



Pro Bono Impact Report 2025

Pro Bono Pledge Ireland

The purpose of this Impact Report is to outline the Pro Bono work reported by signatories to the Pro Bono Pledge during 2025.

It provides 20 Case Studies of Pro Bono work undertaken by signatories to the Pledge during 2025.

These case studies demonstrate the powerful impact and potential of Pro Bono. We hope they will inspire and encourage current and future signatories to the Pledge in their Pro Bono endeavours.

About the Pro Bono Pledge

PILA, the Public Interest Law Alliance, is a project of FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres). PILA acts as coordinator of the Pro Bono Pledge.

The pledge is open for signature by solicitors, barristers, law firms and in-house legal departments.

It provides a common definition of pro bono legal work, a commitment to a minimum aspirational target of 20 pro bono hours per lawyer per year, and a mechanism to benchmark progress through annual reporting of anonymous pro bono data.

The full text of the Pledge and the Pledge Reporting Guidelines are available on <https://www.pila.ie/pbw/>.

Since the launch of the Pledge in November 2020, it has been signed by:





Introduction

This report shines a light on those who are leading the way to create a legal system where engaging in pro bono work is a key part of a career in the legal profession. The Pro Bono Pledge was developed by an independent grouping of law firms, barristers, and in-house teams with a presence in the Republic of Ireland who came together to affirm their commitment to delivering pro bono services in Ireland.

Signatories to the Pro Bono Pledge believe that universal access to justice and legal services are essential to the rule of law, to the vindication of rights, and to the functioning of a democratic society. The legal profession has a privileged role and a unique purpose and position in the legal system, in society, and in matters of justice. Signatories to the Pro Bono Pledge Ireland are committing to change the existing status quo and to correct the imbalance of a justice system weighed against those who face multiple barriers to access to justice.

The pro bono work described in this report has a number of key elements of a legal service for people and communities experiencing disadvantage and discrimination. It puts the person/community at the heart of the service, strives to be accessible, flexible, tailored and targeted and prioritizes the greatest areas of need. There is also a focus on preventative justice, which involves early legal advice and assistance to address issues before they escalate. It also looks to build legal capabilities, including the knowledge and confidence to cope with the legal issues, alongside the awareness of legal mechanisms and those for reform. Pro bono works most effectively when it is collaborative, flexible and innovative, and complements and supports wider legal and advice provision.

We are grateful to all of the Pledge signatories who reported, to enable PILA to shine a spotlight on the pro bono work of the last year. PILA is very proud to be working with and supporting our Pledge signatories to coordinate the Pro Bono Pledge Ireland and to continue to support the nurturing and developing of this critically important work.



A Message from Eilis Barry, FLAC Chief Executive:

“This report reflects a new era of Pro Bono in Ireland. At least in certain sectors of the legal world, Pro Bono has been mainstreamed into the work of lawyers. This is a cause for celebration and the result of years of work undertaken by PILA and its legal and NGO stakeholders.

There remains work to be done. We must ask how we can engage even more of the legal community in pro bono work. Many barristers and solicitors already engage in pro bono and public interest work as part of their practices but do not engage with PILA or the Pledge. They are an important part of the wider pro bono movement. It is important that we recognise their contribution and provide them with the supports they need to develop as pro bono practitioners.

Pro Bono is about bringing free legal assistance to people and communities to empower them to achieve social change. At its most effective, it can address the barriers to justice faced by people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage and who often have multiple, inter-related legal issues.

I hope the diverse array of Pro Bono case studies outlined in this report acts as an inspiration and sets in motion the next chapter for Pro Bono in Ireland.”

Pro Bono Pledge Ireland 2025: Impact in Numbers

The Pledge's aspirational target is that all lawyers will carry out (on average) 20 hours pro bono legal work annually. This information relates to pro bono work undertaken by the signatories who reported into this year's report. We understand that far more pro bono work is carried out than has been reported to PILA, in particular by barristers and solicitors, with only 323 hours being reported by barristers.

PILA is also conscious of the administrative burden involved in reporting and is keen to make it less onerous.

23

SIGNATORIES REPORTED UNDER THE PLEDGE.

45,034

HOURS PRO BONO LEGAL WORK REPORTED.

