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## Part 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is designed for partners, corporate social responsibility (CSR) professionals and anyone involved with the pro bono and corporate responsibility work carried out by a firm.

The toolkit can be used by all sizes and types of firms, from local high street firms to global city firms, who are looking to start or develop their firms' contribution to public legal education.

### 1.2 Overview and how to use this guide

Getting involved in public legal education (PLE) gives solicitors the chance to use their knowledge and expertise about the law to help inform and educate the public about their rights and responsibilities. PLE activity is still very new to many law firms, and this guidance is here to help firms understand how and why they might build PLE into their CSR strategies and/or community engagement programmes.

This toolkit is not prescriptive. Different firms will be able to contribute varying amounts of resources and types of expertise to their public legal education work and this toolkit should be used as a source of inspiration and guidance rather than a blueprint. It should be used as a guide to the general issues and opportunities, and provides an overview of organisations currently engaging in PLE.

We will update the guidance and toolkit from time to time, so we would welcome your comments and suggestions.





### 1.3 Defining PLE

The Law Society endorses the view that:

*‘Public legal education provides people with awareness, knowledge and understanding of rights and legal issues, together with the confidence and skills they need to deal with disputes and gain access to justice.*

*‘Equally important, it helps people recognise when they may need support, what sort of advice is available, and how to go about getting it.*

*‘PLE has a further key role in helping citizens to better understand everyday life issues, making better decisions and anticipating and avoiding problems.’<sup>1</sup>*

PLE aims to:

- raise awareness of rights and legal issues and of the wider justice system
- help people to identify the legal dimensions of everyday situations
- equip people with the skills and confidence to resolve issues and prevent problems
- enable people to recognise when they need help and find the best help
- help people to organise effectively for legal and social changes and get involved in shaping the decisions that affect them both at a local and national level

For the purposes of this toolkit, PLE does not cover legal advice, legal representation, nor does it include continuing legal education for lawyers.

<sup>1</sup> This is the definition agreed by the 2007 Public Legal Education Task Force of which the Law Society was a member.

## 1.4 Why PLE is important

**Unlocking demand for legal services:** When people are educated about their legal rights and responsibilities they are better equipped to identify when they have a legal problem and to seek professional help and, where appropriate, seek redress.

**Community engagement:** Proactive campaigns to promote health and financial literacy have been very popular with the public and promoted by government. A similar campaign to educate people about their rights is a practical and powerful way to increase public understanding about the law and the contribution that solicitors/the legal profession make to education in their communities.

**Promoting the rule of law and access to justice:** PLE helps to create empowered citizens who understand and value the rule of law. The current low levels of public understanding and appreciation of and for the importance of the legal system have undoubtedly made it harder to galvanise public support for legal aid. PLE may instil greater public sympathy for protecting access to justice in the future.

**Recruitment and social mobility:** Demystification of the law may also help to attract more diverse talent to the profession, particularly where PLE is delivered in schools. A greater understanding of the role of the law in protecting citizens may also encourage individuals who may not have otherwise considered a career in law to do so.





## 1.5 The business case for PLE in your firm

Legal practices and individual solicitors support PLE and recognise the value it adds to their firms for a number of reasons. Below are some of the reasons why firms have told us they have begun to take part in PLE projects.

**Diversity in volunteering options:** Many businesses recognise the valuable contribution they can make to their local communities and feel they have a responsibility to give something back. It is increasingly popular for firms to offer pro bono, and other volunteering opportunities, as part of a diverse CSR program.

PLE is another way solicitors can volunteer their time. Unlike most volunteering projects, PLE draws upon solicitors unique knowledge as a lawyer; and unlike most pro bono projects, solicitors are not being asked to volunteer to carry out their day job. For many firms PLE offers a balance between these two traditional CSR routes.

PLE can also offer micro-volunteering opportunities where solicitors can volunteer as much or as little time as they can afford without necessarily making a long term commitment.

**Recruitment:** By working with local schools, firms have the opportunity to get to know local talent and enthuse them with an interest in law and an understanding about your firm.

Many law graduates will look at a firm's CSR programme when choosing which firm to apply for – having an innovative and relevant employee volunteering programme can be a real selling point to a potential trainee.

**Staff retention:** PLE projects present an excellent opportunity for lawyers to do something different. It is a rewarding way to use their legal knowledge, and can boost staff morale.

Evaluation of PLE projects have found that they improve an employee's perception of their employer and of the value they place on their employees – this, in turn, improves staff retention rates and satisfaction.

