



LAC

Legal Advice Centre



Queen Mary
University of London

Annual Report for the Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre 2017

RUSSELL
GROUP

lac.qmul.ac.uk

Mission Statement

Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre has two central aims; educating students, and engaging and supporting the community through the provision of pro bono legal advice.

We endeavour to do this by;

- providing students with the opportunity to learn legal and non-legal skills through clinical based teaching, learning and experience;
- ensuring students understand the value, importance and impact of pro bono work for themselves and the community; and
- striving for every individual to be able to access justice.

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Foreword



“The academic year 2016-17 has been another busy but prosperous year for the Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre. We continued working into our tenth successive year helping our local and wider community, and enhancing post graduate and undergraduate student education. This was the year we launched the new undergraduate LAC module; The Practice of Law in a Clinical Environment and welcomed new supervising law firms and chambers as well as starting a partnership with the City of London Appeals Clinic. We were delighted to welcome a new full time and

two part time members of staff to the team. As the Legal Advice Centre goes from strength to strength and continues to be a pillar of support for clients and students alike, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff, students and volunteer lawyers and other partners for all their hard work and commitment.”

Valsamis Mitsilegas

**Head of the Department of Law
at Queen Mary University of London**

About the LAC

The LAC provides a free, accessible, client centred advice service to the public. It was opened by its Patron, Lord Goldsmith, in 2006 and currently engages over 180 students across its various projects. We are delighted to have over 100 volunteer barristers and solicitors who supervise students and enable them to deliver legal advice.

We act as a first-tier advice agency: providing preliminary advice on the strength of a client's case, the processes that need to be followed, and an explanation of complex legal issues. Clients come to the LAC from a wide variety of backgrounds and present a wide range of legal issues and needs.

This provides our students with the opportunity to experience law in a practical context and to develop many of the skills required for successful entry into the profession. Our volunteer lawyers enjoy engaging with the local community on pro bono matters and are able to assist in the training of the next generation of barristers and solicitors.



Facts and Figures for 2016-17

Student Engagement

- 24 students undertook The Practice of Law in a Clinical Environment (undergraduate optional module) who also act as Student Advisers.
- 50 Student Advisers who engaged with the LAC on an extra-curricular basis.
- 58 qLegal Student Advisers who were post graduate students engaging on an extra-curricular basis.
- 12 students on our SPITE for Schools project who engaged on an extra-curricular basis.

Supervisors

- 131 undergraduate Student Supervisors
- 32 postgraduate Student Supervisors

Client contact

Undergraduate

1466 client enquiries	286 booked clients
876 signposted clients	25 different areas of law

Post Graduate

126 qLegal client enquiries	67 booked clients
56 signposted clients	5 different areas of law

Each enquiry is carefully assessed to see if we can book that client in. We use the following considerations;

- the area of law and availability of appointments,
- the students' ability to advise on the legal issue,
- the volunteer lawyer's knowledge and resources,
- the complexity of the legal issue, and
- the urgency of the case.

I'm extremely grateful for the professionalism and detailed guidance provided by your team. The eloquence of the explanation also really helps and I was given clarity of the legal approach that would best suit my case. Really pleased, thank you.

Undergraduate Projects Offering 1-2-1 Client Appointments

Criminal Justice Project - assisting those who have queries relating to the Criminal Justice System.

Family - providing legal advice on a full range of family law issues. These include divorce, child contact disputes, child care proceedings, wills and probate and cohabitation issues.

Immigration - legal advice on all types of immigration matters including asylum, indefinite leave to remain, and deportation.

Law for the Arts - the LAC offers free advice to people who are involved in the creative industries who need intellectual property law advice in relation to their work.

Law for Forces - offering free legal advice to those currently in the Armed Services, to those who have served, and to their families.

Law in General - provides advice on a wide range of legal issues including landlord and tenant, employment, consumer and contract disputes. Once a month we offer Company law appointments which can cover; the formation of companies, company disputes, and being a sole trader.

SPITE - SPITE (Sharing and Publishing Images to Embarrass) is a free legal advice service provided to anyone who has been a victim of image based abuse, or subjected to the 'sharing and publication of images to embarrass' by another individual. We are the only specialist service in providing advice in this area and are partnered with the government funded Revenge Porn Helpline.

Pink Law - The LAC is committed to offering both a welcoming and confidential environment for members of the LGBT community when seeking free legal advice. As part of this on-going commitment, we launched Pink Law, which gives free and impartial legal advice to the LGBT community on a range of legal issues including; discrimination, family and immigration law.

qLegal (postgraduate) - provides free legal advice, workshops and resources to tech start-up companies and entrepreneurs. We support innovation by providing free access to legal and regulatory resources to new businesses, primarily in the technology sector. qLegal services are provided by postgraduate law students under the guidance of legal professionals from collaborating law firms and academic staff in the School of Law at Queen Mary University of London.

