

Strathclyde Law Clinic

PROVIDING ACCESS TO
JUSTICE IN GLASGOW
AND THE SURROUNDING
AREAS.

ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23

www.lawclinic.org.uk



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 University of Strathclyde Law Clinic

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 University of Strathclyde Law Clinic

CONTENTS

Directors' Report by Kate Laverty	3
Our People	4
Our Roots	5
2022/23 At a Glance	6
Mode of Operation	7
Our Members	8
Our Clients	10
Case Highlights	15
Initial Advice Clinics	17
Clinical LLB: An Overview	18
Maintaining a Voluntary Clinic	19
Our Collaborations	20
Our Projects	25
Training: An Overview	28
Student Accounts	29
Where Are They Now?	32
Thanks	34
Commendations	35
Awardees	37
Executive Committee	38
Supervisory Committee	40

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kate Lavery

I am delighted to introduce our annual report where you will find details of what we have been doing this past year. We have continued to advise and represent as many people as possible, who would otherwise have no access to legal help, and take part in various events and activities, all of which aim to play a part in improving access to justice. We reached a significant milestone this year reaching the incredible figure of over £2,000,000 won or saved for our clients since our inception. We would never have thought this possible in the early years of the Clinic, but our students invariably surpass expectations.

Our collaborations with the Scottish Women's Rights Centre, Miscarriage of Justice Organisation, and Refugee Survival Trust, are great examples of what can be achieved when the skills, knowledge, and expertise of different organisations come together to pool resources and work towards common aims. We are delighted that these collaborations will continue in the following year despite a challenging financial climate for all.

It is always enriching to share our experience and learn from the experience of other Clinics at home and around the world. This year, the supervising staff were very fortunate to receive the support of the Law School to attend the Global Alliance for Justice Education Conference in South Africa. This was an inspiring event where we learned different approaches to justice education and Clinic practice from our colleagues around the world. Many are amazed at the extent of our student's representation work, with few others seeing students appear in courts and tribunals. The South African Clinics were an inspiration and were terrific hosts.

Closer to home, one of our students Arün Smith, along with supervisor Gillian Melville attended the ENCLE Conference in Liverpool, where Arün led a workshop discussing diversity in clinical legal education. He has been instrumental in introducing the role of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Clinic's Executive Committee and he delivered training throughout the year. We are so grateful to him for all the knowledge he shared with us and for the time and energy he expended in organising and delivering this invaluable training during his very busy Diploma year. The annual Law Works and Attorney General Awards invited three of our students to London where Amy Woodcock, our SWRC student co-ordinator, was commended for her volunteer work with the Scottish Women's Rights Centre and received a special mention from the Advocate General for Scotland, Lord Stewart.

A special thank you must go to our wonderful team of volunteer solicitors and students who give up their time to advise those using our Initial Advice Clinics. This is an invaluable service where people can access advice from a solicitor to help them understand their legal position. We are so fortunate to have specialists in employment, housing, and immigration along with others who can advise on a wide variety of subjects. Their commitment, enthusiasm, and kindness encourage and inspire us all.

We were delighted to receive news that we received funding for one of our part time supervising solicitor posts for the next five years from an exceptional donor, David Stirling, whom we were fortunate to meet. This has made an incredible difference to our capacity to continue to service our community and we are very grateful for this help.

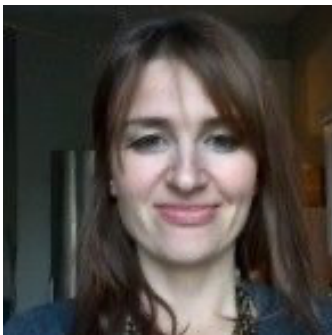
We are looking forward to celebrating our 20th Anniversary in the coming year giving us the chance to reflect on what we have achieved with the hard work of so many and renew our drive to continue to improve access to justice for as many as possible in the coming years.

OUR PEOPLE

Session 2022/23



Kate Laverty
Director



Gillian Melville
Supervisor



Diane Inglis
Administrator



Kathleen Bolt
Supervisor



Paige Alexander
Student Director



Cara Hope
Student Director

OUR ROOTS

Est. 2003



HISTORY

The University of Strathclyde Law Clinic was established in 2003 by Professor Donald Nicolson OBE. Strathclyde Law Clinic was the first of its kind. We are a student-led organisation providing free legal advice and representation to people in Glasgow and the surrounding areas who cannot access this through other means.

We build upon the tradition of clinics in the US, the rest of the UK, and the Commonwealth, where clinics are recognised for their value to the community and to each new generation of lawyers. In creating the Clinic, Donald built upon his experience in Clinics in South Africa and Bristol. The Clinic aims to complement services such as Citizens Advice Bureau, by working in partnership with various other organisations to assist vulnerable groups within society and tackle the societal issue of access to justice.



ETHOS

The Law Clinic aims to improve access to justice; address the local community's need for legal services; and place our clients' interests at the forefront.

Our students gain invaluable experience through their involvement in clinic work. As student advisors, they develop legal skills and knowledge, alongside gaining practical experience, whilst reflecting on the ethics and justice of legal practice. The Clinic creates a space of useful learning, which is the central tenet upon which Strathclyde University is built. Students find their clinic experience challenging, rewarding, and useful in providing an insight into law in practice.

The Clinic offers students a better understanding of both the legal and other needs of their local community and the impact that good quality advice and representation can have on the outcomes of disputes. It also encourages young lawyers to be more empathetic and altruistic in their future careers and to be aware of the barriers that exist for those struggling to access justice.

2022/23 AT A GLANCE



**ENQUIRIES:
421**



**ADVICE AND
ASSISTANT
CASES:
84**



**IAC USERS:
276**



**ONLINE
ENQUIRIES
ANSWERED:
59**



**TAP CASES:
8**



**MONEY
WON/SAVED FOR
OUR CLIENTS:
£158,940.44**



**MONEY
WON/SAVED FOR
OUR CLIENTS
SINCE
INCEPTION:
£2,073,228.63**



MODE OF OPERATION

We are delighted to have returned to a predominantly in-person service.

Students and staff were welcomed back into the Clinic offices in June 2022, following a prolonged period of remote working, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This transition from remote to in-person working presented challenges. However, our advisors continued to tackle these challenges and take each learning opportunity in their stride. Due to the Pandemic, many of our Clinic members had not had the chance to visit our offices or meet fellow students in-person.

Whilst our students and staff are working primarily from our offices, we have adopted a hybrid working format. Previously, Clinic work was carried out exclusively within the Clinic offices and advisors were not able to work from remote locations. This caused some issues, as finding time to complete casework during the Clinic's opening hours could prove difficult for students when working around their busy schedules and other commitments. Our hybrid approach has enabled them to become more involved in Clinic work, at no detriment to their studies and other responsibilities/commitments. It has also proven to be beneficial to our clients, enabling us to accommodate our clients' needs and expand our outreach. Face-to-face meetings with clients have resumed, although Zoom remains an option. This opens accessibility to more clients than ever before. This is extremely important as it enables us to provide access to justice to individuals residing out with Glasgow and its surrounding areas.

Representation at hearings has largely returned to in-person appearances which has been an invaluable experience for our students.

Having recognised the benefits of home-working, students continue to embrace the opportunity to work where and when it suits them. Training and additional resources have been provided to ensure our high standards of confidentiality are upheld and GDPR is adhered to, and we will continue to roll this out to future Clinic members.

Throughout session 2022-23 we have continued to complete our cases electronically, which has enabled us to fulfil our commitment to environmental justice. The default position remains that client case files are created for each client and paper files are only to be used when necessary. Client information is therefore stored securely through our electronic systems and can be accessed by students when working remotely or within the Office.

