

Student Law Office

Annual Report 2017 - 2018





Welcome to the Student Law Office



Reflection is an important aspect of the learning process within the Student Law Office and the annual report provides an opportunity for me to reflect upon the year. If asked to sum up the year in one word, I would say that word is 'community'.

The Student Law Office is a community service providing invaluable legal advice and representation to the people of the North East and beyond. This service is provided through casework, legal advice sessions and public legal education programmes.

This community service is important at a time where people have great difficulty in accessing the advice and support they require. The Family Justice Project, led by Ana Speed and Kayliegh Richardson, is a fantastic example of this and was duly recognised as such with the award of Best New Project at the LawWorks and Attorney General's Student Pro Bono Awards 2018.

This academic year has also seen an amazing community spirit amongst the students working within the Student Law Office. This spirit has seen the students raise money for a number of charities including the Personal Support Unit and the North East Legal Support Trust. Further, the students also collected food and other supplies that were donated to Newcastle West End Foodbank. The students also organised a number of well attended social events such as a Band Night, a dodgeball tournament and an End of Year Celebration.

Finally there is the community of staff, both academic and professional support, who work tirelessly to ensure clients receive an exceptional level of service and the students receive a high learning experience.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the Student Law Office community as we look forward to the challenges ahead.

Paul McKeown

Director of the Student Law Office

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 the new 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 2017-2018

Students working in the Student Law Office:

Year 4 - **135**

Elective students - 23





Cases:

New enquiries - **954** New and existing cases conducted - **223**

Compensation recovered for clients: £110,493.31





Number of staff involved:

18 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



SLO supervisors Kayliegh and Ana with students Stephanie Wilson and Daniel Ruddick, and the Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP

Family Justice Project wins Best New Pro Bono Activity at prestigious national awards

At the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Awards 2018, held in the House of Commons, judges named The Family Justice Project as the Best New Pro Bono Activity. The awards recognise and celebrate outstanding pro bono work undertaken by law schools and students across the UK. They are run by national charity LawWorks with the support of the Attorney General, The Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP.

The Family Justice Project launched in 2017, in response to the drastic surge in demand for pro bono legal advice and representation in family law matters in the North East following the reduction in the availability of legal aid. Led by SLO supervisors Ana Speed and Kayliegh Richardson, The Family Justice Project empowers and provides extensive and high quality free legal advice and support to vulnerable and minority groups.

Paul McKeown, Director of the SLO, said: "These are hugely significant awards within the legal sector and we are immensely proud of all those involved in The Family Justice Project. The legal support provided has been recognised at the highest level for its

quality, and for fulfilling a growing need for pro-bono legal assistance. It also provides our students with an outstanding learning experience that they can take with them into their future careers. Winning the award is testament to their commitment and skills as legal practitioners - it is richly deserved. We also thank the partners that worked with us on this project, Ben Hoare Bell LLP, the Angelou Centre and Impact Family Services".

SLO supervisor shortlisted for Law Teacher of the Year

SLO supervisor Victoria Roper has been shortlisted as a finalist for Law Teacher of the Year at the 2018 Northern Law Awards.

The award is open to any law teacher working in a higher education institution in the North of England. Entrants must provide evidence of innovative teaching practices, an ability to enhance student learning experience through scholarly activities, student engagement skills, interest in student development, and student satisfaction

Reflecting on her successful shortlisting, Victoria said: "I am delighted to be a finalist in the Law Teacher of the Year category. Northumbria Law School strives to provide its students with an excellent teaching environment and I am proud to do my part to enhance the student experience."

SLO makes the final of the Northern Law Awards

We were delighted be shortlisted as finalists in the Pro Bono/Community Initiative category at the 2018 Northern Law Awards.

The Northern Law Awards celebrate the great wealth of legal talent and success within the North of England. Recognising success from across the career span with categories such as Trainee of the Year and Rising Star to Firm of the Year and the Outstanding Achievement,

the awards showcase and celebrate the talent of local firms and organisations.

Director of the SLO, Paul McKeown, said: "I am delighted the Student Law Office has been shortlisted in the Pro Bono/Community Initiative category at the Northern Law Awards. This recognises the fantastic work of the staff and students in the provision of legal advice and assistance to the North East community and facilitating access to justice."

Praise for SLO employment firms' assistance to Northumbria Police

Throughout the course of this academic year, students in Lyndsey Martin's employment firms have provided regular employment law updates by way of newsletters to the legal department of Northumbria Police who in turn circulated them to their HR department.

