

Student Law Office team win inaugural Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence

The Student Law Office has won a national award in recognition of its work providing students with an excellent learning experience for our students.

The Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) is a new award given by the Higher Education Academy. CATE celebrates collaborative work in teaching and learning, and highlights innovative practice which supports student learning. The Student Law Office was one of 15 projects across the UK to be shortlisted for a CATE award, and one of just six to be named a winner. As part of the prize the Student Law Office has been awarded a grant of £15,000 to help disseminate its learning further.

Carol Boothby, then Director of the Student Law Office, said: *"We are delighted to have won this highly prestigious award, recognising the excellence of our teaching team. This is recognition of their commitment to provide the best possible learning experience for our students, whilst at the same time also leading research into the benefits to students and the local community of this type of real-life experience."*

Jonny Hall, Faculty Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning & Teaching) and Professor Elaine Hall accept the CATE award on behalf of the Student Law Office

Professor Peter Francis, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, added: *"This award highlights the achievement of Northumbria's vision of professional excellence allied to Research Rich Learning delivered through our commitment to experiential learning. The Student Law Office is an exemplar of this practice within this university and beyond."*

Solicitor Tutor awarded prestigious National Teaching Fellowship

Solicitor Tutor Elaine Campbell has achieved a highly prestigious National Teaching Fellowship in the Higher Education Academy's teaching awards.

The scheme celebrates excellent practice and outstanding achievement in learning and teaching in higher education. Elaine was awarded the fellowship in recognition of her contribution to the Student Law Office, which provides community-based pro-bono legal services, and for her role in developing the Business and Commercial Law firms. The awards also noted her extensive peer reviewed publications and conference papers in several fields, including clinical legal education and her award-winning social media work.



Professor Peter Francis, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, said: *“Whether you are a student, an academic or a member of our professional support services, there are many reasons to be proud of Northumbria and this is certainly one. Elaine’s award demonstrates teaching and learning excellence across everything that she does within the institution, nationally and internationally. Above all, it shows that her work has real impact.”*

Commenting on her success Elaine said: *“I am delighted to receive this prestigious award. I particularly want to pay tribute to the many colleagues, past and present, who have encouraged and supported me throughout my career. I am proud to be part of our excellent Northumbria Law School team, committed to innovative, student-centred learning and teaching activities, and rich, impactful research.”*

Student Law Office wins Access to Justice Foundation Award

The Student Law Office team were delighted to be this year’s recipient of the Access to Justice Foundation Award.

The Access to Justice Foundation is a national charity which, along with a network of local Legal Support Trusts, works to provide access to justice for the most vulnerable in society. It does this by raising funds and distributing them to organisations that provide free specialist legal advice and support to those in need who cannot afford it. The Access to Justice Foundation Award recognises the work of individuals and educational bodies in promoting and supporting access to justice and charities which provide pro bono services.

The Attorney General, The Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP, presented Paul McKeown and Student Law Office students with the award at the House of Commons.

Paul said: *“A university is an integral part of the local community and has a responsibility towards that community. This award recognises the invaluable work of all the staff and students in promoting access to justice and providing legal support to people within our region and beyond.”*

Northumbria Law School shortlisted for LawWorks & Attorney General Student Awards

The eleventh annual LawWorks & Attorney General Student Awards were celebrated at an awards ceremony on 26th April in the House of Commons. Hosted by His Honour Sir Robin Knowles CBE, the awards celebrate the exceptional contribution of law students and law schools to pro bono legal advice.

Northumbria Law School was shortlisted for Best Contribution by a Law School, based on its commitment

to the provision of pro bono legal assistance amounting to over half a million pounds worth of free advice every year.

Northumbria Law School shortlisted for Legal Education Provider of the Year and Pro Bono Team of the Year

Northumbria Law School was shortlisted for Legal Education Provider of the Year and Pro Bono Team of the Year in the Solicitors Journal Awards. A key component of both nominations was the work of the Student Law Office. Jonny Hall, Paul McKeown, Victoria Gleason, and Elaine Campbell represented Northumbria Law School at the awards ceremony in London on 17 May 2017, where nearly 500 members of the legal profession came together to showcase and celebrate their achievements.

Business students call in the law!

Students from Newcastle Business School’s Entrepreneurial Business Management (EBM) course and the Student Law Office have joined forces to share skills and promote enterprise opportunities.

The pioneering EBM course involves students setting up and running their own limited companies. The students working in Business & Commercial firms in the Student Law Office provide pro bono legal assistance for businesses, community groups and entrepreneurs. Lucy Hatt, EBM Programme Leader, and Victoria

Elaine Campbell receiving her award from Professor Rama Thirunamachandran



Gleason, Student Law Office Module Leader, organised a collaborative session where the law students were assigned an EBM team to work with. Each team, composed of both EBM and law students, then worked together on problems and opportunities sourced from the EBM students' business projects.