31% OF LAW FIRMS REPORTED THAT ON AVERAGE, LAWYERS IN THEIR FIRM COMPLETED OVER **20 HOURS** OF PRO BONO WORK.

52% OF LAW FIRMS REPORTED THAT ON AVERAGE, LAWYERS IN THEIR FIRM COMPLETED OVER **10 HOURS** OF PRO BONO WORK.

47% OF LAW FIRMS REPORTED A PARTNER PARTICIPATION RATE OF **50% OR HIGHER.**

52% OF LAW FIRMS REPORTED A SOLICITOR PARTICIPATION RATE OF **50% OR HIGHER.**

Case Study 1:

Frontline Support: the FLAC Telephone Information and Referral Line and FLAC Clinics

In 2025, multiple signatories volunteered pro bono hours to assist FLAC in its mission to promote equal access to justice.

A small regional law firm reported reaching the 20-hour aspirational target of the Pledge, and described the process of volunteering on the FLAC phonenumber. It stated that telephone clinics last for two hours, all calls are a maximum of 20-30 minutes, and that afterwards, a synopsis of the call and advice is completed and submitted to FLAC.

To exemplify the kind of calls a volunteer on the phonenumber might receive, the signatory described a query on cohabitation rights after the caller's relationship ended. The caller had contributed substantial funds to improvements of the family home, which was in the sole name of the former partner. The advice given was related to cohabitation rights, time limits and partition. Another caller sought advice on representing themselves in contested divorce proceedings, and was advised on sources of support, alternative options, steps to be taken in divorce proceedings, and format of the court hearing. A third example related to a caller seeking advice in relation to wills and what information beneficiaries are entitled to. They received advice generally on wills, administration of estate, on "executor's year", and that beneficiaries are entitled to be informed in relation their own inheritance.

A mid-size law firm reported volunteering for the FLAC General Law Clinic alongside maintaining an active pro bono practice. Its other activities included offering pro bono representation in a WRC employment law case and assisting civil society associations to transition into more formal legal structures.

An international law firm reports that as part of their ongoing partnership with FLAC, their lawyers have been providing discrete initial legal advice to individuals on areas including family, employment, housing, social welfare, probate and civil litigation law.

Erin
Brogan
FLAC
Information
Line
Coordinator



FLAC also received pro bono assistance from a Pledge Signatory in conducting their GDPR review. The firm's technology and innovation team undertook a review of FLAC's data protection policy arrangements helping FLAC stay compliant and safeguard sensitive information.

Case Study 2:

Partnership with Irish Charity to Overcome Barriers to Social Housing

A large Irish law firm partnered with a charity to respond to the Social Housing Crisis by providing pro bono legal expertise, casework support and advocacy to help individuals navigate complex social-housing systems, challenge unlawful decisions and secure stable accommodation. One example of this collaboration includes their support to an elderly couple living with significant health difficulties whose social-housing application had been stalled for more than a year. Despite providing all requested documentation, the client was repeatedly asked to produce historic financial records dating back over a decade. After the matter was referred by the charity, the law firm liaised directly with the Local Authority, clarified the legal basis for the requests and guided the couple through the process. Their application was ultimately approved, ending 16 months of uncertainty. The client shared their relief and how much this outcome meant to them:

“We’ve been trying to sort this out for sixteen months so we could be nearer our family and the care we need. I’m absolutely delighted.”

A separate matter referred to the firm by the charity related to a single mother who had lived in her privately rented home for 13 years with her two children. The family had never encountered any problems with their tenancy until they suddenly received a notice of termination from their landlord, who claimed he intended to sell the property. Despite being informed that his notice of termination was invalid, the landlord persisted and sent masked individuals to the property intimidating the tenant, forcing her and her family into emergency accommodation. The firm provided pro bono legal advice and representation during the RTB proceedings, resulting in a successful outcome. The notice of termination was declared invalid, the termination of the tenancy was ruled unlawful, and the landlord was ordered to pay compensation. This outcome provided safety, stability and the chance for the family to rebuild after an extremely distressing ordeal.

Case Study 3:

Partnership with Irish charities to Advance Women's Rights in Ireland

A large Irish law firm partnered with women's rights organisations to provide clear and specialised legal assistance that helps women assert their rights. In 2025, 142 lawyers completed 4000 pro bono hours supporting women's rights. As one woman assisted noted,

"You all did very hard work on my family's case to bring them to Ireland. It was a miracle because of you - it was not possible, I was hopeless and was thinking that everything was finished. But thankfully, you all brought my joys back to my life. I am very, very thankful to all of you. To be honest, I do not have any words to describe how I could thank all of you."