**Staff development:** Lawyers participating in PLE projects find they are developing their own skills and knowledge, often challenging themselves out of their comfort zone. There is evidence about the link between employee volunteering and skills development, including communication, time-management and leadership.

Volunteering allows firms to help the local community while up-skilling the lawyer at the same time.

**Raising your profile:** Involvement in community-based programmes can impact positively on the external reputation of a business as it is playing an active and worthwhile role in their local community. Companies increasingly expect their legal providers to do some form of CSR and so this may help your organisation secure new business.

Local media are generally keen to publish good news stories and this is a great opportunity to talk about the work of your firm with the local community.

## Part 2 DEVELOPING A PLE PROGRAMME

### 2.1 Picking a PLE model

The spectrum of activities that has been used to deliver PLE is wide, and there is no single or correct model for a firm to adopt.

A PLE initiative may be a campaign, leaflets or a pack, a training course, classroom teaching, visiting a local school, a mentoring scheme, a website or taking part in existing programmes run by charities working in the field of PLE.

Different methods of delivery are effective for different PLE goals. Face-to-face methods, such as training courses, are more likely to enhance skills, generate confidence and stimulate action, but can also be time consuming for solicitors who have to commit to being available at a specific time and place. Printed or online methods offer greater flexibility, as well as information and guidance to users in far greater numbers, however they are less likely to enhance users' skills or provide the same sense of interaction with the local community.

Good PLE often combines delivery methods to achieve its goals. Firms will often choose to partner with a PLE or community organisation who will provide a model for them to work in, others prefer to run their own projects in house. This will often depend on the interests of your lawyers, and the resources you have to develop your PLE opportunities. The type of work your solicitors want to engage in will often dictate which organisations you choose to approach for support.





## 2.2 Theme

Some firms like to focus their PLE efforts on a specific theme (such as human rights, or youth engagement). Others choose to cover a wide area of law but focus on working with a specific school or community group.

The benefits of having a theme include:

- building knowledge and expertise in certain areas/localities
- coherence to your programme
- greater presentational impact
- sense of ownership for the whole programme from the volunteers

## 2.3 Internal management of your programme

When starting to think about a PLE programme, you will need to consider who will be managing the programme in the long-term. Many firms will have dedicated CSR and/or pro bono teams who will be happy to lead on PLE, however, for other firms, developing a PLE programme will be their first venture into CSR.

Potential models include:

- **Individual:** Individual partners or associates take responsibility for the programme.
- **CSR/pro bono manager:** Some firms allocate a fee-earner or other employee to oversee their CSR and/or pro bono work, and PLE falls within their work remit.
- **Committee:** Some firms choose to run all their CSR/pro bono projects through a committee, which will often be made up of partners and associates from across the firm, helping to ensure maximum engagement.

Whichever model you decide on, it is generally more beneficial for PLE work to be managed and facilitated centrally, rather than allowing individual solicitors to independently develop their own opportunities. A central structure allows the firm to have oversight of the work carried out by their solicitors, as well as allowing the solicitors to feel that the time they spend on PLE is valued by their managers.



## 2.4 Getting staff involved (and keeping them involved)

Recruiting and maintaining volunteers can be a struggle regardless of how good a programme you put together. The methods firms use to recruit staff often vary depending on the type of firm and the activities available to individual solicitors. These are some tactics which have worked:

- **Recognition:** Internal awards, newsletters and reporting, to highlight the work of the volunteers.
- **Passion:** Asking staff which social issues they are particularly interested in and which area of the public they would like to help. Public legal education can be wide ranging – there are opportunities out there for all interests.
- **Champions:** Using partners to champion individual projects/the programme, to demonstrate commitment to PLE work from the most senior level of the firm.
- **Variety:** Providing a variety of work; from desk based research, to in classroom activities. This will allow people to volunteer according to their own skill sets, time commitments, and passions.
- **Business development:** Pairing up with other law firms or clients to deliver PLE activities.





## 2.5 Checklist for your programme

**Goals:** What do you want to achieve? It is always a good idea to have clear outcomes, that way it is easier to celebrate your successes and learn from any failures.



**Need:** Does your project meet a need in the community? It is worth taking time to understand what your local school/community group/law centre needs, before designing a project which you are able to deliver but has little impact.



**Staffing:** Do you have enough volunteers available at the right time to work on the project? Depending on the type of project you are running, you might want to have back up volunteers, in case your volunteers are unable to participate at the last moment. You do not want to disappoint a class of school children just because a big case suddenly needs to be prioritised.