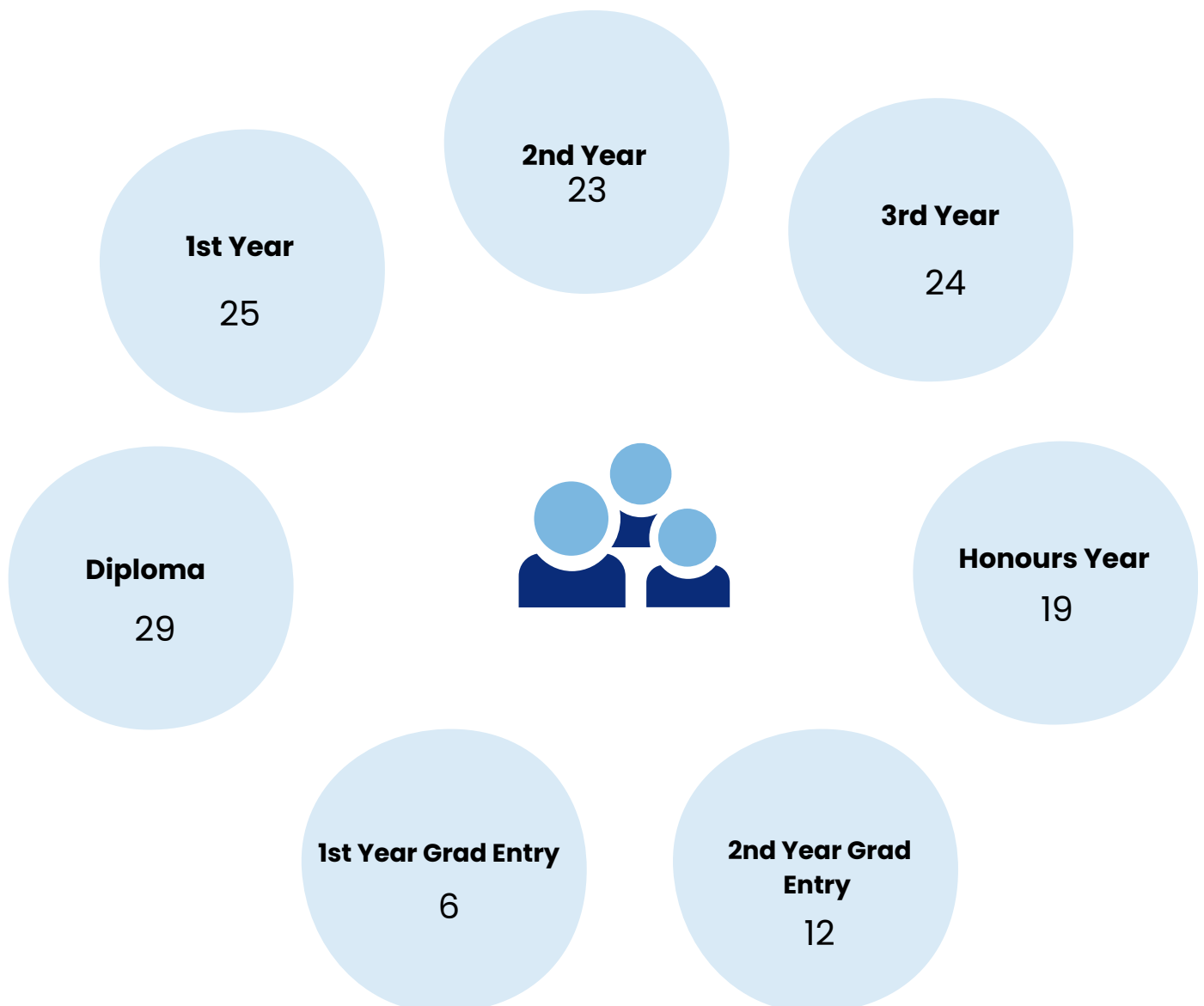
Looking onwards to the 2023-2024 session, we intend to maintain our current hybrid format. Certainly, opening the offices has provided students with an opportunity not only for collaborative working but also socialising with other clinic members.



OUR MEMBERS

STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

The Law Clinic operated with a total of 138 student volunteer members over the reporting period. The statistics below represent the number of students across each stage of their degree. These statistics were recorded prior to the recruitment of new student volunteers for each reporting period.





contd...

STAFF

The Law Clinic could not operate without our team of dedicated staff members who work with our students to ensure the smooth day-to-day operation of the Clinic and provision of a high-quality service.

All work carried out by our student volunteers is first checked by one of our three Supervisors and Administrator prior to distribution. This ensures that the Law Clinic provides our clients with a consistent, high-quality service. Our team of staff is made up of: Kathleen Laverty (Director and Supervisor); Gillian Melville (Supervisor), Kathleen Bolt (Supervisor), and Diane Inglis (Administrator).

SUMMER WORK

We employ Student Advisors on a part-time basis over summer to ensure that our casework can continue; to provide administrative support; and to develop new projects. Without these students, we would have significantly lower capacity over summer, and would struggle to take on cases and continue to provide access to justice or develop our activities and projects effectively.

This year our summer students worked from the Clinic offices which has contributed to building a team spirit within the Clinic and encouraged overall engagement amongst student advisors. In summer 2022, we employed 9 summer students on a 15-hour per week basis for a period of 12 weeks. We were able to maintain this crucial resource with thanks to the Scottish Women's rights Centre, Refugee Survival Trust, the Alumni fund and other donors. A special thanks is owed to the Alumni Fund whose funding enabled us to employ a summer student with the sole purpose of creating user-friendly and accessible Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) resources. Many individuals involved in SSSC proceedings cannot obtain legal aid and must represent themselves. Consequently, these SSSC resources will aid these individuals and assist in closing the access to justice gap which exists within this area of law.

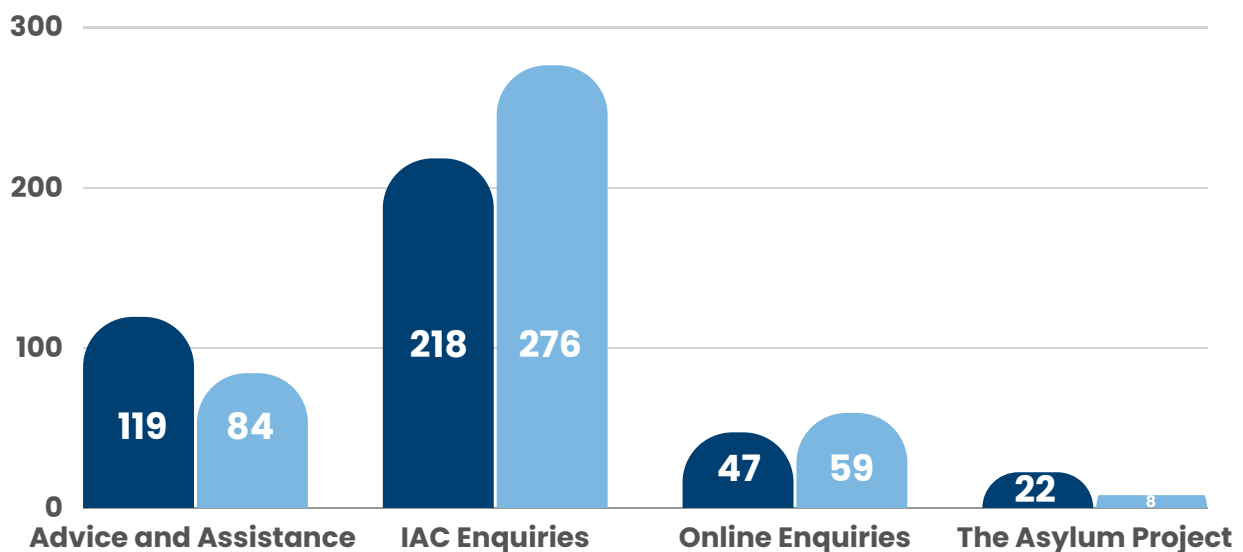
The Clinic has developed an innovative approach to offering our clients the services they need. The Clinic divides its enquiries into three separate casework 'streams', to cater to all clients' needs. We resolve non urgent and simple enquiries through our award-winning Online Advice service. We also provide our clients with the opportunity to seek immediate and more detailed advice from volunteer solicitors, at our bi-weekly Initial Advice Clinics. Finally, our traditional Advice and Assistance service continues to offer the most complete service, over a longer time period than that of the Online Advice service and Initial Advice Clinics.

2022/23

CASE STREAM STATISTICS

● 2021/22

● 2022/23



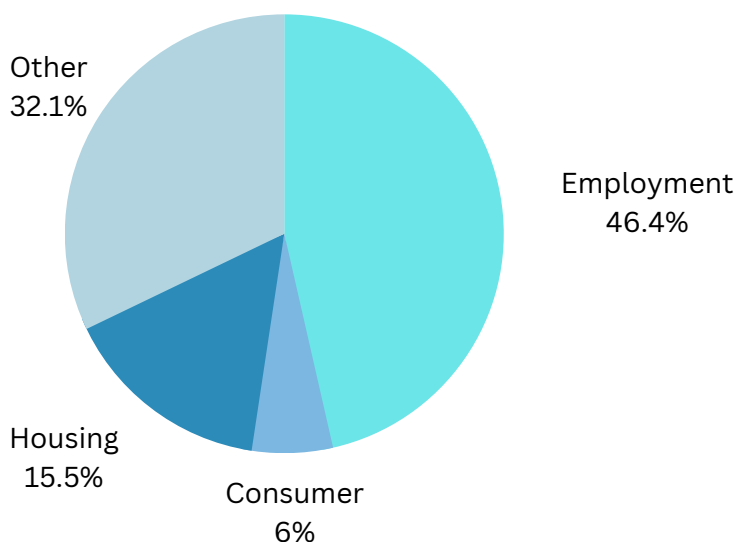
OUR CLIENTS

LOOKING AT THE FIGURES

Over the reporting period, there has been a slight decrease in the number of Advice and Assistance cases. We find we are representing in more complex cases such as discrimination claims in the Employment Tribunal which are more resource intensive. Where we cannot represent we try to ensure people receive initial advice and guidance on their case through our Initial Advice Clinic service which has managed to help more people this year. The number of online enquiries has also increased.

The number of Asylum Project enquiries have decreased. As the funding for The Asylum Project came to an end in November 2021 we have been able to help fewer asylum seekers. Fortunately, we are engaged in a new collaboration with Refugee Survival Trust under their Breathing space project which allows us to continue to help asylum seekers explore fresh asylum claims. However, due to funding and recourse constraints we cannot take on as many TAP cases in comparison to previous years.

Case Type for AA Cases



EMPLOYMENT

Over the reporting period, we took on a slightly lower number of employment cases. Employment cases are very complex and often involve tight deadlines. Time limits are strict and short. There are generally more procedural requirements involved in this type of case. Employment cases require a substantially greater number of hours per case, meaning students are required to dedicate significant time to employment cases. We are continuing to see an increase in the number of unfair dismissal cases following the Covid-19 pandemic and in light of the cost of living crisis. Disability discrimination cases carry additional complexities and are demanding of both students and staff. Many of our clients facing discrimination are vulnerable and need additional support in managing their cases through the tribunal process.

HOUSING

Despite receiving proportionally, the same amount of Housing cases as in previous years, we have seen an increase in the number of cases before the First-tier Tribunal (Housing and Property Chamber). However, this continues to remain low in comparison to Employment Tribunal claims. We are hoping to improve our knowledge in this field by arranging further training and our ultimate goal would be obtain funding to employ a specialist housing solicitor.

