

# advocate



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## Advocate Monthly Top Ten

#ProBono35

advocate



**Donate £35 to Advocate when renewing  
your practising certificate**

The Authorisation to Practice process is now officially open! Please consider donating your **#ProBono35** to Advocate when renewing your practising certificate.

The donations we receive through this process make up **almost 50% of our funding**. Therefore this campaign is fundamental to our sustained success as a charity.

**The demand for our service has reached the highest in Advocate's history.** We received 21 requests for help every day in 2022 and the need for our assistance has grown further in 2023.

**Your support has real impact.** One of our pro bono clients recently told us: "*Advocate has given me a significant ray of hope in what has been otherwise a very tough period for me. Thank you all so much for making representation for me possible in this case*".

We are grateful to the countless barristers who donate their time pro bono. We are also thankful to those, who may not be able to do pro bono work, but can donate to Advocate and support our service this way. Many of you do both and we are incredibly grateful for this. **We simply would not exist without you.**

**[To find out more about our #ProBono35 campaign and how your donation will make a difference click here.](#)**

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## Welcome to the Pro Bono Circuit Officers

### Pro Bono Circuit Officers now appointed on every circuit

This month we met with the new Pro Bono Circuit Officers, who have each been recently appointed by their Circuit Leader. There is now either one, or more, Pro Bono Circuit Officer on **every** circuit in England and Wales.

The Pro Bono Circuit Officers are responsible for encouraging and supporting pro bono on circuit and are the primary contact point for all pro bono initiatives, both for Advocate volunteering and for other pro bono opportunities.

Watch this space and keep a look out for communications from your Pro Bono Circuit Officer(s) detailing the opportunities to get involved in pro bono work on your Circuit.



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### Introducing The Chambers Pro Bono Framework

The Chambers Pro Bono Framework (#TheFramework) is an opportunity for all Chambers in England and Wales to establish their commitment to undertaking pro bono work and improving access to justice.

By signing up, Chambers commit to these four actions:

- 1 Appoint Pro Bono Champions
- 2 Action pro bono work
- 3 Organise a seminar on pro bono
- 4 Report on the work done

Eleven Chambers have already signed up to #TheFramework across England & Wales! We would love to add your Chambers to this list.

[Click here to find out how your Chambers can sign up to #TheFramework.](#)

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## Advocate Statistics



## Forged signatures & false claims: Arash's Story

*When Arash was wronged by his mortgage broker he became homeless and suffered a heart attack. Fortunately, barrister Charlotte was able to help pro bono.*

Arash was a small-time property developer, who worked with Clive, a mortgage broker.

When Arash exceeded his borrowing limits, he and Clive reached a verbal agreement that the properties would be held on trust, with Clive receiving a share of the rental income. A portfolio of properties in Clive's name was built up and developed by Arash.

Clive then claimed that Arash had fallen into arrears on the arrangement and that as a result, Arash had agreed to give up his interest in the properties.

It took ten years for Arash to be able to bring a claim against Clive. During this time, Arash suffered many setbacks including three years of homelessness, a heart attack, the loss of his family and his belief that it was not possible to bring a claim against someone without the help of a solicitor.

Arash eventually turned to Support Through Court for help. He issued proceedings as a litigant in person and attended three court hearings with their help.

[Read on](#)



5 He described the experience of being unrepresented in court, with English as a second language, as bewildering and very stressful.

Arash was then referred to Advocate and we found barrister Charlotte John from Gatehouse Chambers, who stuck with the case for two years, giving Arash advice, drafting documents and eventually representing him in court. For Arash, this help was completely life-changing.

Clive relied on a letter of the alleged agreement, purportedly signed by Arash as confirmation. Arash denied receiving or signing the letter and called a forensic handwriting expert to give evidence.

After a long hearing, the judge found that, contrary to Clive's claims, Arash was in credit on the terms of the arrangement, and found that Arash's signature had been forged.

Arash was delighted and relieved after many years of fighting. He said: "If it were not for Charlotte's day-to-day efforts, I would never have been able to achieve this success."



## 6 Reviewers' Evening

Last Wednesday, we welcomed many of our reviewers to meet with the casework team and learn more about the wider work Advocate is doing to encourage more barristers to join the Advocate panel of volunteers.

Conall Patton KC, our trustee, echoed the thanks of our Chair and CEO, and reminded practitioners of the importance of instating one (or more!) Pro Bono Champion within Chambers to establish a pro bono ethos.

Thanks to everyone who joined us, thank you to our dedicated reviewing panel, who are vital to the smooth operation of Advocate.

Thank you also to Dechert LLP for hosting the event, to our speakers, and to everyone involved in organising.

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**"We cannot do what we do without you"**, Advocate's CEO, Rebecca Wilkie, kicked the evening off thanking all our reviewers who do so much to support our service.

**"The more we can spread the word, the more we can help"** - We then heard from Advocate's newly appointed Chair Sharif A. Shivji KC about encouraging colleagues to take on pro bono work through Advocate's current initiatives, including the [Pro Bono Pledge](#), and the recently launched [Chambers Pro Bono Framework](#).

He also thanked our reviewers, stating: "Advocate is here to support those at a difficult time in their lives. Reviewers are essential to the delivery of that operation."

### Shout out to Panel Members...

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**Jennie Ferrario**  
Nine St John Street

Huge thanks to Jennie for providing advice in a complex long-running disability discrimination claim for a remedy hearing. Jennie assisted in helping the parties reach an amicable settlement. The Claimant's father said "Jennie gave myself and my daughter the strength to go on when the world seemed against us. Jennie is a consummate dedicated professional, has shown absolute integrity and can identify the important issues and options for dealing with these types of cases."

Thank you, Jennie

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**Oscar Davies**  
Lamb Chambers

Shout out to Oscar Davies who secured a £20,000 settlement for their pro bono client, a claimant in a disability-related employment claim against a large retailer. They also obtained £500 in costs for The Access to Justice Foundation as a term of the settlement agreement, that's how you do it! Pro bono costs are a vital component of access to justice as they provide a level playing field for clients that are represented pro bono. Find out more about pro bono costs orders and how you can make one [here](#).

Thank you, Oscar

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**Isabella Kirwan**  
Guernica 37

A massive thank you to Isabella who acted successfully in an appeal against family reunion refusal. The judge praised her stating, "I am extremely grateful to Ms Kirwan for acting pro bono in this matter & found her skeleton argument extremely helpful." The pro bono client stated: "This is the second time that a highly professional barrister from Advocate has saved my life. I appreciate Ms Kirwan having faith in me and my case. Words cannot adequately express my gratitude for all her hard work on my behalf."

Thank you, Isabella



## Pledge your pro bono hours

### Get involved in the #ProBonoPledge

Over 125 barristers and pupils have now pledged to take part in the [Pro Bono Pledge](#) and we want to keep that momentum going!

Are you a barrister able to pledge 25 hours of pro bono? Or are you a pupil, about to start your second six, able to pledge one piece of pro bono work? If the answer is yes, [pledge today!](#)

On completion, you will be sent a celebratory #ProBonoPledge or #PupilPledge logo for your email signature and Chambers profile.

The pro bono work can be done through any scheme or pro bono pathway, not just through Advocate, throughout 2023.

[\*\*Pledge to make pro bono part of your 2023 practice today.\*\*](#)