

# Swansea Law Clinic Annual Report 2021-22

Swansea Law Clinic has had a busy and successful academic year, which has built on existing work and seen the introduction of several new volunteering opportunities for students in the **Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law**.

This fifth annual report assesses the Clinic's activities from July 2021 until June 2022.

The period under review meant we started seeing some of our clients face to face again after the restrictions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic were partially lifted but our premises in the Digital Technium Building on Singleton Park campus, were still not fully operational. However, providing virtual services via the Zoom video conferencing platform caused few technical issues.

The Clinic is responsible for the delivery of two modules as part of the LL.B undergraduate law degree – LAA366/7 *Clinical Legal Education* and LAA364/5 *Miscarriage of Justice*. Both modules are worth twenty credits and run in Teaching Blocks One and Two. In 2021/22 seventy-two students were enrolled on these modules. The *Miscarriage of Justice* module works in partnership with the charity, Inside Justice, which refers cases to the Project. In addition, seventy-one extracurricular student volunteers were involved in our various projects making a total of **143** students being involved in Clinic activities during 2021/22. In total, the Clinic advised on **91** separate cases.

Partnered with five local law firms, who have provided ten volunteer solicitors and trainees who volunteer at the 30-minute Advice Appointments and Legal Surgeries.

We are very grateful to the following firms and their volunteer solicitors for their support:

- DJM, Solicitors
- DLA Piper, Solicitors
- Duncan Lewis, Solicitors
- Eversheds Sutherlands, Solicitors
- Graham Evans and Partners, Solicitors
- Peter Lynn and Partners, Solicitors
- Smith Llewelyn Partnership

The Clinic also forged new partnerships and we were very grateful for the support we received from West Glamorgan Regional Partnership, Age Cymru, Valla and the Children's Society Coordinated Community Support.

The Clinic holds the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) quality kitemark and is one of only four university law clinics which have AQS in the UK.

The Clinic obtained accreditation from the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner to provide immigration and asylum advice in 2021 and we had our first immigration cases during the period under review.

The student activity during 2021/22 encompasses the following:

- Remote Advice Sessions (Student Volunteers shadowing initial advice appointments with solicitors);
- Student Adviser-led Appointments (Student Advisers meeting with clients remotely);
- Miscarriage of Justice project;
- Summer Clinic (volunteer Student Advisers make sure our service continues to run during the long summer vacation through the provision of virtual clinics);
- Ukraine Advice Project UK;
- Collaboration volunteering (HOPE Project, Age Cymru; Valla Project);
- Welsh Translation Project;
- Factsheet Development Project;
- Global Day of Action for Climate Justice;
- Student Board.

## Staffing

During 2021/22 there was a Faculty restructure, Hannah Bussicott who had previously been the Swansea University Legal Centre Manager has taken over as the Children's Legal Centre Manager and in July 2021 Eve Haynes was appointed Swansea Law Clinic Manager. We thank Hannah for all the assistance she has given and continues to give to the Clinic.

A Project Officer, Charlotte Watkins, for the development of the referral app (please see research and Development section below) took up post on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

Professor Rich Owen continues as the Swansea Law Clinic Director.

## Awards and Clinic Recognition

### *Clinic HEAR Awards*

The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) is a student's comprehensive record of learning and achievements whilst at Swansea University. The **Swansea Law Clinic Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Award** was validated in 2019/20, and we were able to award **five Gold, nine Silver and six Bronze Awards (20 total)** to students at the end of the 2021/22 academic year.

To achieve the Bronze Award students volunteer for **20 hours** with the Clinic, (hours comprise of volunteering, training and a short reflection on their experience). Those achieving the Silver have carried out **30 hours** of volunteering, and those achieving the Gold award have carried out **30 hours** of volunteering and sat as a member of the **Clinic Student Board**.

Huge congratulation to ...

Shannon Taylor, Atif Ismail, Alecia Spence, Taliesyn Kallstrom and Lorna Williamson for receiving the Gold Award.

Jeevan Mann, Amber Jenkins, Megan Lewis, Dana Savu, India Ford, Carlie Englefield, Ffion Jones, Minass Himmat and Alexis Rudat for receiving the Silver Award.

Further congratulations to Ellie Sayce, Amber Wassal, Kelsey Elward, Molly Cameron, Mali Burrows, and Rashmi Kungwani for receiving the Bronze Award.

***LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards***

We were delighted that Alecia Spence was shortlisted for a LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Award for Best Contribution by an Individual Student in May 2022.



*Alecia (centre) with Rich Owen and Eve Haynes at the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards at the House of Lords on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022.*

***Sustainability Project Award***

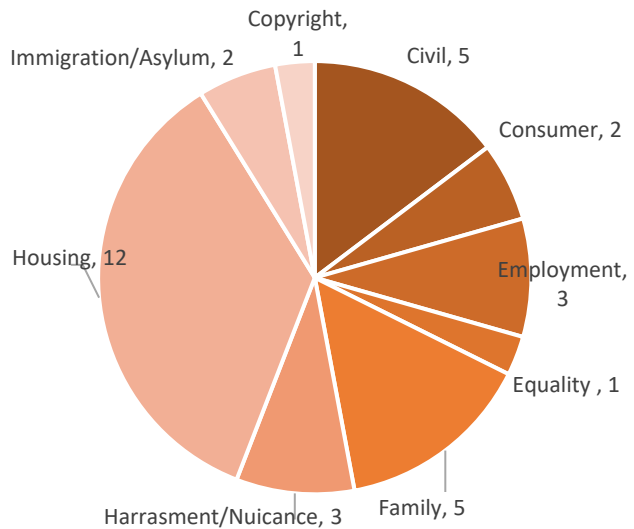
The Association of National Teaching Fellows awarded Rich Owen a Sustainability Project Award for work delivering sustainable higher education in the Welsh Context and for looking at the relationship between all the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

## Breakdown of types of cases by type of activity

### Clinical Legal Education Modules

Students enrolled on the Clinical Legal Education Modules were trained as Student Advisers and carried out interviews with members of the public requiring legal advice. Most interviews were carried out remotely over Zoom, with some students conducting/joining their interviews from the Law Clinic facilities in the Digital Technium.

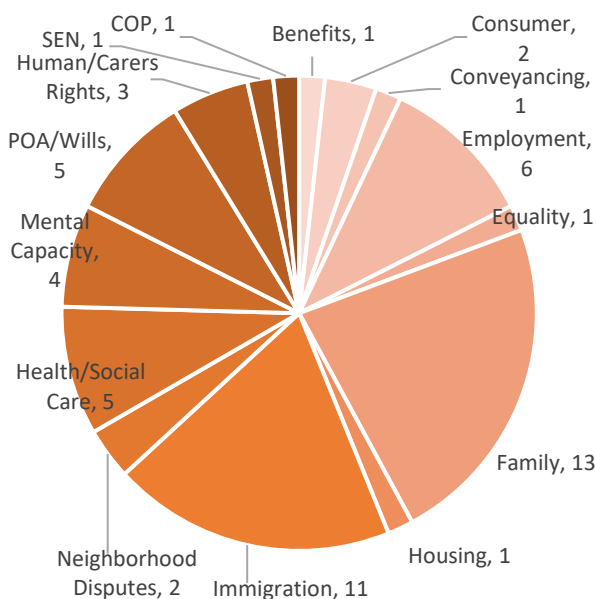
Student Advisers advised on **thirty-four separate** legal cases over the autumn and spring terms. The interviews covered the areas of law shown on the pie chart, most cases were either housing, family, civil or employment law related.



### Miscarriage of Justice Module

Students on this module have been reviewing the safety of a murder conviction. The students have been supported by the Inside Justice Advisory Panel, which consists of a retired judge, barristers, solicitors, forensic scientists, retired senior police officers, journalists and campaigners. Their investigation plan has been approved by the Advisory Panel and the painstaking work of sifting through case papers has begun.

### Thirty-Minute Advice Appointments / Legal Surgeries for Unpaid Carers / Ukraine Advice Project – Fifty-seven cases in total



We have continued to offer free, **30-minute advice appointments** with a volunteer solicitor (shadowed by a student volunteer) this year. The appointments have been delivered remotely (Zoom), arranged on an ad-hoc, as-and-when needed basis. We've had **33 cases**, the primary areas of law advised on: Family, Employment and Immigration.