A central example of this commitment is a partnership reflecting a strategic and holistic collaboration that spans governance, charity law, and national policy research. Through the charity law partnership, we provide regular advice on governance, regulatory and compliance matters ensuring the partner charity has robust and legally sound structures capable of supporting women safely and effectively.

Alongside this structural support, the firm contributed extensive legal research to the charity's work on helping inform policy discussions and advocating as well as strengthening the charity's ability to actively advance women's rights in Ireland.



Case Study 4:

Collaboration between Eight Law Firms, Family Reunification & Kids in Need of Defence (KIND)

The KIND pro bono programme operates in many countries across the globe. In Ireland, it is operated through a collaboration between the Immigrant Council of Ireland and the Irish Refugee Council. Together they provide training and supervision to pro bono lawyers to enable them to take on cases in an area outside their usual areas of expertise. A considerable number of law firms reporting under the Pledge have provided child-friendly pro bono assistance since 2023 as part of the KIND programme, and this trend has continued in 2026, as signatories to Pro Bono Pledge Ireland reported taking on more such cases, acting for unaccompanied minors in the state who wish to apply for family reunification. Together, over 600 lawyers have contributed more than 30,000 pro bono hours, providing legal assistance to 366 unaccompanied minors

One international law firm represented 19 refugee children who were seeking family reunification. The cases typically take around 18 months to 2 years to process, but the firm reported that more recently decision times have been extended, and the cases are taking longer. With training and supervision through the KIND programme, the lawyers meet the children and their guardian and prepare their family reunification application. When the application is successful, the lawyers guide them through the visa process too.

Lawyers from another international firm worked on 6 family reunification applications on behalf of unaccompanied minors in 2025. One case had a successful outcome, with the client's family being reunited with him in Ireland, while the others are awaiting updates from the Family Reunification Unit.

Another law firm involved commented "The family reunification process is complicated and legalistic and one which young people must face alone as legal aid is not available. Through the KIND programme, we provide direct representation to young people to guide them through the family reunification process in a child-friendly and trauma-informed manner."

This partnership represents a major multi-firm collaboration within Ireland's pro bono landscape, earning recognition as the winner of the Volunteering and Pro Bono Services Award at the Chambers Ireland Sustainable Business Impact Awards 2025.



One client noted: ***"the process was confusing, and it took stress off me knowing I had a team of solicitors helping me with my application for family reunification. I look forward to my mother coming to Ireland and we can be reunited once again."***

Another client commented, ***"I lost hope when I left my family but now seeing my mom and my siblings grown up, it feels different. The process and the outcome were all positive. We are grateful and will always remember what they did for us."***

Case Study 5 and 6:

Prison Legal Skills for Everyday Life

Over the course of 3 weeks, teams of staff from across a large Irish firm and colleagues from in-house legal teams attended three of the units in Mountjoy men's prison and the Dóchas Centre women's prison to deliver workshops aimed at developing students' legal skills. The teams worked with over 60 students from the prison population each week using a participatory and accessible teaching methodology. Focusing on skills of argument, active listening, negotiation, critical analysis and self-advocacy, the aim of these workshops was to have students better equipped to deal with legal issues or matters concerning their rights when they arise day to day in life in prison and after.

This programme is an example of how the firm's pro bono outreach work is based on expanding access to justice by empowering communities of rightsholders to understand the legal system and get equipped with the skills necessary to navigate legal problems when they arise.

The programme received a really positive response from the teaching staff across the units, and the enthusiasm and feedback from students, many of whom returned for each session week-on-week, which was a testament to the energy, skillsets, and dynamism colleagues brought to the sessions.

The Disregard of Historic Offences for Consensual Sexual Activity Between Men Bill 2025

The law firm instructed by a charity, together with Irish Barristers and a UK based law firm were involved in drafting the Bill which provides a process for the disregard of certain historic criminal convictions arising from consensual sexual activity between men.

