

advocate



Advocate Monthly Top Ten – March 2024



Justice and access to it

A lecture from Sir Robin Knowles CBE, former Chairman of Advocate

On 14th March, we were delighted to host a lecture given by our new Joint President (and former Chairman), Sir Robin Knowles CBE at Lincoln's Inn.

After several decades working in the system of justice, Sir Robin provided his insight into some of the unique challenges now facing the justice system. The lecture - titled "Justice, and access to it" addressed how not just the pro bono and advice sector, but the government, the Bar and other legal professionals can work better together to ensure that more people have fair and equal access to the justice system.

Sir Robin began the lecture by sharing about how the public's relationship with the justice system has fundamentally shifted since changes in legal aid, before going on to highlight the remarkable pro bono contribution made by barristers, solicitors, paralegals and others in the legal sector, be it through giving their time, making a donation or in many cases both.

Sir Robin asserted that a concerted effort is now needed to address shortfalls in access to the justice system. Acknowledging that there is "not a single answer or a single plan", he spoke on how "sustaining public trust through building public understanding of the system of justice is the starting, foundational point".

Our huge thanks goes to Sir Robin for giving such an insightful and inspiring lecture. We look forward to engaging with further discussions sparked by the event.

[More on the lecture](#)



**Authorisation to Practise
- Thank you to all those who donated**

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated to Advocate this month when renewing their practising certificates through the MyBar portal.

The donations we receive through this process are crucial to our survival as an organisation and for those in need of our help as applications for assistance continue to increase. We were created by the Bar and are sustained by the Bar, and are hugely grateful for all your support. Thank you.

[More on volunteering](#)



**2024 Bar Pro Bono Awards
- Shortlist announced**

We are thrilled to announce the eagerly anticipated shortlisted nominees for the 2024 Bar Pro Bono Awards! This year has been nothing short of extraordinary, with a record-breaking number of over 100 nominations.

The sheer volume of nominations is a testament to the dedication and commitment of the Bar's pro bono work. Each nominee has made an impact in some shape or form, offering their time and expertise selflessly to those who would otherwise face their legal battles alone.

[View the shortlist](#)

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Advocate Statistics



Winning a tax dispute and securing a £55,000 Pro Bono Costs Order

This month, we are delighted to share about John's* experience getting help from Advocate.

Our Applicant John, a full-time carer for his father who has dementia, had been struggling with a tax dispute with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) for almost five years. The dispute related to the charging of Capital Gains Tax, which John maintained he was exempt from, because as a full-time employed carer for his dad, he was in job-related accommodation.

Because of the ruling of the First Tier Tribunal, he was at risk of losing his home if he could not satisfy HMRC's demands for payments of £22,000 in penalties and £32,000 in Capital Gains Tax, plus daily interest. John applied to Advocate for help in 2022.



With the assistance of panel members Keith Gordon and Siobhan Duncan of [Temple Tax Chambers](#), John won his appeal earlier this year.

Not only was he prevented from losing his home, Keith and Siobhan managed to secure a remarkable pro bono costs order of £55,000, a huge bonus that will be paid to the [Access To Justice Foundation](#) to help fund future pro bono work by organisations such as Advocate.

*name has been changed.

[Read the full story](#)

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GUIDE TO PRO BONO FOR PUPILS AND SUPERVISORS

This Guide supports Pupils and Supervisors in undertaking pro bono work



Pupils & Supervisors Guide

As many pupils begin their second six this April, we are delighted to announce the publication of a new [pro bono guide for pupils and supervisors](#).

We have published this guide alongside the [Bar Council](#), the [Bar Standards Board](#), the [Free Representation Unit](#) and the [Council of the Inns of Court](#).

This guide gives a helpful overview for pupils and supervisors looking to “give back” and gain extra experience through pro bono.

It outlines the many ways in which pupils can do this during pupillage, from assisting their supervisor with a pro bono case, through to undertaking pro bono work directly during their second-six.

[Read the guide](#)

Shout out to Panel Members...

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Ravi Jackson
3 Verulam Buildings

We would like to thank Ravi Jackson of 3 Verulam Buildings for giving our Applicant a voice at their hearing, which has taken three years to get to court. With Ravi’s assistance, our Applicant successfully recovered damages from a letting agency after they failed to use reasonable care

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Niaz Shah
Nexus Chambers

Thank you to Professor Niaz Shah of Nexus Chambers, who provided essential advice and representation across January and February this year, after an appeal was remitted by the Upper Tribunal. Niaz was successful in appealing the Home Office decision that refused the appellants' human rights

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Callum Hurley
Unit Chambers

Our many thanks to Callum Hurley of Unit Chambers for stepping up to provide last-minute advice and representation for our Applicant, a vulnerable person who has been removed from her home by her uncle, for an occupation order. The Applicant previously resided in the

in carrying out reference checks for a tenant who later failed to pay rent. The applicant has expressed their thanks to Ravi for his exceptional support.

Thank you, Ravi

claim. Thanks to Niaz's assistance, the appellant has leave to remain in the UK with her elderly mother, with whom she lives with and cares for.

Thank you, Niaz

home with her grandmother and the uncle prior to the grandmother passing. Callum was quick to agree to assist on the case after seeing the application form and notice of hearing.

Thank you, Callum



Steps for Justice - A walking tour in aid of Advocate

Happening on Thursday 25th April, Tour guide and pro bono solicitor Ian Fagleson will lead a walking tour around London's most beautiful sites, all in support of Advocate.

This walking tour is more than just a stroll – it's a meaningful step towards a fairer, more equitable society. Advocate relies on the generosity of and determination of people like you to ensure that everyone, regardless of their financial circumstances, has access to the legal support they deserve.

[Reserve your spot](#) for the walking tour today!