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BPP Pro Bono Centre Newsletter

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In this issue of our newsletter, two new London-based staff members, Anna Corrigan and Jenn McIntosh, introduce themselves and their views on the Centre's work. The Newsletter then features a variety of our students' articles describing their work in the Centre. We welcome Anna and Jenn, as well as our fantastic new Administrators, Joanna Beevor (Holborn) and Saira Iqbal (Waterloo)!

- Kara Irwin, Director BPP Pro Bono Centre

I'm **Jenn McIntosh**, the Pro Bono and Legal Advice Clinic Manager since January 2008. My main role is to run the BPP Legal Advice Clinic (BLAC) in London, with assistance to BLAC in BPP Manchester and Leeds. I am also involved in a number of the other projects undertaken in the Pro Bono Centre. I am fortunate in that I have a very fulfilling and enjoyable job for several reasons. Firstly, BLAC provides an enormously valuable service to members of the community local to BPP who are unable to afford legal advice, and who do not qualify for legal aid. Without our help, the 45 clients we have helped since January in London alone would have been left with nowhere to turn for the legal assistance they needed. Secondly, it is rewarding to see so many students gain actual legal experience ranging from interviewing clients in person and over the phone, to representing them in the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal. We have had some great successes this year and hope to build on this in 2008/9. Finally, I am very lucky to be part of such a dedicated and like-minded team of students and staff.

I'm based in the Pro Bono Centre, 4th floor Holborn, and available on 0207 430 5673 or jennfermcintosh@bppls.com.

I'm **Anna Corrigan**, the Supervising Barrister at BPP Pro Bono Centre at Waterloo, covering Victoria Speed's position whilst she is away on maternity leave. I have significant employment law experience, much of which was gained in a London Law Centre. I also teach law at undergraduate level. I am passionate about access to justice and the importance of legal advice in empowering individuals to bring their own claims in Tribunal, and the alternative of good quality representation when a client requires it. It find it fun to combine my employment advice sector and teaching experiences to work with students to provide a high quality and accessible pro bono employment service for clients in need.

The BPP Pro Bono Centre and BPP students are currently making a real difference in this area. I am impressed by the number of students involved in diverse ways and mention just a few examples here. There is the BVC student who has worked hard to become an experienced FRU Representative and appears regularly in Employment Tribunal and even, in at least one case, in the Employment Appeal Tribunal. There are also the Student Directors and volunteers who give their time regularly to ensure the smooth running of the Employment Law Telephone Advice Line (ELTAL), enabling clients to receive prompt advice from specialist employment lawyers to assist them in dealing with their own cases or to identify whether they need more ongoing help. At the other end of the spectrum, the innovation of the Streetlaw Prisons Student Directors has meant that BPP students have been proactive in providing legal presentations to community organisations working with ex-offenders and reaching people who otherwise might not access advice or justice but for whom the information can make a real difference to their lives. Equally innovative, the Polish Legal Centre is using BPP students' linguistic ability and pro bono commitment to provide a much-needed legal advice service to the Polish community.

BPP is well placed to make an even bigger difference to the challenge of pro bono services in employment law. Employment law is one of the popular areas amongst BPP students. Other advice services around us are facing real funding challenges and we are becoming the place they refer their clients. BPP students make up a significant number of FRU Representatives, but despite just being round the corner the approximate total of active FRU volunteers overall is significantly less than the number of BVC students at BPP. With the complementary services we offer through our Legal Translation Service and Mediation Friends Project, we are in a unique position to provide a holistic approach to appropriate cases. The challenge for the Pro Bono Centre is how to use the wealth of resources available to us to meet the needs of the increasing number of clients approaching us. It is a challenge I am glad to help meet.

I'm based in the Pro Bono Centre at Waterloo and available on 0207 633 4346 or annacorrigan@bppls.com.

Liberty Letters Clinic, London

How to get involved in BPP Pro Bono projects:

If you are a BPP student, please see the Pro Bono Centre site on the student intranet.

