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BPP Pro Bono Centre Update

**By Kara Irwin,
Director,
BPP Pro Bono Centre**

Happy New Year, and welcome back to school/work! The BPP Pro Bono Centre has a lot planned for 2007 in all our sites in London, Leeds and Manchester, with new projects, staff, and volunteer students and supervisors.

In Leeds, Claire Daniel and her team of volunteer supervisors and student directors continue to do a stellar job of running all the Centre's usual projects, as well as starting new ventures in intellectual property and providing pro bono legal services to the Leeds community, which is underserved in free legal resources. More on some of our Leeds projects later in this newsletter.

Joanne Bell and her team in Manchester have had great success this year in launching the BPP Legal Advice Clinic there. Significant local news coverage has ensured that they are starting off busy!

In our London Centre, we have two new staff members in the London Centre, each of whom will be spearheading a new pro bono project.

Victoria Speed has joined us, working part-time (Mondays through Wednesdays) and based in Waterloo on the ground floor next to the Careers office. Victoria is an employment solicitor who has worked at Simmons & Simmons and Russell-Cooke. She will be the Centre's Waterloo contact and will particularly supervise all

employment projects.

Victoria is overseeing development on a new employment law project we will operate in conjunction with the APEX Trust. We will be running a telephone helpline from Waterloo to advise individuals who have had contact with the criminal justice system on employment issues. Current BPP students who are interested in this project will be able to find more information on the Pro Bono Centre site on LawCampus from the end of January.

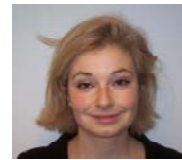


Victoria can be contacted on 0207 633 4346 or at victoriaspeed@bppls.com.

Eloise Power has been teaching part-time on the BVC since September 2006, and has now joined us in the Holborn Centre full-time as the Supervising Solicitor for the BPP Legal Advice Clinic, replacing Anna Jennings. Eloise originally qualified as a barrister but has since converted to a qualified solicitor. She had previously worked for Southwest London Law Centres and has a specialism in immigration law.

Eloise is looking into starting a new project related to immigration and asylum law and refugee issues. We will be holding a general interest meeting on **Thursday 11th January from 6.15pm** (Room 3.7 Holborn) to see how many students are interested and to

discuss ways we would like to get students involved in these issues. Diane Taylor, a journalist who runs a North London asylum-seeker drop-in centre, will be there to discuss her work and the asylum seekers' needs. We are particularly looking for students who have relevant language capabilities (French, Arabic and Farsi), as well as those who would be interested in developing a Streetlaw presentation (eg on preparing relevant documentation for possible appeal), and those who are generally interested in this area of law. If you are interested in the possibility of joining an immigration law project but cannot attend the meeting on the 11th January, please email Eloise on her contact details below.



Eloise can be contacted on 0207 430 5673 or at eloisepower@bppls.com

Eloise and Victoria join the Centre's incredibly capable Administrator, Antonia Rickenback, and me in working with all of our London volunteers, as well as providing support to our Leeds and Manchester Centres.

We are all looking forward to 2007 and hope to work with as many of you as possible this year!

Forthcoming London Environmental Pro Bono Group Events

Christoph Schwarte
FIELD (Foundation for
International
Environmental Law
and Development)
www.field.org.uk

Wednesday 10th
January 2007
6pm
Holborn room 6.1

And

Phil Michaels
Friends of the Earth
www.foe.co.uk

Thursday 25th January
2007
6pm
Waterloo room 3.1

Please put these in
your diaries!

Also, we would very
much appreciate it if
you could RSVP just
so we get a feel for
numbers likely to
attend.

enviro@bplaw.co.uk

Streetlaw Homeless – Update

**By Rebecca Rule, LPC
FT London 06/07**

The Streetlaw Homeless Project at the BPP Holborn site is very much in its developmental stages but aims to provide homeless people and the organisations that assist them with access to legal understanding and information. There has been a great deal of interest in the project this year, moving us towards our goal of delivering interactive presentations on the law to residents and clients of London's shelters. Having successfully completed work for The Passage House and Mountford House in Victoria at the

beginning of the year, we are currently in the process of building contacts with London's shelters and hostels to explore the various ways that we may become involved in their organisations. We have had several productive meetings compiling research on the organisations to choose the most appropriate ones for our purpose and are sending out personalised information packs to encourage them to become involved with the BPP Pro Bono Centre. Our aim is to build relationships with some of these organisations, enabling us to begin collaborating with them

soon. We have had so many enthusiastic students volunteering this year that we are extremely optimistic that the project will be flourishing soon.

