THE DICKSON POON SCHOOL OF LAW



King's Legal Clinic Annual Report 2019







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Foreword

This year has seen a great deal of growth and development for our Clinic and I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of our students, partners and staff. We have seen a rise in the number of student volunteers in the clinic and advised more clients largely due to a number of new partnerships we have formed this year. A few highlights include; setting up the King's & PricewaterhouseCoopers Legal Clinic in February 2019, where we advise individuals and small businesses from the local community on issues ranging from employment, housing to setting up as a social enterprise; the Article 8 project with Islington Law Centre, Hackney Migrant Centre, Reed Smith LLP and Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP. This project provides much needed substantive representation to migrant families who are seeking to remain in the UK on human rights grounds.

A number of our students have excelled and received recognition for their voluntary commitment with our Clinic. A particularly proud moment was our student Giulia Mazzu winning the Best Contribution by an Individual Student Award at the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards on 1 May 2019. Giulia had participated in a number of projects with the Clinic and her award recognises her unwavering commitment to help some of the most vulnerable members of society in any way possible.

We have also begun to work more closely with academics from The Dickson Poon School of Law on a number of research initiatives. Working with Professor Philippa Webb a number of our students were involved in testing the TrialWatch app and providing valuable feedback. TrialWatch is a project run by the The Clooney Foundation for Justice, it aims to monitor and report on trials that pose a high risk of human rights violations. TrialWatch aims to professionalize and scale the practice of trial monitoring through developing a TrialWatch app

which will contribute to the creation of a worldwide fair trial index

We look forward to the year ahead and developing further initiatives to serve and engage our local community whilst also embedding a lifelong pro bono ethic within our students. Some new initiatives for the coming year include our Family Law Clinic with Stowe's LLP and the Protea Clinic providing immigration advice and support to vulnerable women who may be victims of modern slavery.

We will also be moving into a new office space in the King's Building on the Strand which provides a larger space for students to work which reflects the steady growth of the clinic. We have interview rooms exclusively for clinic clients which will enable greater privacy.

A particularly significant development this year is our commitment to the Climate Justice Pledge, which now forms part of our mission statement. We will strive to raise awareness of this issue, we will be contributing to the global day of action on the 18 November 2019 by holding an event on both the very local and global issue of Air Pollution.

Shaila Pal

Director of Clinical Legal Education and Supervising Solicitor King's Legal Clinic



Our mission

King's Legal Clinic ('the Clinic') has two key aims; enhancing the education of our students and promoting social justice.

Our aims are achieved through five objectives:

- To provide our students with the opportunity to work on live cases thereby developing their skills and understanding of law in context.
- To develop innovative experiential learning and teaching methods.
- To develop students professional and ethical awareness and instil a lifelong commitment to access to justice for all.
- To provide free high-quality legal advice to members of the public, in particular those who cannot afford to pay for legal advice.
- To engage in legal activism and research initiatives relating to access to justice and social justice issues.*

We aim to achieve our objectives by developing projects and initiatives which focus on:

- The provision of free legal advice.
- Research on access to justice and social justice issues.
- Partnerships with external organisations.
- Widening participation.
- Community engagement and outreach.

^{*}The Clinic recognises that climate change is one of the most significant social justice issues we face. Its impacts will be felt most by the poorest and most vulnerable. As a student law clinic with a commitment to social justice, we commit to raising awareness of the issue of climate change in our teaching, research and activism; and to finding ways to support law students to contribute to the struggle for climate justice.

Introduction to King's Legal Clinic

The Clinic was set up in April 2017 and is part of the ongoing development of the Professional Law Institute ('PLI'). The PLI is a new component of The Dickson Poon School of Law, bringing together several initiatives focusing on legal education and training in the context of professional practice.

The Clinic has four main strands of activity:

- the legal advice clinic providing free legal advice to members of the community;
- collaborative community projects;
- research and legal activism; and
- supporting our Streetlaw and Mediation student societies.