**Budget:** Are you clear about your budget? Some projects only cost time, others will need financial resources behind them in order to create an impact. Your solicitors might develop excellent guidance, but if you don't have the resources to disseminate it to the community then you risk undermining their commitment to volunteering.



Whichever of the above models you decide on, it is generally more beneficial for pro bono work to be managed and facilitated centrally, i.e. through an individual or committee.

## Part 3 INFORMATION ABOUT PLE ORGANISATIONS

This section provides an overview of some of the national pro bono charities and organisations that might be able to assist or support you as you set up your public legal education programme(s). It is not a comprehensive list, and you are also advised to research organisations which operate in your local area(s).



### **Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law**

The Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law was launched in December 2010 to honour the work and career of Lord Bingham of Cornhill – a great judge and passionate advocate of the rule of law. The centre is dedicated to the study, promotion and enhancement of the rule of law worldwide. It does this by defining the rule of law as a universal and practical concept, highlighting threats to the rule of law, conducting high quality research and training, and providing rule of law capacity-building to enhance economic development, political stability and human dignity.

Since 2014, the Bingham Centre has been running an innovative citizenship-teaching project. The project provides schools with resources on the rule of law (print-based and audio-visual) including lesson plans, case studies and examples that engage students with topical, curriculum-relevant issues where democracy, justice, and rights arise in different contexts such as immigration, criminal justice, cultural and religious diversity, rights to a fair trial, equality before the law, the abuse of power, and human rights. The Bingham Centre's resource book and accompanying DVD have been trialled in schools across the country with outstanding results. The book has been awarded the quality mark of the Association for Citizenship Teaching, the national subject association for citizenship teaching.

The centre continues to provide guidance and additional resources to teachers in collaboration with other citizenship teaching stakeholders. The centre is also planning a number of public events encouraging a wide range of individuals to engage with rule of law issues.



### Citizenship Foundation

Established in 1989, with the support of the Law Society of England and Wales as the *Law in Education* project, The Citizenship Foundation has 26 years' experience giving young people the life skills, confidence and knowledge they need to shape their future in a fast changing world. PLE is at the heart of their work.

Over 80 per cent of UK secondary schools have taken part in one of their programmes or used their resources. Two million young people have received a copy of their *Young Citizen's Passport – Your Guide to the Law* handbook which is now in its 16th edition. In the 2014-15 academic year, 8,700 young people took part directly in their PLE programmes supported by 2,400 legal volunteers (solicitors, judges and barristers) giving over 25,000 hours of their time. A conservative estimate would value this at £2 million in support to the education sector from the legal profession.

The aim of all Citizenship Foundation PLE programmes is to increase young people's understanding of the law and their capability to use it. Skills based legal volunteering is a fundamental part of their work in schools across the UK. Teachers and heads frequently state that legal professionals coming into school to bring the law to life makes the real difference to skills and knowledge.





## Lawyers in Schools

Established by the Citizenship Foundation in 1999, Lawyers in Schools exists to develop young people's awareness and understanding of the law and the legal system, their rights and responsibilities and how the law affects their everyday lives. It does this by engaging lawyers in the largest in-school skills based employee volunteering programme for the legal profession in the United Kingdom. Lawyers in Schools operates in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Milton Keynes, Bristol and Derby. Demand for the programme from schools outstrips supply and the Citizenship Foundation is always looking for new partners.

Lawyers in Schools places practicing and trainee lawyers in the classroom to work with young people in small groups. They use interactive Citizenship Foundation educational resources, to develop the awareness and understanding of the law of the young people they are working with.

The Citizenship Foundation allocates a dedicated account manager to organise all aspects of the programme on behalf of its partners. There is an annual charge which depends on the size and turnover of the partner for full administration of what is in effect a turn-key CSR programme. Schools do not pay, but have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding which lays out the terms of participation before they are linked with a partner.

Lawyers in Schools is probably best suited to larger practices. For further information visit [www.lawyersinschools.org.uk](http://www.lawyersinschools.org.uk)





### The Law in Schools website and matching service

Mindful that most smaller law firms do not have the resources of the larger firms that take part in the Lawyers in Schools programme, the Citizenship Foundation has piloted a light touch model that will allow lawyers to volunteer as much or as little time as they can afford.

With initial project funding from the Legal Education Foundation the Citizenship Foundation has launched the Law in Schools website [www.lawinschools.org.uk](http://www.lawinschools.org.uk). This provides a matching service so secondary schools can post opportunities for local lawyers to come in and help teachers deliver PLE. Lawyers can offer their services based on a postcode search and the level of commitment they can make. In addition, the website hosts training and quality assured resources.