For further information on this project please email streetlawhomeless@bplaw.co.uk

If you are a current student, please register your interest in this project online via the Pro Bono Centre's site on LawCampus. Please note that this project is starting in London only.

Liberty Letters Update

**By Louisa Soper & Kat Barry,
Liberty Letters Student Directors,
LPC FT London 06/07**

It's been a busy year so far for the BPP Pro Bono Centre's Liberty Letters Clinic in London, Leeds & Manchester!

The BPP student advice clinic was set up to provide support to the advice and information department of Liberty. BPP started the first ever Liberty Letters Clinic in 2004 and are the only Law School that works with this leading Human Rights organisation directed by Shami Chakrabati.

Liberty campaigns to protect civil liberties and promote human rights. They receive thousands of queries on Human Rights issues from the public every year. This term we have answered over 150 queries on a number of issues of fundamental importance to society. These range from complaints against police powers to asylum seekers at risk of imminent deportation.

The clinic offers a great opportunity for students to put their legal knowledge into practice on cutting edge human rights issues.

The importance of our work cannot be underestimated. In the past, students have picked up a huge range of queries, one of which led to Liberty taking on the right to die case of Diane Pretty.

A word from our student volunteers.....

"Liberty Letters gives you a dramatic reality check. Before taking part, I wasn't aware of how many people claim to have been beaten up by the police, ripped off by their local authorities, or photographed in their kitchens. It's satisfying to know that answering these letters helps Liberty help people who've been dealt a tough hand in life."

Robert Rothkopf, LPC Student

"Liberty Letters enables individuals to apply practical solutions to real life problems. The Clinic provides a reassuring reminder that the law can be used as a means of protecting citizens against institutions which may threaten our liberty."

Khaled Khatoun LPC Student

How to get involved in BPP Pro Bono projects:

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

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

Students interested in finding internships in the UK and abroad should visit the Internship Opportunities page in the Pro Bono section of LawCampus.

BPP Mediation Friends

Pete Spink, Oscar Nobi, Ellie James, Mediation Friends Student Directors, London

The Mediation Friends project got underway for the 2006-7 academic year with a day's training on the 21st October. Students learnt about mediation and its growing use as a means of alternative dispute resolution, as well as the importance of their role as a Mediation Friend in supporting a particular party in the process, preparing them for the mediation and accompanying them in order to provide moral support. The training involved a variety of role-plays to develop listening and interviewing skills and finished with a mock mediation, facilitated by trained mediators, to give students a taste of what to expect in an actual mediation. Three mediation services which utilise Mediation Friends from BPP were also presented: the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR), the Residential Property Tribunal Service (RPTS) and the Lambeth Mediation Service (LMS).

Three new Student Directors for the Mediation Friends project have been nominated: Oscar Nobi, who will be responsible for Project Development, Ellie James, who will coordinate the RPTS project and Pete Spink, who will coordinate the LMS project.

Project Development

There has been a tremendous interest in the Mediation Friends project and we want to provide students with as many opportunities to volunteer as possible. We are therefore looking to expand the Project beyond the three services that currently use BPP students.

According to their website, 35 mediation services are registered with Mediation UK in the Greater London area; we are hoping to get as many of them on board as possible to really boost the profile of this Project and give volunteers more chances to experience and support mediations.

Lambeth Mediation Service

We met with the Director of Lambeth Mediation Service in November. Through our work with LMS, the Mediation Friends accompany LMS visitors to the homes of parties involved in a dispute to explain the mediation process and to listen to the dispute in the words of the parties involved. This offers valuable experience to the Mediation Friends, particularly with regard to the development of listening and empathy skills. Mediation Friends will also have the opportunity to observe mediations. LMS plans to organise a day's training for the Mediation Friends to get an orientation to LMS, to get an overview of the community mediation process and to further develop listening skills. There is room for 16 participants and it will be open to all who attended the Mediation Friends training in October. The Director has agreed that if everyone is satisfied with the support provided by the Mediation Friends, he will work with BPP to expand the role they play within the context of the mediation service provided.

Residential Property Tribunal Service

The RPTS is in the early stages of using mediation as an alternative to full tribunals between landlords and tenants involved in disputes. Whilst those cases which have used mediation have often been successful (about 80% of 20 mediations have

settled), the take up has been quite slow. Students attend the tribunal for a day to raise awareness of the issues involved, and any cases arising on that day can be referred to those students if the parties have questions relating to mediation.

Further work will be done to raise awareness of mediation as a dispute resolution tool amongst the tribunal chairs to try and increase the numbers of cases which use mediation instead of more traditional adversarial routes.

