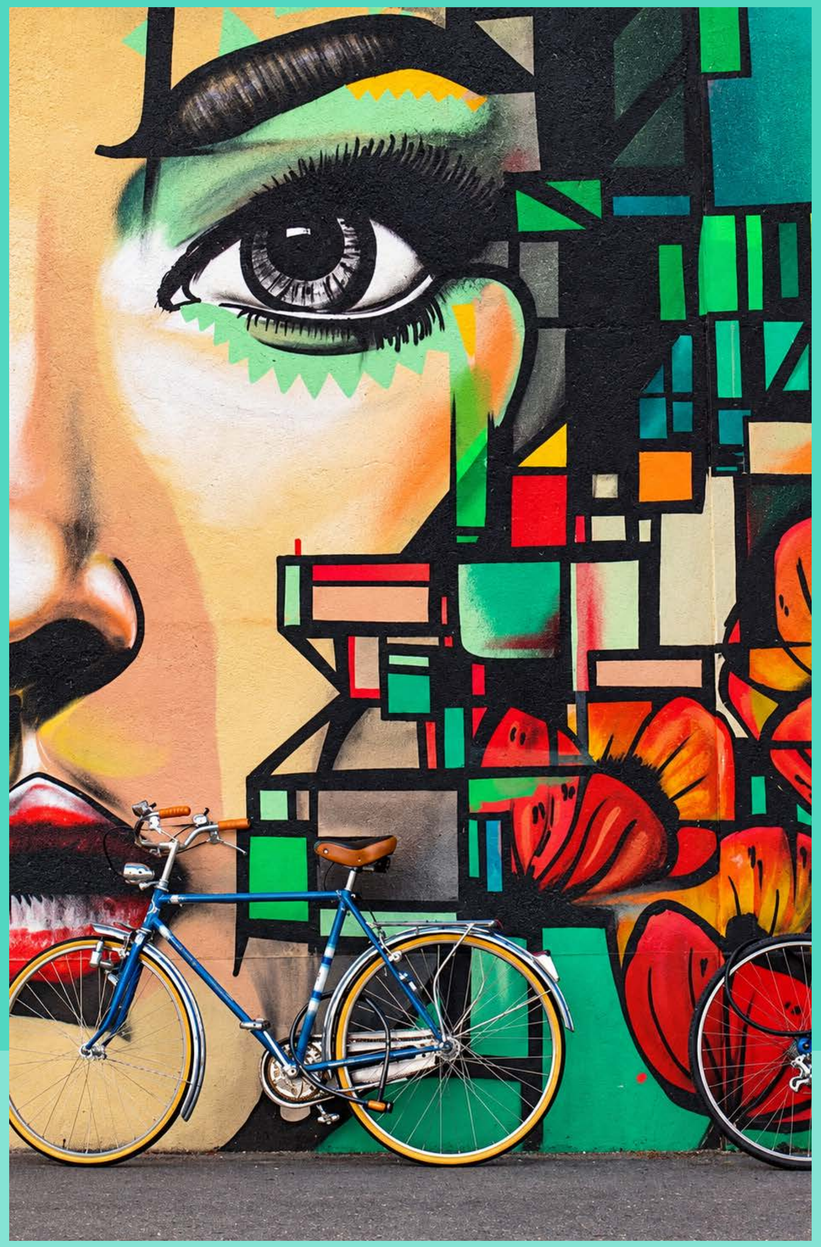

Warwick Law in the Community

Annual Report

2025 - 2026

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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Foreword

from Andrew Williams, Head of School

I'm delighted to introduce this report into the exceptional work of our Law in the Community initiative. LinC is at the core of Warwick Law School's identity and ethos. It has built on decades of innovative community law projects undertaken by the School. But it has taken this commitment to social justice significantly further.

Our students now work with many leading legal service providers on pressing problems facing people today. From helping individuals in desperate need of advice to examining how systems should change for the benefit of many across the region and the country, LinC is making a vital contribution in the legal landscape.

This report highlights all these achievements and provides a flavour of how students have embraced the opportunities offered and the challenges faced.

About Warwick Law in the Community

Warwick Law in the Community (LinC) launched in September 2019 and has grown consistently over the past 7 years. We strive to make a meaningful contribution to our community locally, nationally and internationally through innovative clinical education and research. We work collaboratively with various organisations to create opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate law students to gain practical experience in law and actively contribute to advancing social justice.

We offer opportunities in more traditional forms of legal advice and practice, but we also look beyond these to expose students to alternative ways of doing and thinking about law, including writing, research, community organising and public legal education. We aim to develop and produce engaged and impactful research on social justice, explore how research can support community-led efforts through critical and participatory methods, and foster collaboration between academics, legal practitioners and activists. We seek to develop mutually beneficial long-term relationships and collaborative projects with organisations that share our values.

Warwick LinC offers voluntary, paid and curricular opportunities for Warwick Law School students across a range of initiatives. This includes our Environmental Law Clinic, Immigration and Asylum Clinic, Strategic Social Justice Clinic, Welfare Rights (PIP) Clinic alongside volunteering opportunities with Citizens Advice South Warwickshire. We offer a range of paid summer internships with our partner organisations, and we have two undergraduate modules, Public Legal Education and Social Welfare Law.

Highlights and Achievements



This has been a busy and exciting year for Warwick LinC, with a lot of growth and strengthening of the links between legal education, community engagement and social justice. We've provided more opportunities than ever for students to get involved.

We offered 131 volunteer opportunities across five clinics and ad hoc projects, and we had 47 study with us on our new Social Welfare Law module. We supported more than 750 people through our client facing clinics and volunteer opportunities.

We have introduced two new clinics this year. Our Welfare Rights (PIP) Clinic, in partnership with Coventry Independent Advice Service, became a regular offering after a successful pilot last year. The Welfare Rights Clinic has secured more £1 million in financial gains for our clients, disabled people in Coventry, since starting in January 2025.

This work has felt especially important in light of recent changes to disability benefits and ongoing consultations, which has been one of the focuses of this year's Strategic Social Justice Clinic with Central England Law Centre.

We see first-hand in our work how vital it is for disabled people to access support that enables their independence. Our clinics provide the opportunity for students not only to make a material difference but to shape strategic and evidence-based responses to reform proposals that highlight lived experience.

This year also saw the introduction of our new Social Welfare Law module with key topics changing from year to year to reflect what's happening in the world. Through the module we were able to teach 47 students about the history of disability benefits, the politics of reform, and strategies of legal mobilisation. With the support of Grapevine Coventry and Warwickshire, students learned first-hand about the power of community organising and designed resources to help marginalised communities access their rights.

