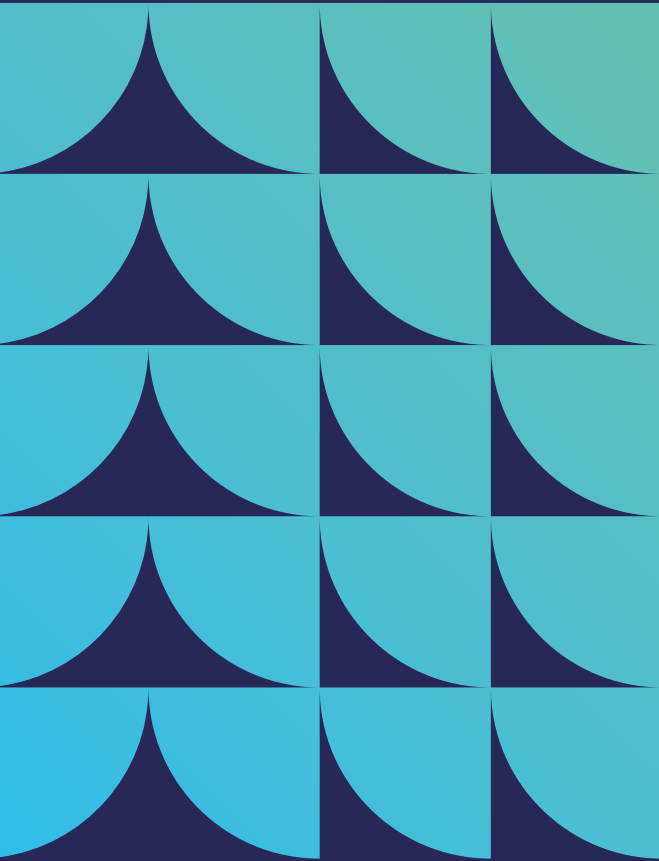


Open Justice Centre Annual Report 2022



The Open
University

Law School

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Stay in touch

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Twitter: [@OU_OpenJustice](https://twitter.com/OU_OpenJustice)

Overview

The Open Justice Centre leverages the expertise of the OU Law School for public benefit. Since 2016 we have experimented with a range of innovative online and offline projects to harness the enthusiasm, commitment and expertise of our students and academics in ways that seek to reimagine the social justice mission that lies at the heart of The Open University's founding vision of being open to people, places, methods and ideas.

Over the last six years we have produced many research outputs which demonstrate the currency and relevance of our work. Our focus on exploiting the potential of digital technologies to deliver high-quality pro bono opportunities for students, whilst

also providing meaningful support for individuals and communities, has captured the interest and imagination of the sector at a time when the recent pandemic has forced universities to reassess their teaching and knowledge exchange practices.

We are very pleased to share our 2022 Annual Report which provides an opportunity to highlight some of our key achievements resulting from the commitment and creativity of our students, Associate-Lecturers and community partners. We would like to thank everyone who has played a part in fostering the growth of the Open Justice Centre and are particularly grateful for the continued support of The Open University and to our growing list of external partners.



Francine Ryan
Director



Jon-Paul Knight
Centre Manager

A four nations approach

The Open Justice Centre is unique in being able to engage with communities across the four nations of the United Kingdom. The majority of our students are based in England, but a healthy proportion of our student base is drawn from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which has allowed us, with the support of the OU national offices, to develop a range of localised initiatives. This has included public legal education events in Belfast, school-based workshops in Scotland and prison-based engagements in Wales. This is in addition to our online work on policy issues, legal advice and public legal education which reaches across national boundaries.

!MAGINE!

Festival of Ideas & Politics

Recent events included a repeat appearance at the IMAGINE! Festival of Ideas & Politics in Belfast where we were joined by an exciting range of speakers including Noam Choksy, Bonnie Greer and Claire Fox to support a session delivered by Dr Sophie Doherty on using visual art to explore the concept of justice.



From left to right, our offices in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff

Open Justice Centre activities and 2021–2022 updates

Open Justice Law Clinic

The award-winning Open Justice Law Clinic provides free, professional-standard legal advice to members of the public on a variety of different areas of law. The clinic is the result of a successful collaboration between students, Associate Lecturers, supervising solicitors and academics which have created a unique online, student-led service.

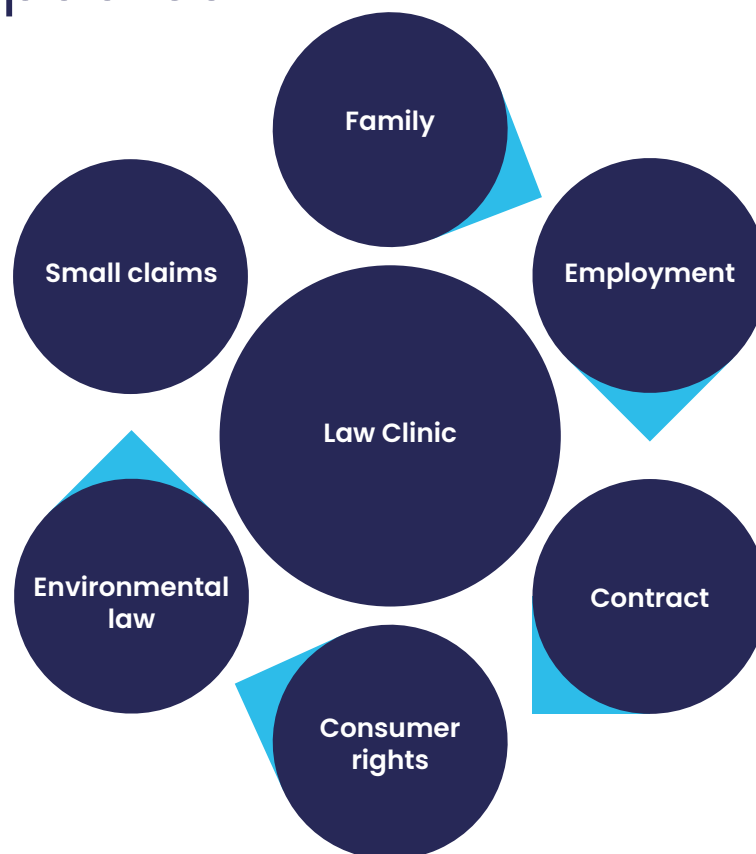
The clinic advises on a range of civil law issues highlighted in the diagram right.