We were also very grateful to the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership for funding to run a series of **legal surgeries for unpaid carers**, the first face to face client meetings we have held since the start

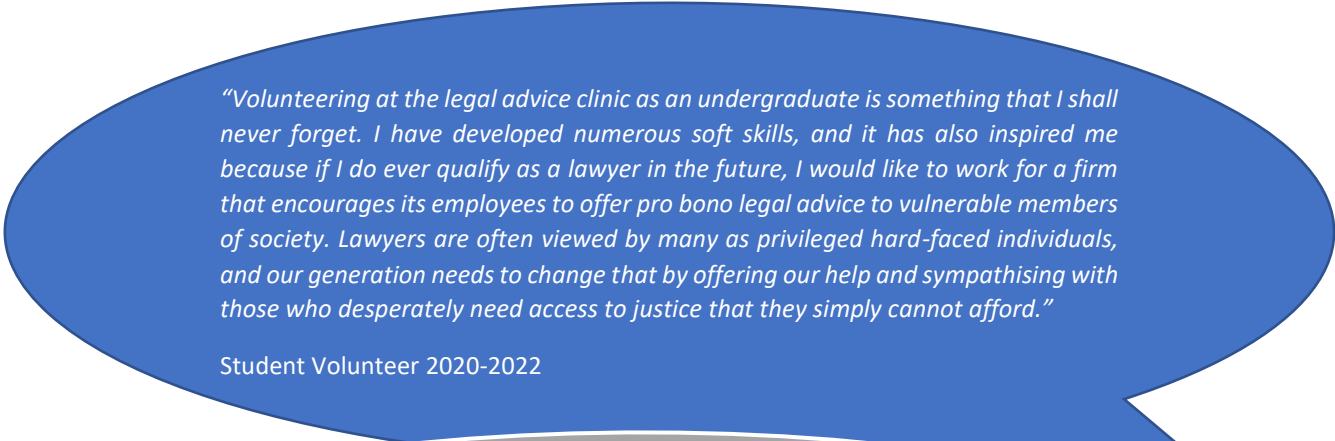
of the Covid 19 pandemic. The surgeries were held at the Cwtch, Swansea Carers' Centre, Mansel Street, Swansea and the St Pauls Centre, Port Talbot. We were very grateful for the

support of Graham Evans, Solicitors and the Smith Llewelyn Partnership in delivering these surgeries.

Clients were offered free, thirty-minute advice appointments with a volunteer solicitor, shadowed by a student volunteer. We had **nineteen cases in total**, the prominent areas of law were: Power of Attorney/Wills, Mental Capacity issues and Health/Social Care.


Finally, the Clinic volunteered to take on **five cases** from the **Ukraine Advice Project UK**, which was coordinated by the 'magic circle' firm of DLA Piper, from February 2022. All cases were written instructions and responses via email.

## Testimonials



*"Volunteering at the legal advice clinic as an undergraduate is something that I shall never forget. I have developed numerous soft skills, and it has also inspired me because if I do ever qualify as a lawyer in the future, I would like to work for a firm that encourages its employees to offer pro bono legal advice to vulnerable members of society. Lawyers are often viewed by many as privileged hard-faced individuals, and our generation needs to change that by offering our help and sympathising with those who desperately need access to justice that they simply cannot afford."*

Student Volunteer 2020-2022



*"The service provided was excellent. The advice was sound and given in a professional manner."*

Student Advisor-Led Appointment Client 2022

## Law Reform Clinics

The Clinic submitted evidence to the Welsh Government's Consultation on the draft Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.

Following that the Clinic hosted an online event on the proposed Bill and the Welsh Government's Fair Work Agenda in October 2021. We were delighted that Hannah Blythyn MS, the Welsh Government's Deputy Minister for Social Partnership was able to participate in the event.

The Clinic Director, Rich Owen, gave evidence to the House of Commons Public Bills Committee on aspects of access to justice issues relating to the National Security Bill in July 2022.

## Welsh Translation Project

Student Advisers have been translating the Law Society's Pro Bono Manual into the Welsh language working in partnership with Eversheds Sutherland.

This includes translating a number of forms and specimen letters into the Welsh language. In this way, it is hoped that clients ability to access justice through the Welsh language will be enhanced.

## Factsheet Development Project

As there is huge demand for the Clinic's services, we have developed factsheets with the aim of providing initial advice and assistance to clients.

The initial factsheet on the Small Claims Track has proved very successful and Student Advisers are now developing another factsheet on First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointments.