Lyndsey and her students were very grateful to receive this feedback from the assistant force solicitor they have been working in partnership with:

"Many thanks for the latest Employment Law newsletter you have provided. On behalf of the legal team here at Northumbria Police may I express our appreciation of the very helpful updates provided by your students and yourself in these newsletters. They are always very relevant and apposite in addressing the sorts of employment law issues we often encounter in practice and the level of information provided is at the perfect level for busy practitioners, explaining the caselaw

Great Legal Quiz at Nancy's Bordello



and providing helpful comment on its practical application. You clearly have a cohort of articulate and astute lawyers to be. I hope also that this is a helpful exercise for your students – it certainly is a valuable service to us."

Great Legal Quiz

This year, the Student Law Office supported National Pro Bono Week by raising over £380 for regional organisations promoting access to justice. More than 80 students and academics attended the Great Legal Quiz at Nancy's Bordello in Newcastle. The proceeds will go to the North East Legal Support Trust and the Personal Support Unit.

Ana Speed, the solicitor tutor leading National Pro Bono Week in the SLO said: "Working with our partners to raise funds for probono support is extremely important and something we do on a regular basis. Events like the Great Legal Quiz are also fun and rewarding for our students."

Our students and staff rise to Great Legal Bake fundraising challenge

On Wednesday 14th February 2018, our students participated in the nationwide Great Legal Bake to raise money for the North East Legal Support Trust (NELST). NELST is our local arm of The Access to Justice Foundation which raises and distributes funds to support free legal advice services. The charities supported by the NELST help to facilitate access to justice for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of

Our students created a special NELST cake as part of Great Legal Bake



society. They provide free legal help to people facing problems such as homelessness, debt, employment disputes and family issues.

Led by solicitor tutor Ana Speed, our students and supervisors created a fantastic range of sweet and savoury bakes, including vegan and gluten free options. We raised approximately £180 for NELST, supporting their vital work in ensuring access to justice for people who cannot afford legal services. Our thanks go to the Great Legal Bake Committee (SLO students Steph Wilson, James Stacey, Diana Margine, Michael Wood, Katie Rowsby, Farhana Ali and Jade Kennedy) for all of their efforts in organising the sale. Thanks also go to SLO staff Kayliegh Richardson, Dawn Nellist, Claire Cowell, and Chris Simmonds for bringing in some delicious treats.

Celebrating the end of the Queen's Anniversary Prize five year period

In 2013, we were awarded a prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for the exceptional work of the Student Law Office. The prize is the highest form of national recognition open to a UK academic or vocational institution, and is awarded in recognition of work judged to be of outstanding excellence and with positive impact.

The prize was bestowed on Northumbria University for having: "A university law clinic making a distinctive contribution to the needs of the local community and to legal education."

SLO students take part in the Climb Everest Challenge



All Queen's Anniversary Prizes are awarded for a period of five years. This year, we celebrated the end of our five year prize period with an event arranged by SLO students. SLO students and staff gathered at The Cluny for evening of live music from many local bands. Congratulations to the student organising committee for putting on a fantastic event.

Foodbank@SLO

Newcastle West End Foodbank is the largest foodbank in the UK, feeding more than 40,000 people last year. SLO students set up the Foodback@SLO project, collecting donations from staff and students across the University. This year, our donations provided hundreds of families in the West End of Newcastle with 3 days' worth of food.

Our students also ran a special project collecting selection boxes. Over 100 selection boxes were delivered to Newcastle West End Foodbank in time for 1st December 2017

In addition, on 30th November 2017, SLO students and staff baked some amazing Christmas goodies as part of a bake sale for the Foodbank@SLO project. We received lots of feedback about how good the bakes tasted! Congratulations to everyone who volunteered and baked for the sale. Over £240 was raised towards Foodbank@SLO.

Climbing Everest to raise money for the Personal Support Unit

In December 2017, SLO supervisors and students took part in the Climb Everest

SLO students selling festive themed bakes for Foodbank@SLO





EBM and SLO students collaborate at the Northern Design Centre

Challenge in order to raise money for the Personal Support Unit (PSU). The PSU is a charity dedicated to providing free, independent assistance to people facing proceedings without legal representation.

