

ANNUAL REPORT



September 2024 -
August 2025
EDITION

Hertfordshire
Law Clinic

UH





CONTENTS

Messages from Director & Employability Lead	4
Spotlight on our Students	5
Our External Supervisors	7
Law Clinic 5 th Anniversary	9
Awards & Events	10
Statistics for the Year	12
Parole Clinic - HMP The Mount	13
School Tasking & Green Crimes	14
Our Justice Bus at work	15
Dean's Awards	16
Events with Hertfordshire Law Society	17
Alumni Achievements	18
What's Next?	19

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CLINIC DIRECTOR

“

It is hard to believe that the Law Clinic is now five years old. Over this time, the team has continued to expand the range of projects on offer, creating even more opportunities for our students to demonstrate their outstanding skills, while ensuring that we remain committed to supporting those most in need within our community.

This year's highlights include the Prison Clinic being Highly Commended at the national LawWorks awards and the successful launch of the Herts Duty Solicitor Scheme, delivered in partnership with the local Family Justice Board.



AMANDA THURSTON
Director of Clinic

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INTRODUCING OUR EMPLOYABLITY LEAD

“

This year, Amanda and I have worked closely with our team to ensure that students clearly understand the link between the projects and activities they volunteer for and their future employability. Our aim is for students to develop relevant, practical skills through experiential learning, helping them build stand-out CVs and giving them plenty to showcase in interviews.

In March, we hosted the School's largest recruitment fair to date, providing students with the opportunity to connect with a wide range of potential employers. We also continued our successful Summer micro-placements programme, supporting undergraduate students in gaining their first valuable work experience.



LAUREN MCGILVRAY
Employability Lead for the
School of Law & Education

”

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR STUDENTS

Our student volunteers continue to be at the heart of the Law Clinic and our related projects. They are all unique, but together, they work hard to bring an amazing blend of dedication and energy throughout the year.

We are proud to recognise their contributions and whilst we cannot showcase all of them in each report, here are just a few of their stories to highlight the real differences their involvement this year has made.

Emma Hardy



“ Since starting my degree, I’ve taken full advantage of all opportunities on offer. For the past three years, I’ve volunteered as a Student Advisor in the Law Clinic, helping to provide free legal advice to members of the public. This role has been hugely rewarding, not only for the clients we help, but also for my own development. I’ve learned how to conduct client interviews, analyse legal issues and communicate advice clearly and professionally. I’ve also taken part in the Trial Advocacy course, where I’ve honed my public speaking skills, as well as the “You Be the Judge” activity where I acted as a Magistrate, deciding the outcome in mock cases. These experiences deepened my understanding of courtroom procedure and challenged me to think critically and fairly. Both activities took place in our replica Crown court room – and it was certainly fascinating getting to sit on both sides of the bench! All these experiences have enhanced my legal knowledge, confidence and commitment to a career in law. They have taught me the importance of preparation, empathy and clear communication – skills which I will carry forward with me into my future legal career. ”

Mirela Tuta



“ My time at UH has undoubtedly shaped who I am today. During my undergraduate studies, I was given numerous opportunities to develop both personally and professionally. My experiences include volunteering with the Law Clinic, participating in advocacy work, and assisting with various educational outreach projects and events, like School Tasking; the Festival of Ideas; and the Bishop Hatfield advocacy demonstrations. As someone who immigrated to the UK ten years ago, I have been deeply impressed by the University’s commitment to support student diversity - encouraging growth and learning, regardless of their background, or abilities. The university fosters a fair and supportive environment, encouraging both academic achievement and self-confidence. This supportive atmosphere enabled me to achieve a first-class law degree, even though I doubted my abilities during my first year. ”



Chintankumar Parmar

“

I was really concerned about familiarising myself with the laws and judicial system of the UK when I enrolled as an international student on the LLM Masters in Law programme at UH.

I was really anxious at first, but we were introduced to the Law Clinic and its pro bono activities at the start of the first year, whereby we had the opportunity to shadow a solicitor and learn how to write an advice letter. We did a lot of practical training, which helped me to not only carry out my clinic duties efficiently but also advance my understanding of UK legislation. We also had the opportunity to help support other projects, like the Herts Duty Solicitor scheme and Support at Court. I had the opportunity to attend the local family courts for FHDRA hearings (in Children cases) as part of these projects, where I was able to assist litigants in person with their court cases. This may be the most effective approach to introduce a student to the court and the judicial system.