If you are a practitioner interested in supervising a project, please email Kara Irwin, Director, BPP Pro Bono Centre at karairwin@bppls.com

Kate Pumphrey and Sarah Rogers, Liberty Letters Clinic Student Directors, LPC FT 07/08, London

The year 07/08 has been a busy – at times slightly crazy! – one for the BPP branch of Liberty, a leading civil rights organisation for England and Wales. An impressive number of volunteers have foregone their Tuesday night television in order to attend the Letters Clinics, where they have drafted responses to queries that have been sent in to Liberty by the public. Aided by volunteer lawyers and copious supplies of Pringles and Maltesers, student volunteers have researched

subjects ranging from how to cope with tetchy neighbours and challenge convictions for drink driving, to gay parental rights and privacy in the work place.

BPP has sent Liberty some 250 draft letters over the course of this academic year, a contribution of which our volunteers can be justly proud. In addition, BPP Holborn hosted a lecture given by Liberty's policy director, Gareth Crossman, on the subject of surveillance in the UK, which raised some very interesting, at times disconcerting, points about our society.

Another evening was spent in a rather more light-hearted fashion, at the

glamorous Kensington nightclub, Amika, where the annual fundraising event was held. Based around a 'Spring Fling' theme, the night was a big success with over 350 students and lawyers raising £3000 through their partying. As Student Directors, we would like to thank all the volunteers for helping to make our year so entertaining and rewarding, and we look forward to hearing about the Clinic continuing to flourish next year!

For further information about the Liberty Letters Clinics, please email the students directors at libertyadmin@bpplaw.co.uk

Polish Legal Centre Initiative

By Monika Haidar, PLC Student Director, GDL PT 06/08, London

The Polish Legal Centre (PLC) was set up by the Polish City Club to offer free legal advice to Polish people living in the UK. It started operating in November 2007 based at POSK (The Polish Cultural Centre) in Hammersmith, but it didn't have a Polish language phone line. This was defeating the main purpose of PLC as the people who rang, who were usually unable to speak English, couldn't understand anything and therefore were unable to get an appointment!

This has changed however, thanks to the BPP Pro Bono Centre's involvement. We are providing a phone line run by Polish BPP law

students. Clients can call and leave a message in Polish. BPP students then call them back, interview the clients in Polish, and decide whether or not the issue can be dealt with at the PLC. If so, students make the client an appointment to see a lawyer at POSK (Polish Cultural Centre) in Hammersmith.

PLC offers advice in employment law, debt, welfare and benefits, housing and family law. PLC plays a very important role in the community as it enables the most vulnerable members of society to get help and advice which they would not have been able to get otherwise. It is also one of the first efforts in the UK to offer free legal advice aimed at one particular language group.

At the moment PLC is fully booked every Tuesday, sometimes even 2 weeks in

advance. We are developing steadily and hope to be able to increase students' involvement in the future and increase the number of days each week that PLC operates. We are hoping also to expand services to include "drop in" sessions.

As well as gaining an invaluable experience, BPP students also achieve personal satisfaction for being able to help those in need.

For further information about the Polish Legal Centre initiative, please email the Student Directors at plc@googlemail.com



BLAC's Excellent Client Feedback

"It has been a great help to me to receive your advice on the problem I raised and to know that I can contact BLAC in the future should I need help."

Mr T, leaseholder,
March 2008, service
charge dispute

"Thank you so much for the legal advice and the next steps to take. It's greatly appreciated."

Miss V, tenant, March
2008, dispute with
landlord over deposit

"Please keep up the good work."

Mr T, leaseholder, April
2008, historic neglect of
property



BPP Legal Advice Clinic, Manchester

Barnaby Cowin, Hollie Marcham and Christina Birds, BLAC Student Directors, LPC FT 07/08, Manchester

It has been a satisfyingly busy year for the BPP Legal Advice Clinic (BLAC) in Manchester. After such a successful first year of operation there was a great deal of interest this year from both students and potential clients alike, culminating in over 30 different clients being advised on a variety of different legal issues.