The preamble to the Bill notes: "In light of the damage that the discriminatory criminalisation of consensual same sex activity between men had on the lives of those convicted of such offences, as well as on the lives of their partners, families, friends and communities; And whereas the continuing impact of this historic criminalisation and the existence of extant historic convictions for such offences is an ongoing affront to the dignity, privacy, autonomy and equality of those convicted; [...] it is declared and recognised that all those, whether applicants or otherwise, who were prosecuted or convicted of offences arising from consensual same-sex sexual activity between persons of full capacity are entitled to and hereby receive an apology and an acknowledgement that maintaining such offences was, on the part of the State, improperly discriminatory and contrary to human dignity and that it infringed human rights including in particular the right to personal privacy and autonomy."

The Disregard of Historic Offences for Consensual Sexual Activity Between Men Bill 2025 was introduced as a Private Members Bill and co-signed by several parties on 1 July 2025. Since its introduction in the Oireachtas, the Government announced plans to introduce its own expungement scheme.

Case Study 7:

Gazan Family Unification and Legal Advice to Developing Nations on Obligations under the Paris Agreement

A medium sized Irish firm provided pro bono assistance to a client, a Gazan mother of four whose family was devastated when the refugee camp they were sheltering in was hit by an airstrike. One of the client's children, due to the injuries suffered, was granted immigration permissions by the Irish government, as part of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, Medical Evacuation Scheme ("the Scheme"). The client had to make the impossible decision to leave her three other children behind in Gaza with an extended family member (their father having been killed in the airstrike) and fly to Ireland with her son so that he could receive ongoing medical treatment under the Scheme (having been told that she could travel only with the child requiring the medical attention).

On researching the Scheme, the firm discovered that in the context of evacuations to Ireland, it provided that the siblings and immediate family members of the patients who received Scheme permissions were also entitled to travel with the patient. The firm's work involved liaising with a number of government departments in order to have the three minor children reunited with their mother and brother in Ireland. After 5 months apart, the family were reunited.

The firm's climate team, in conjunction with an international organisation, provided pro bono legal advice to a group of developing nations in connection with negotiations under the Paris Agreement on the Global Goal on Adaptation ("GGA"). The group sought advice in support of its objective to promote a goal to triple adaptation finance as part of the GGA outcome, or through an alternative negotiation stream.

The advice also examined precedents for the quantum of finance being discussed in rooms outside the dedicated finance agenda items, to identify alternative procedural pathways for advancing the group's goals. The matter reflects the firm's commitment to climate justice and to ensuring that the most climate vulnerable nations are effectively represented in multilateral negotiations.

Case Study 8:

Pro Bono Phone Advisory Clinic for Underserved Communities in Dublin and Limerick

A large Irish firm partnered with an Irish Charity to support its mission of providing accessible legal, mediation, and education services to underserved communities in Dublin and Limerick. In 2025, 25 volunteer solicitors have taken part in the charity's Phone Advisory Clinic, offering high level legal guidance to individuals whose queries are suitable for remote consultation.

Solicitors participate on a monthly rota, handling up to three pre-screened calls per session. The charity manages all client intake, provides advance details of each query, and offers professional indemnity cover. Common issues include social welfare, housing, employment, family matters, and access to justice. Where further support is required, volunteers refer cases back to the charity for follow up.

All participants complete a structured induction, including recorded training, Q&A sessions with experienced volunteers, and clinic shadowing. Volunteers receive clear guidelines, advice sheets, and support on managing expectations and maintaining appropriate boundaries.

Case Study 9 and 10:

Legal Education for Refugees and People Seeking International Protection

Lawyers from an international law firm delivered a legal education programme in partnership with an Irish charity. The programme consisted of structured legal education sessions led by lawyers and guest experts, focusing on core areas of Irish law relevant to participants' day to day lives (including information about rights and obligations in the state, particularly in relation to immigration status, employment, education, healthcare, consumer rights, privacy and other areas). The assistance was aimed at improving legal literacy and enabling participants to better understand and navigate Ireland's legal, employment, and public services frameworks.

Since its launch in Ireland in 2021, the programme has reached over 1,300 participants to date. In 2024, the programme continued its established annual delivery in Ireland as part of the law firm's ongoing pro bono legal education offering for refugees and people seeking international protection, with over 500 participants attending. In 2025, the programme was delivered as an eight-week course, with 311 participants completing the programme, representing 44 nationalities.