CONSUMER

Most of our clients' consumer issues continue to be resolved more readily through our IAC and Online services, leaving us more time to dedicate to more complex cases.

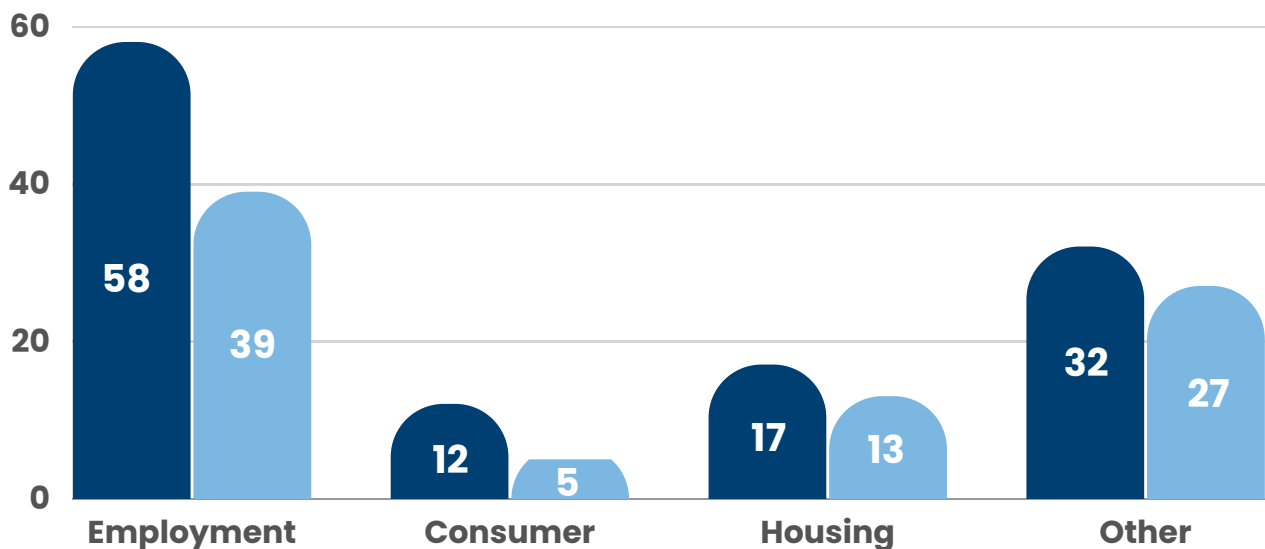
SSSC

There has been a steady increase in the number of SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council) cases, which illustrates the demand for our service for cases of this nature. In an effort to provide assistance to those involved in SSSC proceedings, with the help of funding from the Alumni Fund, we are in the process of producing user-friendly guides, which will be available on our website.

2022/23

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE: CASE TYPES

● 2021/22
● 2022/23



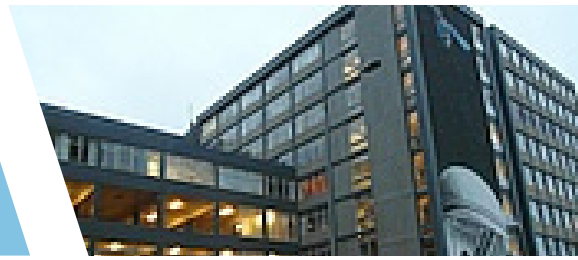
The outcomes of the cases, upon which we advised and assisted, varied. For Clinic cases, the measure of success is subjective. For some of our clients, success takes the form of an acknowledgement of unfair treatment/acceptance of liability from the Respondent, a good character reference, or payment of money owed to the client. For others, success takes the form of a well negotiated financial settlement or a legal judgment, in their favour, following a successful hearing.

The Clinic exists to provide access to justice to those who need it most. Many of our clients are vulnerable and find themselves in particularly difficult situations. Consequently, many of our clients were satisfied with simply being able to have someone to advise and support them through their dispute. Even clients whose hearing did not go in their favour, felt a measure of success as our assistance and representation allowed their narrative to be heard.

In terms of financial success alone, our cases resulted in a total of £158,940.44 being won/saved for our clients over the reporting period. This brings the total amount of money won/saved for our clients, since inception, to £2,073,228.63.

The following case highlights provide a small insight into the numerous cases our Student Advisors and Supervisors work on every year. Each individual we assist is extremely grateful for our help and support. As a student-led organisation, we would not be able to provide these individuals with access to justice without the dedication, hard work, and perseverance of our student advisors and staff.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS



SIMPLE PROCEDURE

Our student advisors negotiated a very good settlement for an elderly client who was being pursued for parking fines. The client was particularly vulnerable as he suffers from memory issues.

The client parked his car outside a shopping centre several times. Due to his memory issues, he forgot his car was there and took the bus home. After returning home, he would notice that his car was not there and would remember that he had left it in the car park. He would go back to collect the car on the same day. However, this often resulted in him not collecting the car until 30-60 minutes after his parking time had elapsed. Consequently, the client was charged parking fines which escalated due to non-payment.

Three dedicated student advisors worked diligently on this case and spent a great deal of time researching the client's position. The advisors then wrote a letter to the other side outlining the client's mitigating circumstances. This letter was very persuasive, as although the client's legal position was not strong, the other side agreed not to continue with the simple procedure action, if the client paid £100. The action was for recovery of the money owed, which was in excess of £1500. The client agreed to pay the sum of £100 and the case was dismissed. The client was very grateful for the Clinic's support and made a generous monetary donation. This outcome was due to great teamwork, perseverance, and dedication.

The lead student advisor on the case, reflected upon the outcome:

"This was my first case in the Clinic. What seemed at first to be a pretty mundane dispute over parking charges, turned out to be a really interesting and rewarding case. It was gratifying to be able to support the client through a period of uncertainty and ultimately secure the financial relief that they sought. On to the next!"

The co-advisor on the case, also reflected upon their experience:

"This was a great first case at the clinic. I enjoyed working as a team, figuring out one step at a time how we were going to resolve the problem. To hear that the client was relieved with the outcome was the best news possible!"

CASE HIGHLIGHTS



EMPLOYMENT

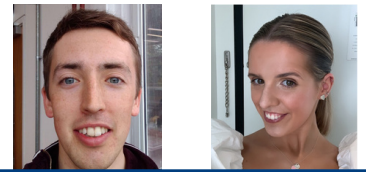
Many of our cases involve employees seeking recourse in the Employment Tribunal for poor treatment at work. However, it is not unusual in cases where an employee has had their most basic employment rights infringed, to find that the employer has gone into liquidation or become insolvent some way into the case, leaving employees with little chance of recovering any award issued by a Tribunal.

This past year has been spent trying to recover an award issued by the Tribunal, for an employee we represented successfully in the Employment Tribunal. The employee had been dismissed very shortly after her employment was transferred, in terms of the Transfer of Undertakings Regulations, from one employer to another. Although the employer never turned up at any stage of the case, they still submitted a defence in the name of a linked company. This caused no end of delay while we established that there had been a TUPE transfer to the correct named original employer. The case then proceeded as undefended, and an award was made in favour of our client. However, the employer's company then went into liquidation and of course no funds were available through the administrators.

Fortunately, in these circumstances, the UK government's insolvency service can step in and pay employees who have been made redundant their statutory redundancy pay; a limited amount of arrears of pay; holiday pay; and notice pay. It can also pay out the basic award that a Tribunal awards in an unfair dismissal claim. After many months of liaising with the insolvency practitioner and the Insolvency Service, the client eventually received the equivalent of her basic award for her unfair dismissal and has been advised that she can also seek her notice pay.

Some of our cases last many years with many different advisors involved. However, we persist until we have exhausted all avenues to recover the funds our clients are due, and in this case, as in others, eventually we achieve something for our client.

INITIAL ADVICE CLINICS



Alasdair Flett
IAC Coordinator

Natalie Marshall
Deputy IAC Coordinator

Over the past year, we have expanded and broadened our Initial Advice Clinic service in various ways. We increased the number of solicitors, both immigration and general civil solicitors while maintaining our reliable bank of employment solicitors through our relationships with specialist firms such as Work Nest. The increase in volunteer solicitors has been helped by our article in the Scottish Legal News based on the Cost-of-Living Crisis, which attracted several recruits. September 2022 saw the re-introduction of in-person appointments, which came with challenges as we adjusted to the post Covid restriction environment. We eventually settled on a hybrid model where half of our clients choose in-person appointments at the Clinic and half are seen on Zoom.

In the 2022/23 session, we advised 272 clients, which is a figure up 36.7 per cent on last year's total. A possible explanation for this is the return of in-person appointments and being able to provide for a wider range of issues with the new intake of volunteer solicitors following the SLN article in November. By and large, IACs have continued to fall every other Wednesday, with some limited exceptions for clients in emergencies/with impending deadlines. IACs continue to be by appointment only.

Going forward we would like to continue growing our partnership with the Royal Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow who allow us to utilise their building to host IACs. This provides a great opportunity for our volunteer students and solicitors to get together in a space out with the Law Clinic office. We are also striving to increase the number of in-person appointments, although our current hybrid model is working well to provide support to clients out with Glasgow through Zoom.

We occasionally receive feedback from clients showing how much they value the IAC service:

“Just a quick note to whoever heads up the Clinic and the Law faculty to say thanks for the assistance given during my call with them yesterday. Not only did they demonstrate ability to grasp the key facts quickly, but the advice they gave was sound, clearly explained and delivered with great bedside manner”.