”



Mabel Ejeh

“

My time at the Law Clinic has been a truly formative experience. Working as both a clinic assistant and a student advisor gave me the chance to engage directly with real life clients, and to apply the legal knowledge I had gained in a practical setting. Speaking to clients, taking instructions, and helping them navigate their legal issues sharpened my communication skills and gave me confidence in handling responsibility. It also showed me the importance of empathy, professionalism, and clarity when providing legal advice.

This experience has been invaluable in shaping my path toward the solicitor route. I am currently awaiting my SQE results and preparing to take the next stage of assessments. In the meantime, I am actively applying for legal roles, and I am grateful that the skills and experience gained through the Law Clinic have already strengthened my CV and opened doors. I have begun receiving promising offers in legal areas, which I believe will help me progress further in the profession. Overall, my time at UH and the Law Clinic has given me both the confidence and the foundation to pursue my future career as a solicitor.

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“

The dedication and empathy shown at the Law Clinic truly helped me feel understood during a challenging time; the commitment to providing accessible legal support is commendable.

OUR EXTERNAL SUPERVISORS & PARTNERS

Our external solicitors have been an essential part of the Law Clinic's success this year, bringing not only their legal expertise but also compassion and commitment to every case.

We are proud to work with such dedicated professionals and are deeply thankful for their help in making a difference in people's lives every day.

Here is an introduction to one of our latest recruits...

Joe Colley Machins Solicitors LLP

“

I am an associate solicitor at Machins, specialising in all areas of private family law.

I began my legal career with a background in corporate law and criminal defence, and my original ambition was to practice at the criminal bar. However, with changes to legal aid, I reconsidered that path, but still could not decide whether to pursue a career at the Bar or to practice as a solicitor. I then joined Machins in the private family team and discovered my true passion for this area of law and a happy compromise away from the bar.

Throughout my career as a family lawyer, I've had the opportunity to work on a wide variety of cases, ranging from ultra-high-net-worth financial disputes to High Court child arrangement matters. What I find most rewarding is being able to serve as both a solicitor and an advocate, handling most of my own hearings. This allows me to combine my love for advocacy in the court room with a consistent and personal approach for my clients. I am currently undertaking my higher rights of audience to become a solicitor advocate.

Machins has been involved with the Law Clinic for the past year, an initiative that I, along with my team, have greatly valued. The clinic not only helps clients in their time of need but also gives students the invaluable chance to gain practical, hands-on experience –something that is increasingly rare in today's legal environment.

”



A HUGE shout out to ALL our external supervisors - without you we could not run the law clinic, and a SPECIAL mention to **Richard Gilbert** (Spencer West) and **Alicia Instone** (Cleveland Scott York) who have been working with us since we opened back in 2019!

NATIONAL
LEGAL
SERVICE
SOLICITORS

HODGE
JONES &
ALLEN

 **Machins**
SOLICITORS

RAYDEN
SOLICITORS

 **LONGMORES**
SOLICITORS

 **Abbey Law**
Our mission is your success

SPENCER WEST

cleveland
scott york

DEBENHAMS
OTTAWAY
SOLICITORS

 **SHELTER**

 **OSBORNE
& WISE**

wells**burcombe**
SOLICITORS

5TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



We marked this significant milestone for Hertfordshire Law Clinic with a celebratory event at the University in October 2024, where all attendees received a commemorative fifth anniversary pin. We were especially delighted that our patron, **Professor Grace Ononiwu CBE**, was able to join us remotely to formally open the occasion and express gratitude to the many supporters who have contributed to the Clinic's success.

The event brought together a diverse group of guests, including the High Sheriff, our School Dean Professor Penny Carey, Clinic founder Diana Kirsch, external supervisors, alumni Student Advisors, and even our very first client. In their remarks, Professor Carey and Amanda reflected on the Clinic's remarkable achievements over the past five years and outlined exciting plans for the future—ensuring that experiential learning and employability remain at the heart of all our teaching.