Co-ordinated by tireless LPC lecturers Andrea Williams and Joanne Bell, along with three Student Directors, the Clinic continued where last year's team had left off. The Clinic takes place on Tuesday evenings, and this year we regularly carried out up to three

client interviews a night. The advice offered touched many different areas of law, including employment, family, wills and probate, contract, landlord and tenant and intellectual property law.

The Clinic's growth is partly due to the BLAC team's marketing efforts. We distributed leaflets widely and contacted local community institutions. This broad approach is reflected directly in the fact that clients were referred to us by a wide variety of organisations, including Citizens Advice Bureaux, Law Centres, magistrates' courts, libraries, and even a doctor's surgery! Two BLAC Student Advisers were also interviewed by Paul Ridyard, a DJ for community radio station All FM.

It is testament to BLAC's development that not only were so many clients able to obtain advice, but also that we only had to refuse and refer fewer than 15 matters. This was down to the support of the many BPP lecturers who volunteered their time to assist as supervisors. One particular client noted in the feedback form that the "service has been exemplary from start to finish".

We hope that BPP staff and student support will continue, demonstrating that in addition to being rewarding for those taking part, BLAC performs a valuable function within the community as a whole.

BPP Legal Advice Clinic, London

Sarah Regh and Caroline Shephard, BLAC Advisers, LPC FT 07/08, London

A seemingly straight-forward leasehold case evolved to be far more time-consuming than expected, yet really worthwhile for the experience and practice we gained from it. Here was yet another leaseholder suffering at the hands of a management company which was craftily attempting to increase service charges with illegitimate excuses and a lorry-load of sweet-talking. This necessitated regular contact with our clients and led us representing them before the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT).

Despite the LVT directing the management company to provide the leaseholders with a full explanation as to the contents of their application,

leaseholders were left second guessing the meaning of this ominous 'Directions' letter. With deadlines fast approaching they sought our advice as to what new battle they had on their hands.

Our initial priority was to seek an extension on the hearing date to enable our client to be adequately prepared. The proposed hearing then became a less daunting Case Management Conference and three leaseholders and two student advisers turned out in force against the lone representative of the management company.

Based on the management company's behaviour, primarily involving poor communication with the leaseholders, the LVT chairman ordered that the case be re-commenced thus ensuring that both parties were on an equal footing.

The client concerned with this case gave excellent feedback:

"I am absolutely delighted that I approached BPP for support with my case. The two lawyer students are really professional and have made a big difference to the outcome so far.

I am very impressed and speak on behalf of 30 leaseholders in my flat block. The level of ongoing support and legal advice I have received is excellent and much appreciated."

For further information about the BPP Legal Advice Clinic, please email

London:

blac@bppls.com

Manchester:

blacm@bpplaw.co.uk

Leeds:

lacleeds@bpplaw.co.uk

Dates for your diary

London legal support walk

Please **join the BPP Team** on the evening of **Monday 19th May** for the annual London Legal Support Trust Sponsored Walk of 10k, starting at 5.30pm at the Royal Courts of Justice and taking in legal London landmarks before finishing at the Law Society and a party! Join the BPP Team by emailing bhatiap@bpplaw.co.uk or baryana@bpplaw.co.uk and, of course, get all your friends and relations to **sponsor our team** at <http://www.justgiving.com/bpplawschool>

A similar Manchester walk will be taking place in September – stay tuned for details!

LawWorks Student Conference

This will be taking place on 1st November in Nottingham. Look out for more details at the start of the Autumn Term.



BPP Intellectual Property Legal Advice Service

Charlotte Quail, Student Director of BIPLAS, LPC FT 07/08, Manchester

About BIPLAS

The BPP Intellectual Property Legal Advice Service is a project at BPP Law School in Manchester whereby students provide free legal advice on intellectual property (IP) matters to members of the public, under the supervision of qualified legal professionals with IP expertise.

