



Lancaster University
Law Clinic

ANNUAL REPORT
2022-23



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Executive Summary

Lancaster University's national, award-winning Law Clinic has continued to grow from strength to strength in 2022-2023. Building on our work in previous years, our Law Clinic students, under the supervision of qualified lawyers, have continued to provide free legal advice to members of the public. Since 2019, Lancaster University's Law Clinic has assisted over 210 clients and provided the equivalent of over £290,000 of free legal advice to the public. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Law Clinic also runs on a virtual basis, allowing us to provide free legal advice to clients across the UK.

Considering the recent Legal Aid cuts, many of the clients that the Law Clinic serves have nowhere else to turn to receive free, high quality legal advice. The Law Clinic provides an essential public service, and its importance is reflected in client feedback.

"I thought the advice given was stellar... I am particularly grateful to... the Law Clinic for offering their time and expertise as no law firm/solicitors seem interested in this case... This encounter with the Law Clinic has given me support and confidence..."

The quality, impact, and distinctiveness of the Law Clinic's work has been recognised through several awards and nominations. The Law Clinic won Lancaster University's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences "Outstanding Contribution to Engagement" award in 2020 and was nominated for the University Engagement Award in 2021. The Clinic supports the University's "town and gown" Memorandum of Understanding and the Civic University Agreement.

For most of our students, working in Clinic is their first experience of providing legal advice. Before starting their Clinic work, our students receive intensive training on topics such as client interviewing, legal research and case management. The student experience in Clinic is as authentic as possible to life as a practising Solicitor, and our students use a case management system, time record, use practitioner databases, and participate in an annual appraisal.

Working in the Clinic is a transformational opportunity for many of our students. The Law Clinic is truly collaborative, as Law students and practitioners work together on a project that aims to build a more socially just, sustainable, and equitable society. Students recognise the importance and value of their work and the commitment that it involves. We are very proud of our Law Clinic students who dedicate their time to the service of the community.

"Not only does the Law Clinic provide personal benefits in terms of my studies but aiding someone in a difficult time by sharing my knowledge is extremely rewarding."

The Law Clinic team are constantly looking for new ways to innovate and enhance the service provided to the community. For example, in 2020 – 2021, the team ran "pop-up" Law Clinics with the Open University in Rawtenstall, which is a local area of high legal need. The pop-up Clinics were fully booked, and the Police and Crime Commissioner provided a grant for the fully booked Clinics to run.

In 2021, the Law Clinic team founded the University's first Policy Law Clinic, in collaboration with the Environmental Law Foundation and UCLAN. This project runs on an extracurricular basis, and students are trained to conduct empirical research on local authority Climate Emergency Declarations and climate action plans. Under the supervision of practising lawyers, the students draft a joint report to the Environmental Law Foundation, setting out the results of their climate research. The impact of the project report is significant, and it is used by the Environmental Law Foundation in their climate justice work. The Environmental Law Policy Clinic won the University's Environmental Sustainability Award in 2023.

We are very grateful to our wonderful external Law Clinic supervisors and our students, without whom the Clinic could not run. Their commitment to the Law Clinic and access to justice is inspiring.

We are excited to continue our Law Clinic work in the local community and surrounding areas in 2023/24. We have planned numerous innovative projects for the next academic year, including pop-up Law Clinic events on campus and in the community. In particular, we aim to continue to reach those communities that might not otherwise be able to access free, high quality legal advice.

We look forward to seeing the Clinic continue to go from strength to strength in 2023/24.