Our case has been improved considerably by this brief engagement alone. Please pass on our thanks to them both and also to the Dean of the Faculty.

Another comment from a satisfied client with an employment issue:

“You guys were so helpful to me in my case that lasted nearly two years. You helped me so much when I had to represent myself. I wanted to let you know I won my case on Friday. We settled out of court. I got a good amount. Nothing that takes the stress away But it's the end. I'd just love to thank you”.

CLINICAL LLB: AN OVERVIEW



Malcolm Combe
CLLB Director

The University of Strathclyde continues to offer its law students who are involved with the Law Clinic the chance to study and then graduate with a dedicated “clinical” degree. This tailored programme is a unique opportunity amongst Scottish universities, providing a useful synergy between a student’s development and activity within the Law Clinic.

The existence of this programme does not change the underlying voluntary ethos of the Law Clinic. It is not compulsory for volunteers at the Law Clinic to enrol in the clinical programme, and those who are on any other LLB degree path can and indeed do make a valuable contribution to the Law Clinic and its clients.

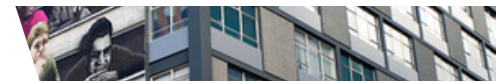
For those who do participate in a Clinical LLB, which this part of the Annual Report now focusses on, the expectations of their degree programme and their Law Clinic role are augmented by requirements to undertake various tasks and training activities in addition to their regular Clinic work. That regular Clinic work is also formalised to an extent, with CLLB students required to undertake a minimum number of cases and/or online enquiries, and such cases need to be written up as part of an academic module.

Following on from previous years where there were some adaptations relating to the pandemic or the presence of the major COP26 event in Glasgow, any Law School-related CLLB requirements were largely delivered on campus. This helped to revivify students’ involvement with the Law Clinic, but some training activities for new CLLB students were delivered in a manner that allowed us to build on lessons learnt during the periods of remote learning. Students and staff engaged with on-campus “case surgeries” (a chance for students to discuss and consider legal, practical, and ethical issues, in a safe environment with their peers and a supervisor); “continuing professional development” (training in relation to practice areas, such as housing and employment law); “Initial Advice Clinics” (where students assist solicitors in providing free, on-the-spot legal advice to members of the community); training in advocacy, mediation and negotiation; ethics training; and finally, “reflective diaries” (an exercise whereby students reflect on their journey through Law School and the Law Clinic, and how their ethical and practical responses to legal representation have changed and indeed improved during that time). The Clinical LLB programme culminates in a “portfolio” of work, representing all of the reflective diaries and a selection of important cases in each student’s Clinic work.

In 2022, we were joined by 16 new students on the Clinical LLB, with 7 of those being “graduate entry” students (i.e., those with previous degrees). As in previous years, this recruitment was made possible only by the hard work of the Clinic supervisors in assessing a huge number of application forms, followed by interviews of candidates by those supervisors with assistance from members of the Law School. At the other end of the degree journey this year, we graduated 16 CLLB students – 7 from the graduate LLB, and 9 with honours.

In between these incoming and graduating cohorts, we continued to have 32 students enrolled in the Clinical versions of the Scottish Undergraduate LLB, the Scottish and English Dual Qualifying LLB, and the Graduate Entrant LLB programmes. (Reforms to the route to qualification as a solicitor in England and Wales mean that no new students joined us on a dedicated Dual Qualifying programme, although there will be elective English law modules that interested CLLB students may opt to study.) The combination of these degrees, and the opportunity for Clinical LLB students to interact with others across a range of LLB degrees, continues to enhance their education and to provide the community with invaluable access to legal services and justice, now and into the future.

Our Clinical LLB students, in partnership with other Law Clinic volunteers, have contributed much needed legal advice to vulnerable members of the community, making flexible use of technology as appropriate. Over and above that, CLLB students have done well to produce the additional work required by the Clinical programme. Lecturers, tutors, supervisors, and clients, continued to be both impressed by, and very proud of, our Clinical students' performance. This lecturer is certainly proud of the CLLB students he met during his period acting as CLLB Programme Director, and whilst there is smidgen of regret that he must hand back this role to the returning CLLB Director Dr Rhonda Wheate, he is delighted that he can make this handover when the Law Clinic and the CLLB programme is in such fine fettle.



MAINTAINING A VOLUNTARY CLINIC

Students on the CLLB programme represent a very small proportion of the total number of students who work in the Law Clinic, because the overarching ethos of the Clinic remains one of 'volunteerism'. That is, our students provide legal advice to many of the most vulnerable members of our community, free of charge, without gaining any formal academic or other credit for their service.

The Law Clinic and Law School remain committed to this principle, and for that reason, much of the training and work in the Clinical law programmes is available to all Clinic members, and Clinical students are not given priority of access to casework in the Clinic.

This system continues to reflect the principles of the Law Clinic founder, Professor Donald Nicolson OBE, whose main concern was always the welfare of the members of the community who, without the Law Clinic, would not be able to afford legal advice or access justice.

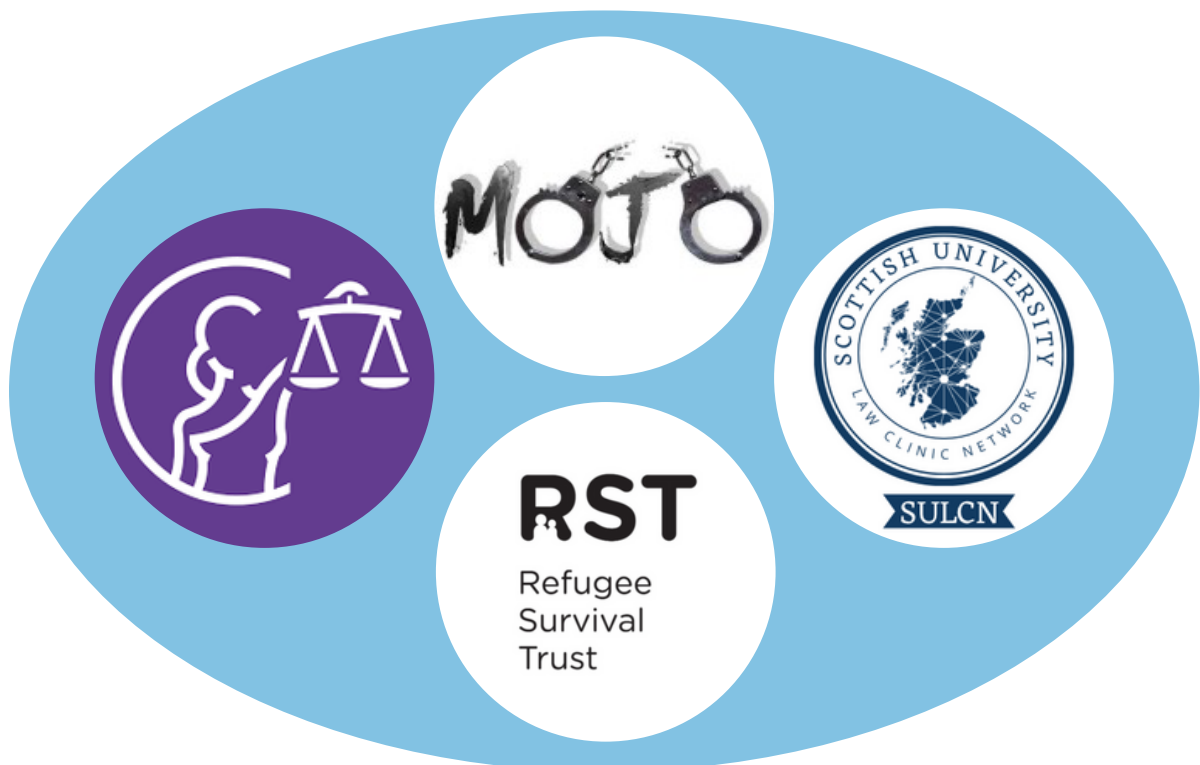
OUR COLLABORATIONS

Both on our own, and in partnership with other bodies, the Law Clinic strives to provide the most comprehensive suite of services possible.

The Law Clinic works with partner agencies to ensure that the local community's full range of needs is met.

We are currently collaborating with the following organisations/agencies:

- Scottish Women's Rights Centre (SWRC)
- Refugee Survival Trust (The Asylum Project)
- Miscarriages of Justice Organisation (Criminal Justice Project); and
- Scottish University Law Clinic Network (SULCN)



SCOTTISH WOMEN'S RIGHTS CENTRE



Amy Woodcock
SWRC Coordinator

The Scottish Women's Rights Centre is a partnership between the Clinic, Rape Crisis Scotland and Just Right Scotland (JRS). The SWRC provides free legal information, advice, advocacy, and representation, to women affected by violence and abuse. The SWRC exists because of abuses of power, and because a gap persists between women's experience of violence and abuse, and their access to justice. The SWRC strives to fill these gaps by working with specialist solicitors and experienced advocacy workers. In 2022/23, we recruited a further 4 volunteer student advisors to support the SWRC solicitors in providing this service, thus creating a group of 9 student volunteers.

Following the impact of Covid-19 all student volunteering was being carried out remotely. Whilst a remote set up was in place, this academic session we piloted new ways of working, in order to ensure that the work was engaging and to create a team environment. This new pilot meant that volunteers were receiving oral feedback on the work in which they had completed that day. This allowed for volunteers to progress their own work whilst gaining insight into how their work was being applied. We look forward to continuing with this dynamic way of working into the new academic year, with the intention of building stronger relationships between our volunteers and the staff at the SWRC. We also made use of Teams, creating a chat for volunteers and staff in order to have a platform in which we could help one another, whilst sharing relevant articles/events. Again, hoping to create an inclusive environment whilst working remotely.