The Legal Advice Clinic

The Clinic is a free first tier advice service based in The Dickson Poon School of Law on the Strand Campus. Students working under the supervision of qualified lawyers will interview clients, analyse their problem, research the issues and send them a letter of advice normally within two weeks of their appointment. The purpose of the advice letter is to provide the client with an understanding of the legal issues in their case, details on any relevant processes and practical advice on the available options. Where the Clinic is unable to provide advice, we aim to signpost clients to organisations which may be able to assist.

We offer advice on a wide range of legal issues including housing, family, commercial, intellectual property, immigration and employment with the support of a number of law firms:

PwC Legal Clinic

Launched in 2019 in partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers ('PwC'), our PwC Legal Clinic offers free legal advice to individuals and businesses from the local community. Under the supervision of PwC lawyers, our students assist members of the public, sole traders, small business owners and social enterprises with one-off advice. The clinic also helps advise on a range of legal issues including commercial and intellectual property, employment, and housing.



Social Enterprise Clinic

King's Social Enterprise Clinic, in partnership with Charles Russell Speechlys, offers free legal advice to start-up social enterprises and the self-employed on a range of issues including the most appropriate business structure, employment law, and data protection regulations.

Duncan Lewis Immigration and Asylum Clinic

The Clinic is supervised by solicitors from Duncan Lewis who interview clients with the support of our student advisers, they offer advice on issues like asylum, indefinite leave to remain and family visas.





Collaborative community projects

Article 8

Since April 2013 legal aid is no longer available for Article 8 ECHR immigration applications. The complexity of immigration law and the open government policy of creating a hostile environment for migrants means that there is a significant need for pro bono representation in this area. A particularly vulnerable group are migrant families with children who are either British or have spent all their life in the UK These families face significant difficulties making applications for permission to remain in the UK, including extremely complex legal rules and ever-increasing fees.

Article 8 is an immigration and human rights law project run in collaboration with the Clinic, Islington Law Centre (ILC), Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC), Reed Smith LLP and Akin Gump Straus Hauer LLP. ILC will represent a migrant family in an application to remain in the UK on human rights grounds, a team of lawyers and students will assist ILC. The Clinic with ILC, provides training to the lawyers and students on immigration law and coordinates the project.

'It's a great help to have a KGL student with enthusiasm, commitment and confidence working on what can be very difficult cases. They are engaged, interested and willing to assist.'

Roopa Tanna, Supervising Solicitor Islington Law Gentre





Eight students were recruited and trained as casework volunteers. They have worked on two cases involving two families and a total of six clients. Students have dedicated a great deal of time to the cases, approximately 350 hours over the academic year.

'It was very helpful that Giulia (a student) came with me to the embassy; she was able to help me do what I needed to do. I would have struggled without Giulia and am very grateful for her help. In terms of the whole application process, it can be very stressful and depressing. I feel much better now that I have Roopa and people like Giulia helping me. They do everything professionally and support me.'

Client







Through King's Legal Clinic I was able to combine my passion for human rights and my legal knowledge from university to help others. By researching issues involving Article 8 ECHR, helping draft witness statements and maintaining files, I have learned useful skills for my future legal career. It is of great importance to assist families whose lives are at risk of great upheaval and the clinic contributes to society by helping them to be heard and to fight for their right to stay in the UK.'

Paulina Rundel, LLB and German Law

The Personal Support Unit

With cuts to legal aid, the number of individuals fighting eviction from their homes, battling custody for children or facing bankruptcy has been steadily increasing. The Personal Support Unit (PSU) is a national charity that provides practical and emotional support to litigants in person in the civil and family court system.

The PSU places great value on the effort and time given by its volunteers who help these individuals, often with very limited financial resources, navigate through the legal system.

We recruited a group of students to be PSU volunteers with a minimum commitment of 20 days over the calendar year. Following an intensive day of training and five days of shadowing more experienced volunteers, our students helped individuals, for example, work through their claim forms, lodge their documents to the correct court office and accompanied them to their court hearings.

'My experience at PSU has been truly multifaceted; I've grown as a person by helping litigants from all walks of life, and also hugely improved my knowledge of the practicalities of the English court system.'