High Sheriff's Annual Lecture

This year's High Sheriff, **Annie Brewster**, welcomed **Murray Rosen KC** to the campus to deliver her annual lecture on his specialist subject of sports regulation. The event provided an opportunity for staff, students, and distinguished guests to engage in a thought-provoking discussion and to strengthen professional networks. Following the address, Annie presented her annual Community Contribution Awards, honouring law students who have made significant contributions to local charities and to the University's pro bono initiatives.



Professor Carey, Murray Rosen KC & Annie Brewster

I was listened to and I was asked a number of good questions, which confirmed to me a deep level of listening.

Client feedback

AWARDS & EVENTS



This year students and staff, including our Dean **Professor Carey** and Deputy Vice Chancellor, **Professor Mairi Watson**, attended the House of Lords for the final of the **LawWorks & Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards**. Chintankumar Parmar (a Masters in Law student) was shortlisted for the Best Contribution by an Individual Student and we were then Highly Commended for our Parole Clinic at HMP The Mount as the Best New Pro Bono Activity. Full details of this project are on Page 13.



Student Pro Bono Awards 2025

High Sheriff's Community Contribution Awards

At her Annual Lecture held on campus in the Weston Auditorium High Sheriff **Annie Brewster** gave out the following awards to our students, recognising and celebrating the contribution that Hertfordshire Law School students make to the community in Hertfordshire:-

:-

Winner - Humeira Dadabhai

Runners-up - Ahad Mustafa & Karen Jenkins

Highly Commended - Jekaterina Bodnarchuk



LAW SCHOOL FUNDRAISING



advocate



A group of students from our **LLM Masters in Law with Work Experience** programme received a Bronze Award for their fundraising skills in the **Law School Challenge**. This was a remarkable achievement given most of the team were international students who did not have local friends and family to support them. They raised £575 for social justice charities LawWorks and Advocate. Special thanks goes to their Module Leader **Eric Shahzar** for supporting them throughout. Well done to the student team - Sakshi Joshi; Sehrish Abbas; Wahab Siddiqui; Ali Saber; Ahmad Salman; Humeira Dadabhai; Fatima Saqib; Syed Shahzaib Kazmi; Chintankumar Parmar; Ayesha Gul Rukh; and Muhammad Annass Seyal.



Very friendly and approachable

Client feedback

Law School students and staff once again supported the **London Legal Support Trust's** charity walk in June. They joined 19,000 walkers enjoying the sites of central London and sunshine whilst raising monies for pro bono advice charities.

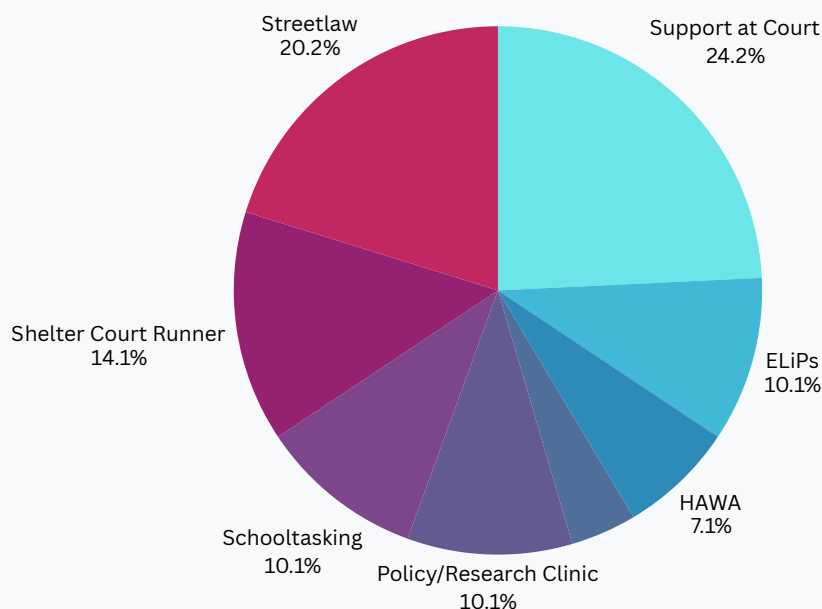
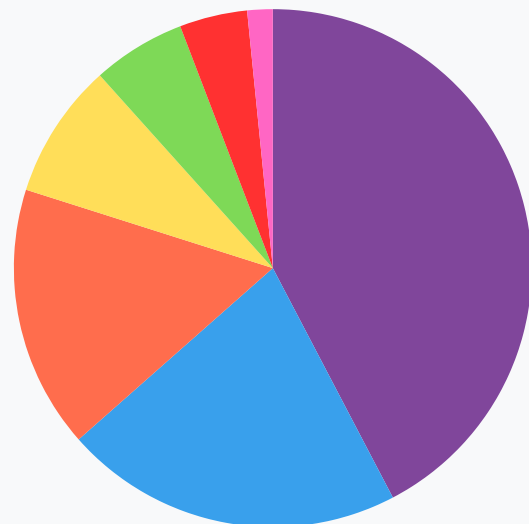
STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR

200

clients we have provided free legal advice to

86

students working in the clinic - both online and at our Justice Bus events



99

students working on other Real World Learning projects

PAROLE CLINIC - HMP THE MOUNT

Lecturer **Zaherah Saghir** has forged a strong relationship with our local prison HMP The Mount (located in Hemel Hempstead) to offer a new and unique experiential learning opportunity for students in a prison setting.

The innovative project was designed in collaboration with local, specialist solicitor **Harjit Channa of Wells Burcombe** and has students creating and delivering parole workshops in the prison. The students come away with knowledge in an important area of criminal law, and improved practical skills including research and presentation.

The project delivered the Parole workshops twice over its first year, with a waiting list of prisoners showing its popularity and need. Due to the setting of this project, we were not able to take photographs of the workshops. However, we received feedback from all those involved.



Prisoners stated that they felt better equipped and better understood the parole process as a result of the workshops.

Students confirmed that the project gave them an “invaluable insight into the parole process and the realities of the prison system” and was “a valuable and eye-opening experience, providing a unique insight into the complexities of the parole process”.

Harjit added “It is also a great opportunity for open conversations”, allowing “attendees to learn from one another.”



Clear advice given followed by notes written up for reference of advice given

Client feedback

SCHOOL TASKING

This year the UH Widening Access & Student Success team kindly funded this project to allow students to teach local Year 5 primary school pupils about Law and Higher Education, through the fun and games of TaskMaster - the hit Channel 4 programme.



Mahfuza Sultana, our Clinic Co-Ordinator, supervised the project and had the inspired idea to use Year 6 pupils from Denbigh Primary School in Luton (where she attended) as the School Tasking judges.

The competition to be on the judging panel was fierce, and here was one (successful) entry from a Year 6 pupil:-

"Taking on the role of a Taskmaster judge requires a sharp eye for detail, strong leadership and the ability to evaluate performance objectively. It's not just about choosing winners, but about recognising creativity, effort and innovate problem-solving. A judge must provide thoughtful feedback, guiding participants to push their limits and work collaboratively. This position demands strategic thinking, quick decision making and fostering an environment where both individual and team achievements are celebrated."

GREEN CRIMES

This exciting activity introduced students to 'crimes against nature', exploring the core concepts of green criminology, the interplay between criminology and environmental law, and the emerging critical perspectives on ecological justice. **Dr Nicola Coleman** (one of our criminology lecturers) devised the project to cover a variety of interactive and practical skill-based activities, including working collaboratively to create an informative booklet: Planet in Peril; research into theoretical perspectives and legal frameworks; reviewing real world examples of corporate environmental crime; analysing the challenges in addressing wildlife crimes, both locally and globally; and exploring the quest for ecological justice.

"Very useful co curricular. As I studied Sociology at A-level, most topics were quite familiar as I covered green crime as a topic and it enhanced my understanding. This co curricular will be useful to demonstrate my understanding of current affairs and what is currently happening with the environment."

"I've thoroughly enjoyed this co-curricular and would highly recommend it to other students. The topics are relevant to every day life and opened my eyes to a lot of legal issues occurring every day in the environment sector. These sessions have inspired me to look into environmental law as a possible career path."