## HOPE (Helping others participate and engage)

HOPE is a partnership project between; Age Cymru, Age Cymru local partners (such as Swansea Law Clinic) and Age Connects Wales partners across the whole of Wales. HOPE delivers independent advocacy for older people (50+) and carers across Wales.

The Clinic worked with Age Cymru to recruit and assist in the training of independent advocates from amongst Student Advisers to provide support to local older people and carers so they can help shape the key decisions affecting their lives and avoid getting into a crisis situation. The aim of the project is for the independent advocates to not only assist their client through delivering low level advocacy, but to give them the tools and confidence to be able to advocate for themselves.

## 'Legal Tech'

The Clinic obtained funding, as well as support, after a competitive tendering process from the Children's Society's Coordinated Community Support to develop an inter advice agency referral app, which will be launched in 2022. The app will improve the referral process between agencies, which will enhance the client journey.

The Clinic contributed to research led by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) in a project funded by the UK government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy's Regulators' Pioneer Fund called *Using Legal Tech to Address Inequalities in Access to Justice*. The other research partners were the Legal Innovation Lab Wales, the Information Commissioner's Office, the University of West of England and the West of England Combined Authority.

As part of this research an online focus group with the advice sector in Wales entitled **Advice services and technology workshop- Wales** was held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

Rich Owen, Liz Withers of the SRA and Stefano Barazza of the Legal Innovation Lab Wales talked at an online event about the project which was organised by Legal News during Pro Bono Week on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.

## Student Board

This was the second year of operation of the Clinic's Student Board. Members of the Student Board are asked to contribute ideas directly to the Clinic staff in all areas of Clinic development and strategic priorities.

There were four meetings of the Board during the period under review. The first meeting identified ways in which distressed clients could be further assisted. There was a noticeable increase in the number of clients experiencing severe distress as the country emerged from the Covid 19 pandemic. Mindful of this increase, members of the Student Board also made suggestions to changes to the Clinic's Confidentiality and Consent Form to give Student Advisers the opportunity to disclose areas which may trigger adverse reactions.

Members of the Student Board also commented on the proposals to make changes to Student Advisers' training and induction with the inclusion of a simulated client interview.

They were also the first Student Advisers to be involved in the Ukraine Advice Project and had been involved in events organised by the Clinical Legal Education Organisation. This enabled them to share experiences with students based at other university law clinics.

## Events

A session entitled '**Legal Aid Talk and Q&A**' was open to all law students, hosted by one of our volunteer solicitors, Georgina Arthure of Peter Lynn and Partners, Solicitors on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

Student Advisers again took part in the **Law Clinics' Global Day of Action for Climate Justice** on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The theme was use of plastics, which was the idea which had been put forward by Swansea Law Clinic at the Global Alliance for Justice Education Conference in June 2021. Student Advisers held a Twitter Takeover of the Clinic's Twitter account for the day.

The Clinic hosted an online workshop entitled **Delivering sustainable higher education: the Welsh Context**, which was sponsored by the Association of National Teaching Fellows on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The event started with a presentation by Professor Carolyn Hayles, Professor of Environmental and Sustainable Design for the Built Environment at Cardiff Metropolitan University who gave an overview of the Quality Assurance Agency's Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development. This was followed by a case study led by Pavla Boulton, National Teaching Fellow, from the Faculty of Life Sciences and Education, University of South Wales. There then followed a case study from Ben Rawlence, Chief Executive of Black Mountains College (BMC), which re-imagines education in a time of ecological crisis. Rich Owen of Swansea Law Clinic provided the final case study and considered ways in which legal services have to be delivered differently, as a result of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2014.

## Invited Talks

Members of Clinic staff have been invited to give talks at a number of events.

LawWorks invited Rich Owen to be a panellist in a discussion entitled **Holistic approaches to pro bono, a focus on delivering advice in partnership with healthcare settings** at the third LawWorks Clinics Network Conference was held online, on the 8th and 9th July 2021. The other speakers were Amanda Finlay CBE (Law for Life), Dr Philip Drake (University of Manchester), Professor Dame Hazel Genn (UCL), Dan Hopewell (Bromley by Bow Centre) and Kathryn Penrith (Making Space).

As part of Pro Bono Week 2021, LawWorks together with the Environmental Law Foundation and A4ID invited Rich Owen to be a lead panellist for a discussion entitled **Pro Bono and Environmental Justice**. Other speakers were Robert McCracken QC, Wessen Jazrawi (Hausfield), Matt Hunt (PGMBM, an environmental law firm), and Emma Montlake (Environmental Law Foundation).