We have continued our partnership with Lancaster University, Rawtenstall Social Justice Centre and MP, Jake Berry and have been offering virtual appointments to members of the community in Rawtenstall.

We continue to collaborate with the Environmental Law Foundation advising on environmental law cases. The Environmental Law Foundation receives enquiries on a range of different types of issues including air pollution, nuisance and enforcing climate change legislation.

The stories that we hear in clinic are of people who are struggling to get legal advice because they cannot afford to pay for a solicitor. As a result of the pandemic there has been a rise in people needing employment and family law advice.

We are proud of the work of our students who provide a service to people who are in challenging circumstances. This year we have advised on a number of difficult family cases that involved in supporting clients to navigate the complexities of the family law



system to help them tell their story about their family and their children.

Our students have virtually worked through endless documents, and

statements to ensure that not only are they giving legal advice, but they are empowering clients to take their next steps on their legal journey.



I would like to thank you very much for the opportunity to undertake pro-bone with the clinic, it truly has shaped my journey to become a lawyer. The work that the Open Justice Law Clinic undertakes both for students experience and access to justice is truly fantastic and will forever stay in my heart.

Rachel Innes Open Justice Clinic Law Student

The Open Justice Law Clinic have listened to, and understood, the background and detail of a very specific legal issue. Although they have not been able to provide a magic bullet, they have clearly explained the legal aspects and background, and provided detailed advice on the path I should follow to attempt to find a remedy.

My case is complex, extensive and time-consuming requiring attention to detail. You gave everything to help by offering unbiased advice, allowing me to know my rights and my options.

The students were empathic, supportive, and excellent communicators. The letter of advice they provided was very thorough and clearly set out what steps to take next.



Open Justice Policy Clinic

[The Open Justice policy clinic](#) offers students the opportunity of gaining experience of carrying out legal policy and advocacy work for a charitable or third sector organisation or to influence government policy. Students carry out research, with the aim to influence policy and/or law reform. During the academic year 21-22 there were three groups working in the policy clinic on different projects.



Environmental Law Foundation

One group worked on a project to establish the impact of climate emergency declarations (CEDs) made by local authorities in the East of England, in response to a brief provided by the [Environmental Law Foundation](#) (ELF). ELF is a charity which helps the voice of ordinary people and communities to be heard on matters affecting the environment in which they live. The student carried out research to determine how CEDs are taken account of in local authority decision making and the amount of community involvement. This involved Environmental Information regulations requests to local authorities and a desk based search of relevant websites, with the report being provided to ELF for their policy and advocacy work. This project built upon previous policy clinic research in this area.

[Report for the Environmental Law Foundation in relation to the local authority Climate Emergency Declarations for the East of England](#)

A second group worked jointly with [Northumbria University](#) to research the impact of COVID-19 and the move to online court hearings on the public's access to court hearing. The project researched how many hearings moved from face to face to online hearings and what arrangements were made for public access to hearings in the County Court, Crown Court and Court of Protection. Students carried out fieldwork by participating in the Open Justice project run by the Court of Protection and attended online Court of Protection hearings, providing feedback on the accessibility and ease of the process. The report was sent to the Open Justice project and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

[Access to justice during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK - abbreviated report](#)



The third group also worked jointly with Northumbria University to determine the issues and/or reluctance of private landlords when renting their property to tenants with cats and/or dogs, in response to a brief by the [Society for Companion Animal Studies](#) (SCAS). SCAS promotes the study of human-companion animal interactions and raises awareness of the importance of pets in society. The research involved a survey to landlords and a selection of interviews with private landlords to explore the issues in the survey further and provide more in-depth qualitative data. The report will be used by SCAS in their policy and advocacy work.

[Research report for Society for Companion Animal Studies \(SCAS\)](#)



Find out more information about the Open Justice Policy Clinic's work at Policy clinic | Open Justice

Criminal Law Clinic

The Open Justice Centre has started an in-house criminal justice clinic where students research and advise on live criminal cases under the direct supervision of a solicitor. We ran three pilot projects in 2021 to 2022 and have now incorporated the project into the W360 'Justice in action' module for October 2022.

The students consider the evidence and unused material on a live criminal case where the convicted defendant continues to protest their innocence. Students carry out research and apply legal principles to determine whether there are any grounds for referral to the Criminal Cases Review Commission or for an appeal to be made.

The cases involve serious criminal offences such as murder, manslaughter, serious assault and drugs cases, amongst others. Students are provided with appropriate training and have weekly supervision meetings with the supervising solicitor and case worker. Students obtain valuable legal, professional and collaboration skills whilst the client obtains a well thought out advice on their case.

The students were required to deliver a Research document, a formal Advice (which would go to the client) and produce a reflective blog about their experience of working in the CJC, each of which were approved, after a detailed review and amendment, before issuing.



Supervising solicitor and manager of the Criminal justice clinic Emma Curryer writes about the project in this [article](#).



Student Kate said: There aren't enough superlatives to describe this experience. From the first-class training and support to the overall learning experience, I can only highly recommend the Criminal Justice Experience as being a highly worthwhile enterprise.



You can read some blogs from students that have worked on the 2021-2022 Criminal Justice Clinic project at

open.ac.uk/open-justice/blog/journey-unknown

open.ac.uk/open-justice/blog/criminal-justice-clinic-opportunity-not-be-missed



International Law

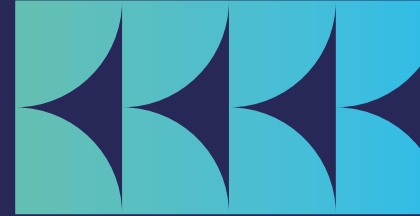
For the International Law Project students undertake a piece of practical legal work with an international focus. The exact nature of the work varies from year-to-year but usually covers international human rights law and / or international humanitarian law. It may include legal work to assist an international non-governmental organisation, a community, or a group of individuals. The work might include legal research, reviewing documentation, taking witness statements, or drafting submissions to an international forum such as the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

Students are supervised by practising lawyers and given training to support their work. Training includes the relevant area of international law, their duties and responsibilities as practising lawyers, the ethics of international legal work, and how to deal with additional aspects of the work such as stress and challenging materials.

