

Advocate Monthly Top Ten

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Advocate says goodbye to Rebecca, our Chief Executive



This month, we say a heartfelt thank you to our Chief Executive, Rebecca "Becks" Wilkie, as she steps down after six years leading Advocate.

Since joining the charity in 2020, Rebecca has guided Advocate with unwavering dedication, integrity and compassion. Through periods of change, growth and opportunity, she has provided calm, thoughtful leadership, always keeping access to justice and the people we serve at the heart of every decision.

Under Rebecca's leadership, Advocate has continued to strengthen its support for those unable to afford legal representation, while growing and engaging our extraordinary community of volunteer barristers and clerks. From expanding our reach across England and Wales to championing pro bono throughout the profession, her vision has helped ensure that Advocate remains a trusted and respected organisation. Most recently, she has led the development of our ambitious new three-year strategy, leaving the charity well placed for the future.

Those of us who have had the privilege of working alongside Rebecca know that her greatest strength has been her people-centred approach. She has been an exceptional leader, offering encouragement, wisdom and steadfast support to the Advocate team, and beyond. Her ability to lead with both confidence and kindness has shaped the culture of Advocate and inspired those around her.

On behalf of everyone at Advocate, and the thousands of volunteers who make our work possible, we would like to thank Rebecca for her outstanding leadership, commitment and unwavering belief in the power of pro bono. Her contribution to Advocate and to access to justice has been immense, and her impact will be felt for many years to come.

We wish Rebecca every success and happiness in this next chapter.



The Advocate team was delighted to volunteer at this year's [London Legal Walk](#), organised by the London Legal Support Trust.

As the largest fundraising event in the legal calendar, the walk brings together thousands of legal professionals each year to support free legal advice services and improve access to justice. Throughout the day, members of the Advocate team were proud to volunteer behind the scenes, helping with everything from selling raffle tickets and handing out water to assisting with the event clear-up.

It was fantastic to see the legal community come together in support of such an important cause; over 19,500 walkers took part on the day, including barristers and chambers staff. Thank you to everyone who took part, donated or volunteered, and to the London Legal Support Trust for organising another brilliant event. We were delighted to see that £1 million has been raised in support of free legal advice charities across London and the South East.

We are already looking forward to next year's walk!

Find out more about London Legal Walk



Last week, Advocate was delighted to join the Sheffield & District Law Society Pro Bono Committee for a special panel event celebrating 30 years of Advocate and the enduring importance of pro bono.

The event brought together legal professionals from across the region for an evening of discussion on the value of pro bono, the importance of access to justice and the many ways lawyers can support those who need legal assistance. We were proud that our Engagement Manager, [Faye Pauffley](#), joined an esteemed panel alongside District Judge Blackmore and Carl Fender of Bank House Chambers, with each panellist sharing their own perspectives and experiences of pro bono work and its impact across the profession.

The discussion highlighted the collective commitment of the legal community to ensuring that access to justice remains at the heart of the profession and demonstrated the vital role that volunteers continue to play in making that possible.

Our sincere thanks go to the Sheffield & District Law Society Pro Bono Committee for organising such a thoughtful and engaging event, to our fellow panellists for championing pro bono alongside us, and to everyone who attended and contributed to the discussion. We hope the evening inspired even more legal professionals to get involved in pro bono work.

Sign up to our panel of volunteers



Hear from Harry Stratton on the value of pro bono work

In a recent video, we hear from Harry Stratton of One Essex Court – named Young Pro Bono Barrister of the Year at the 2026 Bar Pro Bono Awards – on what draws him to pro bono work and why it matters to the Bar.

Harry has built an extensive pro bono practice that has included defending defamation claims involving #MeToo complainants, representing international activists and refugees, and acting in discrimination cases, including education-related claims.

Asked how pro bono work has shaped his professional practice, Harry told us, "It's the variety. It means you get to do something completely different. You get to encounter a whole new area of law."

Harry also shared a useful tip for any barrister considering taking on pro bono work: "Keep track of your time so that you can claim a pro bono costs order."



Where a case is successful, the court can make a pro bono costs order requiring the other side to pay a sum equivalent to the fees that would otherwise have been charged. The payment is made to the Access to Justice Foundation (the prescribed charity for pro bono costs orders), which distributes these funds to free legal advice charities. Pro bono lawyers may express a preference as to how the funds are distributed (for example, to Advocate), but the decision remains at the Foundation's discretion. It's a way to give something back to the pro bono sector, and genuinely makes a difference in helping us provide the support that we do.

Congratulations Harry! Thank you for everything you do to widen access to justice.