The law students were able to gain an understanding of the commercial issues facing the business projects whilst highlighting to the EBM students any areas which might merit closer consideration from a legal perspective. Later in the session, the focus moved to collaborative working between EBM teams, as each EBM group came up with an issue or opportunity facing one of their business projects, which was then set as a challenge to another team.

The business students found the contribution of the law students really valuable, with one commenting *"Today was really fun as well as informative. I feel like I learnt a lot from the law students, as well as learning more about each other."* One of the law students added *"Everyone seemed to benefit from this session, both business and law students. It helped us consider different issues which may arise when dealing with a business."*

Pub quiz for National Pro Bono Week

In November 2016 we supported National Pro-Bono Week by raising £164 for regional organisations providing free legal advice. More than 60 current and former students and academics from the Student Law Office held a charity quiz at Nancy's Bordello in Newcastle. The proceeds will

go to the North East Legal Support Trust (NELST) and the Personal Support Unit. Ana Speed, a Solicitor Tutor in the SLO, said *"working with our partners to raise funds for pro-bono support is extremely important and something we do on a regular basis. Events like our recent quiz night are also fun and rewarding for the participants."*

Civil drafting workshop – run by Marg Castles, Director of Clinical Legal Education at Adelaide University

In October 2016 we were joined by the Director of Clinical Legal Education at Adelaide University, Marg Castles. Marg ran a workshop with our students on civil drafting, which over 30 students attended. Marg adopted a very hands-on approach to the teaching of pleadings, with the students preparing a statement of case and particulars of claim throughout the one-hour session. One student commented *"thank you very much for the workshop we had today. It was a great help and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I thought Marg was a great tutor and very interactive with us all."*

The Great Legal Walk 2017

In May 2017, a team from the SLO joined the North East's legal professionals in a 10k walk around Newcastle in order to raise money for the North East Legal Support Trust. Laura Cassidy, fundraising and development manager of the North East Legal Support Trust (NELST) said: *"To receive such support from so many people and different legal organisations is heart-warming and*

Solicitor Tutor Ana Speed (centre) helps hold up the North East Legal Support Trust banner outside Newcastle Law Courts



demonstrates how when people unite with a common cause, they can really make a difference to our goal of justice for all. All the funds raised from the walk go directly to help people and charity organisations who desperately need help and access to legal services."

Employment Law Project – Employment Tribunal Practice and Procedure

Sarah Morse and Caroline Hood's employment firms have undertaken an Employment Law Project over the course of the year, to develop their knowledge and understanding of Employment Tribunal Practice and Procedure. As part of this project they attended a lecture delivered by Jamie Anderson of Trinity Chambers, visited the Newcastle Employment Tribunal to observe a hearing and researched, designed and delivered a lecture to their peers.

In order to capture this knowledge and to demonstrate and feed forward their learning they ended the project by producing posters on the topic. This project and prizes were funded by Northumbria University as part of a teaching, quality and enhancement activity. Sarah Fitzpatrick of Collingwood Legal kindly acted as judge and attended the presentation.

Congratulations to our students Emelie Jayne Vardon and Amy Dufferwiel for producing the winning poster.

We wish to thank Jamie Anderson and Sarah Fitzpatrick for their contribution to the success of the project.

Lord Carnworth (centre) visits the Student Law Office



Student prizes

The David Gray prize for the student scoring the highest overall mark for the Student Law Office was awarded to Ailsa Tennant. The Philip Plowden prize for the best undergraduate performance in Criminal Appeals Clinic was awarded to Jacob Mitchell. Congratulations to Ailsa and Jacob.

We also 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 2016 the scholarship was awarded to Ailsa Tennant.

Visits

We are delighted to host a substantial number of visits from academics, clinicians, Members of Parliament, campaigners, students, and other dignitaries each year. In 2016-17, we hosted many individuals and groups, including:

The Rt Hon Lord Carnworth of Notting Hill, CVO, Justice of The Supreme Court

We were visited by Lord Carnworth, a Supreme Court Justice, prior to his public lecture at Northumbria University exploring the role of environmental law in society. During the lecture, Lord Carnworth discussed

recent environmental case law from senior courts across the world, identifying key themes and challenges. Lord Carnwath was shown the Student Law Office by Dr Michael Stockdale, Head of the Law School, and he spoke to a number of students about their SLO experience.

Dr Vanessa Davies, Director General of the Bar Standards Board

In November 2016, we were delighted to host Dr Vanessa Davies, Director General of the Bar Standards Board. Student Law Office is an option for students enrolled on the Bar Professional Training Course.