In 2021-22 teams of students researched customary international law during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia with a leading firm of solicitors; advised on disclosure obligations regarding 'protected sources' in different international jurisdictions for a large international NGO; and others looked at how a 'community development fund' could best be established by the African Court of Human Rights, on behalf of an NGO working on the rights of indigenous peoples.



Paul Troop
Project lead



Mediation

Our e-Mediation project transfers traditional mediation training to an online environment. Students undergo training in online mediation skills including online training sessions, group work and individual work. They then have the opportunity to put these skills into practice by acting as co-mediators in two training-simulated mediations.



Our two trained mediators wrote and delivered three online training sessions and provided additional work for the students to complete between sessions, both individually and in small groups. This included the theory of mediation, introductions to different mediation techniques, consideration of the differences in face-to-face and online mediation and the various skills needed to successfully complete a mediation.

In 2021-2022 we trained 46 students who then successfully mediated two different scenarios, the last one involving other tutors and former students who played the part of clients in an employment law dispute. The clients provided feedback on the students' work and this was overwhelmingly positive, as students put into practice the skills and techniques they had learnt during the project. The majority of students brought their mediation to a successful conclusion and, in a few cases where the entire dispute was not resolved, the student mediators assisted the clients to reach consensus on most of the key issues.

Conducting mediations online allowed students to simulate the conditions in which many mediations were carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to develop skills in using a range of online technologies. The skills they developed in online communication and conflict resolution will be of wider benefit to them going forward.

Digital Justice and technology

The Digital Justice project is about giving students an opportunity to solve legal issues through the use of technology. Students are encouraged to think about new ways to design legal services and how technology can be used to support Public Understanding of Law. In this project students get to experiment with legal technology to encourage their curiosity and creativity.

Through the course of the 16-week extra-curricular project students learn how to develop a legal chatbot using a platform developed by Josef. Students are given a brief and then spend time researching the legal issues before they start designing their solution. The Digital Justice project uses design thinking and explores the importance of human-centred design.



It was an amazing experience one which I would recommend any law student to participate in. You not only learn but get to put your skills to the test and have a finished product at the end. So much you can take from the project and can see how this can really help clients in the real world, pro bono activities are vital.

The experience I had was amazing. Everyone was very helpful and supportive of each other. I was apprehensive at first as imposter syndrome set in but that was quickly relieved by the reassurance from the group. I have learnt so much from completing this project and would recommend to anyone studying law!

I really enjoyed creating the bot and attending the meetings - I found that they were really informative and they covered a range of things; Law Tech, design methods (personas etc) and a little bit about programming!



Students this year created a wide range of bots that supported individuals representing themselves in court proceedings.

Open Justice partnerships

Developing student professionalism

Providing opportunities to participate in pro bono activities is a means by which we assimilate our students into professional legal culture. For this reason, we have prioritised the development of a professional partnership relationship with our students. The execution of each project relies on students taking ownership of their project, in close collaboration with their tutors and the core team. We provide a set of clear aims in project handbooks which outline professional standards, training, safeguarding and levels of supervision and support expected. This includes fostering online skills to support the development of a culture of collaboration amongst dispersed teams.

Engaging national and local partners



St Giles

Turning a past into a future

St Giles

We have developed a strong partnership with St Giles Trust, a national charity with award-winning prison and ex-offender projects, to develop OU student-led prison-based projects. We have previously run projects with students serving prisoners in 11 prisons across England and Wales. Projects consist of between three and five half-day visits over a three-month period and have included legal research and guidance projects in collaboration with prison-based peer advisors, and an innovative prison radio project.

During COVID-19 restrictions our students worked in small groups in collaboration with peer advisors to produce employment and housing law handouts to support St Giles' work with clients in their [Pantry food hubs](#).

We are really excited that we are starting a new project working with [St Giles SOS+](#) service on developing a new Street Law project and planning further prison projects in 2022-2023.



Support Through Court

Support Through Court (STC) provides support for litigants in person, who are attending court without legal representation, helping them to navigate our complex civil and family legal systems. We are now in our fifth year of this partnership and are delighted that our students are continuing to make a positive contribution to the work of this important charity.

We hope to continue with more collaborative projects in 2023.



Citizens Advice

Our students are continuing to volunteer with Citizens Advice (CA) and can use their experience towards the assessments in the W360 'Justice in Action' module. We continue to liaise with the Employer Engagement team at The Open University and have recently assisted with a recruitment drive for CA where students can volunteer for the organisation but still work from home.



Environmental Law Foundation

Environmental Law Foundation

In 2020 we developed a partnership with Environmental Law Foundation, a charity which aims to provide free information and guidance on environmental issues for individuals and communities. In 2021 and 2022 our students undertook research on behalf of ELF together with eight other universities and members of UKELA's (UK Environmental Law Association) Student Working Party to review the impact of local authorities' climate declarations around the UK. The full reports are available at the ELF website. We look forward to working with ELF over the next 12 months.



Government Legal Profession

Mentoring scheme – UK Government Legal Profession

This year (2021-2022) included the fifth iteration of the Open Justice professional mentoring project. A result of close collaboration with the OU Careers and Employer Engagement team, we have succeeded in developing a prestigious link with the UK Government Legal Profession which provides practising Government lawyers to mentor 10 competitively selected students over nine months. Sustained contact with UK Civil Service lawyers is an invaluable tool in raising our students' career aspirations.