This work and our research on legal needs led to us speaking at the launch of a new campaign for a right to advice in Westminster and further opportunities to translate our work into wider policy influence, including ongoing strategic policy work on the Renters Rights Act. Warwick LinC students also had the opportunity to meet with the Attorney General, Lord Hermer KC, during his visit to the University of Warwick. Students shared insights from their ongoing research and clinical projects, discussed pressing policy issues, and engaged in a wider conversation about the role of law and public legal education in addressing contemporary social challenges.

Our new collaboration with Citizens Advice South Warwickshire has enabled us to provide even more students with opportunities to gain skills and support clients through one-to-one telephone advice. Our Immigration and Asylum Clinic with Central England Law Centre continued to provide a lifeline of free legal advice on some of the most challenging, human rights-based claims, as well as public legal education work around changes and proposed changes to the Home Office rules that are already making life much harder for migrants and asylum-seekers. Our Environmental Law Clinic carried on their strategic work on a Rights of Nature approach in local government.

Finally, this year we have been able to provide more paid summer internships, including new opportunities with the Environmental Law Foundation and Reprieve. These opportunities are invaluable for students who want to pursue careers in social justice, and we've been proud to watch several of our student volunteers progress into paid employment.

Looking ahead we see many opportunities for further growth and greater impact with our incredible students and expanding network of community partners. Next year we will be piloting a new clinic and offering three community-engaged modules, Human Rights in Practice, Public Legal Education and Social Welfare Law.

We are grateful to all our community partners for their continued support and collaboration throughout the year. Their expertise and commitment to working with our students are central to the success of LinC, enabling us to provide meaningful clinical opportunities that connect legal education with community priorities and social justice outcomes.

Clinics and Teaching

Overview

Expanding opportunities

This year we have provided more opportunities than ever for students to get involved with Warwick LinC through our clinics and teaching. We introduced two brand new opportunities through our Welfare Rights (PIP) Clinic with Coventry Independent Advice Service (CIAS) and our new collaboration with Citizens Advice South Warwickshire (CASW). We also introduced a new module, Social Welfare Law, that provides more opportunities for students to engage with the community and focus on social justice issues as part of their learning.

Growing student engagement

From October 2025 to August 2026, we provided a total of 131 volunteering and internship opportunities across our main clinics and several ad hoc projects.

> **This is a 39% increase from 2024 - 2025**

Student demand for these opportunities continue to grow with 406 applications received across the year. In addition, 47 students studied Social Welfare Law with us and worked on public legal education projects, showing a strong academic interest in these fields. Teaching and clinical opportunities combined have an increase of 63% from 2024-2025.

Our impact

Our clinics and teaching have had a positive impact for our students and in the community.

We reached more than 750 individuals through our client-facing clinics this year, providing access to essential legal support that would not otherwise be available. The help of our students has enabled people to access benefits, stay in the country, and deal with the complex problems of day-to-day life.

> **“I would be grateful to you for passing on my gratitude to the Warwick University student who helped me. She is doing something that is really worthwhile, and genuinely life-changing.”**
>
> Welfare Rights (PIP) Clinic Client

For our community partners, LinC provides vital resource to take on problems in novel, mutually beneficial and sustainable ways.

> **“SSJC is a huge support to Central England Law Centre and gives us the resource to explore important issues that we wouldn’t be able to otherwise. The work the students produced this year has been so helpful both in supporting ongoing projects but also identifying strategic priorities for the future. As well as this, it has been a really collaborative and enjoyable process”**
>
> Katherine Lloyd, CELC



For our students, these experiences deepen their understanding of law and social justice, inspire their career goals and give them a chance to make a difference in our community.

> **“I think this is one of the rare experiences where I feel like the work I’m doing would actually mean something and have an important purpose as well as it would be put into good use.”**
>
> Immigration and Asylum Clinic Student Volunteer

> **“I really enjoyed this clinic- I found it super enlightening. I also enjoyed working towards a practical goal and being able to walk away knowing I helped people. Thank you so much for organising this opportunity.”**
>
> Immigration and Asylum Clinic Volunteer

> **“It has made me see how social justice is actually a part of every area of law and society, and has encouraged me to put this at the forefront of everything I do”**
>
> SSJC Volunteer

They develop valuable transferrable skills that will help them in their future careers.

> **“I was able to work in a group well and learn how to use resources to then extend an argument. Where an argument may not have been clear I was able to extract some information and then apply it to the problem at hand which I think was a useful skill to learn”**
>
> SSJC Volunteer

> **“My communication skills as well as my confidence have improved dramatically. I also think my legal research skills and my ability to understand legal documents improved over the course of this work. My online communication skills have also developed, as the entirety of this project being online was a first for me”**
>
> Immigration and Asylum Volunteer

Environmental Law Clinic

LinC collaborates with the Environmental Law Foundation (ELF) to provide students with volunteering opportunities through our Environmental Law Clinic. The clinic supports students to develop practical legal research, advocacy, and policy skills while contributing to work focused on environmental justice and the protection of nature. Through the clinic, students explore legal and policy opportunities to advance the recognition of Rights of Nature locally.

This year we provided opportunities for 10 students. The clinic explored how proposed reforms to local government in England, including the introduction of Strategic Authorities and the transition from two-tier to unitary local government, could affect the development of Rights of Nature (RoN) at a local and regional level.

With government reforms placing greater emphasis on regional approaches to planning, environmental governance and nature recovery, the project examined whether these changes could create new opportunities or challenges for embedding RoN principles within decision-making structures.

As part of this project, students examined the implications of local government reorganisation for existing RoN initiatives in Warwickshire and opportunities for future lobbying and campaigning. They investigated current and proposed council structures, existing RoN motions and related activity, and explored how RoN could be advanced through emerging governance frameworks.

Finally, they produced a policy briefing that brought together their findings and recommendations, considering opportunities to integrate RoN into strategic planning, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and wider environmental governance approaches.

The research provided valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with advancing Rights of Nature within changing local government structures in Warwickshire. The students' policy briefing contributed to the wider evidence base being developed by ELF, bringing together university-led research exploring how RoN can be advanced in the context of evolving local government reorganisation.