In our effort to create a more dynamic working environment. We held two successful events within the academic year. The first was a joint event with JustRight Scotland as part of the "16 days of Activism", an annual campaign to highlight the issues surrounding gender-based violence. This was the SWRC's first in person event and we were delighted to hold it within the Student Union. This was an opportunity to raise awareness surrounding the campaign and the support the SWRC can offer, having both volunteers and SWRC workers on campus to answer any students' questions.

The second was an International Women's Day Event which involved a number of speakers from organisations working to combat sexual harassment. The event was extremely insightful and had very positive feedback. Our very own Maya Bedi spoke on her rewarding time as a summer intern, sharing the skills and experience which she gained from this opportunity. We heard from other speakers, such as Kelsey Smith who discussed the importance and issues which surrounds addressing sexual harassment within the workplace. As well as Regan Bonar, who provided further insight into the work carried out by the SWRC and the development of their FollowIt App.

The SWRC also took part in the Legal Walk to raise money for the Access to Justice Foundation Scotland. The work carried out by this charity is crucial within our society in ensuring that legal advice is accessible, regardless of an individual's personal circumstances - an issue very close to the ethos of the Law Clinic. This was a great opportunity for our volunteers, providing an afternoon of steps and interesting conversations, all for a good cause.

Our volunteers were able to see all of their hard work across the year being utilised late June, when the SWRC published their 'Response to Reforming the Criminal law to Address Misogyny: A Scottish Government Consultation'. Not only have our volunteers developed their own legal research skills, but they have had the opportunity to contribute to influential pieces of work, in the hope of making a positive difference within society. In addition to this, our volunteers have provided research notes to assist caseworkers on pressing cases.

There was an exciting trip to London to draw the year to the close, as SWRC Coordinator and Student Advisor Amy Woodcock had been shortlisted for 'Best individual Contribution from a student' at the Law Works and Attorney General Awards. Amy Woodcock, Laura Nicol, and Stephanie Smith took to the capital for what was an unforgettable 24 hours. It was an extremely insightful day, being surrounded by likeminded people and hearing about all the amazing pro bono work being carried out across the country. They even got a special shoutout from Lord Stewart of Dirleton Q.C (a fellow Strathclyde) which left all the advisors very starstruck.



THE ASYLUM PROJECT

Fiona Rennie
TAP Coordinator

Rahmah Aslan
Deputy TAP Coordinator

The Asylum Project (TAP) is a project within the University of Strathclyde Law Clinic.

TAP aims to assist people who have had their asylum claims refused and have exhausted all their rights of appeal. We help our clients find new evidence to submit a new claim, which is referred to as a 'fresh claim'.

After having exhausted all rights of appeal, asylum seekers are normally no longer eligible for support or accommodation and become destitute. They are unable to support themselves as they are not allowed to work. Their psychological wellbeing and health are clearly affected by this.

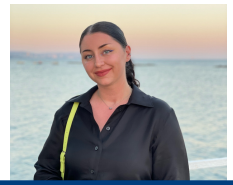
There are many reasons as to why asylum seekers want to remain in the UK, and it is usually that their human rights will be violated if they return to their country of origin.

TAP is continuously collaborating with the Refugee Survival Trust (RST) on the Breathing Space Project to assist asylum seekers who have exhausted all rights of appeal. This project offers an accommodation service to help prevent people from becoming destitute, by providing safe temporary accommodation and legal advice. Our role is to assess cases and provide legal support to those that are referred to us by the project.

Where our Asylum Project cannot assist, we refer the clients to the Initial Advice Clinic (IAC) which is another project within the University of Strathclyde Law Clinic, where an immigration solicitor can provide legal advice to their immigration related enquiries.

We managed to recruit 23 new advisors in the year 2022/2023 and we delivered two training sessions for our TAP advisors - asylum law and fresh claims, delivered by former Law Clinic advisor Hannah Cosgrove from Latta and Co; and 'Working with Trauma Survivors: Legal and Psychological Perspectives on trauma informed Practice', delivered by Andy Sirel from JustRight Scotland and Norma McKinnon Fathi from Mandala Consultants.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROJECT



Georgia Kyriacou
CJP Coordinator

Wrongful convictions still occur in Scotland, with a devastating impact on the mental and physical health of convicted people. The Miscarriages of Justice Organisation (MOJO) assists people wrongfully convicted in Scotland and sentenced to prison for more than 4 years. The casework team at MOJO investigates the factual innocence of MOJO applicants and prepares appeals for them.

In addition to casework, MOJO provides aftercare, educational, and public advocacy services. More information about those services can be found on MOJO's website, www.mojoscotland.org.

Law Clinic members are eligible to apply to be caseworkers at MOJO. This programme did not operate in 2022 and early 2023, due to the Covid-19 pandemic's lasting impact. Georgia Kyriacou (2022/23 Project Coordinator) recruited 11 new Clinic members to the programme, and all the recruits were accepted to MOJO as new caseworkers.

The caseworkers began work in February 2023. The MOJO staff provided the new caseworkers with several weeks of intensive training in criminal law, procedure, and the history of Scottish and UK miscarriages of justice. Each caseworker then received their own set of cases.

Cases undergo a 3-stage process at MOJO. Caseworkers are not involved in triage, the first stage.

At the second stage, caseworkers have individual responsibility for their assigned cases. They assess each case for merit and factual innocence, by reviewing the entire trial file and other available materials. Access to materials relies on the co-operation of defence agents and the Crown, which is increasingly not guaranteed. Caseworkers will interview clients where necessary. If clients are still serving the custodial part of a sentence, caseworkers interview the client in prison.

If the case progresses to the third stage, the caseworker remains involved and assists with the preparation of the client's appeal or their application to the Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (SCCRC). Successful appeals are rare, even where the convicted person provides proof of innocence. This is because Scots law restricts the grounds on which a criminal appeal can succeed.

Caseworkers initially volunteer for 1 full day per week, which is always done in-person at MOJO's premises. Team A works every Wednesday and Team B every Friday. These arrangements can become flexible as caseworkers become more experienced and are able to work independently. Caseworkers can decrease their involvement or change their working arrangements, subject to the needs of their live case.

The time commitment made by caseworkers to MOJO is significant and reflects the complex and serious nature of criminal appeals work. Caseworkers must continually balance the project, their academic and personal commitments, and the needs of their civil Law Clinic clients.

The Law Clinic could not operate this programme without the MOJO staff team, who provide caseworkers with supervision, training, and support. The staff team this year was Cathy Molloy (CEO), Scott Jenkins (Welfare Rights & Reintegration Officer), and Euan McIlvride (Legal Officer).

Caseworker Anthony Kelly will co-ordinate the project in 2023-24 and more caseworkers will be recruited after the Law Clinic's yearly intake of new advisors.

SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY LAW CLINIC NETWORK

Est. 2012

The Scottish University Law Clinic Network (SULCN) is an initiative that brings together and raises awareness of student law clinics in Scotland.

The Law Clinic remains part of the Scottish University Law Clinic Network (SULCN), formally launched in June 2012. During 2022–23, the Network was led by Robert Gordon University, the Chairing University. The Network met remotely every month to exchange ideas on subjects, such as ethics, public legal education, practice, and procedure in Law Clinics, and clinical legal education. A small group of Strathclyde clinic students were involved in drafting the SULCN Terms of Reference, which has proven to be a valuable resource.

Working collaboratively students and academics from Glasgow Caledonian, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Dundee, Robert Gordon, and Aberdeen Universities, SULCN continues to plan and strategise to expand its presence in Scotland.

Strathclyde Law Clinic will be the Chair University for the 2023/24 academic year and consequently, will host the 2024 SULCN Conference.





OUR PROJECTS

In addition to our 'core' case streams, the Law Clinic is currently running, developing, and setting up a number of different projects to expand our reach in the community and increase opportunities for students. Each project is lead by a 'Project Coordinator', who sits on the Law Clinic Executive Committee.

We currently have the following projects:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (EDI)
- Prisons Project; and
- Environmental Justice Project (EJP)

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP



Arün Smith
EDI Coordinator

The EDI working group seeks to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion within the Clinic.

Our previous EDI Officer, Arun Smith, reflected upon his 2.5 years as the Clinic's first-ever EDI Officer:

"During my time in the role, I sought to build a foundation where EDI work was at the heart of the Law Clinic's ethos. From knowledgeable advisors to an institutional culture that champions the importance of making access to justice meaningful, the Law Clinic provided a brilliant forum. Indeed, the fact that I received no backlash to the intention behind creating this role and in the initiatives I undertook is testament to this. I expected that, especially given the broader socio-political world, I would have to navigate challenging and disheartening questions about the purpose of EDI work; instead, I found challenging and deeply heartening questions engaged with the subject and trying to explore its nuances.

I began the role by creating relationships with the then-EDI Officer in the Law School, Dr Elaine Webster (who has now moved into a similar role at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences-level) and with the StrathUnion team, and by collating a digital library of resources. These sources exist to serve advisors present and future.

Then, I developed and delivered training sessions for advisors and Law Clinic staff. I am pleased that almost the entire Executive Committee attended these, along with many advisors. The purpose of these was to ensure not that people learned particular material – though, of course, that helps – but rather that a space for conversation was created. I have no doubt that Corey will continue to develop these conversations.

I wish Corey every success as he takes on this role. When he and I first met after he was appointed, he asked me what more I wish I could have done in the role. I believe he took my answers to heart, and given how he has already set out an agenda for the role, I have no doubt that EDI work will continue to be central to the Law Clinic.”