Criminal Defence Milton Keynes

Criminal & Prison Law

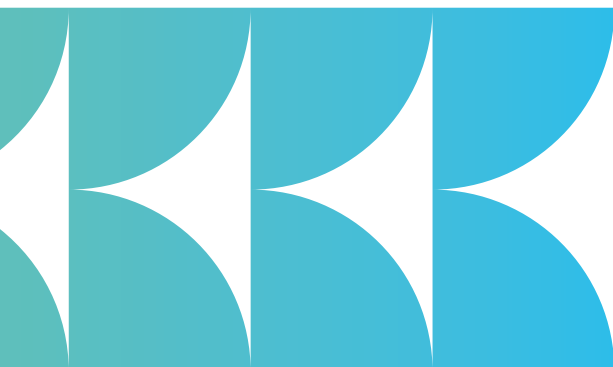
Criminal Defence Milton Keynes

CDMK solicitors are specialist criminal solicitors with social justice at their core, often representing the most vulnerable in our society. CDMK provide us with cases where a convicted person continues to protest their innocence. Our students then work on these cases in a case management system, reviewing the evidence and researching the law to provide a legal advice and research document to the solicitors' firm. This benefits our students greatly equipping them with valuable employability skills, it also benefits CDMK as they have assistance at looking at pro bono work and it benefits the client as the students thoroughly research the case and no stone is left unturned.

HICKMAN&ROSE SOLICITORS

Hickman & Rose

Hickman and Rose are a legal firm based in London who have been working with us on briefs for our international law project.





UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

United Nations

The Open Justice Centre and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are continuing their partnership to support the Global Resources for Anti-Corruption Education (GRACE) initiative. GRACE has been developed to prevent crime and promote lawfulness – by supplying integrity and ethics education resources for schools, colleges and universities around the world.

Open Justice co-produced a certified five-hour online train-the-trainer course with UNODC, launched in November 2019, and translated into Spanish in 2020.

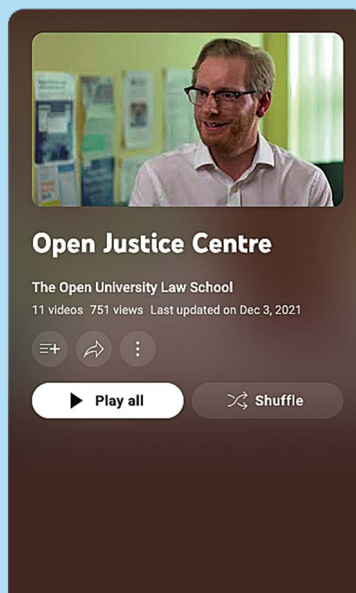
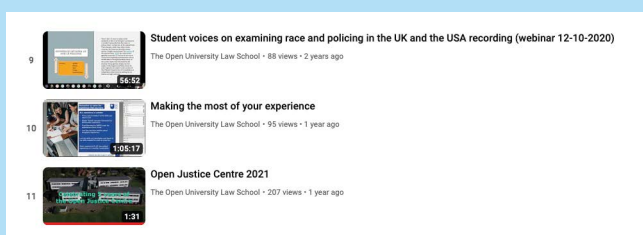
Former Open Justice Co-Director Hugh McFaul was appointed to a nine-month consultancy with UNODC to develop their Global Resources for Anti-Corruption Education Project. His work included engaging with universities in Pakistan, Tunisia and he was an invited speaker at the UNODC Academic Symposium in Egypt in December 2021.



Learning and education activities and outputs

Video and YouTube resources

The Centre is continuing to expand its presence on the Law School's YouTube channel and have a dedicated playlist. Titled '[Open Justice Centre](#)', it features videos about our student projects, messages from the centre directors, promotional films and a recording of our 'Taking clinical legal education online' webinar.



OU and BBC collaborations



Hugh McFaul (Head of OU Law School) and Francine Ryan are Academic Advisors to The Detectives; a BBC2 documentary following Greater Manchester Police as they tackle complex and organised crime. The first two episodes were broadcast in May of 2021 with the remaining episodes due to be broadcast in 22/23. Our involvement in the production of The Detectives has been an excellent opportunity to raise the public profile of the OU Law School and the Open Justice Centre.

Hugh was advisor for the previous series which reached millions of viewers who were invited to explore the legal issues raised in the series on Open Learn, the [OU's public platform](#).

W360: Justice in Action 2021–2022



W360: Justice in Action provides Open Justice students with an opportunity to gain academic credit for participating in public-facing pro bono legal projects. Since 2017 we have supported approximately 1,270 students through the module and related extra-curricular projects. During the module, students engage with topics of social justice, professional identity and legal ethics which help them contextualise their experience of engaging in pro bono work.



The Open Justice centre really is a fantastic part of the law degree at the OU and I recommend any law student to get involved when they can.

It was brilliantly supported by the supervising tutors who were all infectiously enthusiastic, the group of fellow students were equally committed and a pleasure to work with.

It was without doubt the highlight of the entire degree.

Dan Mander

2021 Open Justice Student



For 2021–2022 we focused on offering online pro bono projects, introducing a new international project and piloted a criminal law project which has now become part of the module. We have introduced a new online business clinic project this year and hope to resume face-to-face projects as soon as possible.

Public engagement



Home > Public understanding of law

The Centre website is a source of updated information about our activities, public access to the online law clinic, knowledge exchange, events and news. Our new and improved site went live in June 2020 and this year we have added a careers page with a wealth of information on pro bono legal work experience. We also added a separate page for each of our student projects.

Between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 there were 12,374 unique visitors to the site, which is almost the same figure as the previous year. Including return visits, the total rises to 16,942.

Top 12 most popular pages 2021-2022

Website page	Visits
Open Justice Main landing page	3,287
Staying silent during a police interview	1,705
Freedom Law Clinic (Criminal Justice Clinic)	1,353
Get legal advice	1070
Blog	904
Meet the Open Justice team	717
Working as a witness service volunteer	566
Meet the tutors	492
Public understanding of law	462
News	356
Online domestic abuse resource launched (news item)	334
Open Justice research	332

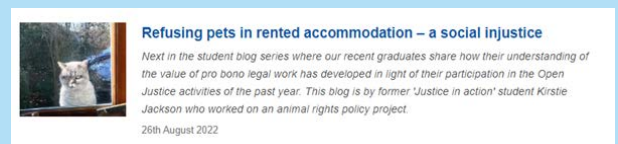
Some 38.7% of users typed our address directly or bookmarked us to find us, 59.4% used a search engine, 5.9% came from social networks and just under 1.1% accessed us through other websites.

