

advocate



Advocate Monthly Top Ten

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This November we were busy with our most action-packed Pro Bono Week to date. The Advocate team were out and about and pleased to be involved in 26 events nationwide showcasing this year's theme: *Pro Bono in Action*.

The week kicked off at the **Launch Event** with the Attorney General, **Lord Hermer KC**, describing pro bono as the "lifeblood of the legal system." Our founder, **Lord Goldsmith KC**, also spoke and emphasised that pro bono ensures the law "belongs to everyone", and reminded us that pro bono is "part of the profession as a lawyer...helping people who need our help."

We were proud to once again co-host the **Young Lawyers Event**, where a fantastic panel of young barristers and solicitors discussed the impact of pro bono work. Later on in the evening, we heard from the **Solicitor General Ellie Reeves MP**, who encouraged early-career lawyers to embrace pro bono: "Go out there and seize the opportunities."

Two new events made their debut on Wednesday. Almost 30 clerks attended our first **Clerks' Breakfast**, celebrating the essential role that clerks play in connecting chambers

with pro bono opportunities. In the evening, our inaugural **Stand Up for Justice Comedy Night** raised nearly **£900**, thanks to a brilliant line-up and generous guests.

On Wednesday we were also pleased to attend the **Cardiff & District Law Society roundtable**, bringing together barristers, solicitors, pro bono leads, law clinics and representatives from LawWorks Cymru to discuss the future of pro bono provision and engagement in Wales.

Throughout the week, we shared stories demonstrating the real impact of pro bono, including **Bryan's case**, in which barristers from Harcourt Chambers and Deans Court Chambers helped a father regain contact with his child.

On Thursday we were delighted to attend the **Manchester Pro Bono Awards**, celebrating exceptional contributions across the Northern Circuit - including Barrister of the Year, Christian Weaver of Garden Court North Chambers, and Chambers of the Year, 23 Essex Street.

To close the week, our CEO Rebecca Wilkie chaired a panel on career development through pro bono at the **Western Circuit Women's Forum Conference**, where it was great to hear from Richard Khaldi, CEO of St John's Chambers in Bristol, and Mr Justice Linden, Presiding Judge of the Western Circuit.

[Read more about the week](#)



Nominations now open for our 2026 Bar Pro Bono Awards

Exciting news - nominations for the 2026 Bar Pro Bono Awards are now open! Next year will be extra special as we celebrate our 30th anniversary. Through our awards, we are keen to celebrate the Bar's long-standing dedication to ensuring access to justice for all.

The awards ceremony will take place at Inner Temple on 19th May 2026. We are pleased to have an exceptional panel of judges with some new ones this year including Court of Appeal Judge, Lord Justice Zacaroli.

Nominations are completed by filling out the nomination form alongside two supporting letters, and must be submitted to

awards@weareadvocate.org.uk no later than **Friday 30th January 2026**.

[Nominate now](#)



Help Litigants In Person in the commercial courts

This November, we are pleased to announce the launch of the Commercial Court and London Circuit Commercial Court (LCCC) Pro Bono Scheme, an 18-month pilot supporting unrepresented litigants in these specialist courts. Developed with the full backing of the judiciary, the Scheme is a partnership between Advocate, COMBAR, Pro Bono Connect, and the courts.

Barristers with post-pupillage commercial experience, including COMBAR members, have volunteered to take on cases at short notice, with solicitor assistance available via Pro Bono Connect where appropriate. Barristers who want to volunteer can do so by emailing our Schemes Coordinator [Maya](#).

[More about our partner schemes](#)

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Advocate Statistics

205 Live cases currently looking for assistance	Summary of live cases: Employment: 32% Family: 14% Chancery: 7% <u>advocate</u> ^
77 Pieces of work placed in November 2025	
32 New Panel Members in November 2025	

Make use of our mentoring scheme: Collaborate



Are you a young barrister taking on your first pro bono matter or branching into a new area of law? Or perhaps you are a KC looking for a meaningful way to pass on your knowledge and give back?

Good news: [Collaborate](#), Advocate's case-based mentoring scheme, is here to support you.

Through Collaborate, senior barristers can provide guidance and impart their knowledge to panel members. This can be through answering case-specific queries over the phone, to working with a junior barrister as pro bono co-counsel on an Advocate case. They can also offer guidance to barristers who are taking on work in a secondary specialism for the first time.