Miranda Saunamäki, Politics, Philosophy and Law LLB

'The cohort of King's students who have volunteered with the PSU this year have provided an excellent level of support to litigants in person in the Central Family Court and Royal Courts of Justice. Their fantastic problem-solving and interpersonal skills have enabled them to provide both practical and emotional support to vulnerable clients and really make a huge difference in helping them to navigate the complex court system. Our "core volunteers" - often retired legal professionals - have frequently commented on how professional the student volunteers are and how their excellent client skills will put them in good stead for their legal careers. The PSU's partnership with King's College enables us to recruit an excellent calibre of student volunteers and means our clients benefit hugely from their support.'

Charlotte Domanski,
Interim Regional Manager, PSU
(London & South East)



Collaborative community projects

The Freedom Law Clinic

The Freedom Law Glinic (FLG) is a pro bono project which investigates potential miscarriages of justice and examines whether there are grounds for referring cases to the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC). Working alongside solicitors and barristers, students participated in a six-week training programme to gain a thorough grounding in the criminal justice and appeals system. As part of the training, students worked on a live case, helping to review the evidence and contacting expert witnesses to determine whether there are any grounds for the conviction to be deemed unsafe. At the end of the training programme, students were able to apply to become full caseworkers with FLC for a period of 12 months.



'The experience was immensely helpful for me to delve into the way the more procedural aspect of the law meets substantive law and how to read court documents in full while being aware of potential issues for appeal – for example focusing on the directions a judge makes to a jury. I enjoyed debating and interpreting the facts with those running the Freedom Law Clinic because it was more akin to how an appeal would be written in practice.'

Maria Boutovitskai, **LLB**

The King's students who participated in the project this year have been consistently bright, very capable and diligent in the work they have produced working on Mr P's case. They have been extremely self-sufficient and self-reliant in completing the tasks necessary to assess whether there is merit in referring to the CCRC. As testament to the thoroughness of King's students, from our previous cohort, we now have three King's students who are part of our full-time casework team and have been excellent.'

Luke Gittos, Solicitor and Director,
The Freedom Law Clinic

Zacchaeus 2000 Trust

The Zacchaeus 2000 Trust (Z2K) is an advice and campaigning charity set up in the 1990s to fight for justice for those most at risk of poverty. They campaign to raise awareness of problems in the welfare benefits system and represent people in London on very low incomes in appealing unlawful decisions about their disability benefits. The financial benefit achieved for clients in 2018 was three million pounds.

Following a comprehensive day of training, our students (working under the supervision of Z2K caseworkers) assisted in providing advice and representation to clients with upcoming benefit appeal hearings. They interviewed the client, drafted submissions on the client's behalf and then accompanied the client to the appeal hearing.

'I was assigned a case regarding a decision not to renew a client's personal independence payment (PIP)...I had to read the bundle, interview the client on my own, and draft the submissions for the tribunal... This experience has allowed me to gain practical experience with the law in the most rewarding way...I have also been able to develop the critical soft skills necessary when handling a client and a live case. I hope that this is the first step in a long future of advocating for those in need'

Chloe Gershon, Politics, Philosophy and Law LLB





Research and legal activism

The Clinic is keen to increase its research impact on matters that affect our local community and access to justice issues by working alongside academics from within The Dickson Poon School of Law, as well as other faculties, and community organisations.

Evidence and Strategic Litigation Project

Led by Dr Joe Tomlinson, our Evidence and Strategic Litigation project gave students the opportunity to learn about evidence gathering in strategic judicial review. A small cohort of six students worked together in pairs researching a particular policy development where there have been concerns about the lawfulness of a procedure or scheme.

The students focused on three main issues: the use of litigation debt as a basis for refusal in immigration claims; accusations of deliberate deprivation of assets in relation to social care costs and the disparity between the operation of welfare assistance schemes by local authorities. Students used a wide variety of sources in their research including freedom of information requests, local newspaper articles and internet forums.

'The project we were working on covered the current system of Asset Deprivation powers that councils have and are using to confiscate assets from the elderly going into social care...! was able to learn about how to go about the process of collecting and analysing evidence in light of an issue that affects families and the elderly all around the UK.'