The Open Justice Centre blog



www.open.ac.uk/blog/openjustice

The Open Justice Centre blog is where students, alumni, team members and wider OU staff in associated areas of the University (and anyone that wishes to apply) can publish writing that is accessible to the public. The blog is incorporated into our website and visitors have the option to sign up for a monthly newsletter that details recent blog posts.



We published 38 blog pieces from July 2021 to October 2022. Above is a screen shot of a recent post.

Twitter account report

Between June 2021 and August 2022, we gained 176 new followers, taking us to 1,568 followers. We are delighted with this progress but are keen to spread news of our projects and student successes so please follow us at @OU_OpenJustice if you have not already done so.

This year we continued to concentrate our efforts on promoting our events, student activities, webinars, news coverage and blog posts.

Traffic-wise on the account we have been consistently busy this year. Between August 2021 and September 2022, we had 26,541 visits and 78,729 'impressions' (the number of times a tweet showed up in somebody's timeline). This is another 'visitor' increase on previous years' totals and our busiest social media year so far.

Our student blogs and the annual 'advent calendar' blog series in December provided us with some popular tweets as well as Open Justice Week.



Top Tweet earned 3,093 impressions

It's Open Justice Week 2022 !! We are pleased to present our 5th annual e-festival of public legal education where we post examples of the work our students have produced over the last year. New content will be added every day this week.

open.ac.uk/open-justice/e...
pic.twitter.com/Ef28S4oOiu



Top Tweet earned 9,667 impressions

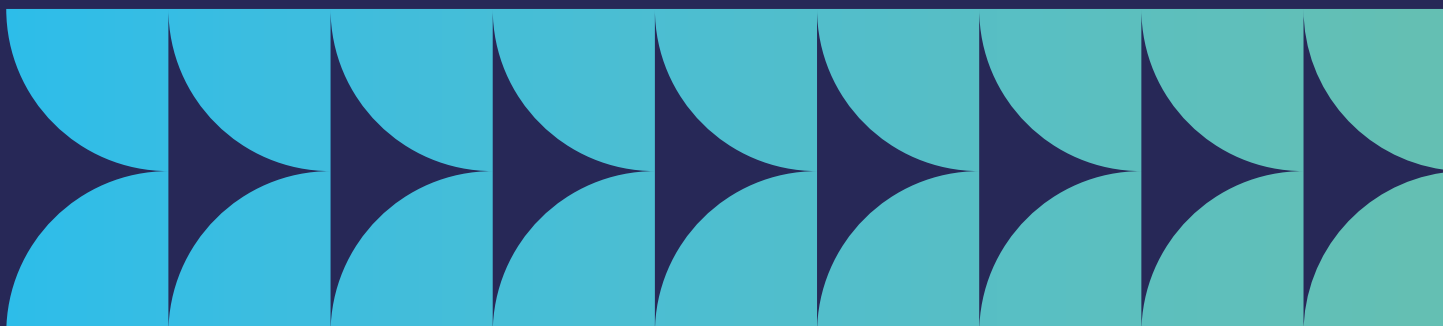
On the first day of our 'Legally Christmas' series Simon Lee @paradoxbridge presents a Christmas mystery in five daily parts. open.ac.uk/open-justice/b... Please feel free to engage with the story as it unfolds !

@OU_Law @OU_FBL @OU_OpenJustice
pic.twitter.com/y2N59uRdGZ



Top mention earned 94 engagements

Gillian Mawdsley from the @OU_OpenJustice Centre writes about the recent visit our students made to Gray's Inn. Check it out here open.ac.uk/open-justice/b... @HonSocGraysInn @OU_Law @OU_FBL pic.twitter.com/46KjSWDOOM



Award shortlists and nominations in 2021–2022



'The Detectives' a BBC, OU co-production that Hugh McFaul (Head of OU Law School) and Francine Ryan are Academic Advisors on was nominated for a BAFTA Television Award in the Factual Series Category.

Open Justice Student Awards 2022

Each year, The Open Justice Centre celebrates the exceptional achievements of our high calibre students. Prizes were awarded by the Open Justice Centre to commend their highest achieving students in 2022.



Winning students with Francine Ryan, Jon-Paul Knight and Liz Hardie at the 2022 award ceremony in Milton Keynes

Outstanding individual contribution to Open Justice *Elizabeth Hill, Daniel Mander, Rachel Moses, Iain Service*

Elizabeth Hill was the winner of the 'Outstanding individual contribution to Open Justice', with Daniel Mander and Rachel Moses as runners-up. In this year's awards we also presented a special award to Iain Service for his work on the Criminal Justice Clinic.



Elizabeth Hill – Individual winner

Elizabeth took part in the Open Justice Law Clinic where students give free legal advice to members of the public under the supervision of qualified solicitors. Students are allocated to a firm of students and work on cases in teams, building and maintaining valuable working relationships with their colleagues. Students working in the clinic are subject to the same standards and professional obligations required of all solicitors so hard work and effort is required to succeed.

Tutor Arj Arul who nominated Elizabeth for the award said:

"Elizabeth showed a commendable commitment to her studies this year. It was clear from the outset of the work in the Open Justice Clinic that she would put her heart and soul into each case.

Elizabeth was a key member of her group, often acting in a lead role, and stepping up to every challenge posed. The cases presented were complex however the group took this in their stride and Elizabeth in particular would always get 'stuck in' no matter the difficulties.

Elizabeth showed great professionalism and resilience in managing some personal difficulties experienced part way through the module. Elizabeth has been a pleasure to work with this year and demonstrated all the qualities of a legal professional and team player."

Arj Arul

Tutor

On winning the award, Elizabeth said:

"I felt ecstatic when I won! It was a difficult year for me personally and academically, so to receive recognition in this manner was very gratifying. It was such a privilege to be involved in the Open Justice Clinic and I received incredible support from the other group members, my tutors and the solicitors and specialists involved."