Mentors share their experience, help with procedural or practical questions, and support professional development.

The time commitment is flexible and can be as little as a phone call once a month. As one of our mentors, Michael Ranson of Falcon Chambers, fed back to us this year:

"My experience of mentoring through Advocate was great. It was a painless process for me and I cannot (honestly) think of any ways in which the Advocate team could have made the process easier/smooother."

For barristers looking for a mentor: if you accept a case via Advocate and would like mentoring, simply tell our Casework Team when you confirm the case.

For senior barristers looking to become a mentor: you can sign up to be a mentor in minutes through filling out [this form](#).

[More about Collaborate](#)

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Fighting for fatherhood: Bryan's story

This month we shared [Bryan's story](#), a father who had faced a final court order removing him of his parental responsibility. Unable to challenge the decision alone with no other access to legal assistance, he turned to Advocate for help.

A team of committed panel members supported him at each stage of the process. Rob George KC of Harcourt Chambers drafted strategic advice and grounds of appeal, which succeeded on all points. Damian Broadbent of Harcourt Chambers assisted with preparation and represented Bryan at the remote appeal hearing.

Barristers team up to help a father restore contact with his child

Liam Kelly of Deans Court Chambers drafted a detailed position statement for the Family Court, and Michael Jones KC of Deans Court Chambers represented him at the subsequent hearing - all pro bono.

Their combined efforts delivered a life-changing outcome: Bryan secured supervised direct contact with a clear path towards unsupervised contact. He told us, *"I can now move forward. Thank you... for everything."*

Our sincere thanks to all four barristers involved for their commitment to this case.

[Read Bryan's story](#)

Shout out to Panel Members...

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Rory Brown

South Square

Thank you to Rory Brown of South Square for assisting two retired former hotel owners in a dispute with a building company and its director for over 9 months. The building company claimed that there was an agreement to split profits for sale of the flats on the redeveloped hotel site between them and the defendants. However, the defendant owners denied the existence of any such profit-sharing agreement, maintaining that the claimants abandoned the project and overcharged for the work done, resulting in the couple having to file for bankruptcy. Rory represented the couple at two interlocutory hearings and a two-day trial in the High Court in Bristol before HHJ Matthews. Not only did the Judge dismiss the claimants' claim, Rory was successful in obtaining a pro bono costs order of £117,000. This is the fifth largest pro bono costs order ever obtained,

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Avi Williams

Parklane Plowden

We would like to thank Avaia (Avi) Williams of Parklane Plowden Chambers for stepping in at short notice to assist a mother with her child arrangement proceedings hearing. The mother's case concerns an alleged wish expressed by one of her children to live with her and their two siblings on a permanent basis. There were also concerns that the child's emotional needs were not being fully met by the Special Guardian. The mother was therefore seeking to amend the Special Guardianship Order to allow the child to live with her and to stay in contact with the respondent Special Guardian on an informal, child-led basis. Avi agreed to assist on the case less than 24 hours before the hearing, drafting a new position statement and providing representation. The mother is pleased that he has now agreed to assist her further.

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Emma Christie

The 36 Group

Many thanks to Emma Christie of the 36 Group for stepping in at short notice to represent a mother before the SEND Tribunal. The mother was trying to secure a school place for her son, who has special educational needs and requires access to specialist support. English is not the mother's first language, and she was also suffering the recent bereavement of the child's father. Following questioning and submissions, the Tribunal agreed that the school is uniquely placed to meet the educational requirements under the child's EHC Plan. They concluded that, despite capacity challenges, the school can accommodate him and that the local authority cannot rely on the exception under Section 39(4) of the Children and Families Act 2014 to deny placement, noting that difficulty is not the same as impossibility. Thanks to Emma's support, the child is now

and the money will be paid by the losing party to the Access to Justice Foundation to fund future free legal advice work.

Thank you, Rory

Thank you, Avi

able to access the educational support he needs to thrive.

Thank you, Emma



Law student goes the extra distance running 100km for Advocate

A massive thank you to **Rachel Fairley** - law student at the University of Cambridge - who took on her own fundraising challenge of running 100km within seven days this month, all in support of Advocate!

Rachel raised an incredible **£1,242** - this is a colossal achievement, and we are hugely grateful to Rachel for taking on this impressive challenge.

[Take on a fundraising challenge for Advocate](#)

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