> **"The Environmental Law Clinic was truly rewarding and became a catalyst for why I want to become a lawyer. It also allowed me to attend conferences where I was able to discuss the policy report that we created as a team. It was a great addition to my CV, as I was able to showcase teamwork, communication, and my ability to write an accurate and well-conducted report. Being part of Warwick LINC was truly rewarding."**
>
> Feedback from ELC Clinic Student Volunteer

> **"The Environmental Law Clinic with Warwick LinC provided a great opportunity to work on a report based on the local Warwickshire council. The collaborative sessions every week allowed us to bridge research, such as looking at the previous Right of Nature motion (RoN) and how it can be established in a future post-devolution Warwickshire, while looking at local proposals for how a devolved Warwickshire will operate. It also provided an opportunity to learn and understand real-world environmental proposals such as the RoNs. "**
>
> Feedback from ELC Clinic Student Volunteer

Immigration and Asylum Clinic

Our Immigration and Asylum Clinic in partnership with the Central England Law Centre is our longest standing clinic. CELC is the only provider of legal aid in immigration in Coventry and the clinic continues to be one of the only sources of free immigration advice in the city. In a city with a such a large and diverse migrant population, it is a vital resource. The clinic includes a weekly advice clinic and a strategic policy-focused project.

This year we provided opportunities for 29 students. As part of the advice clinic, students help take instructions and assist in completing immigration applications; when they aren't seeing clients, they're helping with associated casework and doing research. They receive training and close supervision from the CELC immigration team. Reflecting evolving best practice, this year the training included more explicitly trauma-informed approaches to help students better understand and anticipate the needs of clients and look after their own well-being while providing support.

The advice clinic saw 106 clients over the course of the academic year. Most received one-off advice but 15% were subsequently taken on as cases by the CELC team. The casework comprised a wide range of issues including asylum claims and appeals, settlement applications including for refugees and victims of domestic violence, modern slavery, and stateless persons.

In addition, the students have helped to draft advice letters, application cover letters, grounds for legal aid Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) throughout the academic year, supporting various members of the team.

Clients face multiple barriers, including language barriers and stigma, and the clinic is often the only place people can access support with complex immigration processes. The clinic can also be an opportunity for people in difficult circumstances to reach out for help. This was the case for one client who attended the clinic with his parents. The students noticed that he seemed upset and wanted to speak separately. They alerted their supervising solicitor who was able to speak to the client in private. The client disclosed abuse and asked for help to make his own claim, without his parents. As a result of the students' quick thinking in the appointment, the Law Centre was able to help the client who was awarded leave to remain. He hopes to attend university next year.

The students also conducted in depth research to support casework. This included legal research on the Immigration Rules, relevant legislation and case law, as well as Home Office guidance. They also researched a wide range of issues to help establish client's claims, from the humanitarian situation in Cameroon, to interfaith marriages in India, and the persecution of Kurdish people in Turkey, among others.

Our strategic project this year focused on the significant changes that the Home Office is making to the immigration rules, including making it more difficult to obtain settlement or indefinite leave to remain. While only some of the changes have been implemented so far, they are causing distress as people struggle to understand the new rules and how they will be affected, leading to confusion, fear and misinformation. As part of this project, students reviewed the extensive documentation about the rules and produced public legal education resources tailored to the needs of CELC's community partners.

> **"I have definitely have had my eyes opened to the reality of immigration and asylum in the UK"**
> Feedback from I&A Clinic Volunteer

> **"The clinic has been more hands on and practical than expected, which I have really enjoyed. The casework has also been very interesting and intellectually stimulating, prompting questions that had never previously come to mind"**
> Immigration and Asylum Clinic Volunteer

> **"Everything, to be honest, went well, the face to face client work was very beneficial and enjoyable. Additionally, doing research, particularly on cases/for clients whom you have already spoken to, makes you feel very included in the whole process of their case. The team is lovely and great to learn from."**
> Feedback from I&A Clinic Student Volunteer



Strategic Social Justice Clinic



The Strategic Social Justice Clinic is a joint initiative between Central England Law Centre and Warwick LinC. It specialises in using public law strategically, focussing on a rights-based approach, to address systematic disadvantage.

Working in small groups, student volunteers receive supervision, guidance and mentorship from Katherine Lloyd (CELC) and Dr Rebecca Munro (Co-Director of Warwick LinC). Our projects are carefully selected to put legal learning into practice, find creative ways of using the law and develop leadership, communication and organisational skills in the social justice sector. The clinic provides a vital, responsive source of support for CELC in areas of strategic priority that often fall outside the scope of legal aid.

In 2025–26, we collaborated on four projects covering a range of pressing contemporary social justice issues, providing opportunities for 58 students.

Building Community Legal Capability

This project built on our recent legal needs research in Coventry which focused on the experiences of marginalised groups in the city and the role of frontline community organisations in supporting them. Following the launch of the research, community organisations identified the value of further support to strengthen their ability to recognise and respond to legal issues. Through this project we conducted a needs assessment survey which has helped to inform a new community training programme for frontline organisations.

This project gave students the opportunity to get a deeper understanding of how people experience everyday legal problems in the city and how organisations like food banks and other charities regularly encounter people who are struggling. They developed key research skills and undertook a range of tasks including producing a survey, supported partner organisations to respond to the survey, analysed responses and produced short reports. They also interviewed the legal teams at CELC for their perspective on what community organisations should know about their areas of practice.

This project was instrumental in further developing our understanding of how partner organisations perceive their legal capability, capacity, and confidence in responding to clients' legal problems. While these insights were valuable in themselves, they have also provided the foundation for the Getting Help Right community training programme being rolled out in 2026-2027.

Disability Benefit Reform Project

In this project, students worked with CELC to help build their capacity to respond to ongoing consultations around reforms to disability benefits that risk increasing poverty among disabled people.

In March 2025, the Government published the Green Paper Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working, setting out proposals for significant changes to disability and health-related benefits. The proposals included tightening eligibility for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), reducing financial support for some future Universal Credit (UC) claimants with health conditions, abolishing the Work Capability Assessment, increasing reassessments, and restricting access to the UC health element for younger claimants.

Some measures aimed to improve employment support and provide greater flexibility for people moving into work. However, CELC's casework and engagement with partners, it was also clear that these reforms, in particular the changing eligibility for PIP and the removal of the Work Capability Assessment, would have a significant detrimental effect on CELC's client groups and the wider community in Coventry. This was reflected in consultation responses from CELC and many other organisations, which argued that the reforms were inconsistent, lacked sufficient consultation, would increase poverty and undermine domestic and international legal obligations.

Significant opposition from parliamentarians, select committees, disability rights organisations and campaigners led the Government to make some concessions, including delaying some measures pending further view and providing some protections for existing claimants. The Universal Credit Act 2025 implemented a more limited set of reforms, but a number of reviews (including the Timms Review), consultations and impact assessments remain outstanding. CELC remains concerned that further reforms could substantially reduce financial support for many disabled people and increase the risk of poverty, hardship and social exclusion.