CEDR

Two Mediation Friends, Pete Spink and Rachel Zhao, were recently involved in a CEDR mediation where the dispute had become so heated that the two parties were unwilling to even meet in the same room. The importance of the Friends during the mediation really shone through here as Pete and Rachel were able to provide a listening ear to each of the parties, as well as to help them see both sides of the dispute. This in turn helped the mediator facilitate a dialogue between them and culminated in the parties reaching an agreement.

The conclusion from the Mediation Friends involved was that an agreement would have been much more difficult without a Friend's help; they presented an opportunity for the parties to have someone who would listen without being judgemental, and who could introduce an element of objectivity and show them that their version of events was not the only side of the story. Above all, they acted as a guide through the process itself and allowed the parties to feel more at ease – and more open to an agreement.

Leeds Cares Update

Ann Denton & Ruth Nicholson, Leeds Cares Student Directors, LPC Leeds 06/07

So far our first challenge is going well with 17 donations from both students and staff at BPP. If we keep receiving donations we will be able to hit our target of 60 gifts. We are collecting new toys for children, the age ranges are 0-6 months up to 18 years. These children make up homeless families in Leeds who are being supported by LEAP (Leeds Emergency Accommodation Provision). LEAP provides temporary accommodation for homeless families, singles and couples.

They provide emotional and social support, advice on tenancy issues, personal health, substance use, referrals and help in accessing school places, doctors, nurseries etc.

There is a decorated box in reception for you to put your toys in, these need to be wrapped and labelled stating whether they are for a male or female and for what age.

We would like to thank students who gave up their time to decorate the box and design and produce posters.

Once we have completed the challenge of collecting 60 toys we are going to liaise with Our Lady's Primary School, who need a

team of volunteers to decorate a classroom and brighten up a cloakroom area with pictures and murals.

This will make the area friendly and welcoming for the children as well as creating a feel good factor for children at school for the first time. We have had a fantastic response from students so far which is promising.

We are currently putting together fundraising ideas so we can raise enough money to be able to buy all the materials. Suggestions have been a cake bake, quiz, slave auction? We are hoping to do this challenge during the Easter break. Once we have further details we

will send out the details.

The two student directors are going to be attending team leader training. This is being organised by Leeds Cares on the 12 December and will enable us to run the next challenge in the most beneficial way for us, the volunteers and those who will benefit from the challenge.

So far Leeds Cares is going well and we hope this will continue throughout our challenges. We hope the interest from students will carry on supporting Leeds Cares.

For further information or an update on this project please email leedscares@bpplaw.co.uk

Streetlaw Leeds Update

Natalia Levine, Streetlaw Leeds Student Director, BVC FT 06/07

Streetlaw at BPP Law School Leeds has grown in strength and numbers this year. In Leeds, Streetlaw is an umbrella term for three projects that we are involved in.

The first project is Culture Kids. This project involves us working with Leeds Cares and West Yorkshire Police. Volunteers go into primary schools and deliver a presentation, the aim of which is to teach the children to respect others from different cultures.

As part of the presentation, the students are asked to participate in a role-play. So far this year we have delivered one presentation, the next will be at the beginning February 2007 and we have a further two sessions planned for the remainder of the academic year.

The schools project for years nine and ten is now in full flow. To date we have delivered six presentations and have confirmed the presentations for this year, of which there will be at least 40. The focus this year is still on giving interactive presentations but we have moved on slightly to also focusing on

transferable skills for the students, by introducing debates to the sessions.

This is proving to be a huge success and is a fantastic way for the students to voice their views. Future plans for the schools project are to increase the number of schools we deliver presentations to, so that more schools in the region can benefit from the work we do.

The third and final project that Streetlaw Leeds is involved in is Speak Up. Volunteers deliver presentations (the most recent of which was on the Equality Disabilities Scheme) to people with

learning difficulties explaining recent laws in a manner that they are able to comprehend. Further presentations will take place during the remainder of the academic year.

Thus far, this year has been hugely successful and with the number of volunteers and sessions increasing, Streetlaw Leeds can only go from strength to strength.

For further information on this project please email streetlawleeds@bpplaw.co.uk

New London Pro Bono Project:

Immigration

Initial
interest
meeting
to be held:

Thursday 11th
January
2007
18:15
Holborn 3.7

Streetlaw Primary Schools Update

**Unbreen Ashraff,
Streetlaw Primary
Schools Student
Director, LPC FT
London 06/07**

The Primary Schools Project is currently undergoing some exciting changes as we begin to expand our sphere of operations and collaborate with a number of new schools on the program.

A record number of volunteers signed up this year and one group has already made a hugely successful trip to the Wellington School in Bow. Both the volunteers and the pupils enjoyed the class on "The Constitution", and the school has accordingly added more dates for our

Streetlaw sessions to their curriculum as a result of our students' great work.