The Rt Hon Lord Mackay of Clashfern

The Rt Hon Lord Mackay of Clashfern, one of the UK's most respected and influential legal figures in recent times, gave a public lecture at Northumbria University in October 2016. In his Lord Chancellor Eldon Lecture the former Lord Chancellor of Great Britain and Lord Advocate of Scotland delivered a lecture entitled: "Criminal Trial on Indictment in England and Scotland: A comparative view from Hadrian's Wall". The lecture will compare and contrast some outstanding features of cases brought on indictment in the two jurisdictions. Before his lecture Lord Mackay very kindly took the time to speak to some of the students working in the Student Law office about their experience.

Sir Mark Walport

The Government's Chief Scientific Adviser Professor Sir Mark Walport visited Northumbria in November 2016 to deliver a public lecture about the power of forensic science in law. During his talk, entitled Forensic Science and Beyond, Sir Mark discussed the different and innovative ways analytical science is being used, from within the pharmaceutical industry to cyberspace. He also discussed his influential 2015 Annual Report around the future of forensic science, to which a number of experts from Northumbria contributed chapters. Sir Mark also visited the Student Law Office where we were delighted to speak to him about our pro bono work.

Dr Wijewardena, Faculty Honorary Graduate

In December 2016, we hosted respected South East Asian economist Dr W.A. Wijewardena. Dr Wijewardena is currently President of the Business Management School (BMS) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. His career at the Central Bank of Sri Lanka lasted 37 years culminating in nine years as the Deputy Governor, responsible for economic research, monetary policy, financial system stability, public debt, rural credit and banking. Dr Wijewardena was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law by Northumbria University.

Santander Universities UK

Representatives from Santander Universities UK visited the Student Law Office in October 2016. Northumbria University has entered into a three-year partnership with Santander Universities, which will see a package of annual scholarships, worth at least £40,000 per year, made available to students to help to support their international mobility and entrepreneurship activities. Santander will also support the Students' Union with its fundraising activities, for example, providing opportunities to match-fund donations made to charitable causes such as RAG Week.

Clinical Research

International Journal of Clinical Legal Education Conference 2017 (3-5th July 2017), in association with the European Network for Clinical Legal Education (ENCLE) and the UK Clinical Legal Education Organisation (CLEO)

The International Journal of Clinical Legal Education (IJCLE) is an international peer-reviewed, open-access journal devoted to the innovative field of clinical legal education. The journal is edited and staffed at Northumbria University.

The first IJCLE conference was held in 2003, in London. Since then clinicians from around the world working with students in the delivery of legal advice and education projects have gathered together each year for their annual conference. Conferences have been held in in South Africa, Ireland, Scotland, Australia, Spain, Czech Republic, Turkey, and Canada. In 2017, the conference returned to the home of the IJCLE, and was held in association with the European Network for Clinical Legal Education (ENCLE) and the UK Clinical Legal Education Organisation (CLEO). Professor Kevin Kerrigan gave the welcome keynote address, and the keynote panel was delivered by Professors Lisa Bliss, Mary Anne Noone, and Veronika Tomoskova. Over 170 academics from more than 25 countries attended the conference.

Professor Elaine Hall, editor of the IJCLE, said *"We have been blown away by the enthusiasm and scholarship of international clinicians. The network, always strong, supportive and inclusive is becoming ever more complex and collaborative both in the research undertaken and in the deep reflection on what it means to be a clinician."*

Jonny Hall, Faculty Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning & Teaching), said *"The University of Northumbria and the city of Newcastle provided a warm welcome to our delegates, who constantly remarked on the friendliness, openness and curiosity they met – all*

good clinical traits! Next year our conference will be in Hong Kong where we'll continue to explore the ways in which clinic contributes to student learning, community empowerment and access to justice."

The hashtag for this year's conference was #IJCLE17. You can follow news about the journal and our annual conference at the IJCLE twitter account @ijcle.

Northumbria Law School celebrates its first clinical legal education PhD

Tribe Mkwebu, Northumbria's first doctoral candidate in clinical legal education, has been awarded his PhD. Tribe's thesis was entitled *"Clinical Pedagogy: A Systematic Review of Factors Influential in the Establishment and Sustainability of Clinical Programmes and a Grounded Theory Explication of a Clinical Legal Education Case Study in Zimbabwe."*

Congratulations to Dr Mkwebu and his supervision team of Professor Elaine Hall and Professor Chris Ashford.

LEAPS: Legal Education and Professional Skills Research Group

The group is an inclusive collegiate group intended to provide support, promote and enhance legal education at Northumbria. The group acts as a focus point for research activity surrounding legal education and professional skills. LEAPS members have delivered a substantial number of conference papers, and published widely during the 2016-17 academic year. For a full list of papers and publications, and more information about LEAPS, please visit northumbria.ac.uk/LEAPS.

IJCLE delegates come together to say farewell on the last day of the conference





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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Law School