JUSTICE BUS AT WORK

The Law Clinic and Justice Bus have been able to partner with local charities and support groups this year including the Hertfordshire Village Halls and Community Buildings Consortium, the Trussell Fund's food banks, and Citizens Advice. This allows our students to gain a wide range of experiential learning and at the same time provide advice and signposting to vulnerable clients; help save and improve local community spaces; and broaden our impact. Here are a couple of examples:-



FLAMSTEAD CASE STUDY

“ In November 2022 I was put in touch with Hertfordshire Law Clinic, thanks to our Village Halls and Community Buildings Consortium. I was asked to provide photos or plans of the proposed works and a copy of the title register and plan from HM Land Registry. My interview on Zoom with two Student Advisors took place a week later and lasted about an hour. In a relaxed atmosphere, I was invited to outline the project, identify the Trustees' concerns and answer the students' questions.

A fortnight later, after it had been checked by a supervising solicitor, I received the letter of advice from the Student Advisors. This summarised the facts, identified my concerns, and clarified the position of the Village Hall, as occupiers and owners of the land. The advice confirmed that an appropriate way forward would be to have a formal agreement between the three parties involved – ensuring that it was expressly stated who would be responsible for the planned works, and for further costs, including maintenance and insurance. It also emphasised the importance of complying with Dacorum Borough Council's Planning Assessment, which the clinic had considered even though a copy was received only the day before the clinic interview.

With this advice, I felt more confident that the Trustees' concerns could be addressed and the project could proceed. It took a while to organise the drafting of the Memorandum of Agreement, but this was signed in July 2024 and construction of the ramp was completed in early September 2024.

Jane Lutman

Chair, Flamstead Village Hall Management Committee

”

Supporting Hertsmere Citizens Advice

Law Clinic **Student Advisors** Varenaya and Ziya volunteered to give a presentation to Hertsmere Citizens Advice at its AGM. They were able to explain all the pro bono help Hertfordshire Law School could offer to their staff, volunteers and guests. It was a great opportunity for them to showcase their confidence and professionalism.



The advice was thoroughly explained in detail so that I understood it, which was much appreciated ...

Client feedback



DEANS AWARD 2025

Professor Penny Carey, Dean of the School of Law and Education, hosts the School's Awards event at the university each year:

"I believe it is important to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our entire School community – both students and staff. This occasion provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the past academic year and to acknowledge the wide range of contributions that enrich our students' learning experience. This year's ceremony, held on 23 May, was made especially memorable by the presence of Professor Grace Ononiwu, patron of our Law Clinic, who joined me in presenting the awards. Among these were her prestigious Rising Star Awards which honour exceptional law and criminology students. It is a point of pride that many past recipients have since gone on to achieve remarkable success."

Law Award Category	Winner Name
Outstanding Achievement in the LLB	Gemma Walsh-Beasley
Outstanding Achievement in Criminology and Criminal Justice	Chelsea Howard
Outstanding Achievement in LLM Legal Practice	Chase Fry
Outstanding Achievement in the Master of Laws LLM	Stephanie Melecia White
Grace Ononiwu Rising Star LLB (3 Winners)	Ocean Hilliard
	Joy Ighade
	Joyce Katua
Grace Ononiwu Rising Star CCJ (3 Winners)	Jisire Akinrogunde
	Isabella Spires
	Yasmin El Telbani Alonso
Outstanding Contribution to Pro Bono Activities	Veronika Slavova
Outstanding Achievement in the LLM Bar Practice	Krishna Jaya Balan
Outstanding Achievement in Master of Laws Solicitors' Practice	Muhammad Nawaz
Resilience in the Face of Adversity Award	Jade Robinson
Student of the Year Award	Wali Ullah
Teacher of the Year: Law & CCJ	Eric Shahzar
Colleague of the Year	Kate Ollerenshaw
Education Award Category	Winner Name
Outstanding Achievement in the BA (Hons) Education	Thomas White
Outstanding Achievement in the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Education	Sian Williams
Outstanding Achievement in BEd (Hons) Primary Education with QTS	Darcey Perricone
Outstanding Achievement in the MA/MSc Education	Anni Mahr
Outstanding Achievement in the PGCE	Sian Appleyard
Rising Star Undergraduate (3 Winners)	Jacob Waggeh
	Sarah Gillman
	Tabitha Scales
Rising Star Postgraduate (3 Winners)	Harry Watts
	Kayleigh Fitzgerald
	Solomon Ayotunde Abiodun
Outstanding Community Impact	Francesca Navrady-Wilson
Resilience in the Face of Adversity Award	Leontine Munanga
Student of the Year Award	Emmanuel Ejikeme
Teacher of the Year: Education Undergraduate & Postgraduate	Lorena Sanchez
Colleague of the Year	Lewis Stockwell