Looking ahead to the coming year, the EDI Working Group will be working towards meeting two objectives: striving to achieve equity through practical EDI measures and celebrating & promoting diversity.

Our 2023/24 EDI Officer’s (Corey Beaton), experiences in institutional, local, and national representation, as well as extensive involvement in the Scottish third sector, have all served to reaffirm his belief in the importance of Clinic work being led and informed by individuals’ lived experiences and insight. These will be emphasised and prioritised to achieve the two objectives above, particularly through the proposed EDI Working Group whose sub-groups will inform the EDI Officer’s work throughout the year, ensuring that all blind spots are accounted for, and that all proposals are in-keeping with the purposes and values of the Clinic’s approach to EDI.

As a cohort of up-and-coming lawyers, we are instinctively drawn towards offering pragmatic, practical advice and support to our clients which will make tangible differences to their unique and individual circumstances. Our work in promoting EDI across the Clinic should be no different, and the starting point for instituting this change should be providing our new and current student advisers with an EDI toolkit, through a revised EDI training package, which recognises and accommodates for the individual, practical needs of our clients.

Just as our practice should reflect our commitment to EDI, so, too, should our culture and working environment. Through consultation with our student advisers and Executive Committee, a draft Culture Charter will be presented at the Annual General Meeting for approval in October 2023. This document should encapsulate the values and ethos which we all embody, as we work towards providing access to justice through pro bono advice to any and all who are in need. Our internal EDI policy will be reviewed and revised in order to reflect this at an operational level, too.

To take time to reflect on and celebrate the diverse variety of backgrounds which our advisers bring to the Clinic, regular discussions will be held at an Executive Committee level to talk about the barriers and challenges which individuals from a variety of backgrounds face at local, national, and international levels, as well as celebrating important milestones in the EDI calendar through our social media platforms.

History has shown us that the law has always been an effective vehicle for enacting positive change across society to better advance the causes of equality, diversity, and inclusion. The next generation of Scottish legal professionals is likely to be its most diverse yet. Smashing the glass ceiling that so many of us face, as we flourish and grow in our academic roles and prepare for our professional roles, should continue to be our top priority.

PRISONS PROJECT



Gregor Henderson
Prisons Project Coordinator

The Prisons Project aims to offer people with convictions an easier transition back into employment and their community. We hope to provide them with some legal knowledge and information about relevant ongoing issues that could arise when offenders are released from prison and seeking employment.

The Prison Project has an arrangement with Low Moss Prison for a weekly visit. Low Moss Prison is located on the outskirts of Glasgow and has a capacity of 784 prisoners, primarily from North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority Area.

The project has been working to enable the resumption of the visits to the prison in the wake of COVID-19 and the restrictive limitations it created and there are now promising signs that this will happen. Upon returning to the prison, the Prison Project will be assisting prisoners in their final week before release, and it is hoped that the information provided will have a greater impact. Typically, two students will visit the prison and give a presentation to a group of around 20 prisoners, followed by questions and discussion.

The presentation includes helpful information regarding the relatively recent Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019, which created new rules concerning the declaration of spent convictions. Additionally, the presentation includes specific information regarding employment and employment rights, which we hope the prisoners find useful in the future.

Alongside the presentation we have a leaflet which we are hoping to hand out, offering a condensed version of the presentation with valuable information. We hope not only to offer this to Low Moss, but to other ex-offenders who may also benefit from this information. It is hoped that this move will help to expand the projects reach and its positive impact.

As always, the people within the project are continually developing resources in response to feedback from prisoners and staff, and the student volunteers have found their involvement in the project very rewarding. We hope to be back in the prison very soon as well as offering our resources to assist others as much as possible.

ENVIROMENTAL JUSTICE PROJECT

EJP Team: Anastasia Smith, Alyssa Smart, Paige Alexander and Vanessa Rodrigues

The Environmental Justice Project was founded by the Clinic's Executive Committee in May 2022. The project was founded following the COP 26 event held in November 2021. During session 2022/23, the EJP team was formed, consisting of Vanessa Rodrigues, Anastasia Smith, Alyssa Smart, and Paige Alexander. The team have dedicated their efforts to developing the project and conducting research into potential areas of focus and collaborations.

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. It acts as an umbrella term which covers climate justice, food security, and unfair exposure of poor and marginalized communities to harms associated with resource extraction, hazardous waste, and other land uses. The project was named the Environmental Justice Project with the deliberate intention to widen the scope of the project.

TRAINING: AN OVERVIEW

Mhairi Strachan
Training Coordinator

Afton Cook and Sophie Rook
Deputy Training Coordinators

The training of our volunteer student advisors is an integral aspect of the University of Strathclyde Law Clinic. Our structured training sessions conducted throughout the academic year are crucial in enabling the development of our new advisor's confidence, competence, and conscientiousness. As a result of such progression, our clients receive an exceptional standard of service.

Each year, we provide our new intake of Student Advisors with Initial Advisor Training during our induction period in October and November. The purpose of this training is to ensure that all new Student Advisors are provided with the core skills which are necessary to succeed in various aspects of Law Clinic work. This includes client interviewing; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the clinic and legal sphere; professional legal ethics; and case management. Due to the restrictions regarding social distancing being lifted, compulsory Initial Advisor Training (IAT) returned to being held on campus.

Beyond Initial Advisor Training, we continue to offer a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme over the course of the year. Throughout the year, students are strongly encouraged to engage with these forms of training. The objective is to enhance the existing skills of student advisors and expand their legal knowledge in specialised areas of law, to encourage the provision of a more robust and well-rounded service to our clients.

We offered student advisors 7 hours of on-going training, delivered by both internal and external trainers. In these sessions, a wide range of legal topics including training in Employment Law; Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) proceedings; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); and Preparation for Hearings. We extend our thanks to the SSSC, in particular Laura Russel, for arranging and providing training for our students.

We also circulate a monthly newsletter which compiles many upcoming free/affordable training sessions and events from a variety of sources which are relevant to our work. We also ensure our members are aware of upcoming external training, including "Legal Services Agency (LSA)" webinars, seminars, and legal education. The "Law Works – Free Session for Pro-Bono Workers" was included in this newsletter.



STUDENT ACCOUNT: AMY WOODCOCK



Strathclyde's open day in 2018 was where I first learned about the Law Clinic. This played a pivotal role in my decision to study at Strathclyde. Four years later, I cannot thank the Law clinic enough for the experience and opportunities being part of the Clinic has given me.

Once accepted into the Law Clinic, I made the decision to transfer to the Clinical LLB degree to incorporate the clinical aspect into my legal education. I was eager to make my clinical experience as hands on as possible, pushing myself to be deeply involved, although I was hesitant about putting myself out there. With a passion for access to justice and human rights, I sought guidance on how to apply these principles into my future career, and the Law Clinic seemed like the perfect platform for this.

I was particularly drawn to the Scottish Women's Right Centre (SWRC) during our initial training. Due to the nature of the work carried out within the SWRC I had to wait until my second year to get involved. In the meantime, I got involved with several IAC's, the Online project, and The Asylum Project. This provided me with insight into the functions of the Clinic and enabled me to gain legal experience, something which I had no prior experience with.

I worked my first case towards the end of first year. Due to the covid restrictions everything was moved from campus to online. Initially, I felt nervous about being involved in my first case. However, the experienced advisor on the case was incredibly supportive. Their guidance and patience gave me the confidence to continue pursuing cases and other opportunities within the clinic.

Due to covid restrictions I was unable to apply for the SWRC until my third year, I was determined to make the most of my shorter time frame. After being successful in my application process, I began regularly volunteering. The work which we carried out held benefit to my studies, as I was constantly improving my research skills, whilst being able to give back to the community. Shortly after commencing my volunteering, I was given the opportunity to work as an intern for the SWRC. This allowed me to work closer with the staff at the SWRC, building relationships, whilst getting a deeper understanding of the abuse and violence which occurs to women within Scotland, and the requirement for greater protections.

During my penultimate year at Strathclyde, I was given the role of SWRC co-ordinator. This role allowed me to use all the skills I had gathered to support other volunteers and create a supportive environment. Together we organised informative events on campus educating on the work which the SWRC carry out and raising awareness and celebrating international women's day. I really enjoyed my position as co-ordinator and building relationships with likeminded volunteers.

To draw my undergraduate experience to a close, I was shortlisted for the 'Best Individual contribution by a Student' award at the 2023 Pro Bono Attorney General Awards. This gave me the opportunity to attend the House of Commons to celebrate the hard work of law clinics throughout the UK. The whole experience was incredible, and I felt extremely emotional and grateful that the clinic took the time to nominate me.

I have always been someone who struggles with imposter syndrome. Within the legal field it becomes natural to compare your grades and accomplishments against that of your peers. The support and the encouragement that came from those within the Law Clinic helped me in combat my self-doubt and built my confidence in my academic and personal life. The environment within the law clinic is full of genuine support and happiness for your peers and their accomplishments. No question is a silly question within the Law Clinic. I am so grateful to have been given this opportunity and I am looking forward to working with the Law Clinic in the future.

STUDENT ACCOUNT: ANTHONY KELLY



I've just completed the two-year Graduate LLB (Clinical) programme and my second year at the Clinic. I joined during the Covid-19 pandemic, when academic and clinic work was still taking place predominantly online. Before doing the LLB, I had spent a few years working in a business role, so returning to study was a big change. My business role was also quite different to helping clinic clients.