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Other LAC Projects

A no hassle straight forward legal service that you can trust, with friendly, knowledgeable and helpful staff.

SPITE for Schools (undergraduate)

12 undergraduate law students delivered 11 bespoke workshops at local secondary schools on the topic of sharing intimate images and the law. These workshops engaged approximately 700 school pupils over the year. SPITE for Schools has been extremely successful this year. With growing demand for the project to be delivered across more secondary schools in London, we are expanding to 18 schools next year.

Participating school: 'This topic is current and it affects all of our students. The information that was delivered was very informative and I believe that none of our students fully understood the real life implications of sending/sharing and receiving sexually explicit images. The students' presentation was very factual and their workshops really started the students thinking about their actions and potential consequences. It was brilliant, particularly that the delivery was from younger university students rather than teaching staff.'

City of London Appeals Clinic (undergraduate)

45 Students were introduced through six evening lectures to the work of the Court of Appeal Criminal Division and the Criminal Cases Review Commission while simultaneously undertaking case work for the Clinic. Students learned what to look for when seeking to overturn a conviction and what evidence may be useful in doing so. They worked with real casework in order to develop practical experience in case analysis.

qLegal Teach Tech Law (postgraduate)

qLegal, our post graduate project, developed an outreach programme called Teach Tech Law. This saw postgraduate law students provide classes to pupils at St Paul's Way School in Tower Hamlets East London, Saint Gabriel's College and St Martin-in-the-Fields High School. The students provided classes to pupils on law and entrepreneurship including developing a business idea, corporate structure, intellectual property, finance and presentation training. The business ideas were presented by pupils at a Pitch-it competition to a panel of industry experts at the Digital Catapult Centre. The winners will attend the university in April for a coding day to develop their technologies.

EHealth (postgraduate)

qLegal is a partner in the Horizon 2020 Project eHealth Hub. qLegal has advised six eHealth and digital health start-ups with free legal advice and will be hosting two workshops this year in conjunction with MedCity UK and University Esante, France.

qLegal Law and Technology Group (postgraduate)

Post graduate students worked in teams in a law and technology group, based at the legal start-up Lexoo. The programme has provided the group with a view into the world of start-ups and legal technology. Group members work with Lexoo's digital marketing, legal network and account management teams, and have learnt a lot about the back end work that goes into running a start-up; such as the expansion of Lexoo's lawyer database.

Student Career Development

This year, the LAC secured the following career development opportunities for its Student Advisers:

- 2 Mini Pupillages with 15 New Bridge Street Chambers
- 3 Mini-Pupillages with Coram Chambers
- 9 Placements with Nabas International
- 8 Placements with Reed Smith
- 2 Placements at Wilsons

CV workshop – In collaboration with the Careers Department, the LAC provided a workshop to help students understand what they have learnt through the LAC and be able to articulate it accurately. This was attended by 24 Students.

HMP Grendon Visit

Students went to visit a group of prisoners to run an inclusion and acceptance workshop as part of our Pink Law project. We are continuing to work with HMP Grendon to make client appointments across all our projects accessible for inmates.

qLegal is UK Startup's best legal friend; you don't go wrong if you go qlegal.



Partners

It is the unstinting support of our supervising solicitors which enables the LAC to achieve everything it does. Not only do they provide their legal knowledge and expertise on client matters, but they also educate our students to become the best future barristers, solicitors, and other professionals that they can be. It is because of their dedication that our students are able to harness their legal skills and learn how to apply their legal knowledge in a practical context.

qLegal has provided a great opportunity for me to get answers to some of the questions which have worried me whilst being in the early stages of setting up a business and has also helped me to know which questions I should be asking. The advice letters are clear with a summary of easy action steps to take - highly recommended!

As a thank you our Student Advisers nominated their supervisor for the Centre's Annual Supervisor of the Year Awards. This year, the awards went to:

- Rachel Coyle 36 Bedford Row
- Vitoria Nabas Nabas International
- Jessica Bridgett Mishcon de Reya
- Juanita Kareer Wilsons LLP
- Irene McMillan Kingsley Napley
- Simon Lim Bross Bennett
- James Setchell Fieldfisher
- Vikki Leitch Simmons & Simmons
- Anna Storer Mishcon de Reya
- Mark Pring Reed Smith
- Anna Ratcliffe Coram Chambers
- Pritesh Davdra Reece Thomas Watson

Clients

Satisfaction

As with any service, it is essential that client needs are understood. We take a great deal of pride in the feedback we receive and it is particularly heartening for our students and supervisors to know that the work they are doing is having a beneficial impact on their clients. Our feedback continues to be extremely positive:

100% of clients say they would use the service again and recommend it to others

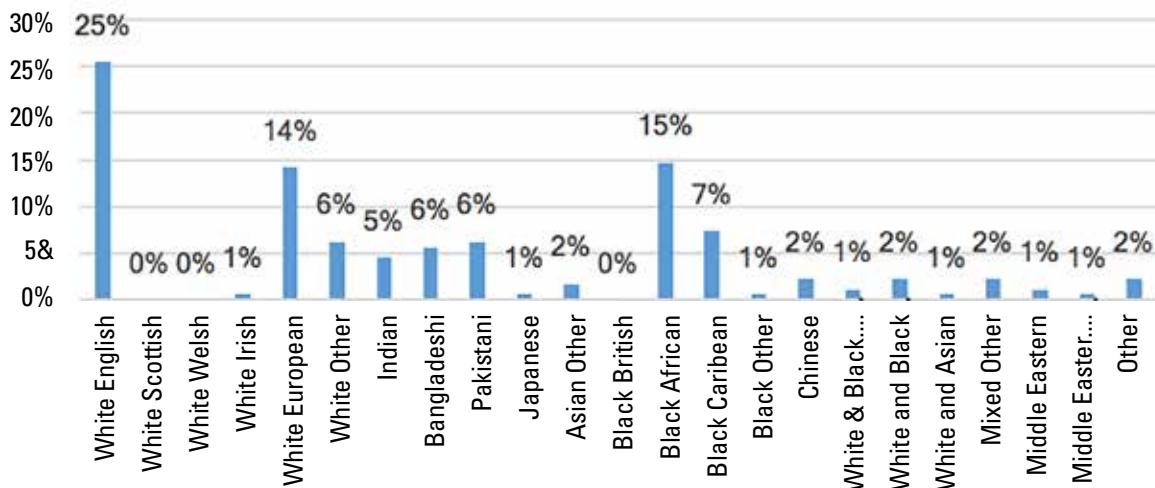
100% rate the overall service provided as either 'very good' or 'excellent'.

Diversity

The results of our equality and diversity monitoring suggest we continue to service a very diverse client base:

- 49% of clients were male and 58% female,
- 79% of clients were from London with 36% from East London, and
- 21% came from outside London.

Client Ethnic Origin



Awards

Queen Mary Festival of Communities Awards

On the 17th May 2017 at the Queen Mary Festival of Communities Award Ceremony, we were delighted to receive two out of the six awards.

- The LAC undergraduate module (The Practice of Law in a Clinical Environment) won the community collaboration award for teaching.
- Our SPITE for Schools project won the award for inspiring the local community for their work on sharing intimate images (aka revenge porn) in secondary schools.



Community and Networking Events

Safer Internet Day

LAC Students helped to promote the issues and law surrounding the sharing of intimate images on Safer Internet Day. An information and involvement hub was set up in the QMUL library for the day to ensure that this important message is spread campus wide and beyond.

The London Legal Walk

18 Staff and students took the streets of London to walk 10km to raise money for the London Legal Support Trust, who help pro bono organisations throughout the country. The LAC were amongst the 700 other teams and 12,000 walkers involved on the day. We are delighted to announce that our LAC team raised a whopping £602.



The Great Legal Bake

This year the LAC not only took part in the London Legal Support Trust's Great Legal Bake, but topped the rankings, and raised the most money of any fundraiser for this event! We were delighted in the turnout on the day and thank all of the hardworking staff and students that made the day a success. Altogether we raised £691.20 but probably accumulated many more lbs!



The QMUL Festival of Communities

Created by Queen Mary University of London in collaboration with Tower Hamlets community groups and organisations; the festival explores living and learning in east London. The festival showcases exciting research, community initiatives, businesses and services based here in east London. We enjoyed hosting a stall at the festival to ensure that our local community are aware of all that the LAC has to offer.

Looking to the Future

Horizon

For the first time we will be partnering with Horizon. 20 students will be trained to provide advice for members of the public; providing a niche, sophisticated end to end service in matters relating to Personal Independence Payments.

EU AIRE Hub

We are pleased to announce that next year we will be collaborating with the charity AIRE. The project will provide advice to QMUL students and members of the public on EU related immigration queries.

I was dealt with in a most professional way and the advice I was given will be extremely useful and most helpful to me in the future

Women's Project

We are working together with Legal Action for Women, to enable 3 students to provide assistance to women engaging in the Child Contact matters.

qLegal Postgraduate Module

qLegal has developed an optional credit half module which will be available on postgraduate courses which will run in January 2017. Entrepreneurship Law Clinic will cover classes on drafting, research, interviewing, teamwork, legal ethics, practice based learning and presentation. The module will be run with lawyers from leading law firms Cooley and Ropes & Gray.

I would definitely recommend this service for anyone seeking clear, professional and unbiased legal advice. This service is especially good for those from minority communities, such as the LGBT+ community, as the service was very accessible and supportive. I was able to explain my situation without fear of judgement or discrimination, and the people I spoke to were very well informed - there was no need to 'educate' them about my minority background, as is often the case when accessing services.



Contact details

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