Salman Shaheen, LLB student

Through his role as research director for The Public Law Project, Dr Joe Tomlinson will use the students' findings to help further develop his own research. Our students will also be writing up short blog posts detailing their volunteer experience and the benefits of such a research initiative.

TrialWatch App

The Clooney Foundation for Justice run a project called TrialWatch which focuses on monitoring, reporting on, and responding to trials around the world that pose a high risk of human rights violations. TrialWatch aims to professionalize and scale the practice of trial monitoring through developing a TrialWatch app.



'The students tested the app comprehensively, including in courtroom observations around London. Their feedback was rich, insightful and practical. It has been

used by the Clooney Foundation for Justice and Microsoft in developing the next version of the app. The fact that the students came from diverse jurisdictions and also had some legal work experience added value to their observations'

Professor Philippa Webb

This initiative, led by Professor Philippa Webb, involved nine LLM students testing the TrialWatch App (Beta version). They were asked for their views on two aspects: (1) how the App currently functions; (2) how the App works in a real-life trial observation based on visits to local criminal courts. The students

provided in person feedback to TrialWatch and their findings compiled into a report. The findings are being used to improve the App so that it can be used by anyone worldwide to monitor the fairness of criminal trials. It is anticipated that KLC students will continue to be involved testing the TrialWatch App; assisting in future data collection to contribute to the creation of a worldwide fair trial index.

Streetlaw Society

Street Law is a global program of legal and civic education geared at empowering the public. The aim is for King's students to educate members of the local community about the law using interactive teaching methods. This year a number of presentations have been delivered, of particular note was the 'Understanding Your Rights in the UK' presentation to the Shpresa programme. The Shpresa programme advances the education and training of Albanian speaking people in the UK, so as to enable them to take on full and active roles in their communities.

Mediation Project

Run in partnership with the KCL Pro Bono Society, the Mediation Project develops students understanding of mediation and helps them understand why it is such a useful method of resolving disputes. Through links with King's alumna Jonathan Dingle, students attend a weeklong training delivered by the Society of Mediators at 218 Strand. Over 2018–19, three separate training sessions were organised with eight students obtaining scholarships places covering the cost of the training. Overall, 47 students were trained as mediators.



Students presented at the Family Mediation Association Conference and raised awareness about mediation by delivering training to wardens from King's Residence teams.

'The mediation training was a great experience. It allowed me to see things from another perspective than my judicial background trained me to see. I am really grateful for the scholarship, because without it I would not have been able to live such a life changing experience...Thus, I learned new ways to reach my goals that seem more efficient. I learned patience, active listening not in order to answer back, but in order to make people understand that I really listened to what they told me.'

Yasmina Aidi, **LLM Student**

The modules

Student Law Clinic module



The Student Law Glinic module is a 30 credit optional module available in the final year of the LLB programme. Students are placed in firms of four and work on up to four cases under the supervision of qualified lawyers. Working in small groups gives students the opportunity to reflect on their experience, the development of their skills and their understanding of the law. Students are also encouraged to explore the effectiveness of the law and legal procedures relating to their cases and consider what if any changes could be made.

The module students worked incredibly hard this year and we are proud of the dedication and professionalism they displayed towards their clients. The quality of the work produced by the students and their performance on the module was of a high standard.

'Clinic requires a different set of skills than other modules because it's just as much about how you communicate as it is about your legal knowledge. You can know every textbook and your case lists backwards, but if you can't provide the best possible advice to the person sitting in front of you for their particular legal issue then you won't get very far. These types of skills just aren't something you can learn any way other than through experience with the public.

The module as a whole has been humbling in the sense that the legal research, you're doing has a purpose beyond its due date. You're researching with a team of 3 others and managing deadlines as you would in the real world. Clinic has made me realise that my career needs to include this sense of achievement gained by using my expertise to help people in what can sometimes be one of the toughest times they've had to go through.'