I entered the LLB with a lack of confidence. I had worked in small-to-medium-sized businesses where everyone knew one another, and where it was easy to stick to doing what makes you comfortable. I spent my first year in the Clinic finding my feet, academically and in clinic work. I started volunteering for cases and found it a very challenging process to work with clients, advisors, and supervisors. I lacked confidence and I was uncomfortable with socialising. For a long time, I had preferred to work alone and to do things my own way.

The Clinic provided a safe environment in which to grow as a lawyer, colleague, and person. I found it enjoyable to become part of our clients' worlds, to share in their experience and to understand everything about their problem. Clients don't just need their lawyer to master the detail of the case. They also need their lawyer to understand what it is like to have lived through their experience. I discovered this only through volunteering for case after case, working out what felt good and effective, and what I needed to improve about myself.

Things went wrong along the way. I made some mistakes or did things imperfectly. However, that simply cannot be avoided. We learn from our mistakes and by trying new things.

I also started to find it enjoyable to work with colleagues and supervisors. As I have taken each case, I learned how important it is to be curious about the perspectives of other people. Colleagues and supervisors don't just sometimes have experience which I don't have, they also see the world a different way and can offer unique insights. Being part of the Law Clinic has helped me to experience, case after case, the immense pleasure that can come from solving a problem with other lawyers.

It isn't always perfect at the Law Clinic. We are staffed by students, which means I have worked alongside inexperienced volunteers, just like myself. We often do not have the experience or knowledge to deal with situations seamlessly. However, everyone I have worked with has taught me about myself, clients, or the law - whether that be through an example of what to do or what not to do.

The Law Clinic itself accomplishes a great deal with limited resources. We help hundreds of clients every year through our regular case work. I have discovered that I most enjoy preparing or conducting litigation. This inspired me to join the Mooting Society in second year and ultimately, to obtain a traineeship in criminal litigation which I will begin with Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, commencing in 2026.

Our range of projects help students to pursue specialist interests and to make a difference in specific areas of law. Example areas are immigration, the environment, prisons, and criminal convictions. I have become involved in the latter project, and I volunteer one day a week through a secondment to the Miscarriages of Justice Organisation (MOJO). Drafting casework decisions on clients who have received criminal convictions has been a fascinating and immersive experience. Additionally, this year I have taken a summer academic research job regarding the Scottish criminal appeal system. It has been unexpectedly enjoyable and satisfying to work with academics, and to research the system which governs the cases which I see at MOJO.

There is something in the Law Clinic for anybody to get involved in. The key, for me, has been to throw yourself into each activity that draws you. Without exception, you will get out what you put in, and you will help people whilst doing so. The experience you have at the Law Clinic will shape the kind of lawyer you become after qualifying. But perhaps most importantly, whilst you are here, your casework will make an immense difference to the lives of real people.

STUDENT ACCOUNT: NATALIE MARSHALL



I initially applied to become a member of the Law Clinic during my first year of the Scots Law LLB in October 2020. However, I was unsuccessful at interview. I used the opportunity in my first year to focus on settling into university life, before reapplying to join the Clinic the following year. I was delighted to secure a place second time around and was determined to make the most of the opportunity.

After completing the Initial Advisor Training, I was advised that the best way to make the most of the opportunities through the Clinic was to put yourself forward. This encouraged me to step forward for the role of Elected Member in November 2021. This involved acting as a key point of contact through which volunteers and supervisors could raise highlights or concerns to be presented at the monthly Executive Committee meetings. I was responsible for drafting emails to members to make sure they had a voice in the Clinic, as well as working as part of a team to implement change across the Clinic. This role gave me great insight into how the Clinic operated.

In December 2021 I began volunteering as a student advisor at the Initial Advice Clinics to gain confidence in conducting interviews and drafting statements from clients. I was a regular IAC volunteer and was delighted to become the Deputy Initial Advice Clinic Coordinator in June 2022. This role pushed me out of my comfort zone in the best way possible. Some of my main tasks in this role included assisting the IAC coordinator in changing the format of the IACs from online to a hybrid format. It was great to be able to meet with clients face-to-face and gradually build a buzz of people around the clinic again. Another highlight in this role included hosting an IAC at the Royal Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow, which saw one of our busiest IACs of the year.

In between project commitments, I also had the opportunity to gain some experience through casework. During my first year in the clinic, I undertook work on 4 different advice and assistance cases, which required differing levels of support and explored various areas of law. Through working on these cases I was required to draft correspondence to both clients and respondents; prepare submissions for the tribunal; and navigate complaint procedures. One of these cases involved supporting a client in navigating a factoring dispute, whereas another case involved acting as a representative for a client who had raised seven different claims against her former employer in the Employment Tribunal. In the latter case, I was delighted to see my client obtain an excellent settlement figure a few weeks before their final hearing was scheduled to take place. Each of the advisors and supervisors on my cases have been extremely patient, encouraging, and supportive throughout, which I have really appreciated.

I am now currently coming to the end of my second year in the clinic. Some highlights throughout this past year have included being appointed as Initial Advice Clinic Coordinator in May 2023 and securing a summer student position in June 2023. I believe undertaking the summer student position has allowed me to gain a better understanding of the workings of the Law Clinic, from receiving an initial enquiry to the closure of a case. This role has also allowed me to spend more time within the Law Clinic office, meeting other advisors, and gaining friendships that will last beyond university. I have thoroughly enjoyed undertaking more casework, increasing the number of clients being seen in person during our IAC, as well as gaining an insight into the general administration duties which are carried out each day behind the scenes.

Going forward in the clinic, I look forward to continuing to grow and develop the IACs throughout the next year, by recruiting new solicitors and expanding the areas of expertise we offer at our drop-in legal surgeries, to increase the number of clients we can help. I am also excited to co-host a Law Clinic event in September 2023 to commemorate its 20th birthday. A final goal for the next year which I look forward to working towards, is to develop my knowledge of trauma-informed practice and general interviewing practices to become a more considerate advisor and future solicitor.

My time at Strathclyde Law Clinic has so far been the most rewarding and invaluable experience of my time at university. Not only have I enjoyed being able to implement a practical approach to my learning which has seen my grades improve, most importantly I feel I have flourished as a person in my ability to meet and converse with a wide range of people offering a variety of lived experiences. I believe the clinic has inspired and driven my interests in access to justice, as well as provided a unique insight into what a career in law will entail. Overall, it is truly remarkable to be a part of an organisation that thrives off supporting each other to deliver outstanding results for our clients.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Lindsay Kirkwood

I joined the Law Clinic in 2010 during my first year at university as a very naive and impressionable student. I was keen to involve myself in all aspects of uni life and on hearing about the Clinic, felt this was a golden opportunity in the very competitive legal profession.

8 years having passed, the finer details of my day to day work at the Law Clinic are a little hazy. However, overall I look back on my time there fondly. This was a huge part of my uni life and makes up a significant portion of my founding skills and experience.

When I first applied, I was focused on building work experience to have content for my traineeship CV, but it turned out to be so much more than that. I gained a wealth of hands-on experience, was presented with so many diverse opportunities to become involved in legal work, team building, practise management skills, sit on a committee, and so much more.

As a law student just starting out on my journey, the exposure to legal work was incredible. Particularly memorable, were 2 cases I led, one of which I represented a client at a Small Claims hearing and the other representing a client at Employment Tribunal against a leading Scottish firm. The Tribunal hearing was, to say the least, a very daunting experience but having achieved a successful result for the client, was well worth the stress and sleepless nights! The opportunity to meet clients, research legal points, manage a file, carry out administrative tasks, and prepare for hearings were unmatched. The team of students and professional mentors really took me under their wing and gave me the confidence and support to excel. In my final year of university, I was appointed as Deputy Student Director, working with a fantastic committee, building a supportive network of fellow students and legal professionals, and opening many more great opportunities.

After university, I started a traineeship with a firm in Dundee. From the offers I had received, this firm seemed to be the best fit for me, so I decided to take the plunge and relocate from Glasgow to the East Coast. I qualified as a Private Client solicitor in 2017 and completed the Society of Trust and Estate exams in 2019. My recent promotion whilst on maternity leave was particularly notable for me. Balancing a child and a legal career is no walk in the park, but with the support of an excellent employer, it can be done! Shortly after returning from maternity leave, my firm merged with a larger Scottish full-service firm. The merge has presented many opportunities and challenges, together with an office relocation and adjustment to work life and culture. Overall, this was a great move for my original firm.

The Law Clinic was undoubtedly a huge part of my journey and contributed to shaping my skills and experience. The legal profession can be fiercely competitive so my best advice would be to invest in yourself as early as possible and get involved in everything that comes your way. The Law Clinic is an invaluable opportunity to gain skills and experience as well as provide an indispensable service to the community.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Hannah Grace

I joined Strathclyde University fresh out of school as a 17-year-old who had chosen law because I wanted to help people and hadn't given it much more thought than that. Hearing about the Law Clinic and the Clinical LLB in introductory lectures intrigued me and so joining the Law Clinic was an easy choice. I couldn't pass up the opportunity to assist with providing access to justice in Glasgow together with gaining practical experience throughout my time at university. Making the decision to switch from the LLB to the Clinical LLB took a little more time though, as when I started university in September 2013 only three students had graduated from the Clinical LLB and they had graduated in June of that year. However, I'm incredibly grateful I did make that decision as it was a unique educational experience, from reflective diaries to creating essay questions and much more. I take great pride in having graduated with a Clinical LLB, particularly when at interviews throughout my career I have been asked, 'What exactly is the Clinical LLB, is that a typo?'