International human rights and access to justice research

International organisations working with refugees and stateless persons required detailed, jurisdiction-specific legal analysis on access to rights under international instruments and domestic law, to support rights awareness and advocacy.

The firm's lawyers contributed to the rights mapping initiated by the international organisations. They carried out legal research and analysis of domestic legal frameworks and policies affecting forcibly displaced and stateless persons, assessing how rights are recognised and implemented in practice. The work supported the development of a digital platform providing accessible, comparative legal information across multiple jurisdictions.

Case Study 11:**Pro Bono Property and Corporate Support, and Law Street Programme**

A large Irish firm's property team advised a Dublin-based family resource centre and registered charity on lease and security of tenure issues relating to its premises. The work involved a full review of title, planning and associated lease documentation to provide clarity and assurance in the context of a significant building investment at the centre. In parallel, lawyers from the corporate and company secretarial teams assisted the organisation with a range of governance and regulatory matters.

The firm's property department also advised a community operating in Dublin on a range of property-related matters, including potential expansion of its activities. This work involved reviewing the relevant structures and related documentation to support the development of facilities dedicated to employment, education, social enterprise, integration, housing and wider community development. A cross-disciplinary team from the corporate, banking and company secretarial departments then worked closely with the organisation to identify the most appropriate legal structure for funding new sporting facilities. The team undertook a detailed review of the proposed arrangements, drafted the necessary agreements and funding award letters, and ensured that all documentation complied with charity law and reflected sector best practice so that the donor's intentions would be fulfilled and the funding process would be smooth and compliant.

A number of solicitors from the firm completed the Street Law training programme offered by the Law Society of Ireland, designed to equip practitioners to teach law in a practical and engaging way to those with no prior legal background. The programme focuses on interactive, discussion-led learning using real-life scenarios, promoting independent thinking and a better understanding of how the legal system operates in practice. By hosting students in the firm's offices, participating solicitors can demonstrate how legal teams work on a day-to-day basis and what a professional legal environment looks like. The initiative aims to build legal literacy and confidence among students while also developing core professional skills for solicitors, including communication, advocacy and the ability to explain complex legal concepts in clear and accessible terms.

Case Study 12:

Legal and Policy Advocacy Support for Animal and Dog Welfare

Lawyers of a large international law firm have provided pro bono legal and policy advocacy support in the area of animal and dog welfare, focused on improving the clarity, effectiveness, and enforcement of Irish dog law. The assistance provided covers several areas including:

- Launching a Pledge to keep dog welfare and legislative reform on the agenda;
- Engaging directly with TDs and government ministers, submitting freedom of information requests, and advocating for greater transparency in policy development and enforcement;
- Supporting a successful judicial review challenging unclear legislation relating to XL Bully dogs, which resulted in a government commitment to introduce an appeals process and clarify the law;
- Proposing evidence-based legal reforms, including mandatory theory tests for dog licences, stricter penalties for irresponsible ownership, and regulation of the dog training industry;
- Delivering public legal education through accessible and engaging content to improve understanding of dog law and welfare obligations.



Case Study 13:

Corporate Support for Charities

The Dublin office of an international law firm advised multiple charities, including a US charity, on establishing themselves as Irish CLGs, preparing and submitting their application to the Charities Regulator to become registered. The firm also acted on behalf of a small religious order in respect of an agreement for lease for a new prayer centre in Ireland.

A large Irish Law firm is preparing a joint submission on the Charities (Amendment) Bill 2022 and has advised on the merger of religious activities into a charitable company.

Case Study 14:

Publishing a Cross-border End-of-life Guide

An international law firm assisted a charity supporting palliative care research, education and practice across Ireland to create and publish a cross-border publication focused on inclusive and compassionate palliative care.

Lawyers at the firm provided pro bono legal advice on intellectual property, publication and governance matters to support the lawful publication and sharing of the material. This included advising on rights, ownership, and appropriate legal frameworks to enable the publication to be shared widely with healthcare professionals, policymakers and the public across jurisdictions.

