

Pro Bono Week: a guide for law firms

UK Pro Bono Week (PBW) is an annual celebration that through events and comms provides an opportunity to recognise, showcase and discuss the voluntary contribution made by the legal profession in giving free legal assistance to those in need. The 23rd annual celebration will take place from 4 to 8 November 2024, and this year's theme is “**The Power of Pro Bono**” with the following subtopics:

1. **Barred from justice** – the powerful, everyday stories of the impact of lawyers and law students who give their time to protect the rights of those most disadvantaged in society.
2. **Embedding pro bono in your organisation and career** – placing pro bono at the heart of everyone's practice and hearing from those at the forefront of establishing business structures for pro bono within law firms, chambers, in house, universities and charities.
3. **How technology can enhance access to justice** – existing and new tools to ensure pro bono is innovative and effective.

About this document

This document aims to inspire and equip you with initiatives to promote and raise awareness of Pro Bono Week within your firm, offering tailored advice based on your firm's size/time available. For small firms or if you're short on time, we provide straightforward, impactful event ideas requiring minimal effort, outlined in the 'Small Firms' section. Medium-sized firms, likely with a small team or dedicated pro bono representative, can find proven strategies to bolster their pro bono activities. Meanwhile, larger firms with established pro bono practices are offered comprehensive event ideas to further enhance their efforts. We hope every firm regardless of its resources or the maturity of its pro bono practice will find this a valuable guide.

Five Top Tips For All

1. Work with your internal and external communications teams/leads to support you with raising awareness of events/initiatives available.
2. Where possible, schedule business-as-usual events/training/workshops during the week and use [Pro Bono Week media resources](#) to promote the event.
3. Prepare communications in advance and use AI to support with drafting.
4. Promote external events to your firm and encourage your people to attend.
5. Communicate with your firm regularly in the leadup to Pro Bono Week and include a countdown.

Small Firms/Short on time

- **Social media:** Use your firm's social media channel to highlight the importance of pro bono work and share success stories. Media resources such as logos are available on the [PBW website](#).

- **Comms team collaboration:** Work with the communications team to add a news article link or landing page link to PBW on your firm's landing page.
- **Create a pro bono Teams group:** Set up a Teams group where all one off pro bono opportunities and initiatives are advertised. Use your firm's internal communications channels to advertise the Team.
- **Lunch and learn:** Host a 30 min lunchtime session where an experienced pro bono lawyer shares their experiences and insights.

Medium Firms/Those with a little more time

- **Set up a pro bono working group/committee:** Launch the committee/host the first meeting during Pro Bono Week.
- **Publish a firm-wide news article** reflecting on PBW, featuring videos, pro bono stories, data, achievements, targets, progress, and extending gratitude to volunteers and pro bono winners.
- **Workshops and training:** Offer workshops on specific areas of pro bono work, such as immigration law or housing rights. If you have a new project launching or updates to training for existing projects consider scheduling the training during pro bono week.
- **Pro bono leaderboards:** Use your firm's communication channels to share departmental leaderboards showcasing the top performing departments across the firm. One idea is to show the leaderboards on lock screens.
- **Share your pro bono story:** Ask pro bono volunteers across your organisation to write a message on why they are involved in pro bono work or share their thoughts on the current pro bono week themes. Add these stories to a PowerPoint presentation and ask your Digital team to display them on office TV screens to inspire others, or post them on your firm intranet.
- **Lunch and learn:** Host a 45-minute session on pro bono, going back to basics for new volunteers to understand what pro bono is and its importance. Discuss your firm's responsible business strategy, the significance of pro bono within your organisation, and ways volunteers can actively contribute to your organisation's programmes. Create a sign-up form for attendees to volunteer for projects at the end of the session.
- **Create a dedicated page for pro bono on your firm's intranet:** Launch the page during Pro Bono Week. Your page could outline the following points:
 - What is pro bono?
 - Why should you get involved?
 - Who can get involved?
 - What pro bono work can I get involved in?
 - Who should I contact if I want to know more?
- **Other suggestions include:** Create a clickable link directed to a pro bono Teams channel to share opportunities and promote events. Showcase pro bono programmes and legal clinics that your organisation supports. Add a section for good news stories and case studies to inspire volunteers to get involved. Create an FAQ section to save your inbox. Add a section on onboarding pro bono clients/matters and how volunteers can record their time with relevant time recording codes.