Elizabeth Hill



Daniel Mander – Individual winner runner up

Daniel took part in the Criminal Appeals project where students working in small groups under the supervision of a solicitor, assist in the process of advising clients on the prospects of appealing their case to the Criminal Case Review Commission. Daniel helped put together a report about the impact of Covid on the mentally ill before working in a larger group with the Freedom law Clinic.

He was nominated by his tutor Avril Martin for:

"Showing leadership skills throughout both projects, Daniel was always proactive and showed excellent skills at communication and collaboration. His contribution to facilitating both reports was outstanding. Daniel was also praised by members of the team for his hard work and effective liaison with them."

Avril Martin

Tutor

Daniel praised the experience saying:

"It was brilliantly supported by the supervising tutors who were all infectiously enthusiastic, and the group of fellow students were equally committed and a pleasure to work with. It was without doubt the highlight of the entire degree. The project gave me the reassurance that I am capable of working in criminal defence after much experience in prosecution and that this is the path I want to go down for my future career."

I was very surprised (at the award) as I had no idea that I had even been nominated. It is very kind that the effort and time I put into the module was recognised and appreciated. The Open Justice centre really is a fantastic part of the law degree at the OU and I recommend any law student to get involved when they can."

Daniel Mander





Rachel Moses – Individual winner runner up

Rachel took part in the International Law Project where students undertake a piece of practical legal work with an international focus. The project Rachel worked on was to provide legal advice to the charity, [Global Witness \(GW\)](#), compiling a report on the rules of disclosure and privilege in New Zealand.

Rachel was nominated by tutor Gillian Mawdsley who said:

“Rachel undertook this work substantially on her own, despite the academic side of the project being challenging both intellectually and legally since this work required starting from scratch; there were no styles or previous research to work from.

Rachel used her personal and academic ability along with fortitude and determination to complete what was by any standards and especially as an undergraduate student an outstanding piece of work described by Global Witness as “impressive.” Rachel’s academic research and written ability did not stop there. She led her team by arranging/hosting all small group meetings, drafting an outline of the report.

Rachel is one of the most impressive hardworking students I have encountered on W360 Justice in Action. Her research, teamworking, and personal attributes allowed her to make a significant and successful contribution to the OU’s Open Justice International Law project.”

Gillian Mawdsley



Iain Service – Individual special award winner

Iain received a ‘special award’ this year for his work assisting the administration and delivery of the newly formed Open Justice Centre Criminal Justice Clinic. Iain acted as the ‘big brother’ to groups of students who had volunteered to be involved, supporting them using the online case management system and contributing to the training and weekly supervision sessions.

Iain took on the challenge whole-heartedly and was nominated by project lead Emma Curryer for his excellent collaboration efforts and his work in gathering the team to produce reports.

Emma said he was::

“Diplomatic, brilliant at dealing with problems and consistently proactive.”

Emma Curryer

Criminal Justice Project Lead

Iain is staying on with the Open Justice Centre in a voluntary capacity and said:

“I plan to focus on continuing pro bono legal work with the OU. I am delighted to be continuing my support for CJC students going forward. I was both surprised and delighted to win! To be recognised for providing an outstanding contribution for something you enjoy doing is humbling. Working with the Open Justice Centre has been the most fulfilling part of my studies. The support provided by Francine Ryan and her team – especially those in the background – and advice provided by outside solicitors has been outstanding”

Iain Service

Outstanding team contribution to Open Justice

Helen Coram, Luke Dawson, Kirstie Jackson, Iain MacRae, Rebecca Ratcliffe, Paul Sutton, Gemma Uddin

The 'Outstanding team contribution to Open Justice' saw a group of seven win in this year's awards for their work in the Policy Clinic. In the Policy Clinic students work as a team on a brief related to one public policy area which is either the subject of consultation by government or is an area of the law where reform has been suggested.

These students worked alongside students from Northumbria University on a brief provided by the Society for Companion Animal Studies (SCAS) to determine the issues and/or reluctance of private landlords when renting their property to tenants with cats and/or dogs. The scope of this brief ended up being very large and led to substantially more work than the other projects in the policy clinic. The report that they produced at the end of the project was of extremely high quality and runs to over 100 pages.

Tutor Debbie Legge, who supervised their work said:

"They produced an impressive report which will help to inform law and policy in this area. They were a massive credit to themselves and the OU."

The students worked alongside Northumbria University students in an integrated way and established good working relationships, modelling for those students how to work effectively in an online environment. Rachel Dunn, who supervised the students from Northumbria University, commented very positively on how committed, impressive, and capable the Open University students were and the substantial contribution they made to the project."

Debbie Legge

Project Manager





Group member Paul Sutton said:

"The Open Justice policy clinic was such an important step towards my law career, I felt it really set me up for life outside of studying. The modules previous to this taught me the law and this year taught me to be a lawyer.

It took me out of my comfort zone on more than a few occasions but all for the better and learning to work as part of a team was a really important part of the course. I thoroughly enjoyed the module and would recommend it in a heartbeat. Thanks for the memories!!"

Paul Sutton



Group member Iain MacRae said:

"My time working with the policy clinic has been a unique experience for me because of working as part of a team that required all members to work hard together, communicate well together and compromise with beliefs we may have held before, about the policy area we were looking at. The guidance from our tutors from the Open University was amazing as they kept us all united in our aims for the policy clinic and meet the objectives we were given. It has been a privilege working with my fellow students in this project"

Iain MacRae



Kirstie Jackson wrote a blog about the project which can be seen [here](#).



International lectures, conferences, workshops and events

Open Justice academics have contributed to a range of online and face to face national and international public engagement events this year.