Summer Balfour, LLB Student

Law and Social Change module

This unique module was led by Dr Emily Barritt.

and supported by the Clinic, and is part of the Learning Together initiative. By developing partnerships between universities and prisons, the initiative aims to enable students and prisoners to learn from each other. The module looks at the ways in which the law can be used to provoke social change and achieve social justice. It addresses some hard and increasingly important questions about how a democratic society should operate, what responsibilities citizens have to contribute to their community and what are the appropriate limits of adjudication in the face of pressing social issues.



Eight students from King's studied this module with eight prisoners from HMP Belmarsh with all classes held at HMP Belmarsh. The unique learning environment enabled students to develop their interpersonal skills by interacting with inmates and prison officers providing them with a unique insight into the operation of the criminal justice system. The feedback from the prisoners from HMP Belmarsh was very positive with many finding the experience 'very engaging' and 'humanising'.

'The Law and Social Change module was undoubtedly one of the best modules that I studied at King's. It is an engaging class and the King's students found it very rewarding. Being able to attend classes at HMP Belmarsh and learn alongside prisoners is a unique experience, one that challenges your perception on social issues and opens your eyes to the reality of life in prison.

For me however, the most valuable aspect of the module was the interactions with the prisoners themselves and the great conversations which we had with them. I thoroughly enjoyed learning more about the prison system, life in prison and the criminal justice system post-trial. We rarely learn about this side of the law in our undergraduate degrees and I valued the opportunity to speak openly with the prisoners about this.

The module taught me how to manage myself in an environment where there are conflicting group dynamics, to not take everything at face value and to try and understand people's reasons for acting as they do. It has made me more interested in a career in criminal justice and certainly has given me a deeper understanding of our criminal justice system as a whole. I would recommend it to anyone who has the opportunity to do it'

Victoria Griffin, Politics, Philosophy and Law LLB

Facts, figures and feedback

Students

Students can get involved with the Clinic by participating in one of our two modules, the Law Clinic module or Law and Social Change, or on an extracurricular bases. The extracurricular activities include; being a student advisor or administrator; volunteering on a community collaborative project or research initiative; and getting involved in the Streetlaw and Mediation Society.

176



30

Module students

22 Jià

Law Clinic students

8

Law and Social Change students

'Clinic is unlike any other module in The Dickson Poon School of Law for student engagement and personal development. It's quite easy to get into a "bubble" whilst studying law to see it very academically and forget that its purpose is actually to help people, and Clinic really helped me to see it in its wider context.'

42

Student advisors and administrators

42



Community collaborative projects and research initiatives

62

Streetlaw and mediation society

Clients

One of our main aims is to serve our community and help our clients resolve their problems. We aim to provide a high quality and professional service and endeavour to instil these values in our students. We greatly value our client feedback and are pleased that it continues to be highly positive.

'I wish to thank you for the help and advice. The team was kind and helpful, I received all the information I needed to continue. I think KLC help saved me a lot of time. Thank you again for having this service.'

200⁺

client enquiries received

100

clients signposted

72

clients advised

'I can't thank you enough for the excellent help of your two students...they were really good when explaining different aspects of my case to me.' 'I want to say the staff...and students helping me showed a genuine interest in my unique situation and took the time to help me find out what I needed to do.'

100%

of clients would recommend the Clinic to someone else. 100%

of clients would describe the service received at the clinic as very good to good. **95**%

of clients would use the Clinic again

Awards and events

King's Award 2018



The Clinic was delighted to receive the King's Award for the most significant contribution to serving the needs and aspirations of society. This award in particular recognized the significant achievement and efforts of Stephen Levett (the former Clinic Director) and Deborah Acquaah (the Clinic Co-ordinator) who were instrumental in setting up and developing the Clinic.

LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards

The Clinic was immensely proud of Giulia Mazzu who won the best individual contribution by a student at the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards on 1 May 2019. We nominated Giulia for this award because of her outstanding contribution to legal pro bono work in a wide range of activities. Within the Clinic, she has dedicated time supporting clients with our Article 8 project and the Freedom Law Clinic.