Large Firms/Time intensive

- **Pro bono summit/roundtable:** Host a summit bringing together pro bono leaders, clients, and community partners to discuss challenges and opportunities in pro bono work with the goal of creating a list of achievable, practical goals for the following year
- **Pro bono clinics/projects:** Aim to schedule the training/launch of new clinics or projects during Pro Bono Week.
- **Recognition:** Share top ten lawyers on LinkedIn to help raise their profile and raise awareness of Pro Bono Week. Work with your finance team to select the top time recorders in pro bono.
- **Mentorship programmes:** Create a mentorship programme where experienced pro bono lawyers can guide and support junior staff in their pro bono efforts. Launch the programme during Pro Bono Week.
- **Pro bono video series:** Interview volunteers and create short clips focusing on what people/clients get out of pro bono work. For example:
 - Why do you do pro bono?
 - Give an example that you've seen of 'the Power of Pro Bono'
 - What are some myths you'd like to bust about doing pro bono work?
- **Events calendar:** Add pro bono events to your firm's events calendar, including external events (where appropriate).
- **Pro bono video:** Team up with your Digital/Creative team to produce a video introducing Pro Bono Week, establishing a connection between PBW and your organisation's CSR strategy, while aligning with PBW themes.
- **Roadshow:** Organise a pro bono roadshow, where the firm's pro bono representatives visit each office to discuss pro bono programmes. The roadshows can feature discussions led by pro bono key contacts, pro bono partners, and pro bono relationship managers. This strategic communication approach ensures that stakeholders understand the purpose, value, and outcomes of your organisation's CSR efforts, reinforcing your firm's commitment to social responsibility and positive community impact. This is an excellent opportunity for new volunteers to explore your firm's programmes, understand how to participate, and have their questions addressed.
- **Pro bono fair:** Organise a fair where your firm's pro bono clients (NGOs/Charities) various pro bono organisations can present their work and opportunities for involvement. This is best hosted over a lunchtime in an area with high footfall such as the canteen.
- **Recognition awards:** Establish pro bono awards to recognise and celebrate the contributions of staff members who have excelled in pro bono work. Ask people to nominate a colleague actively involved in pro bono work, potentially using a MS Form. For example, "*Nominate your colleague for a Pro Bono Award!* [insert MS form link]. *Five awards, each offering a £x e-voucher of their choice, will be given out – one for each day of Pro Bono Week. Submit your entries by X date.*"
 - Example nomination form questions:
 - **Q1:** Name of the colleague you are nominating:
 - **Q2:** Office location of the colleague (if applicable):

- **Q3:** Why are you nominating this person? Please provide specific reasons and examples.
 - **Q4:** How has this colleague's pro bono work made an impact on the community or clients they have served?
 - **Q5:** How has this colleague's pro bono work influenced or inspired others within the firm?
 - **Q6:** Is there anything else you would like to add about the nominee's pro bono efforts?
- o Share this form in October to allow a few weeks for employees to send in their nominations. Send this to your pro bono key contacts within the firm or reach out to your communication team to see if they can support you with targeted messages to certain populations within your firm.
 - o Each week leading up to the deadline, post on your firm's intranet pages or create a slide with a QR code if you have digital screens set up. Encourage nominations and ask your pro bono key contacts to help spread the word across different teams.
 - o Review nominations with your respective team and pro bono heads to select standout nominees. Announce a winner each day of Pro Bono Week via the Exchange.

Other ideas?

The Pro Bono Week website also provides event ideas and tips so we recommend [taking a look](#) for inspiration.

If you have any additional ideas that we could add to this guide, please [let us know!](#)

With thanks to Georgina Dennis and Jessica Duxbury for kindly producing this guide.