MARCH 2022

'Creating Justice: Law, Art and Activism' Imagine! Festival of Ideas and Politics in Belfast



The Law School's Sophie Doherty, Sarah Bryan-O'Sullivan and Neil Graffin, working with the OU in (Northern) Ireland, held an exciting evening event, 'Creating Justice: Law, Art and Activism', as part of the Imagine! Festival of Ideas and Politics in Belfast in late March. It sought to explore the link between law and art, by engaging with the work of artists and activists to explore how a sense of justice can be created through art. The event on 24 March, which included an art exhibition, saw the audience participating in exercises and a series of talks by artists and activists including Raymond Watson, Nuala Convery (AKA Wee Nuls), Ruth Maxwell and Esther Mogada.

Group pictured at ALT conference left to right: Kara Johnson, Carol Edwards, Emma Curryer, Francine Ryan, Andrew Maxfield, Paul Dale



APRIL 2022

Street Law UK and Ireland Conference 2022

Jon-Paul Knight and Gillian Mawdsley attended the Street Law UK and Ireland Conference in Edinburgh where speakers and students from across the Street Law community discussed Street Law theory and shared ideas to develop individual programmes.



APRIL 2022

Association of Law Teachers University of Manchester



Francine Ryan and former Open Justice team member Emma Jones gave a presentation on digital literacy, digital lawyering, digital technology and legal education.

Francine also gave a presentation on "what makes an ideal law graduate?"

Emma Curryer and Gillian Mawdsley gave a presentation about the importance of vicarious trauma training for law students.



JULY 2022

8th ENCLE Conference "Solidarity; we are ALL in this together !!" Brescia, Italy.



The Open Justice team had a successful time at the ENCLE conference in Italy with four papers delivered.

Francine Ryan delivered a paper entitled "From Analog to Apple: exploring digital technology within legal education"

Emma Curryer and Andrew Maxfield delivered "What about Justice? The importance of understanding student needs when setting up a criminal justice clinic.

Liz Hardie delivered "Sharing our experiences of setting up an online policy clinic – tears and laughter" and Emma Curryer and Gillian Mawdsley presented "Navigating Vicarious Trauma: The importance of planning, teaching and delivering VT training within clinical legal education."



OCTOBER 2022

Vicarious Trauma: Meet Joanna Fleck in conversation. Online webinar.



Joanna Fleck, who runs reflective practice groups and community mental health projects for Mind was in conversation with Emma Curryer discussing and exploring vicarious trauma and ways for lawyers to cope.

SEPTEMBER 2022

Society of Legal Scholars Annual Conference, Kings College, London

Francine Ryan gave the keynote speech on graduate attributes at the Society of Legal Scholars Annual Conference.



You Retweeted
Emma Flint @MrsGingerLawyer · Sep 9
Thank YOU Francine Ryan @OULaw @OU_OpenJustice for getting the #LegalEducation stream off to such a FABULOUS start with your keynote yesterday @SLSConference #SLSKings22

It's the mark if a good keynote if it sparks debate and questions. Plus you leave with takeaways too #JobDone

NOVEMBER 2022



Annual Conference of the Irish Association of Law Teachers, 2022



Open Justice member Siobhan Cullen (pictured right) and Bronagh Heverin from ATU Donegal presented a paper entitled 'Virtual Public Legal Education- support for the LGBTIQ+ Community'



DECEMBER 2022

Global Alliance for Justice Education (11th GAJE WWC)

International Journal of Clinical Legal Education (20th Annual Conference)

South African University Law Clinics Association, Stellenbosch, South Africa

Francine Ryan and Jon-Paul Knight delivered a paper on 'It's a moot point: exploring the use of a virtual courtroom in legal education'

Liz Hardie and Carol Edwards delivered a paper on 'How to support clinical legal education students online and promote engagement in peer support communities'

Liz Hardie and Kate Holtaway delivered a paper on 'Addressing Legal Advice Deserts'

Emma Curryer and Gillian Mawdsley delivered a paper on 'Building Resilience for our students: The Importance of Acknowledging, Teaching and Delivering Vicarious Trauma Training in Clinical Legal Education'



Open Justice in the media



Last Decembers collaboration between Open Justice and the BBC Ideas production team ['Does it ever pay to represent yourself in court?'](#) continues to be popular with 54.6K views to date (22/11/2022)

The Open Justice and BBC Ideas Collaboration is a short film that explores whether it is a good idea to represent yourself in court. What was really surprising was how much filming is involved for a short production. Francine Ryan spent a day at the National Justice Museum in Nottingham. Sections of the film were shot from different angles and in different positions within the courtroom and sadly some of the content never made it into the final cut. It was an interesting day not only because of the topic of the film but to get a better understanding of the process.

[The National Justice Museum](#) in Nottingham is an excellent place to visit there are exhibitions and you can also tour the courtroom.



This film led to articles featured in the Law Society Gazette in May 2022 - ['Does it ever pay to represent yourself in court?'](#)

An article about on Ann McCabe Solicitors [website](#) And the [Global Herald](#).



Research outputs

Interest in the Centre's research and scholarship continues to grow and has been the subject of increased attention due to the relevance of online teaching methods post-pandemic.

Some highlights are given below, and a full list of published articles is available at our website. We were pleased to have created a new section last year where student research will be published.

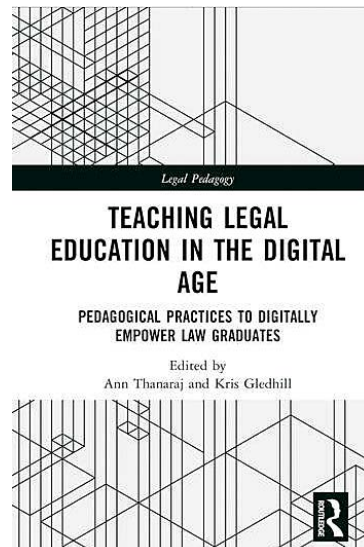
Most publications below are available for free, for personal use from The Open University's Open Access library or by request to the first author, who can be contacted via open-justice@open.ac.uk. Many are published journal articles which can also be obtained through university libraries for those with access.

We have contributed to three books this year.

Teaching Legal Education in the Digital Age

We were really pleased to contribute an article to this edited collection in collaboration with our colleagues in Learning Design, David Vince, Lawrence Kizilkaya and Jamie Daniels.