Students have undertaken a range of tasks that will enable CELC to be proactive rather than reactive, and respond more strategically, when reforms are announced. This includes a detailed review and briefing on the proposals put forward in the Green Paper, producing a summary of key points to draw on to challenge the reforms, scoping forthcoming opportunities for CELC to advocate against the reforms, and producing a series of case studies drawing on anonymised client data to be used in future campaigns. This supports CELC's policy work, their work with community partners, and builds their campaigning and influencing capacity.

Housing Vulnerable Adults Project

This project sought to understand pervasive problems in Supported Exempt Accommodation and whether forthcoming legislation will resolve them. Supported Exempt Accommodation (SEA) is a form of supported housing exempt from Housing Benefit caps, intended to provide accommodation alongside care, support or supervision for vulnerable people, including those experiencing homelessness, domestic abuse, substance misuse, disabilities and mental health difficulties.

While many providers deliver good-quality services, the sector has been undermined by inadequate regulation. Concerns including unsuitable placements, inadequate support, poor housing conditions and barriers to moving on into employment or alternative housing. In response, the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 was introduced to establish national standards and a licensing regime. However, key provisions required secondary legislation and implementation remained delayed pending the Government's response to a 2025 consultation, which has now been published.

The lack of effective regulation around SEA is a serious and entrenched issue in Birmingham and an increasingly urgent concern in Coventry. This is evident not only through CELC's own casework, but also through the experiences of its partner organisations working directly with affected communities. As part of this project, students conducted research and produced a briefing outlining the current problems with SEA and the potential impact of the new legislation. The project also identified issues that the legislation wouldn't address (for example, limited access to specialist legal advice for residents), potential unintended consequences of the legislation (for example, relocation of residents if accommodation is shut), and explored the harms caused by the delay in implementation. The students delivered an in-person presentation to CELC's Public Law Team and facilitating a conversation about next steps and potential legal challenges. The also produced valuable public legal education resources for a local foodbank, Narthex, to enable them to better support people in SEA.

The project has given CELC a much stronger understanding of how SEA operates in practice, where the current legal framework may assist, and where it is likely to fall short. This insight strengthens CELC's ability to support partner organisations, informs frontline casework, and may provide the foundation for future strategic litigation.



Awaab's Law and the Justice Gap

This project focused on Awaab's Law, a law introduced following the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in 2020 from a respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his social housing property. Despite repeated reports by his family and interventions from health professionals, no effective action was taken by the landlord. Following a Prevention of Future Deaths Report by the coroner and a national campaign, Awaab's Law was enacted through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The law places time-limited duties on social landlords to investigate and remedy serious housing hazards, beginning with damp and mould and emergency hazards from October 2025, with further protections introduced in phases. The Renters Rights Act 2025 extends similar protections to private renters, with implementation projected for 2027.

While Awaab's Law strengthens tenants' rights, significant barriers remain to enforcing them. This project was driven by a concern that without adequate awareness of rights and legal support, many tenants living in unsafe housing conditions will be unable to benefit fully from the protections that Awaab's Law was intended to provide. Legal aid for housing disrepair is generally limited to cases involving a serious risk to health or safety and is largely restricted to securing repairs rather than compensation for losses caused by poor housing conditions. Proposed reforms to legal aid could further reduce the viability of housing disrepair and possession cases, placing additional pressure on already stretched legal aid providers. These challenges sit within a wider access to justice crisis. Following reductions to legal aid in 2012, large parts of the country have become "legal aid deserts," with many people unable to access specialist housing advice even where they are eligible for legal aid.

A clear understanding of Awaab's Law and its phased implementation is of significant strategi1c value to CELC's Housing team and Health Justice Partnership. Through this project, students have produced a briefing outlining how Awaab's Law operates, gaps in Awaab's Law (for example, temporary accommodation), how legal aid and Awaab's Law interact and how the access to justice crisis impacts individual's ability to exercise their rights. They produced a chart outlining campaigning and influencing opportunities and delivered an online presentation to the Health Justice Partnership Team at CELC and Coventry Women's Partnership.

Support from the SSJC has enabled CELC to engage with Awaab's Law critically as well as practically, strengthening its ability to anticipate both the opportunities and limitations of the legislation. By identifying the gaps within Awaab's Law, alongside associated campaigning and influencing opportunities, the project has supported CELC to develop proactive strategies and build connections with other organisations working effectively to improve housing conditions and access to justice, clarifying how the justice gap may undermine the practical impact of Awaab's Law. The project has also informed Coventry Women's Partnership's strategic planning in relation to their work on gendered housing and homelessness. SSJC students were also able to raise these issues directly when they met with the Attorney General in June 2026, placing access to justice concerns before decision-makers at the highest level.

> **"Volunteering with the Strategic Social Justice Clinic in Term 3 was an incredibly enriching experience for me, from strengthening my legal technical and research skills, as well as my ability to work successfully in a team to produce high-quality work. The project contributed to the very important work that the Central England Law Centre does, and it was very gratifying to know that our research and project was going to directly inform and benefit efforts to support the most vulnerable tenants and communities negatively impacted by issues in the social housing sector. "**
>
> Feedback from SSJC Clinic Student Volunteer

Welfare Rights (PIP) Clinic

After a successful pilot last year, in 2025-2026 we introduced the Welfare Rights (PIP) Clinic in collaboration with the Coventry Independent Advice Service (CIAS). The clinic is based at Foleshill Community Centre and offers appointments and walk in services every Wednesday.

The clinic focuses primarily on Personal Independence Payment (PIP), a benefit intended to help with the extra costs associated with having a disability. The clinic offers help with the application, appeals and reviews, as well as supporting people to access other disability-related entitlements. We recruited eleven students who received intensive training on the PIP application process and spent several weeks shadowing advisors before starting to take their own appointments.

> **"The students were very professional when dealing with clients. They all wanted to help and were very willing to listen and learn from us when shadowing."**
>
> CIAS Advisor

The application form for PIP is long and complex, and most people struggle to fill it out on their own. Through the clinic, people who need assistance with the form can be walked through it step by step. For our students this requires both legal knowledge and skills, and the ability to put clients at ease while discussing sensitive and personal health information.

The clinic has been enormously successful, providing opportunities for 10 students and helping 267 clients between October 2025 and July 2026. It has secured almost £620,000 in financial gains for those clients. Since the clinic started in January 2025, it has secured more than £1 million in financial gains for clients.