At present there is no charge for this service.



### SmartLaw

SmartLaw is an innovative free app for iPhone and Android that entertains and informs young people about the law by connecting the dots between popular culture, the news and everyday legal situations. The quizzes and scenarios are written by volunteer law students, lawyers and barristers – working with the Citizenship Foundation. The stories and multiple choice quizzes are based on TV plotlines, sport and current events that allow young people to explore the law and its relevance to their daily lives. Stories from the four main categories of sport, celebrities, entertainment and news and culture are generated and continually updated, ensuring that the SmartLaw app will always be up-to-date with current developments in the law and popular culture. At present SmartLaw is used by teachers as a tool to get their students discussing legal issues. The app is supported by guidance and teaching notes. Lawyers and firms who would like to contribute content (which can be credited to its author in the text of the app) should contact the Citizenship Foundation directly.

If you would like more information about Citizenship Foundation PLE programmes you can e-mail them at [law.schools@citizenshipfoundation.org.uk](mailto:law.schools@citizenshipfoundation.org.uk) or call their PLE team on **020 7566 4130**.



### Law for Life

Law for Life: the Foundation for Public Legal Education is an education and information charity that aims to increase access to justice by providing everyone with an awareness of their legal rights together with the confidence and skills to assert them.

The charity provides multimedia information and education that explains how to manage legal situations in a straightforward way. They run the AdviceNow website, which provides a hand-picked and checked information service that draws together the best up-to-date information about the law and rights available on the internet.

Law for Life also deliver community based education and training projects that help people to understand how the law works and build their skills and confidence. They develop innovative and interactive community-based education around housing, welfare, consumer, and employment issues with an emphasis on skills.



### The Legal Education Foundation

The origins of The Legal Education Foundation date back to the 1870s. Originally operating as a law tutorial firm under the name Gibson and Weldon, in 1962 the business merged with the Law Society School of Law to become a charity, The College of Law. In 1975, the college was awarded a Royal Charter.

Over the years, the college developed its law courses for the solicitors and barristers professional examinations, an undergraduate law degree, a master's degree and post qualification training for lawyers. By 2011, the college was delivering a full range of legal education courses to over 7,500 students a year at eight centres across England. Following a major strategic review concluding in 2012, the governors of the college decided to sell the education and training business and devote the monies generated by the sale to endow the organisation as a foundation. The £200 million net proceeds from the sale have been invested, with the foundation distributing the return on these investments through grants and commissions.

In 2014-15, the foundation disbursed £3.7 million. At the time of the sale the charity received permission from the Privy Council to change its name from The College of Law to The Legal Education Foundation. The foundation awards grants to a wide variety of mostly charitable organisations working in different social, professional and academic settings and by commissioning research on PLE.



### The National Centre of Citizenship and the Law

The National Centre for Citizenship and the Law (NCCL) is part of the registered charity, the Egalitarian Trust. The charity's vision is 'opportunity for all to learn about the law'. The trust provides activities, workshops and exhibitions at places of legal interest which enable both school and public groups to learn about the law and justice system and its role in contributing to a fairer society.

NCCL delivers PLE by using real buildings, real objects and real people to engage, inspire and motivate young people to learn from the past, act in the present and change their future.

NCCL believe every person should have the opportunity to learn about the law and they aim to empower children and young people to become active citizens; to develop an understanding of the law and to increase social mobility. They do this by offering opportunities for young people to meet and engage with legal professionals. To achieve this objective, they welcome the expertise, experience and time of legal professionals.

There are numerous ways to get involved in their legal education work through our Friends of NCCL programme. This can include Q&A sessions with schools/colleges, presentations about your career path, advocacy, resource support and sponsorship.



Image credit: National Centre for Citizenship and the Law (NCCL)





### Streetlaw

The name Street Law™ has been registered in the USA by Street Law Inc of Washington DC, USA. Street Law Inc is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes legal literacy and human rights. The street law approach began in 1972 when Georgetown University Law Center developed a programme that sent law students into high schools in Washington, DC to teach practical law lessons to high school students.

The term Streetlaw has been adapted for use in the UK, and is a recognised model of PLE volunteering opportunities for students in law schools across England and Wales. Students provide interactive learning presentations on the law to various groups, including primary and secondary school pupils, prison inmates, community groups and the homeless.

Universities/law schools run their own Streetlaw projects, and many rely on the help and support of solicitors to make their programmes work.