Teams competed against each other to achieve the goal of reaching the height of Everest in two hours. We raised over £700. Well done to the worthy winners, the Peaky Climbers!

Collaboration with Newcastle Business School celebrates its second year

For the second year running, students from Newcastle Business School's Entrepreneurial Business Management (EBM) course and the SLO 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. This year, the students met twice at the Northern Design Centre to work on legal problems and opportunities sources from the EBM's students business plans. SLO students also offered additional one-to-one legal assistance sessions for the FBM students

Victoria Roper appointed to the Law Society's Education and Training Committee

We are delighted to announce that SLO supervisor, Victoria Roper, has been appointed to the Law Society's Education and Training Committee.

The Law Society's Education and Training Committee represents solicitors' interests in matters relating to education and training, and sets and oversees the implementation of policy in this area.

Commenting on her appointment Victoria said: "I am delighted to have been given this opportunity to contribute to the important work of the Education and Training Committee at such a crucial time for the solicitors' profession. As both a university lecturer and a practicing solicitor, I am passionate about the education and training of solicitors and I want to contribute to decisions that will shape the future of legal education and impact both universities and law firms."

Professor John Wilson, Pro-Vice Chancellor Faculty of Business and Law, added: "Victoria's appointment to such an important and influential committee exemplifies the way in which Northumbria is a business-focused university with strong links to the professions. It also reflects the quality of teaching at Northumbria Law School, and the way in which we strive to be at the forefront



SLO supervisors Kayliegh (L) and Ana (R) showcase their work on gender-based violence

of developments in legal education for the benefit of our law students and graduates."

SLO students raise raffle money in support of the Personal Support Unit

This year, our students sold raffle tickets on behalf of the PSU and all proceeds were given directly to the charity. Prizes included 5x £100 of Deliveroo vouchers, and a £300 SuperBreaks gift voucher for weekend breaks and holidays.

Family law firms take part in 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence

Family law firm supervisors Ana Speed and Kayliegh Richardson hosted a series of activities for Student Law Office students as part of the international campaign, 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness about gender violence and the strategies for ending it.

As part of the activities, students participated in documentary screenings, debates and met with domestic violence organisations to hear about their important work. They also participated in a workshop by Associate Professor Ruth Lewis about her innovative research on gender violence and online abuse.

Kayliegh and Ana also set up a family law blog 'A Family Affair'. Every day, for the 16 days of

activism, students posted an article on topics related to gender violence. You can visit the blog here: afamilyaffair.wordpress.com.

Following the success of the project, Ana and Kayliegh delivered a paper 'Consideration of Whether Participation in the International "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence" Campaign is an Effective Teaching Tool for Raising Awareness and Understanding of Gender Based Violence' at the Directions in Legal Education Conference in Hong Kong in June 2018.

Special screening of "I, Daniel Blake"

On 7th February 2018, SLO students arranged a special screening of the feature film "I, Daniel Blake". The film tells the story of Daniel Blake, who is denied employment and support allowance despite his doctor finding him unfit to work. It won the Palme d'Or at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, and features Newcastle West End Foodbank. SLO students gave a presentation before the screening, and the Head of the Foodbank and a volunteer spoke to visitors, staff and students about the work the Foodbank carries out.

SLO students give a presentation before the screening of "I, Daniel Blake"





SLO end of year party organising committee and prize winners

SLO Tuck Shop raises money for the Newcastle West End Foodbank

This year's Student Foodbank Volunteers set up an SLO Tuck Shop in the office. Students and staff were able to buy crisps, chocolate or biscuits, or a bottle of pop to keep their sugar levels up. There was an honesty box with a suggested donation of 50p minimum. All proceeds went towards the Newcastle West End Foodbank collection.

SLO students arrange end of year event at Tyne Bank Brewery

This year, our SLO students arranged a relaxed evening at Tyne Bank Brewery, with food from local supplier Fat Hippo, to celebrate another successful year of pro bono advice and representation. The students voted for and gave prizes to students who had, for example, been deemed the most committed to the SLO. Well done to the organising committee.

Student prizes

The David Gray prize for the student scoring the highest overall mark for the SLO was awarded to Elizabeth Clazie. The Philip Plowden prize for the best performance in Criminal Appeals Clinic was awarded to Hannah Donovan. Congratulations to Elizabeth and Hannah.

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 2017 the scholarship was awarded to Elizabeth Clazie.