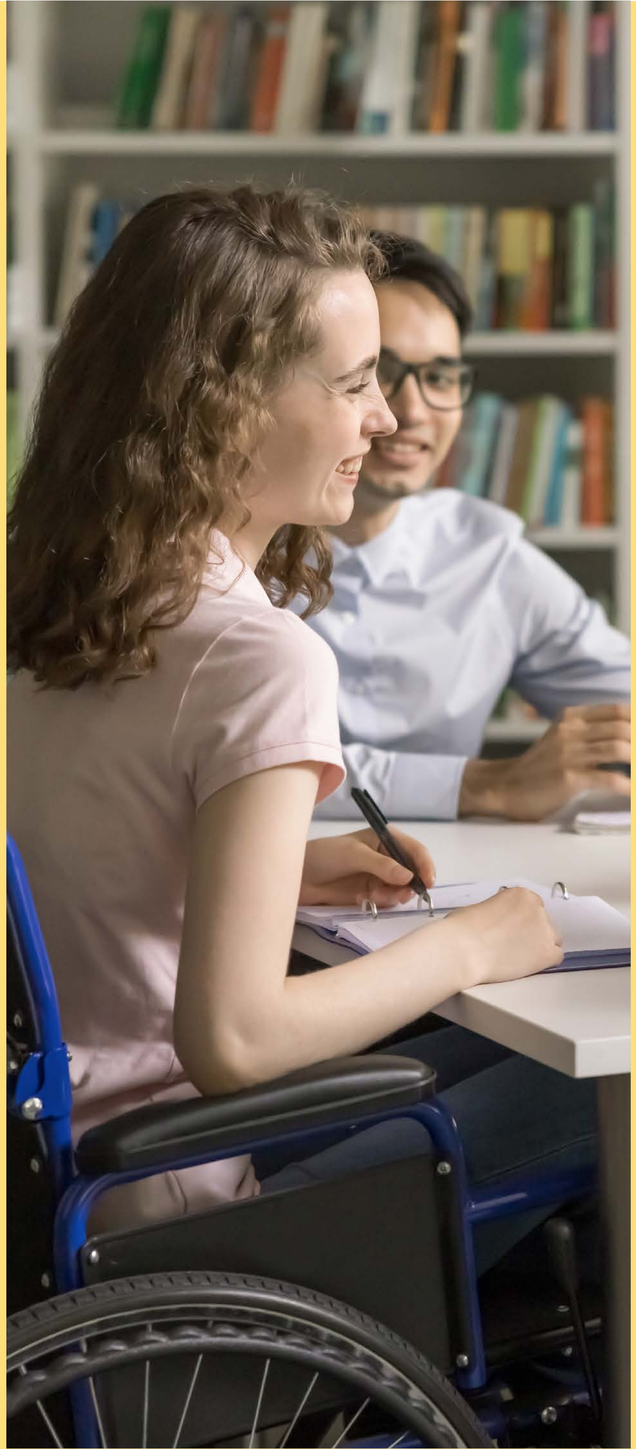
According to CIAS, without the support of the student volunteers they would not be able to help this number of clients. The clinic has also enabled them to offer a more holistic service with time to address other disability-related issues. The idea of a service dedicated to PIP has been popular with other agencies who regularly refer into us. These services are often oversubscribed or do not offer form filing services or do not have the expertise to help.

The benefits have not only been financial. Clients commented that they enjoyed being listened to and having chance to talk about their situation in more depth. Clients express increased confidence and reduced stress as a result of the support from the clinic.

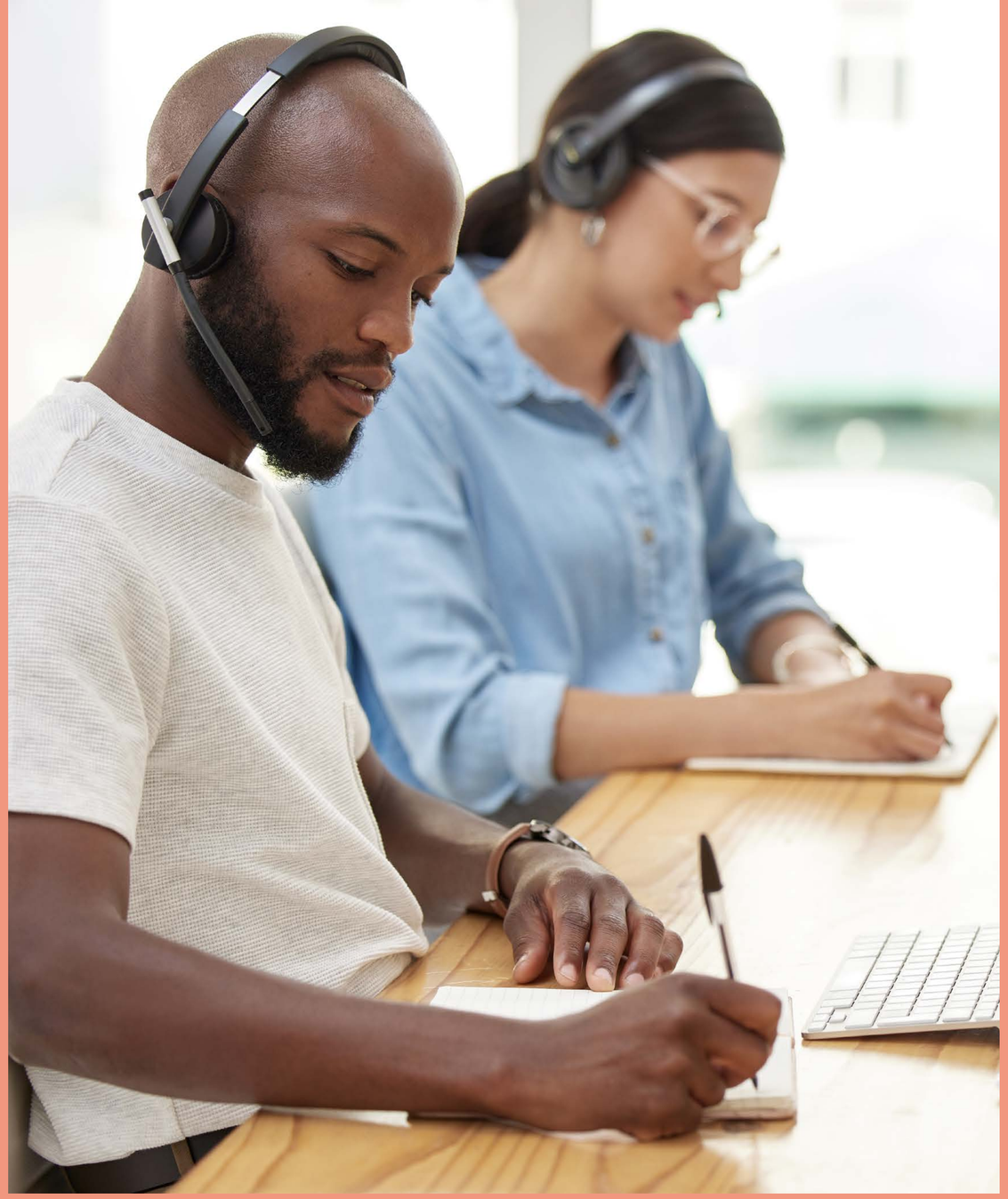
> **"I was awarded the standard rate of daily living, and the enhanced rate of mobility, which I feel was fair. As I already had the mobility element, it has basically doubled my income, and has made a really significant difference to my life!"**
>
> Client

The students described their experiences as rewarding, and they found that their confidence and skills improved through the clinic.