In addition, Giulia has been very active in encouraging others to get involved in pro bono activities and fundraising. Giulia was the Events Officer for KCL Student Action for Refugees ('KCL STAR'), organising

events to raise awareness on different issues which impact refugees including mental health, gender violence, FGM, grassroot groups and legal workshops. In February 2019, Giulia organised a KCL STAR conference titled 'The Journey after the Journey: the asylum process' with the support of Dr Rosana Garciandia Garmendia. The keynote speaker at the event was Maurice Wren the Chief Executive of the Refugee Council. Both Dr Garmendia and Maurice Wren supported Giulia's nomination. Giulia was very humbled and elated upon receiving the award from the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland OC MP.



Most Effective Client Communication Award

One of our Law Glinic module students, Idil Kaner, along with her teammate, won the Most Effective Client Communication Award at the Society for Computers and Law Student Tech Law Challenge 2019. It was a great success for Idil who was competing against approximately 60 teams composed of undergraduate and postgraduate students from across the UK. The judges felt Idil had demonstrated an excellent grasp of the law and was able to explain it in simpler terms to the client.

Global Experience Award

Alessandra Yolland, a Law Glinic module student, was awarded the Global Experience Award for an assessment piece reflecting her experiential learning whilst studying in China in summer 2018. The award recognised Alessandra's ability to engage interculturally and recognise particularly sensitive issues. She chose to write on the issue of loneliness and drew comparisons and distinctions on the emotion of loneliness whilst in China and the UK through evaluative reasoning and reflective analysis.

'Participating in this award has made me conscious of the value of learning in another environment than the one you are used to. Through diversity we are able to better understand ourselves and our environment.'

Alessandra Yolland, Law Clinic module student

Alessandra's development as a reflective practitioner continued on the Law Clinic module where she excelled.

IJCLE conference 2019 and Climate Justice Pledge

Shaila Pal, the Clinic director, attended the International Journal of Clinical Legal Education ('IJCLE') conference in July 2019. She co-presented a seminar titled 'Global Action for Climate Justice' with Stephen Levett and Sara Boulton from the University of York. The aim of the seminar was to explore ways in which university legal clinics could engage in the issue of climate justice at a local level with the aim of having maximum global impact. Various strategies were explored with key outcomes of the seminar including:

- 29 university clinics over four continents have signed up to the climate justice pledge contained in our mission statement.
- The first annual co-ordinated day of action on climate justice by student law clinics across the globe will be on Monday 18 November 2019.

The Clinic is keen to develop initiatives which honour the climate justice pledge and plans to work closely with Dr Emily Barritt and the Environmental Research Group to develop public legal education materials on the issue of air pollution.

Film screening, 'The Longest Run'

In collaboration with PhD student Sophia Schroeder, the Clinic hosted a film screening of the documentary 'The Longest Run' directed by Marianna Economou.

The film explored the lives of two underage refugees, Jasim and Alsaleh, in a Greek prison and follows the two friends closely while in custody, during the trial and after the verdict. The documentary illustrated how youngsters are forced to transport migrants cross the border to Greece while the smugglers stay behind and continue their job uninterrupted.

Following the film screening, a panel discussion took place involving speakers from Refugee Legal Support – Athens and Duncan Lewis Solicitors.

Future projects

We are committed to providing more and varied learning opportunities for our students and responding to unmet legal need in our local community. We are looking forward to developing the following initiatives in the 2019–20 academic year:

King's Family Clinic with Stowe Family Law LLP

In partnership with Stowe Family Law LLP, we will be launching a Family Clinic. Our Family Clinic will offer specialist advice on issues like divorce and separation, financial disputes and cohabitation. With the support and supervision of solicitors from Stowe, our students will be interviewing clients about their issue and producing a final letter of advice for the client.

The Protea Clinic



The Protea Clinic is a free advice-only service

run by students at the Clinic in partnership with Hibiscus Initiatives and Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre. The clinic aims to assist foreign national women who require advice in relation to immigration issues, with a focus on vulnerable women who are facing deportation and may be victims of human trafficking. The Clinic will be piloted over summer 2019 before being officially launched at the start of our 2019–20 academic year.





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