The project aims to serve those members of the community who need IP advice but have not yet instructed a solicitor. Clients often include inventors, small businesses, charitable organisations, artists and students. The service also educates BPP law students by allowing them to gain hands-on legal experience that they would otherwise not gain until practice, such as meeting clients and preparing tailored advice.

The reason for having a specific group for IP related queries is twofold. By offering the public a specialist service we hope to gain their confidence in the service, which will motivate those with queries to make the journey to the law school on a wet Manchester Monday evening! Secondly, we help those students who wish to focus on more commercial areas of law in their careers and are considering choosing to qualify into IP departments.

Setting up BIPLAS

The service restarted in Autumn 2007 following a year-long break. At first, the group's main focus was on marketing BIPLAS to various institutions in Manchester and on building relationships with organisations such as the Manchester Inventors Group.

As we started receiving client queries in the spring and

summer terms, BIPLAS's focus has shifted to organising interviews, researching and sending advice out to our clients.

Clients

In client appointments, we have advised on more traditional aspects of IP law such as trade marks, as well as less obvious areas in which IP law has an impact, such as a charity's responsibilities in relation to copyright-enforcing regulatory bodies. The aim for 2008/09 is to spread the message about BIPLAS more widely, reaching more of Manchester's thriving creative community.

For further information on BIPLAS, please email the Student Directors at ipprobonom@bpplaw.co.uk

ELTAL - Update

Anna Bugden, Frances Trevena, ELTAL Student Directors, GDL FT 07/08, London

In November 2007, the Employment Law Telephone Advice Line (ELTAL) started operating, expanding our client base beyond those coming to us through our Apex Trust line (APEAL). With a team of 20 lawyers, 60 volunteers, 2 Student Directors and a Supervising Barrister Anna Corrigan we have provided employment law advice to over 100 clients since the New Year. We continue to develop the service in order to cater to more clients and better meet their needs. At present we are in the process of marrying our service with that of the BPP Legal Advice Clinic in order to achieve greater consistency and wider scope. Two new Student Directors have been

appointed and will start at the end of the academic year.

They will inherit a project which has come on leaps and bounds since its inception a year ago and will no doubt extend its success.

ELTAL is a particularly helpful source of support for clients who want advice to help them resolve complaints with their employers without resorting to Tribunal or for clients who are contemplating issuing or running a case themselves and want advice as to whether they have an arguable claim. At present we are usually able to refer a caller to a lawyer within about a week of a student first taking details of the client's problem. Clients are referred to ELTAL from a wide variety of sources from the Employment Tribunal itself through to CABx and other advice agencies.

Excitingly we were recently contacted by a client with a test case listed to be heard within days of the first student call. Thanks to the student adviser's clear case summary, it was readily apparent that this was a case that would be likely to be taken up by an interested lawyer. With the assistance of the lawyer allocated to the advice call, we were able to arrange for the case to be taken up promptly by a member of leading chambers, through the Bar Pro Bono Unit. This has led to an opportunity for students to remain involved and assist in what promises to be an interesting test case.

For further information on ELTAL, please email the students directors at apex-trust@bpplaw.co.uk

Manchester Streetlaw Update

Andrew Gammack,
Streetlaw Student
Director, LPC FT 07/08,
Manchester

BPP Manchester's Streetlaw project delivers education about law, democracy and human rights to those members of society who may not otherwise have ready access to such information. Following a training session in presentation delivery, our student volunteers developed and delivered Streetlaw presentations to local primary and secondary schools, encouraging discussion of relevant legal and social topical issues.

This year we had a fantastic response from students willing to get involved in the project, enthusiastic to broaden the ambit of the project beyond local schools to youth offender institutions and local youth groups.