> **"The training of the advisors was really helpful and useful. I felt like throughout the weeks my skills in filling out the forms and communicating with people really improved as I became less afraid of talking to strangers and could navigate the PIP forms with much more confidence"**
>
> Student Feedback



> **"My experience at the PIP Clinic was an invaluable stepping stone in my career. It taught me lessons that academics alone could not: the importance of communication, patience and equanimity. Supporting members of my community was incredibly fulfilling on a personal level, as I felt that I was making a genuine impact: not only by providing legal advice, but also by building meaningful relationships with clients along the way.**
>
> **The experience highlighted the importance of making legal advice accessible and reinforced my aspirations to become a solicitor and use my skills to help others. I also discovered a level of perseverance within myself that I did not know I had. Completing applications under significant time pressure, while also supporting and reassuring clients who were in difficult and often distressing situations, required a lot of focus, empathy and multitasking.**
>
> **Overall, the PIP Clinic was an incredibly rewarding experience that allowed me to develop both professionally and personally. I would highly recommend this opportunity to anyone looking to strengthen their interpersonal skills, gain practical experience and make a meaningful difference"**
>
> Hanna Tomaszewska,
> Welfare Rights Clinic Volunteer 2025-2026



Volunteering with Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

This year we had the opportunity to start a new collaboration with Citizens Advice South Warwickshire. While students often volunteer with local Citizens Advice, this was the first time we've worked together to create opportunities specifically for Warwick Law School (WLS) students.

Citizens Advice provides a vital service to members of the public. Their network of independent charities offers confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person, for free. People rely on this service because it is independent and totally impartial. Citizens Advice believes no one should have to face problems without good quality, independent advice.

Over the period of time from October 2025-June 2026 13 students have helped nearly 400 clients who have contacted the adviceline, offering them all full advice at the point of contact. This includes a multitude of issues with the top issues being benefits, housing, relationship & family, employment, charitable support and legal.

Training as generalist advisors is an invaluable experience for students who aspire to become lawyers because it offers first-hand experience with clients who are seeking help, often with law-related problems and exposure to a wide range of areas. Students learn about how to communicate with people who may be feeling distressed, how to identify problems and find relevant information, and importantly, how to say when they can't help.

"I have gained invaluable insight into what Citizens Advice does as a service, as well as seen the impact they have on people's lives. I have learned how to deal with problem-solving on the spot and communication with people who are facing extremely difficult problems. I have learnt so much from the existing volunteers who work there, just from hearing their calls and listening to them. I am happy that I shadowed calls for the first two to three weeks and then was able to confidently take my first calls"

CASW Volunteer

"The training was very comprehensive and I felt like I learned a lot in one day. I liked the fact that we got to practice writing up case-notes and received feedback for it, that was very helpful in establishing what the quality of our work should look like. Shadowing calls was also useful and made it seem less daunting as our mentor was very kind in taking us through each step bit by bit. The settling down into taking calls was very gradual and I enjoyed the experience a lot"

CASW Volunteer

Summer Internships



Every year, LinC offers paid summer internship opportunities for students who have volunteered on any of our projects or clinics. The internships opportunities have been designed with our partners to give students a chance to gain experiences, develop skills and make connections that can help them on their way to a career in social justice. This year we offered more internships than ever with six part-time roles and one full-time opportunity. New opportunities for this year included Citizens Advice South Warwickshire, the Environmental Law Foundation and Reprieve.

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Advicenow

The intern supported Advicenow's Insight and Change and Legal Information teams through a range of research, analysis, and content development activities. Their work included researching legal and policy issues, undertaking literature reviews, supporting data analysis and evaluation projects, maintaining datasets, and contributing to reports, publications, and policy submissions. Students also supported the development and improvement of public legal information resources by reviewing content for the Advicenow website, researching changes in the law, helping develop guides and practical resources, updating online information, and contributing to communications and social media content.

Central England Law Centre (CELC)

This year's internships included three with CELC, with one student supporting the Strategic Social Justice Clinic and two supporting the Immigration and Asylum Clinic.

Strategic Social Justice Clinic

This year's intern supported a project exploring the impact of digital exclusion across CELC's client groups to identify barriers affecting access to advice and services. The project involves gathering evidence from CELC staff through an internal survey and interviews with relevant teams, collecting case studies of client experiences, and analysing findings to produce a Digital Exclusion Report. The report will include key findings, recommendations, and an action plan to support CELC's future work in improving digital inclusion and addressing barriers faced by clients.

Immigration and Asylum

The interns worked with the Immigration and Asylum team to assist with all aspects of their work. This included taking instructions from clients, drafting correspondence, conducting legal and country information research and supporting with administrative tasks, enabling the clinic to continue operating through the summer months.

Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

During their summer internship with Citizens Advice South Warwickshire, the intern supported the delivery of the organisation's advice services, gaining practical experience in providing information and support to members of the community. The opportunity provided insight into frontline advice work, client support, case management and the wider role of Citizens Advice in helping people navigate challenges and access appropriate support.

Environmental Law Foundation (ELF)

The internship supported the delivery of ELF's Advice & Referral Service, providing valuable assistance to the Head of Casework and Paralegal. The intern contributed to the assessment and management of environmental law enquiries through research, analysis and casework support. Responsibilities included reviewing new enquiries, gathering and analysing information, maintaining case records, liaising with clients and professional members, researching relevant legislation and case law, and supporting the preparation of instructions to Counsel.

Reprieve

The intern supported Reprieve's US Death Penalty Team, contributing to research, advocacy, and human rights-focused initiatives relating to the use of lethal injection in the United States. The internship provided experience of multidisciplinary legal work, with involvement across legal research, advocacy, campaigns, and communications activities. The intern worked alongside colleagues across London and the US team, gaining insight into efforts to challenge human rights abuses and promote systemic change.