Watch Harry speak about the importance of pro bono

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Brick Court Chambers Dragon Boat Race

A huge thank you to Brick Court Chambers for organising their sixth annual Dragon Boat Race. It was a pleasure to attend as part of team Advocate and meet some of the dedicated barristers and solicitors taking to the waters in the name of charity.

The event brought the legal community together once again, raising an outstanding £27,283 for four fantastic charities, including Advocate. We are so grateful for all the continued support that makes it possible for us to keep assisting those who are unable to afford legal help, across all areas of law. Events like these are a reminder that improving access to justice is a shared effort.

Fortunately, this year we were able to ditch the wooden spoon and secure two race wins! An extra special thank you to the Brick Court clerks who joined our team on the day and helped paddle us to victory – we could not have done it without you.

Fundraise for us

Shout out to Panel Members...

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James Laughland
Temple Garden Chambers

We would like to thank James Laughland of Temple Garden Chambers for his outstanding support of one of our applicant in her contract case.

James provided advice, drafting and representation for our applicant who was the defendant in a breach of contract claim relating to unpaid fees, while also bringing a counterclaim for return of the fees she had already paid. In respect to both the claim and counterclaim, her case was that the contractual terms were unfair to her as a consumer.

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Matt Gibbons
Deans Court Chambers

Thank you to Matt Gibbons, Senior Clerk at Deans Court Chambers, for his consistent leadership in championing pro bono within chambers and proactively encouraging barristers to take on pro bono cases. He firmly believes that the legal profession has a responsibility to give back to society and is passionate about promoting the positive impact pro bono work has on both clients and practitioners.

Matt has witnessed first-hand the difference that pro bono assistance can make. One particularly memorable moment came when a client,

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Steven Evans
New Court Chambers

Please join us in thanking Steven Evans of New Court Chambers for his support of two of our applicants in complex proceedings involving their grandchildren.

The proceedings had been ongoing since 2024 and were entering the final stages of a 25-day fact-finding hearing at which the parties were represented by junior and King's Counsel. Our applicants, who were caring for their grandchildren, had originally been granted intervener status in the case before later being reclassified as witnesses. Following evidence that

Thanks to James' clear advice and robust representation, the claim against our applicant was dismissed in full. Not only that, but judgment was entered in her favour on the counterclaim, resulting in the repayment of the sum she had previously paid. When the opposing party sought permission to appeal, James continued to represent our applicant, successfully resisting the appeal and upholding the counterclaim award and delivering a complete win. We are extremely grateful for the skill, commitment and care James brought to this case.

Thank you, James

grateful for the help they had received in securing contact with their children, arrived at chambers with gifts as a token of thanks. Experiences such as these serve as powerful reminders of the life-changing impact that pro bono representation can have and of the important role clerks play in facilitating that work behind the scenes.

Matt is immensely proud of his chambers' commitment to pro bono, including becoming Bronze Pro Bono Patrons and having 7 members, including 2 KCs recognised on the 2026 Pro Bono Recognition List.

Thank you, Matt

raised new issues relating to them without an opportunity to respond, the court recognised the potential unfairness and reinstated them as interveners.

At this late stage of the proceedings, our help-seekers required independent representation to ensure that matters concerning them could be fairly explored and addressed. The case involved highly sensitive allegations relating to fabricated or induced illness, domestic abuse and wardship issues, all within the context of complex family proceedings.

Steven travelled from London to Manchester to represent our applicants during the hearing and attended the cross-examination of their daughter which spared them having to cross-examine her themselves.

We are incredibly grateful for the dedication, expertise and care Steven brought to this matter, and for the meaningful difference his pro bono assistance made to our applicants.

Thank you, Steven



Congratulations to Louis, our Western Circuit caseworker, who has recently obtained pupillage:

I will be starting pupillage at 7BR Chambers in 2027, where I will practise in a broad range of areas across crime, civil and family. 7BR stood out for me when I applied for pupillage because of the multi-disciplinary training the Chambers offers, so I am really excited to start next year. In my view, my work as the Western Circuit caseworker at Advocate has greatly helped to achieve this career milestone.

Working at Advocate has been a continual reminder of my answer to the TED-talk question "what is your why?" It has shown me that the Bar is a profession that people not only admire and respect, but also one that can provide meaningful help to those who need it. It has been a real privilege to help prepare cases for our fantastic volunteer barristers and

reviewers, and a real learning opportunity to see how the job of being an advocate is done well.

The only real downside of working at Advocate has been the recurrent stifled wish to roll up my sleeves and provide the representation at a hearing myself! Fortunately, I will not have too much longer to wait until that is reality!

Read more about Louis' journey from Advocate to pupillage