Best wishes

Sadie, Kathryn, Zanele and George

The Law Clinic Team

Overview of Activities

210+
CLIENTS

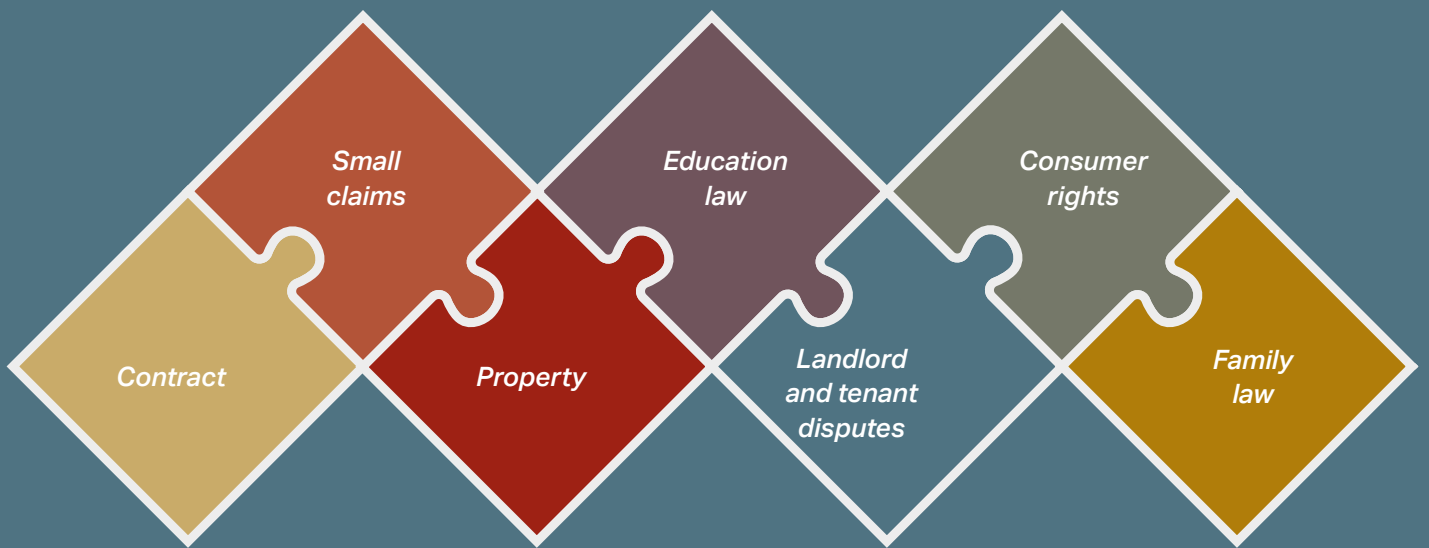
ASSISTED SINCE 2019



£290,000

**FREE LEGAL
ADVICE
PROVIDED
BY THE
LAW CLINIC
SINCE 2019**

"The law clinic provided me with with an incredibly speedy and efficient service, at a time in my life when I did not know where, or who, to turn to. I have nothing but praise for how professional and patient they have been with me, and I shall definitely be taking their advice..." Client quote



WE PROVIDE FREE LEGAL ADVICE ACROSS THESE AREAS OF LAW

"I put the advice given into practice and it has so far boosted the responses given by my errant Landlady/Agent. Thank you." Client quote



The Student Experience

Law Clinic students gain invaluable skills through their work in the Clinic. Before working with members of the public, our students receive a period of intense training on topics such as client interviewing, legal research, and using a case management system. Working in the Law Clinic simulates life in legal practice, and the experience is as authentic as possible. For example, students have an annual appraisal, time record, and liaise closely with practising Solicitors who supervise their work. Our students therefore gain invaluable employability skills, which helps them stand out in a competitive jobs market.

"I believe that participating in the Law Clinic is the closest experience to working as a professional lawyer that a law student can get throughout their course. The clinical experience has helped me acquire numerous technical skills such as legal researching and drafting, but also many soft skills, such as teamwork and time management. The Clinic has certainly helped my employability. In fact, I have never had an interview for a vacation scheme or a training contract in which the interviewer did not ask me about my experience at the Clinic."

Beata Kolodziej, LLB (Clinical Learning), Law Clinic Student 2021/22

In addition to developing a wealth of employability skills and gaining a deep insight into the profession, our students also increase their understanding of issues around access to justice. Our students regularly reflect on the importance of the Clinic's work, and they have a deep sense of pride in the service that they provide to the public. Many of our students will enter the legal profession, and our hope is that their Law Clinic experience inspires them to dedicate some of their time as practising lawyers to the continued provision of pro bono legal advice.



"Not only does the Law Clinic provide personal benefits in terms of my studies, but aiding someone in a difficult time by sharing my knowledge is extremely rewarding. Seeing how grateful clients are for the support which we provide makes the process even more brilliant."