(L-R) Lucy Winskell OBE, Sir Geoffrey Vos QC, His Honour Judge Kramer, Vice Chancellor Mr Justice Barling

Visits

We are delighted to host a substantial number of visits from academics, clinicians, Members of Parliament, campaigners, students, and other dignitaries each year. Thank you to every one of our visitors who attended the Student Law Office this year, including:

Sir Geoffrey Vos QC, Chancellor of the High Court

On 1 March 2018, Northumbria University hosted a prestigious launch event announcing the opening of a Business and Property Court (B&PC) in Newcastle. Offering convenient access to experienced judges and expert legal services, the Court will be located initially at the Law Courts on Newcastle's Quayside. It will combine and co-ordinate the specialist civil jurisdictions of the High Court and County Court to provide a single resource for commercial and property-related litigation in the North East.

With its pioneering Law School, excellent relationships with the legal professions and the judiciary and established partnerships with regional businesses, Northumbria was seen as an ideal yenue for the launch.

Before the launch, Paul McKeown, Elaine Campbell, and Adam Jackson met with Sir Geoffrey, Mr Justice Barling, and His Honour Judge Philip Kramer to discuss the work of the Student Law Office and our pro bono activities.



District Judge Nicola Shaw (centre) and the SLO family firms

John Gill, Editor - Times Higher Education

John Gill has been editor of Times Higher Education since March 2012. We were delighted to host John as part of his visit to Northumbria University on 24th August 2017. Solicitor Tutor, Lyndsey Martin, and SLO administrator Dawn Nellist gave John a tour of the SLO and discussed our pro bono work.

District Judge Nicola Shaw

District Judge Nicola Shaw visited the University to talk to the SLO family law students about her experiences of working in the judiciary. This visit was organised by SLO family law supervisors Ana Speed and Kayliegh Richardson as a joint firm meeting. Nicola talked about her career to date, which included being a specialist family barrister at Broad Chare Chambers and Trinity Chambers.

Professor Joanne Conaghan

Professor Conaghan is Head of Bristol Law School. Professor Conaghan has written extensively about issues relating to gender and law and is widely recognized as a leading international scholar in that field. She visited Northumbria Law School to share her experience as Deputy Chair of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework law subpanel, and to deliver a seminar on Policing, Professionalism and Liability for Negligence. As part of her visit on 5th October 2017, we were very happy to host Professor Conaghan in the Student Law Office

Principal District Judge Bala Reddy, Community Justice and Tribunals Division, State Courts, Singapore

We were delighted to be visited by Judge Bala Reddy on 12 October 2017. Judge Reddy is a Principal District Judge, Community Justice and Tribunals Division, in the State Courts of Singapore. He also teaches Evidence, Litigation & Criminal Process at Singapore Management University. Judge Reddy spent the morning the Student Law Office, meeting Elaine Campbell, Paul McKeown, Sarah Morse, and Ana Speed to discuss the way the Student Law Office operates and our probono projects. He also met with and spoke to students Benjamin Marsay, Stephanie Wilson, and Shona Nicholson.

Judge Reddy meeting SLO students and SLO supervisors Ana Speed and Elaine Campbell





Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, meeting SLO students and Director Paul McKeown

Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP

On 20 October 2017, we were visited by Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed. Student Law Office Director Paul McKeown and students Jack Pattinson and Adam Miller met Anne-Marie to discuss the work of the Student Law Office.

Michal Urban, Charles University

On 23rd October 2017, Sarah Morse, Module Leader for Streetlaw and Student Law Office, and Managing Editor of the International Journal for Public Legal Education met with Michal Urban to discuss Streetlaw projects.

Sir James Mumby

We were delighted to host Sir James Mumby, former President of the Family Division of the High Court of England and Wales, as part of his visit to Northumbria Law School. Sir James met with Kayliegh Richardson and Ana Speed, family law firm supervisors, and SLO family law students from across a range of SLO family firms. The students spoke about the projects they had worked on, and also engaged in a discussion with Sir James on the importance of pro bono assistance to individuals requiring family law advice.

Mr Wee Teng Woon

Northumbria alumnus and supporter of the Student Law Office, Mr Wee Teng Woon visited the SLO with his family on 9 July 2018. Mr Woon was met by the Director of the SLO, Paul McKeown, and Solicitor Tutor Ana Speed, who expressed our thanks for Mr Woon's

continuing support, and provided an overview of our latest projects and successes. Paul and Ana also discussed future projects which would facilitate access to justice.

