

LJMU LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE – PRO BONO POLICY 2020

The law should be accessible to everyone

Our School of Law's highly skilled academics and legal practitioners educate the next generation of lawyers. We believe that not only should our students gain the best possible legal education for their own benefit, but also that every lawyer – even the most junior – has a moral duty to use their knowledge to inform and assist their wider community.

Our School is committed to improving access to justice, and supporting the rule of law. This commitment aligns with Liverpool John Moores' vision to be a modern civic university which shares expertise, and brings people together with a common purpose.

The kinds of work we do

The Law Society and Bar Council define *pro bono work* as '*legal advice or representation provided by lawyers in the public interest including to individuals, charities and community groups who cannot afford to pay for that advice or representation, and where public and alternative means of funding are not available.*' Our staff, students and external volunteers work together to provide *pro bono work*.

We also develop projects explaining the law in a way that is easy to understand, to help people in particular groups or organisations to know what their rights are. This is known as *Streetlaw* work. This is not legal advice, but we believe this information can be useful in helping people understand what the law says they can or cannot do in relation to a specific issue. They are then empowered to decide for themselves what steps are best for them to take next.

Our guiding principles

We want to make sure that the free advice and information we provide has the biggest benefit and impact for the people who need it most. As such, we use the following guiding principles when designing our projects and taking on new casework or collaborations.

Demand	Conflicts	Education	Location
<p>There is a high demand for our services. We do not conduct financial means testing for our pro bono work or Streetlaw services.</p> <p>However, where possible we will give priority to working with people or organisations whom we consider to be vulnerable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically; • Economically; and/or • Socially. <p>If we cannot take on work for any reason we will try to provide information about an alternative service that may be better able to help.</p>	<p>Our professional duties require us to act in the best interests of clients who want pro bono legal advice. This means that we cannot give advice if the work would mean our staff, or one of the solicitors volunteering with us, would have a conflict of interest. We will always check this carefully and in complete confidence before we take on pro bono legal advice work of any kind.</p> <p>Our Streetlaw projects provide information rather than give legal advice. In giving information we are not representing any person or organisation's interests, but are instead putting the law into language that can be better understood by the people we are working with. In doing so, we are simply explaining rights which are already available to everyone in our society.</p>	<p>We are part of a University. We believe that our students learn best when they see how the law works in real life for real people.</p> <p>As such, we aim for all the services we develop and provide to educate our students, at the same time as helping our clients. We always do this in a sensitive, respectful and responsible way, observing strict rules of confidentiality, and as set out in our Privacy Notice [link].</p>	<p>We do not require that those we work with must be based in Liverpool.</p> <p>However, if we know of a similar free service that is located closer to someone who is enquiring about our services, then we may direct them there.</p>

For further information about the Legal Advice Centre, please contact our Clinical Legal Education Programme Leader, Rachel Stalker: r.stalker@ljmu.ac.uk or visit our webpage [link](#)