This year we have managed to establish close relationships with a local primary and secondary school, delivering several presentations to multiple classes in each school. We used the specially created 'Brain Room' in the primary school, comprising integrated pods where we ran interactive sessions with the pupils concerning the role law has within an organised society, followed by a dramatisation in the stage area with much audience involvement! Through small group work and presentations in the secondary school we were able to discuss (and correct!) legal considerations to people of GCSE age, covering drugs, alcohol and happy slapping.

The feedback received from both sessions is that the pupils walked away better informed and more secure in their understanding of the relevant legal and social considerations.

The project has proved beneficial to our law student volunteers who, as well as enjoying the experience of planning and delivering interactive learning sessions, have relished the opportunity to put their legal knowledge and skills into practice and gain valuable experience in delivering presentations. The project has proved so popular that we have been referred to the Trafford Citizenship Forum who are interested in offering the project in their constituent secondary schools from next year. A great finish to a successful year!

For further information about BPP Manchester Streetlaw,, please email the student directors at streetlawm@bpplaw.co.uk

How to get involved in BPP Pro Bono projects:

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If you are a practitioner interested in supervising a project, please email Kara Irwin, Director, BPP Pro Bono Centre at karairwin@bppls.com



Manchester Streetlaw Volunteers after delivering a presentation to pupils at St Kentigern's Primary School

*BPP Pro
Bono
Centre
London End
of Year
Awards
Party 2008!*

**Take a
break from
studying**

**The party
and awards
ceremony
will be held
on Thursday
29th May
2008 at BPP
Holborn
from 6pm in
room 5.7**

**RSVP to
sairaiqbal@
bppls.com**



Legal Translation Service, London

**Marwa Al-azairy and
Effy Robinson, LPC FT**
and GDL FT 07/08
London, LTS Student
Directors

The BPP Legal Translation Service (LTS) was inspired by the realisation that the needs of non-English speaking members of the community, who require legal advice could be met by BPP Law School's supply of law students who have native or fluent ability in a foreign language and an interest in combining this ability with their legal skills for the benefit of the community. The service is available for individuals and organisations to assist those with limited or no English to break down one of the most difficult barriers they face in obtaining the legal assistance they need. Law student volunteers use their legal knowledge and language skills in translating or interpreting, whilst adhering to principles of confidentiality and non-bias.

The LTS has a bank of nearly 300 volunteers with native or fluent ability in over 20

languages across the GDL, LPC and BVC courses.

One part our work is to provide a translation service to charities and human rights organisations, including the Kurdish Human Rights Project, Advocates for International Development and the International Bar Association Human Rights Unit. Such organisations' valuable work can be meaningless if it is not accessible and understood in the relevant foreign jurisdictions. Our translation multiplies the impact of the organisations' efforts.

We also provide both interpreting and translating services to individuals in need via law centres, Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Free Representation Unit. We have reached out in particular to under-funded and deprived local boroughs in London, where there are a number of people whose lack of English might otherwise limit their access to legal services. Legal advice centres may have little access to or funding for professional interpreters, and

clients are frequently forced to resort to using their children or neighbours for interpreting assistance.

The person interpreting, however, may not speak much more English than the client, may not understand the legal concepts involved, may have a vested interest or bias in the matter, and their presence may impinge on lawyer-client confidentiality.

We encourage all students with bilingual abilities to join this exciting, unique service, as it is challenging and rewarding. It is also an excellent way to meet other students who speak the same foreign language.

Finally, we would like to thank all of our volunteers who have made LTS a success through their hard work, dedication and professionalism.

For further information about BPP's Legal Translation Service, please email the student directors at translation@bpplaw.co.uk

BPP Pro Bono Centre End of Year Awards Party 2008

You are invited to the 2008 BPP Pro Bono Centre Awards which reward outstanding student volunteers and supervisors who have supported BPP Pro Bono projects.

The party and awards ceremony will be held on Thursday 29th May 2008 at BPP Holborn from 6pm and will be followed by a wine reception.

Take a break from studying - free wine and snacks from 6pm in room 5.7

RSVP to sairaiqbal@bppls.com