LawWorks invited Rich Owen to be a panellist in an InfoExchange entitled **Environmental Law Clinics** on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The other speakers were Brontie Ansell (University of Essex/Lawyers for Nature), Tom Brenan (Environmental Law Foundation), and Jo Smallwood (University of Sussex).

LawWorks asked Rich Owen to be a panellist in a discussion entitled **Access to legal services for diverse communities** as part of the LawWorks Clinics Conference on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The other speakers were Abiodun Michael Olatokun (Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law); Karen Bailey (Bailey Wright & Co); and Reshma Derasari, (University of Roehampton).

The Clinical Legal Education Organisation invited Rich Owen to be a panellist in an online discussion entitled **Promotion as a Clinician** on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The other panellists were Linden Thomas (University of Birmingham) and Rachel Knowles (UCL).

The European Network of Clinical Legal Education (ENCLE) asked Rich Owen to be a panellist in a discussion held on the Clinic's Global Day of Action for Climate Justice, (17<sup>th</sup> November 2021) entitled '**Beyond Clinic? Developing the next generation of Legal Activists**'. The other speakers were Christoph König (Humboldt-Universität, Berlin); Bianca Sukrow (Bucerius Law School Law Clinic, Hamburg); Carlo Caprioglio (Roma Tre University); and Veronika Tomoszková (Palacky University, Olomouc).

## Networks

Members of the Clinic's staff participate in a number of networks.

Rich Owen continued in his role as the Welsh Government appointed but Independent Chair of the Steering Group of the Swansea Neath Port Talbot Regional Advice Network, which fosters partnership working across the advice sector in these local authority areas. The Clinic hosted meetings of the Steering Group and full member meetings of the network.

Rich Owen was elected as the Chair of the Law Society's Access to Justice Committee and started his three year term in September 2021. As well as Chairing Committee meetings, the role involves meeting with other sectoral bodies and regular meetings with the Ministry of Justice.



## Research and Development

Rich Owen delivered a paper '**Lawyers as leaders: developing students' leadership skills to create a more sustainable planet**' at a Symposium organised by the Global Alliance for Justice Education, International Journal of Clinical Legal Education and Association for Canadian Clinical Legal Education at their conference "'Turning Challenges into Opportunities: Justice Education in Times of Crises" 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Rich Owen contributed a chapter '**Rebellious lawyering theory, sustainability and clinical legal education**' in a book edited by Omar Madhloom and Hugh McFaull, *Thinking About Clinical Legal Education: Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives* (Routledge, 2021).

Rich Owen guest blogged on the Association of National Teaching Fellows blog on the *Workshop on Delivering sustainable higher education: the Welsh Context* event, which can be accessed here < <https://ntf-association.com/report-on-workshop-on-delivering-sustainable-higher-education-the-welsh-context/>>

Rich Owen contributed an article to the Future Generations June 2022 newsletter on the work of Swansea Law Clinic, which can be accessed here <<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Future-Generations-Newsletter-June-2022.pdf>>

Rich Owen and Eve Haynes delivered a paper entitled '**Stronger Together: how the advice sector can work together more effectively**' at the Eighth European Network of Clinical Legal Education Conference (ENCLE) 2022 'Solidarity: We are ALL in this together!' held at the University of Brescia 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022 which considered the issues around the new referral app. This is the first occasion, as far as we are aware, that a member of professional services staff has contributed to the ENCLE conference or any conference on clinical legal education pedagogy, so we were pleased that Eve acquitted herself well.



*Eve Haynes and Rich Owen presenting a paper at the Eighth European Network of Clinical Legal Education Conference on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022*

## **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Both staff and Student Advisers engaged in a number of continuous professional development opportunities.

Rule of Law and Climate Change, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 organised by E3G

Third LawWorks Clinics Network Conference 8th and 9th July 2021

Anticipatory Advice & Early Intervention, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Summer Clinic CAB Benefits support training day, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Working with Communities - Funding and research insights organised by the Network for Justice, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Practising Law in a Climate and Ecological Emergency: the regulatory environment, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Clinical Legal Education Organisation Student Law Clinic Symposium 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Fourth LawWorks Clinics Network Conference 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Eighth European Network of Clinical Legal Education Conference 'Solidarity: We are ALL in this together!' 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022.