Clinical Research

Many of our clinic supervisors are members of LEAPS: Legal Education and Professional Skills Research Group. LEAPS is an inclusive collegiate group intended to provide support, promote and enhance legal education at Northumbria University. The group acts as a focus point for research activity surrounding legal education and professional skills.

Over the last year, membership of the LEAPS research group has grown to 40 lecturers. Members of the group have presented at various national and international conferences and research outputs within the group continue to grow in number. The group has been closely following developments relating to proposed changes to legal education and training. This is one area upon which a number of LEAPS members have presented papers at conferences and some have also been asked to appear on expert panels. LEAPS and its members continue to grow in reputation and to maintain and build excellent links to influential organisations like the Law Society and the Clinical Legal Education Organisation (CLEO), Victoria Roper, the Convenor of the research group, is an SLO supervisor.

For a full list of publications, and more information about LEAPS, please visit **northumbria.ac.uk/LEAPS**.

Other research highlights include:

Launch of the UK Clinical Legal Education Organisation's website

The UK Clinical Legal Education Organisation (CLEO) launched its first website on 22nd September 2017. Information about CLEO, including upcoming events, can be found at: cleo-uk.org.

Membership of CLEO has grown in the last year to over 110 members from 60

institutions. The appointment of new trustees and a reorganisation of key roles (Chair and Treasurer) have led to organisational and strategic improvements. SLO supervisor, Victoria Roper, is CLEO's Treasurer.

Given that CLEO members are dispersed across the UK, work is under way to create regional groupings that will facilitate more regular localised meetings. A North West Regional group met in May and it was found to be a very useful, allowing attendees to share good practice and discuss issues specific to their area. This model is now being replicated in other regions.

CLEO has been carefully considering proposed changes to qualifying work experience for solicitors and its impact on clinical legal education. In June CLEO, LawWorks, and Nottingham Law School jointly held a wellattended workshop, "The Solicitors Qualifying Exam - Fit for Purpose? Fit for Pro Bono?" at Nottingham Trent University. A number of other events, including a follow-up SQE event, are planned for the coming academic year. It was decided at the June event that CLEO would organise a working group to consider the options in relation to signing off clinic as qualifying work experience. The intention is that CLEO will facilitate discussion and help develop best practice quidance.

CLEO trustee Linden Thomas continues to work on producing, in collaboration with others, a Clinical Legal Education Handbook. The Handbook will be a practical guide for all clinicians as to how to start up, and also run, a legal clinic and is anticipated to be published later this year.

SLO supervisors represent Northumbria Law School at the Commercial Law Clinics Roundtable

The second annual Commercial Law Clinics Roundtable took place at the University of Sheffield on 9th March 2018. The event was well attended by a range of clinicians and clinic students as well as start-up and enterprise advisers. SLO supervisors, Elaine Campbell and Victoria Roper were both invited to speak at the Roundtable. Elaine discussed the SLO's

current and proposed assessment structure, and later gave some practical advice on clinic scholarship based on her own research journey. Following Maxine Carr's presentation on the Solicitors Qualifying Exam, Victoria gave a reply and then led a question and answer session.

Kayleigh Richardson wins prize for best poster presentation at World Congress

SLO family law supervisor Kayliegh Richardson and Northumbria Law School Senior Lecturer Laura Coapes won the prize for best poster presentation at the 7th World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights which took place in Dublin in June 2017.

Northumbria Law School celebrates its 2nd clinical legal education PhD

Rachel Dunn, Northumbria's second doctoral candidate in clinical legal education, has been awarded her PhD. Rachel's thesis was entitled "The knowledge, skills and attributes considered necessary to start legal practice competently and whether live client clinics develop them."

Congratulations to Dr Dunn and her supervision team of Professor Elaine Hall and Paul McKeown.

International Journal of Public Legal Education goes live

Edited by Student Law Office module leader Sarah Morse, the International Journal of Public Legal Education aims to promote & support PLE development, and critically examine & share best practice. The journal was launched on 16 October 2017.

The second issue – looking at programme design, development and value - is currently live, and can be found here: northumbriajournals.co.uk/index.php/ijple

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.

Tel: 0191 227 3385

Email: karen.newton@northumbria.ac.uk

Northumbria University is the trading name of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.

northumbrialawschool.co.uk