Domonique West, LLB, Law Clinic Student 2021/22

"During my time in the Lancaster University Law Clinic, I have had the opportunity to work on a wide variety of cases such as consumer rights, education discrimination, and divorce. Furthermore, I have also written a piece for the Lancaster Guardian and attended an interview with BBC Radio Lancashire. Working in the Law Clinic has allowed me to develop key skills required within private practice such as legal research, client care and communication. Similarly, it has also broadened my perspective on how the law impacts the day-to-day lives of the local community and the importance of affordable, easily accessible legal advice.

The Law Clinic offers a truly unique experience in which students can expand and develop a repertoire of skills not necessarily utilised on a traditional LLB programme. Not only does this greatly enhance your CV, provide discussion points in interviews, and give you the opportunity to understand what it is like to work in private practice, but it also gives you a sense of the direction in which you may wish to pursue your future career."

Sam Rae, LLB (Clinical Learning), Law Clinic Student 2021/22



For many of our clients, the Law Clinic is one of the only remaining options to access free, high quality legal advice. Clients frequently provide feedback regarding the impact and effectiveness of the Law Clinic's service. We love hearing from the clients that we have worked with, and we are incredibly proud of the service that we provide.

"I thought that the zoom meeting was very professionally run. The students asked good, detailed questions while creating a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The report was very detailed and offered an array of next steps. I really appreciate the time and effort that has been taken in assisting me with all of the legal advice I have received; and could not afford to pay for. I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you very much to everybody involved for their help and guidance."

Client Quote – January 2020

"I applied to the Law Clinic when I needed it most... I am very grateful for the advice they have given. I haven't started the legal process yet, but your help definitely worked for me. I sincerely thank you."

Client Quote – March 2023

"All staff were very helpful, supportive and efficient. I am truly grateful to all of them."

Client Quote – March 2023



Policy Law Clinic



Environmental Law Foundation

Lancaster Law School's Policy Clinic is an ambitious and innovative project that was designed and developed by the Policy Clinic team in 2021, in collaboration with UCLAN and the Environmental Law Foundation. The Policy Law Clinic won the University Environmental Sustainability Award in 2023.

The Policy Clinic staff train Law students to conduct empirical research on local authority Climate Emergency Declarations and climate action plans. Under the supervision of qualified solicitors, students are trained to draft Environmental Information Requests. The Environmental Information Requests are then submitted to local authorities, to determine the extent to which they are on track to achieve their stated climate goals, such as "net zero" carbon emission targets. On receipt of the Local Authority responses, the students draft a joint report to the Environmental Law Foundation, in collaboration with the Policy Clinic staff, in which they set out the results of their climate research. The impact of the student report is significant, and it is used by the Environmental Law Foundation in their climate justice work.

Tom Brenan, Head of Education and Policy at the Environmental Law Foundation, reflected on the positive impact of the Policy Clinic's work:

"The Environmental Law Foundation (ELF) is delighted to include the Lancaster University/UCLAN Policy Clinic within its university network. The students are providing valuable empirical research into action on local authority Climate Emergency Declarations in the Yorkshire & Humber region as part of a nationwide project. The data will support ELF's ongoing policy work on access to environmental justice."

To date, around 25 Lancaster and UCLAN students have worked in the Policy Clinic, which operates on an extracurricular basis. Working in the Policy Clinic gives students insight into issues around environmental justice and the climate emergency. In addition, the Policy Clinic develops our students' employability skills, such as legal research, legal drafting, teamwork, and liaising with local government bodies. The Policy Clinic therefore has a transformational impact at both an institutional and national level.



"I applied to participate in the Policy Clinic as I have a huge interest in environmental issues. Local authorities in particular play a key role in bringing about the changes needed to address the climate emergency, so I feel that the work I have done in the Policy Clinic in ensuring that councils are on track to achieve their net zero targets is vitally important. I have also gained key employability skills from participating in the Clinic.

These include teamwork, through working alongside staff and students from both Lancaster University and UCLAN, as well as research and analytical skills, through investigating local authorities' climate-related goals. Being able to say that I have co-written a report for a charity like ELF has also been a great and unique addition to my CV. It has also been a hugely rewarding experience to get involved with some pro-bono work alongside my studies."

Francesca Jackson, Postgraduate Law Student, 2022/23







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