Meanwhile, we are in negotiations with several new schools and hope to be sending out groups to them early this year.

The last few months have been action-packed for the Secondary Schools Project. Last term saw the Project grow in both size and scope.

The Project has succeeded in attracting immense interest from volunteers and continues to do so. We are delighted to have welcomed over 250 volunteers from various courses to join our team. Furthermore, the project now boasts a network of 7 schools stretching across London.

Volunteers have already participated in six different sessions with topics ranging from youth crime to immigration. Following the enthusiastic response from both the pupils and law firms involved in these sessions, the Project can look forward to an even busier term.

The journey this far has been challenging but exhilarating. We are proud of all of our achievements and look forward to taking the Project further this term.

The Streetlaw Project would like to take this opportunity to thank Kara and Antonia for their advice, support and smiles during the last few months.

Streetlaw Prisons Update

**James Weale, Streetlaw
Prisons Volunteer, BVC
FT London 06/07**

The Streetlaw project at HMP Pentonville is perhaps not the most obvious choice of pro bono work for someone with no interest in practising criminal law. Nevertheless, I found taking part in the scheme highly rewarding and I am sure that the skills and experience acquired will be beneficial in the long run.

Streetlaw was set up to provide prisoners with practical information and advice on issues which are of immediate concern to them. With this in mind, those taking part are provided with training and an information pack on matters ranging from housing applications to employment and training opportunities. Participants in the project visit a group of prisoners and give a presentation in the form of a discussion which covers these issues.

There is a great need for the kind of work done by Streetlaw. Views differ on the level of moral blame which should be attributed to those imprisoned for serious offences. But it is undeniable that the majority of those in Britain's prisons have had to cope with considerable adversity: 70% suffer from an identifiable personality disorder, 70-80% were unemployed when sentenced, over half left school without a single qualification and the vast majority are from broken homes. Furthermore, many prisoners will find themselves homeless on release. It is in everyone's interests that these issues are tackled, not least to reduce the high levels of recidivism.

I was initially apprehensive about working with serious offenders in Pentonville. And the prospect of obligatory "combat training" did little to alleviate my fears. But these concerns would prove

unfounded.

The majority of prisoners in the group were enthusiastic and respectful. They were clearly grateful for the information we provided and seemed stimulated by the debates which arose from our presentation.

I left the prison feeling sad that the prisoners, many of whom were decent people, should have found themselves in such a regrettable position. Organisations like Streetlaw play an important role in giving inmates the opportunity to reverse their fortunes. And after my visit I felt that I had played some small part in this. Working with inmates in uninviting surroundings has also given me confidence in dealing with different people as well as an insight into what life is really like inside a British prison.

**National Pro
Bono Week
2007
will be in
November**

**For more
information,
click on the
link at
ProBonoUk.net**



The Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, with Kara Irwin and Pro Bono Student Directors during National Pro Bono Week 2006

Employment Pro Bono Project, Leeds

**By Lauren Barlex,
Employment Pro
Bono Project
Student Director,
LPC FT Leeds 06/07**

The Employment Pro Bono Group is a new project set up by BPP students in Leeds this year. We have two main purposes:

1. to give students the opportunity to get real legal experience through both preparing Employment Tribunal cases and appearing as advocates; and
2. to assist unrepresented employees or employers in putting their case to an Employment Tribunal.

Students will take on clients in pairs and will advise them on how best to proceed, and, if requested, will act as representatives and present the case to the Employment Tribunal.

The project is now being directed by a committee of LPC and BVC students (under the watchful eye of the supervising LPC tutor, David Norris). There is a strong student interest and it is planned that clients will be taken on from the start of 2007. Students will be given training on employment law and legislation, and will receive training concerning tribunal etiquette and effective representation.

Looking to the wider legal community, the project is currently seeking assistance and external supervision from employment practitioners in Leeds' law firms and chambers. There has also been contact with the Employment Tribunal service itself, a representative from the Employment Tribunal will observe the first cases where the students act as representatives and, if satisfied, will advertise the services of the project to unrepresented claimants at the outset of their claims.

The group hopes to establish itself fully and become a fixture within the Employment Tribunal service in Leeds, further strengthening the links between BPP and the Leeds' legal community. Students should have the opportunity to get a real taste of practice by putting their preparation, research and advocacy skills to good use. Participation in the group will also demonstrate enthusiasm for their future careers to prospective employers. Beyond this, it is hoped that a real difference can be made in the fortunes and outcomes for the clients that seek the assistance, guidance and representation of the students.

If anyone would like to become involved, or requires any further information, please email employmentleeds@bpplaw.co.uk