### Youth Access

Youth Access is the national membership organisation for young people's information, advice, counselling and support services (YIACS).

YIACS provide a holistic response to young people's social, emotional and mental health needs through a range of services provided under one roof, including social welfare advice, advocacy, counselling, health clinics, community education and personal support. Members of Youth Access respond to over one million enquiries a year on a diverse range of issues, including homelessness, benefits, debt, mental health, sexual health and relationships.

In 2016, Youth Access will be developing plans for a national PLE programme focussed on young people aged 15 to 25.

Lawyers wishing to engage with local youth advice services, should email:

**[pamela@youthaccess.org.uk](mailto:pamela@youthaccess.org.uk)**



## Part 4 PLE CASE STUDIES



### Educational publications

In 2013, the solicitors firm Olswang published the fourth instalment in a series of educational publications devised by London based charity, Guy Fox History Project Ltd called *How the World REALLY Works*. The series covers topics ranging from investment banking to insurance, breaking down complex topics to enable primary school aged children to understand the subjects and help raise their aspirations.

Over 20 volunteers from Olswang worked in collaboration with Guy Fox History Project Ltd, a team of barristers from Blackstone Chambers and the children of John Donne Primary School in Peckham, London to create the publication.

Through a series of educational and creative workshops, the volunteers worked alongside the children to artistically portray legal landmarks, key historical developments and legal concepts. The children's illustrations have been incorporated throughout the book, not only bringing to life the story of the English legal system but helping to explain the subject simply and effectively.

10,000 copies of the book have been printed and distributed to primary schools across London, including each primary school in their local borough of Camden.



### Client collaborations

Simmons & Simmons have a long standing relationship with the Citizenship Foundation, and have worked with their clients to deliver public legal education in schools.

Simmons & Simmons LLP work with their client Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc. to deliver Lawyers in Schools sessions to students at St Saviour's & St Olave's School in Southwark, London. This involves volunteers from both businesses working together in the classroom. The sessions have enormous benefits, including increasing business opportunities, building employees' skills and most importantly, developing the young people's legal capability.

The Simmons & Simmons volunteers, who come from all levels of seniority, find the sessions an excellent way to informally network with their client, while giving back to their local community.

## Part 5 USEFUL CONTACTS

### **Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law**

British Institute of International  
and Comparative Law,  
Charles Clore House, 17 Russell Square,  
London, WC1B 5JP  
**w:** [www.biicl.org](http://www.biicl.org)  
**t:** 020 7862 5151

### **Citizenship Foundation**

50 Featherstone Street,  
London, EC1Y 8RT  
**w:** [www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk](http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk)  
**t:** 020 7566 4130  
**e:** [law.schools@citizenshipfoundation.org.uk](mailto:law.schools@citizenshipfoundation.org.uk)

### **Law for Life**

Elizabeth House, 39 York Road,  
London, SE1 7NJ  
**w:** [www.lawforlife.org.uk](http://www.lawforlife.org.uk)  
**t:** 020 7401 7566  
**e:** [info@lawforlife.org.uk](mailto:info@lawforlife.org.uk)

### **The Legal Education Foundation**

Suite 2, Ground Floor, River House,  
Broadford Park, Shalford, Guildford,  
Surrey, GU4 8EP  
**w:** [www.thelegaleducationfoundation.org](http://www.thelegaleducationfoundation.org)

### **National Centre for Citizenship and the Law (NCCL)**

**w:** [www.nccl.org.uk](http://www.nccl.org.uk)

#### **NCCL Galleries of Justice Museum**

##### **Head office:**

High Pavement, The Lace Market,  
Nottingham, NG1 1HN  
**t:** 0115 952 0555  
**e:** [learning@nccl.org.uk](mailto:learning@nccl.org.uk)

##### **London office:**

NCCL, West Green Building W32,  
Royal Courts of Justice, Strand,  
London, WC2A 2LL  
**t:** 020 7947 7544  
**e:** [london@nccl.org.uk](mailto:london@nccl.org.uk)

##### **Manchester office:**

NCCL, Peoples History Museum, Left Bank,  
Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3ER  
**t:** 07912 000 493  
**e:** [Kath.downs@nccl.org.uk](mailto:Kath.downs@nccl.org.uk)

### **Youth Access**

1-2 Taylors Yard, 67 Alderbrook Road,  
London, SW12 8AD  
**w:** [www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk)  
**t:** 020 8772 9900  
**e:** [admin@youthaccess.org.uk](mailto:admin@youthaccess.org.uk)





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