SUPPORTING THE ROUTE TO SUCCESS

This academic year saw the launch of our new **LLM Solicitors' Practice** course - a one year postgraduate programme designed to give students a Masters in Law alongside the preparation needed to take the Solicitors Qualifying Examination.



A fundamental part of the course is gaining some of the Qualifying Work Experience needed to become a solicitor, through taking part in our Real World Learning projects.

Students and Staff from the programme shared their experiences of this new route to qualification through a hybrid training session given to Herts Law Society who we work closely with.



Students & Staff from LLM Solicitors' Practice

The event even got a mention in the Welwyn & Hatfield Times, with **Massimo Trebar, President of the Hertfordshire Law Society** quoted as: "It's a very impressive course and I am pleased to see the importance of criminal advocacy included in it."

LLM Solicitors' Practice Programme Lead **Sharmila O'Reilly** also attended the Herts Law Society Annual Dinner in June with **Carolyn Marsh** from our Bar Programme and Law Student Tia Pavett, who was presented the award for excellent Level 5 performance in her law degree.



National Law Society President, Richard Atkinson
presenting the award to our student Tia



Sharmila & Carolyn representing the Law School

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS



We thought it would be great to find out what our amazing alumni students from the Law Clinic are doing since finishing their studies.

Here are just a few we have tracked down ...

Adeyemi Ogunkoya
Trainee Solicitor at
Browne Jacobson

Daniella Gregory
Solicitor at Irwin Mitchell

Amy Tapping
Solicitor at Crane &
Staples

Stephy Rai
Trainee Solicitor at
Raydens

Brittaney Gleed
Solicitor at Debenhams
Ottaway

Gemma Cozens
Trainee Solicitor at Fullers
Family Law

Julide Hasan
Trainee solicitor at
Druces LLP

**Ashley
Nkmemakolam**
Trainee Solicitor at
Raydens

Anna Lampard
Barrister at Nexus chambers

Siddika Islam
Trainee solicitor at Neves Solicitors.

Aedan Courtney
Trainee Solicitor at
Machins

Charlotte Godwin
Solicitor at Ringrose Law

Alexander David
Canadian lawyer at Deutschmann Law

WHAT'S NEXT?

Hertfordshire Duty Solicitor Scheme

Approximately a year ago, Hertfordshire Law Clinic was invited by the **Herts Family Justice Board** to support the establishment of a Duty Solicitor Scheme in the Hertfordshire family courts, aimed at providing free, on-the-spot legal advice to parents without representation.

The partnership has already proved highly effective, with students operating the Duty Solicitor desk at the Watford and Hertford courts on days when the first hearing in children cases (FHDRAs) are scheduled. Students meet and triage clients, after which the Duty Solicitor can join via video link to provide tailored legal advice.

This model enables solicitors to continue with their fee-earning work alongside this pro bono service, encouraging a wider number of firms to allow their Family Law teams to participate.

Full details of the project will follow in our next report.

Alumni Achievements

We would like the chance to celebrate the successes of all our alumni in future editions of the Annual Report. If you are (or know of) a UH Law School graduate who would like to feature in the 2025/26 edition, please contact Amanda on a.thurston@herts.ac.uk

Hot off the Press

Just before publication of this year's report UH announced the wonderful news that our Law Clinic patron, long time supporter, and alumna **Professor Grace Ononiwu CBE** will become the University's Chancellor - from 1st October 2025.

We will do a special feature on Grace's amazing journey in our next edition.



The staff and students were extremely helpful and friendly. They answered all of my questions and gave me some excellent advice

Client feedback



Clear, comprehensive and to the point

Client feedback



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