Our chapter explores virtual reality and the development of the VR app that is a part of W360- Justice in Action. The OU is leading the way with its commitment to the inclusion of virtual reality within its teaching and learning. We are working on a new project that will be sharing soon involving the development of a virtual court room.



Emma Curryer, Lecturer and Head of Department in the OU Law School and Carol Edwards, Senior Lecturer and Student Experience Manager in the OU Law School published a blog in November 2022 on the Association of Law Teachers website.

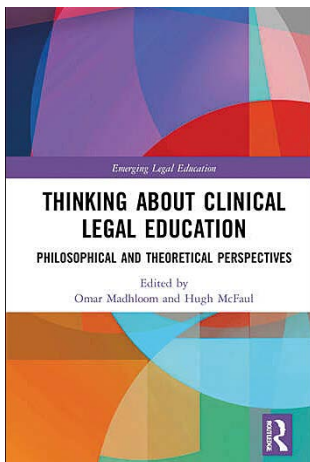
[Reflections on Students Professional Skills Development in Clinical Legal Education](#)



Emma Curryer also had a piece published in the Law Society Gazette in June 2022 '[Pro bono left to pick up the slack](#)'.

Thinking About Clinical Legal Education: Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives.

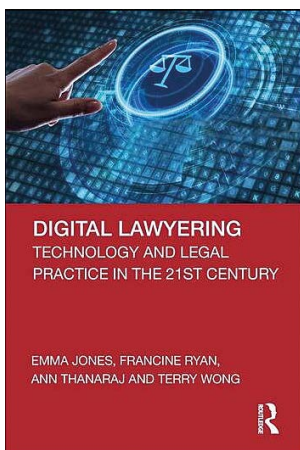
Hugh McFaul alongside his co-editor Omar Madhloom delivered an interesting, edited collection on the use of theory in clinical legal education. This collection highlights the place of theory and explores a number of different theoretical perspectives that are relevant to the teaching of clinical legal education. Hugh



not only edited the collection but has his own chapter along with Andrew Gilbert another of our law school colleagues.

Digital Lawyering: Technology and Legal Practice in the 21st Century

Open Justice academics are not just delivering high quality research outputs, but they are also helping support students navigate the impact of technology on legal practice. This textbook the first of its kind explores digital lawyering to give students an understanding of emerging



technologies, to introduce them to new concepts such as legal design and to guide them on the new jobs that are becoming available within legal practice.

Recent articles by Open Justice Centre authors

- Lloyd Bright, Keren and McNicholl, Maria (2021). [The Open University Law School's Public Legal Education in Prisons: Contributing to Rehabilitative Prison Culture](#) International Journal of Clinical Legal Education Vol 5, No.1
- Mcfaul, Hugh and FitzGerald, Elizabeth (2021). [Supporting access to justice through volunteer training: An evaluation of an Open Educational Resource](#). Journal of Interactive Media in Education, 1(5), pp. 1–14.
- Ryan, Francine (2021). [Voices from the front line: exploring what pro bono means to lawyers in England and Wales?](#) International Journal of the Legal Profession, 28(3), pp. 265–278.
- Ryan, Francine (2021). [Rage against the machine? Incorporating legal tech into legal education](#). The Law Teacher, 55(3), pp. 392–404.

Recently published reports by Open Justice Centre students and alumni

- O' Rourke, Alison; Bowler, Bethany; Hewett, Natalie; Hussain-Kazmi, Shaheen; Willey, Jeanette; Riddle-Harte, Jaimie; Toms, Sali; Wild, Tom; Robinson, Daniel; Young, Jason; Panambo, Junealle; Akhtar, Mariya and Khan, Rabbiya (2022). [Access to justice during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK](#). Open Justice Centre, Open University Law School, Milton Keynes, UK.
- Burton, Jack and Gibson Morales, Phillipe (2021). [The cost of civil marriage ceremonies in England and Wales at non-religious approved venues](#). Open Justice Centre, Open University Law School, Milton Keynes.

Centre contact details

Virtual Intern 2022



In 2022 we recruited our first virtual intern Sarah Tuttsell-Buse (working remotely from Wales) to assist us with the research and scoping exercises that we don't often have the time to undertake ourselves. We recruited Sarah through advertising to undergraduate law and business school students, shortlisting and interviewing them in the usual way.

Sarah gained some useful insights into how we set up and manage student projects, advice and guidance on legal career opportunities and worked with us as part of the team for three months. Sarah is staying on with us as a volunteer in the business clinic project this presentation which we are thrilled about. You can read more about Sarah [here](#).

The benefits we gained were some extremely useful reports on the sector that we can use to inform our strategic planning and future partnerships, input into our website updates including a blog and a review of other organisations websites as well as a useful student perspective into our upcoming projects and in our team meetings. We are looking at providing more intern opportunities in 2023.

Associate Lecturers and project support 2021-2022

Open Justice is an incredible team effort. We work in partnership with our tutors, colleagues and consultants to deliver our pro bono projects. We want to thank everyone for their commitment and support.

Thank you to:

Arj Arul, Astrid Alvarez (Stakeholder and Alumni Engagement), Alicia Babae (publicity and media support), Elizabeth Benoit, David Byrne (Digital Justice consultant), Hazel Clark, Marcus Crawley (Stakeholder and Alumni Engagement), Emma Curryer, Paul Dale, Sheena Daley, Lidia Dancu (clinic support), Lizzie Fusco, Bryony Gilbert, Mike Green, Liz Hardie, Mark Hayward, Debbie Legge, Avril Martin, Gillian Mawdsley, Andrew Maxfield, Siobhan McCormack, Tamsin Morris, Laura Platts, Suzanne Rab, Ian Robinson, Kate Ritchie, Paul Stookes, Paul Troop, Wannette Van-Eg-Dom-Tuinstra



Members of the Open Justice Team 2021-2022.

Left-Right: Paul Troop, Andrew Maxfield, Kate Ritchie, Dawn Harper, Liz Hardie, Jon-Paul Knight, Francine Ryan, Neil Graffin, Emma Curryer, Martin Jones



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