Throughout my time at the Law Clinic, I was involved in a number of the invaluable projects that the Law Clinic provides, including the then Criminal Convictions Unit and Immigration Unit. I attended Initial Advice Clinics and took up the role of Firm Co-Ordinator from my 3rd year until I finished my Diploma. A definite highlight of my time as a student advisor was advocating (and securing a win) for a client at an eight-day Employment Tribunal. Although the experience put me off advocacy for life, it's hard to summarise how beneficial the experience was and just how much I gained from it (other than the Best Case award in 2016 which I'm still extremely proud of).

I would advise anyone who studies law at Strathclyde to join the Law Clinic, the experience you gain is invaluable and it's an incredible opportunity to build skills for a future in a legal career. The Law Clinic makes such a worthwhile contribution to the community, and it is a privilege to be part of such a vital organisation.

I submitted what felt like endless applications for traineeships and finally managed to secure one following a successful summer placement with Burness Paull LLP in Glasgow. The Law Clinic without a doubt prepared me extremely well for becoming a Trainee Solicitor and I was able to draw on the skills and experience I had gained throughout the five years I spent at the Law Clinic to help me succeed as a Trainee. Unfortunately, I did not secure a newly qualified position following my traineeship and entered a difficult career market having qualified in September 2020. I went on to spend 5 months as a contracts specialist at Thermo Fisher Scientific, a global healthcare company, before moving to a newly qualified position in the Corporate department at Harper Macleod LLP. I then decided I wanted to specialise in the Healthcare sector and moved to Thorntons Law LLP where I work as a Corporate solicitor in their Healthcare team, providing advice to healthcare professionals on a wide range of corporate and commercial transactions.

I was undecided about becoming a solicitor up until my third year at university when I took time to reflect and understand how much I enjoyed assisting and advising individuals as a student advisor at the Law Clinic. The Law Clinic has without a doubt shaped and impacted how I work as a solicitor today and I'm incredibly grateful to have played a small part in the Clinic from 2013 - 2018.



THANK YOU...



We are extremely grateful to a variety of people who have supported the Clinic throughout 2022/23. As a voluntary organisation, their continuous support is crucial to our success and development.

Firstly, we would like to thank the Alumni Fund and our regular monthly donors for their continued financial support. During the reporting period, the Alumni Fund funded a summer student whose sole purpose was to create user-friendly guides relating to SSSC proceedings. This work is invaluable, as SSSC proceedings are complex in nature, and individuals involved are often unable to access legal aid. These resources should be published in late October, and we hope they will prove useful in closing this justice gap.

We received funding from the Refugee Survival Trust, Scottish Women's Rights Centre, Thomsons solicitors, Allen & Overy and other donors facilitated by the Alumni office. We are very grateful to each donor for this funding, as it enabled us to employ students, both over the summer period and during term time, to ensure the Clinic was able to continue providing its services during the summer break and throughout the year while providing students with invaluable experience.

We were delighted to receive incredibly generous funding from a previous donor, David Stirling, who has enabled us to secure the position of one of our part time supervisors for the next five years. This has been crucial to the ongoing success and development of the Clinic and we are extremely grateful for this support.

We are extremely grateful to all those who took the time to assist with our training. We would like to extend our thanks to the SSSC, in particular Laura Russel, for arranging training for our students. We would also like to thank the Legal Services Agency for continuing to provide comprehensive online training sessions to students, at a discounted rate. Charles Hennessy and Callum Hiller provided very well received training to our students on advocacy skills and how to become an advocate. McGrade and Co offered specialised training on employment law as did Kathleen Bolt.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the dedicated volunteer solicitors, who attend our bi-weekly IACs. Without their support, we would be unable to provide this crucial service..

We would like to thank Alasdair Stewart for the provision of, and continuing assistance, with our Case Management System.

We would also like to thank the Supervisory Committee for dedicating their time and enabling us to benefit from their experience and expertise. Thank you also to our previous Head of School Professor Claire McDiarmid, for her strong support and encouragement of the Clinic.

Finally, thank you to the many law school academics and support staff who have given advice, assisted with interviews, and provided administrative help to the Law Clinic.

COMMENDATIONS



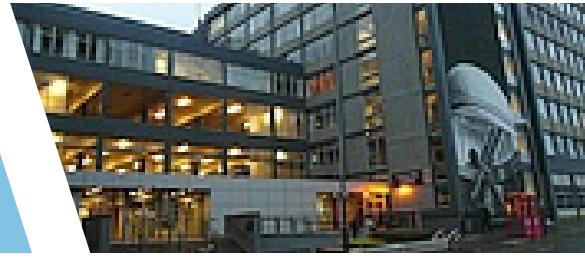
As a voluntary organisation, we rely on the hard work and dedication of our volunteers. Our team of staff and student advisors are continuously striving to improve our service. To do so, we rely on feedback from a variety of individuals who engage with our service. Over the reporting period, we are heartened to have received such meaningful and uplifting feedback from our clients and fellow professionals.

An extract from the Senior President of Tribunals' Annual Report 2022

“In Scotland, and what bright lights they shine in what would otherwise be darkness for many, the rise of the University Law Clinic network has been particularly notable in recent years. They all do an excellent job but I hope I will be forgiven for mentioning in particular, given they are our most frequent law clinic visitors, the staff, volunteer solicitors and students who operate the Strathclyde University Law Clinic. They offer not just legal advice (employment queries are their most common type of enquiry by far) but representation, done by a team of two students per case, at the Employment Tribunal. This is in all types of cases, including complex discrimination. It is daunting enough as a qualified solicitor to undertake such work but for law students to do so, and it is invariably done to a high standard, is nothing short of remarkable. They have had a number of outstanding successes in recent years for individuals some of whom I have no doubt would have withdrawn their claim before it got to hearing had they been left to manage alone. I did not want to leave my post without publicly commending them for the invaluable work they do in improving access to employment justice in Scotland.”

**- President: Judge Shona Simon
Employment Tribunals (Scotland)**

COMMENDATIONS



contd...

CLINIC ALUMNI

“Your help throughout multiple cases has been so appreciated. I have gained so much confidence as a lawyer through clinical work. Importantly, my work in the clinic has solidified my drive to be an ethical lawyer throughout my career and provided me with a real commitment to provide access to justice wherever I can.”

FELLOW LEGAL PROFESSIONAL

“I would reiterate the Sheriff's sentiment that your preparations for and conduct at the Timebar Hearing far exceeded that of some qualified solicitors I have come across and hopefully you can take that experience in to what will, no doubt, be long and successful careers.”

IAC CLIENT

“I want to say a big thank you for all the help & support that your colleagues & students gave me last night at the law clinic. Your team were all fantastic and helped me so much.”

AWARDEES



Every year our students are given the chance to nominate their peers for a series of awards in recognition of their hard work and dedication to their clinic work.

Best Newcomer

Afton Cook

Best Project Worker

Alasdair Flett

Best Case

Angela Walker, Haarisa Akram and Melissa McKillen

Best Caseworker

Sasha Akavicis and Anthony Kelly

Amanda Benstock Award for Compassion

Arün Smith and Fiona Rennie

Effie Shaw Award for Dedication

Adam Crainie

Best Overall Contribution

Mhairi Strachan

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Until May 2022

Student Directors

Paige Alexander and Cara Hope

Firm A Coordinator

Laura Nicol

Firm B Coordinator

Sasha Akavicis

Firm C Coordinator

Martin Gallacher

Firm D Coordinator

Tara Waldman

IAC Coordinator

Alasdair Flett

Deputy IAC Coordinators

Natalie Marshall and Lauren Weetman

Online Project Manager

Peter Akehurst

Deputy Online Project Manager

Hannah Stewart

Training Officer

Mhairi Strachan

Deputy Training Officers

Sophie Rook and Afton Cook

CJP Coordinator

Georgia Kyriacou

Prisons Project Manager

Gregor Henderson

The Asylum Project Co-Coordinator

Fiona Rennie

The Asylum Project Deputy Co-Coordinator

Rahmah Aslan

SWRC Coordinator

Amy Woodcock

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer

Arün Smith

Communications Officer

Laura Nicol

Elected Members

James Marshall, Vanessa Rodrigues, Katy Li



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

From June 2022

Student Directors

Paige Alexander, Cara Hope and Laura Nicol

Firm A Coordinator

Adam Crainie

Firm B Coordinator

Sasha Akavicis

Firm C Coordinator

Afton Cook

Firm D Coordinator

Casey Wilson

Firm E Coordinator

Katy Li

IAC Coordinator

Natalie Marshall

Deputy IAC Coordinators

Lauren Weetman and Scott Gillanders

Online Project Manager

Hannah Stewart

Deputy Online Project Manager

Ava Ferguson

Training Officer

Anna Gren and Jasleen Kaur

CJP Coordinator

Anthony Kelly

Prisons Project Manager

Gregor Henderson

The Asylum Project Co-Coordinator

Rahmah Aslan

The Asylum Project Deputy Co-Coordinator

Saeed Azodazad

SWRC Coordinator

Amy Woodcock

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer

Corey Beaton

Communications Officer

Abbie Clark

SULCN Representative

Holly Cherry

Elected Members

TBC



SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

2022/23

Professor Alan Paterson (Chair)

Professor Claire McDiarmid

Kate Laverty

Sheriff Patricia Pryce

Richard Farquhar

Dr Rose Mary Harley

Gwyneth James

Alasdair Stewart

Professor Donald Nicolson

Heather Maclean

Shona Simon

2023/24

Professor Alan Paterson (Chair)

Professor Adelyn Wilson

Kate Laverty

Sheriff Patricia Pryce

Richard Farquhar

Dr Rose Mary Harley

Gwyneth James

Professor Donald Nicolson

Heather Maclean