Case Study 15:

Assistance to Migrants in Domestic Abuse Situations

An Irish law firm has provided support to an NGO focused on improving and protecting the rights of those from a migrant background. Where there is domestic abuse in a relationship, migrants are particularly vulnerable. In partnership with the NGO, the firm helps service users who are experiencing domestic abuse to apply for a change in their status so that their right to reside in Ireland is independent of that of their abuser. The lawyers provide legal assistance to help migrants navigate this process at a time when they are particularly vulnerable.

Case Study 16:

In-House Legal Team

In 2025, an in-house legal team boasted an impressive number of pro bono hours and took part in multiple interesting initiatives.

The lawyers, assisted by other in-house counsel volunteers, delivered a structured information programme addressing the international protection process, labour market access entitlements for international protection applicants, the process of setting up as a sole trader or establish a limited company in Ireland, an overview of employment rights, and guidance on opening a bank account in Ireland. The programme combined expert-led presentations with facilitated group discussions, allowing attendees to unpack and apply the information with support from participating lawyers.

The team also participated in a programme aiming to deliver legal literacy support to people in custody. The support focused on everyday rights and procedures relevant to dignity, equality, fair process and reintegration, particularly where unmet legal capability can be a barrier to rehabilitation and successful re-entry. The legal information focused on practical rights education including human rights/equality, fair procedures, and employment. The programme started in 2024 and is planned to continue in 2026.

The in-house lawyers assisted an Irish charity helping children with life-long conditions through art to establish their charitable status. The lawyers reviewed key programme documentation, such as the programme's Terms of Service, online booking forms, and associated data-consent wording. They also provided feedback on making consent procedures clearer and more accessible.



Case Study 17:

Legal Support Securing International Protection and Family Reunification for a Palestinian Woman

A law firm has partnered with an Irish charity to represent individuals seeking international protection. An example of this collaboration relates to a Palestinian woman who sought international protection in Ireland after war broke out in Gaza. As the conflict escalated, it became impossible for her to return home. Her family house was destroyed by bombing, her relatives were displaced and on the move, and many of the friends she had grown up with did not survive. In Ireland, our team worked closely with her completing the required documentation and during her substantive interview at the International Protection Office.

Two months after her interview, the lawyers shared in her relief when the Minister granted her refugee status, securing her safety and giving her the stability to rebuild her life in Ireland. Their work did not end there: colleagues continue to advise her on a family reunification application so that she can seek to bring at risk family members to safety.

One lawyer advising on this matter noted, **“We often witness suffering around the world and find ourselves asking, ‘But what can I do?’ Pro bono work offers a meaningful way to step in and make a real difference, providing a lifeline to vulnerable people and creating tangible, lasting change in their lives.”**

Case Study 18 and 19:

Individual Solicitor: Focus on Human Rights Litigation

In 2025, a sole practitioner reported an impressive 230 pro bono hours under the Pledge. The solicitor undertook human rights litigation arising from the 2017 genocide of the Rohingya people in Myanmar.

The practitioner has also assisted an Irish charity on a complaint against a prominent tech company for unlawful data processing on behalf of Israeli Defence Forces in connection with its Gaza offensive, and has reviewed approximately 30 medical legal reports for an Irish NGO.

Regional Law Firm

A large regional law firm has provided training to charitable bodies on the implications of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 and EPAs (Enduring Power of Attorney).

The firm has also provided frontline assistance by supporting a confidential telephone clinic which helps women from minority backgrounds receive crisis support, access health and mental health services, understand legal procedures and prepare documents, and navigate the Irish social system.

Lastly, the firm assisted a charitable organisation with the purchase of a new community centre.

Case Study 20:

Examples of Pro Bono Work Undertaken by Barristers Reporting under the Pro Bono Pledge

- A family law barrister described drafting guardianship applications, conducting pre-hearing consultations, and attending District Court hearings, as well as negotiating and drafting divorce settlements successfully settled in court.
- A barrister provided pro bono advice to an NGO on whether the State's changes to accommodation for people arriving from Ukraine under the Temporary Protection regime are compatible with the duty in Article 13 of Directive 2001/55/EC to ensure access to suitable accommodation or, if necessary, the means to obtain housing.
- A barrister acted in public interest litigation against an Irish regulator which approved bonds issued by the State of Israel. The work included advice, consultations with the client, drafting proceedings, and multiple court appearances.

The data contained herein has been provided by the pro bono practitioners that reported. It is unverified by PILA and PILA takes no responsibility for the accuracy hereof.