Feedback from Summer Interns

> “It was sufficiently challenging as I learnt many different concepts such as legal capability and types of student housing, and I really enjoyed seeing my knowledge grow and being able to apply it to my work. I have never had the chance to undertake experience within civil law, and this internship confirmed my interest in pursuing civil law rather than commercial law. It reassured me that I would love and thrive in civil law or even the charity/NGO sector.”
>
> Advicenow Intern

> “I gained a much deeper awareness of environmental law through exposure to the wide range of enquiries ELF receives and the work it carries out for individuals and communities.”
>
> ELC Intern

> “The main skills I developed were verbal communication, research, case recording, and establishing appropriate professional boundaries with clients. I developed greater confidence in identifying the limits of my role and recognising when a client required specialist advice, signposting or referral. ... The opportunity to develop my social and interpersonal skills was particularly valuable, and speaking with clients regularly helped me become more comfortable in adapting my communication style, asking appropriate questions and maintaining professional boundaries. Working alongside colleagues also helped me become more comfortable in a busy environment, asking for support when needed and navigating professional relationships.”
>
> CASW Intern

> “This role helped me to develop a deeper understanding of the immigration department and network with colleagues ahead of applying for the immigration paralegal role. It helped me to effectively demonstrate that this is an area of law that I am passionate about.”
>
> I&A Intern

> “Seeing the potential impact of my research was especially valuable. My digital exclusion findings informed discussions with Coventry City Council, showing me how evidence about clients’ experiences can shape access to services. Meeting [CELC staff] and learning about CELC’s 50-year history also made the importance of its work tangible. Legal problems involving housing, immigration and families profoundly affect people’s lives, yet many cannot afford or access the help they need.”
>
> SSJC Intern

> “The most valuable thing about the internship [was] definitely the connections and relationships I formed within the team and within the organisation as a whole. Everyone was incredibly kind and supportive, and genuinely wanted to connect and help in any way they could.”
>
> Reprieve UK Intern

Feedback from External Organisations

Immigration and Asylum Internship (Central England Law Centre)

> “... the main benefit the interns have contributed to the law centre has been to increase our capacity to support our clients. They have enabled us to keep our weekly Immigration and Asylum clinic going even outside of normal term times for the first time. This in turn has allowed us to provide more one-off advice and take more cases on during a period we would have otherwise have not had the capacity to do so..”

Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

> “Having [the intern] really contributed to the number of phone calls we could answer during the summer period, when we had volunteers and advisers taking summer breaks. We answered 10% more calls in 2026 compared to the number of clients we helped during the same period last year which was a direct result of having the constant 18 hours per week from the internship”
>
> CASW Staff Member

Environmental Law Foundation (ELF)

> “It was a very positive experience from our perspective ... ELF was delighted with how the internship worked...”

Strategic Social Justice Internship (Central England Law Centre)

> “The production of a report on Digital Exclusion has been extremely helpful. It will form the basis of [our next clinic] project and I am hopeful further policy work by CELC.
> I would not have been able to produce such an extensive document with case studies”
>
> CELC Staff Member

Advicenow

> “We have always had excellent interns over the last 5 years, [this year’s intern] worked extremely well with all Advicenow staff and coped very well with the remote working environment. She assimilated new information very quickly and her work was of the highest standard. Her planning and management skills are excellent, and she usually completed tasks ahead of our expectations. She was always enthusiastic and interested, prepared to learn about areas of civil law with which she was unfamiliar, including family & children law, employment law, housing law and benefits law. She also brought her experiences of living with disability and of renting student accommodation to increase our understanding of these two areas. She has also agreed to continue to help us after the internship, subject to the demands of her degree.”
>
> Advicenow Staff Member

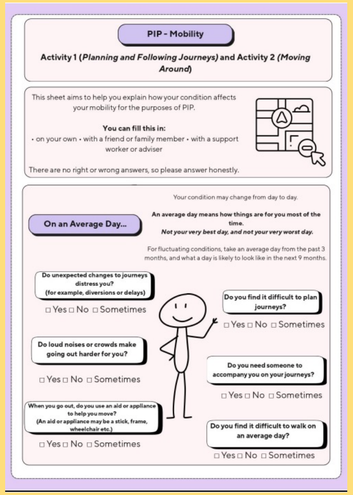
Social Welfare Law

The Social Welfare Law in the Community module provides students with an in-depth understanding of social welfare law through the exploration of key areas including housing law, welfare benefits law, community care law, and education law.

The module supports students in developing a critical understanding of how social welfare law operates in practice and the role of legal and community-based approaches in promoting access to rights and support. Each year, the module focuses on a particular theme within social welfare law, enabling students to explore a specific area of current significance in greater depth.

This year, we focused on proposed reforms to disability benefits. Through a combination of lectures, seminars, and contributions from practitioners and community partners, students engage with the complex relationship between social welfare law, policy, and lived experience. Students developed public legal education projects as part of their assessments, creating resources to help increase access to disability benefits, improve support for people who need it, and raise awareness about the reforms.

We also partnered with a local community organisation, Grapevine Coventry and Warwickshire who helped to shape the module's content and approach, gave a lecture on community organising and provided invaluable advice and feedback on students' public legal education projects.



PIP - Mobility

Activity 1 (*Planning and Following Journeys*) and Activity 2 *(Moving Around)*

This sheet aims to help you explain how your condition affects your mobility for the purposes of PIP.

You can fill this in:
• on your own • with a friend or family member • with a support worker or adviser

There are no right or wrong answers, so please answer honestly.

Your condition may change from day to day.

On an Average Day...

An average day means how things are for you most of the time.
Not your very best day, and not your very worst day.

For fluctuating conditions, take an average day from the past 3 months, and what a day is likely to look like in the next 9 months.

Do unexpected changes to journeys distress you? (for example, diversions or delays)
□ Yes □ No □ Sometimes

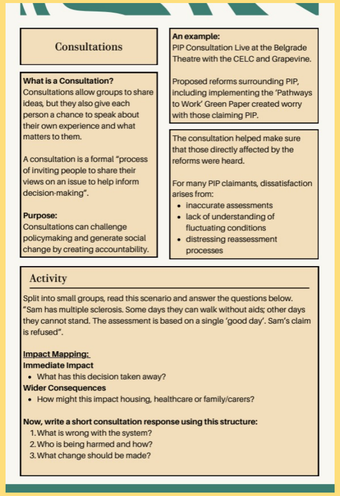
Do you find it difficult to plan journeys?
□ Yes □ No □ Sometimes

Do loud noises or crowds make going out harder for you?
□ Yes □ No □ Sometimes

Do you need someone to accompany you on your journeys?
□ Yes □ No □ Sometimes

When you go out, do you use an aid or appliance to help you move? (An aid or appliance may be a stick, frame, wheelchair etc.)
□ Yes □ No □ Sometimes

Do you find it difficult to walk on an average day?
□ Yes □ No □ Sometimes



Consultations

What is a Consultation?
Consultations allow groups to share ideas, but they also give each person a chance to speak about their own experience and what matters to them.

