
advocate



Advocate Monthly Top Ten

1



As 2025 draws to an end, we want to reflect on what a remarkable year it has been.

With over 1,100 cases placed through our core casework service, hundreds of people helped through our 15 duty and partner schemes, 394 barristers joining our panel, and 617 barristers recognised on the Pro Bono Recognition List of England and Wales, 2025 has been a bumper year.

On behalf of everyone we have helped this year, thank you. It is thanks to your help that families have been reunited, discrimination claims have been settled, homes have been kept, and – most importantly - hope has been restored. Last week one of our volunteer barristers helped a father who had not spent Christmas with his daughter for the past two years. Thanks to our barrister's representation, he now has direct contact with his daughter this Christmas day. The father wrote to us to say:

"I can't express how appreciative I really am honestly. Thanks so much you have made mine and my little girl's Christmas come true."

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas period and very much look forward to continuing our work with you in 2026.

[Read recent stories from people we have supported](#)



A celebration of giving at Carols for Pro Bono

On Tuesday evening, 500+ people joined Advocate and LawWorks for our eighth annual Christmas Carol Concert. A much-loved fixture in the legal calendar, the concert once again brought the profession together to mark the end of Michaelmas term and celebrate pro bono.

Held at Temple Church, the evening featured festive carols and exceptional performances from Collegium Musicum and Duo Melus, as well as readings from special guests including the Lady Chief Justice Baroness Carr. Thanks to the generosity of all who attended, over £24,000 was raised and will be shared equally between Advocate and LawWorks.

[Read more about the night](#)



Big Give Christmas Challenge celebrates the gift of legal support

We are thrilled to announce that we have raised an incredible £18,415 through this year's Big Give Christmas Challenge, exceeding our target of £16,500! We are truly grateful to each and every person who contributed.

These funds will directly support Advocate's Social Welfare Caseworker, a vital first point of contact for people experiencing legal crises. Every day, our caseworkers provide a lifeline to individuals facing eviction, job loss, unsafe living conditions, and other critical challenges, working tirelessly to connect them with volunteer barristers who can take on their cases pro bono.

[More about fundraising for us](#)



Championing access to justice in SEND Appeals: Emma's story



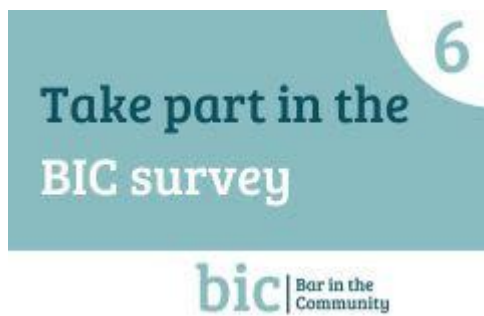
This month we are pleased to spotlight Emma Christie of [36 Group](#), whose pro bono work exemplifies the vital role of the Bar in supporting families navigating the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Tribunal system.

Through Advocate, Emma recently stepped in at short notice to represent a mother seeking a suitable school placement for her son, who has significant special educational needs. The mother faced multiple barriers: English was not her first language, and she was coping with the recent bereavement of her child's father. Following Emma's careful questioning and submissions, the Tribunal agreed that the specialist school was uniquely equipped to meet the child's needs and ruled that he should be offered a place.

Beyond empowering families who would otherwise face the Tribunal alone, Emma also draws attention to how this area of pro bono work offers barristers the chance to deepen their experience of SEND law, develop nuanced analytical skills, and build strong professional networks. Emma notes:

"It is important to remember that most parents won't have any legal training, and they may just need help navigating the system and understanding documents and procedure, which is something all barristers will be able to assist with."

[Read Emma's story](#)



Through [Bar in the Community \(BIC\)](#), barristers and chambers' professionals volunteer their professional skills to support charities and communities across England and Wales – whether by becoming trustees, facilitating training and workshops, mentoring, or providing business support. We have previously connected barristers and legal professionals to opportunities at organisations such as the Prisoners' Advice Service, Young Citizens Mock Trial, State2Bar and the Schools Consent Project. Right now, we want to hear from those who are signed up with BIC.

Help shape the future of Bar in the Community

Are you volunteering because you are passionate about supporting particular causes? Or are you using your skills to support a particular project in your local community?

Please take a moment to complete our short survey, telling us more about why you volunteer and what opportunities you are interested in seeing on BIC to help strengthen its future. Fill out our [Bar in the Community survey](#) or email [Maya](#) if you're interested in receiving a curated selection of volunteering opportunities based on your profile and interests.

[More about Bar in the Community](#)

Shout out to Panel Members...



Thank you to Kimari Storey of Crown Chambers for helping a mother with her hearing in the family courts after the father of her two children sought to seek a shared care

arrangement. The mother had concerns about the proposed arrangement due to the father not accepting that both the children have diagnosed learning difficulties and does not meet their needs, causing distress for the children.

Kimari represented the mother at her final hearing and the mother wrote to us to express her gratitude: *"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for your work on my case and to your charity for all that they do. Ms Storey was amazing in court and provided me with help when I desperately needed it. This has been the worst year of my life, and I have lived in flight or fight for all of it. The legal system can be terrifying and receiving the help from Advocate has been invaluable. Ms Storey was powerful, articulate and perfect to represent my voice at a time when I couldn't speak for myself. We got a good outcome for the children."*

Thank you, Kimari

We would like to shout-out Robert Lassey of Nine Chambers for agreeing to assist a highly vulnerable woman at the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) in relation to a disability discrimination claim she raised almost a decade ago, alongside more recent claims that have been brought to light. The woman suffers from a number of mental illnesses and had previously appeared as a litigant in person in proceedings but lost, after which she became even more unwell. Robert has agreed to assist her with the appeal so that she does not have to face proceedings alone again. The woman wrote to us to say she felt that "a wave of anxiety has lifted" at the prospect of having assistance and not having to face proceedings alone. This is the second EAT case that Robert has agreed to assist with this month.

Thank you, Robert

Many thanks to Matt Lewin of Cornerstone Barristers for helping a single mother whose income-based Job Seekers Allowance had been clawed back by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in late 2021 for allegedly failing to keep them updated with changes to her income. This was despite her being on a zero-hours contract, which meant her income fluctuated unpredictably. The mother maintained that she had declared all her work hours to her Job Centre Work Coach, but DWP still calculated that she had been overpaid for a period of almost a year. She requested a mandatory reconsideration of this decision, but DWP did not change their decision and sought to recover the overpayment and a civil penalty. Her initial appeal (unrepresented) to the First Tier Tribunal (FTT) was dismissed. Matt represented her at the Upper Tribunal and later in the FTT to appeal the DWP's decision. They were successful on all counts, meaning she will no longer have to pay the overpayment figure of £2,000 demanded by DWP. She will also be awarded substantial backpay from December 2021.

Thank you, Matt



Looking ahead to 2026...

In 2026, we are excited to be celebrating our 30th anniversary. We will be highlighting the pro bono impact we have made in collaboration with the Bar over the last three decades by spotlighting the contributions of our volunteers, team-members and supporters, and most importantly, illustrating how this has changed the lives of people in need of pro bono help. Stay tuned to our news page and our [LinkedIn](#) for the latest news and announcements.

"The Bar's commitment to pro bono work continues to inspire us every day. We are deeply grateful for the time, expertise, and compassion shared with those who need our help. 2026 is Advocate's 30th anniversary and we look forward to achieving even more together for those with nowhere else to turn." - Rebecca Wilkie, CEO of Advocate

Our next newsletter will be back in January. We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

[Advocate news page](#)