A consultation is a formal "process of inviting people to share their views on an issue to help inform decision-making".

Purpose:
Consultations can challenge policymaking and generate social change by creating accountability.

An example:
PIP Consultation Live at the Belgrade Theatre with the CELC and Grapevine.

Proposed reforms surrounding PIP, including implementing the 'Pathways to Work' Green Paper created worry with those claiming PIP.

The consultation helped make sure that those directly affected by the reforms were heard.

For many PIP claimants, dissatisfaction arises from:
- inaccurate assessments
- lack of understanding of fluctuating conditions
- distressing reassessment processes

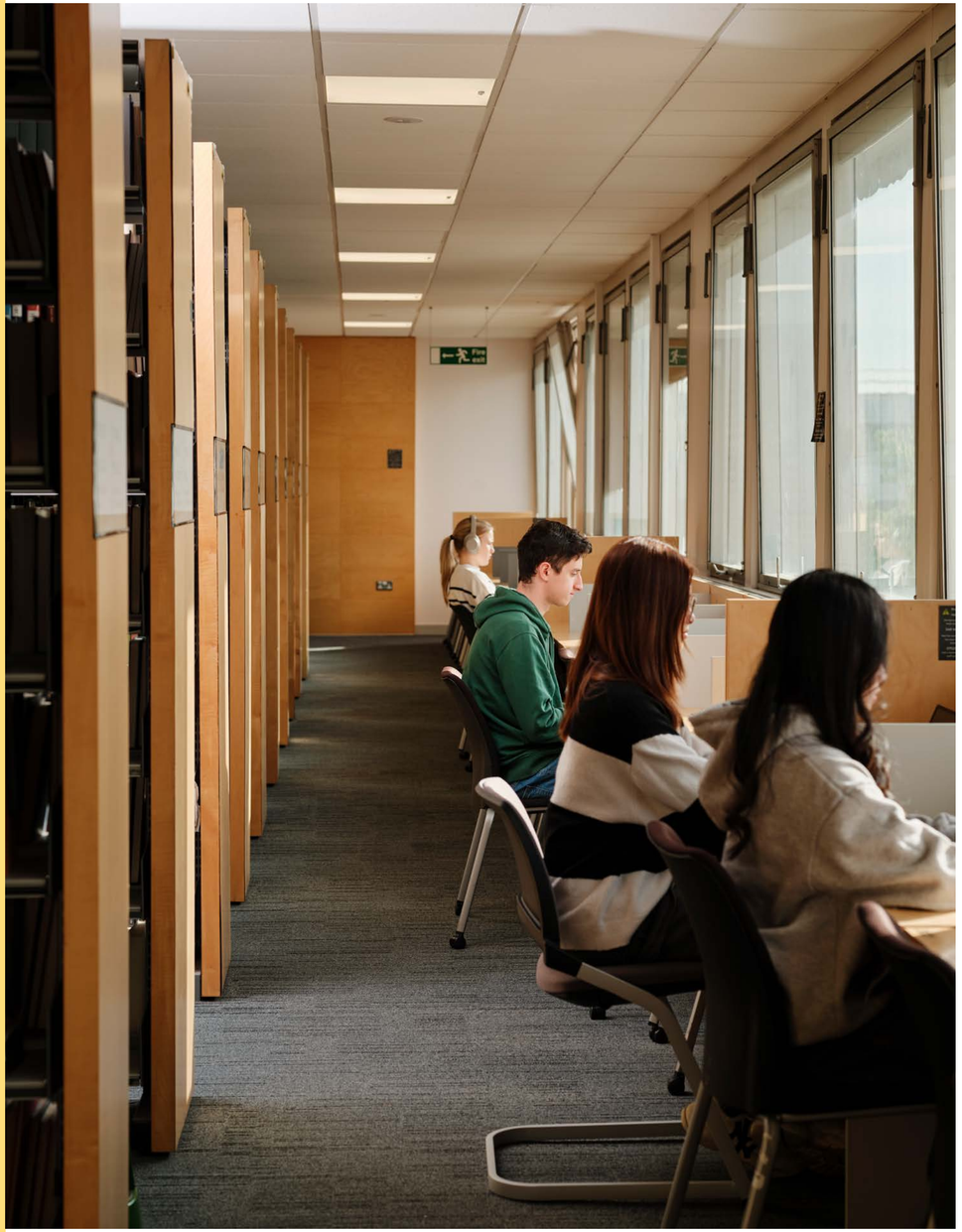
Activity

Split into small groups, read this scenario and answer the questions below.
"Sam has multiple sclerosis. Some days they can walk without aids; other days they cannot stand. The assessment is based on a single 'good day'. Sam's claim is refused".

Impact Mapping:
Immediate Impact
- What has this decision taken away?

Wider Consequences
- How might this impact housing, healthcare or family/carers?

Now, write a short consultation response using this structure:
1. What is wrong with the system?
2. Who is being harmed and how?
3. What change should be made?



Research and Impact

We prioritise ensuring that the work of Warwick LinC is closely tied to research. This helps to ensure our programmes make a distinctive, research-informed contribution to our community, reflecting our expertise as researchers. It also helps to ensure that our clinics, teaching and research influence each other in positive ways that reflect Warwick's Law in Context tradition.

Our recent research report, *Understanding Local Legal Need: Early Intervention and the Ecosystem of Legal Support* (2025), funded by the Nuffield Foundation, has continued to guide our wider engagement.

This includes giving rise to student projects in response to identified needs, such as *Building Community Legal Capability* as part of the Strategic Social Justice Clinic, and new initiatives, such as our *Getting Help Right* training programme for frontline staff piloted this year and set to launch in September 2026.

With the support of the Policy Support Fund, we have also been able to focus advocacy and engagement efforts around the new Renters Rights Act 2025, producing a research briefing and drawing together stakeholders to ensure new rights are accessible. This work will become one of the focuses of our Public Legal Education module next year. We also submitted evidence to the Justice Committee's Access to Justice Inquiry

In May 2026, the Co-Director of Warwick Law in the Community, Rebecca Munro, travelled to Copenhagen as part of a panel of academics and practitioners developing a Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions Doctoral Network on strategic litigation in Europe. The workshop provided an opportunity to share research on social rights litigation and collaborate around questions of how strategic litigation can contribute to wider social change.

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