

Pro Bono In Action: A Decade of Service - 2025 UK Pro Bono Week

News

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Across the UK, vulnerable children face hard decisions without a voice, homeless individuals lack pathways to opportunity, and charities protecting the most at-risk navigate complex legal challenges alone. For the lawyers at Jenner & Block's London office, meeting these needs isn't optional - it's fundamental to who we are.

As we mark UK Pro Bono Week, Jenner & Block's London office celebrates a milestone: 10 years of 'Pro Bono In Action.'

The London office has built a robust portfolio of UK-focused pro bono work over the past decade, including supporting migrant workers, handling disability appeals, and taking on asylum cases. We've also partnered with organisations such as Coram, Homeless World Cup Foundation, and SHiFT that give voice to the vulnerable.

The work highlighted this week represents just a fraction of what our London lawyers do every day. Defined by fearless, client-centred advocacy, our longstanding commitment to pro bono service is vital to who we are both as lawyers and people.

Giving Children a Voice: Representing Coram at UK COVID-19 Inquiry

This year, Jenner & Block's London office represented Coram pro bono at the UK COVID-19 Inquiry, enabling the charity to contribute critical evidence on how children were affected by decisions such as school closures, lockdowns, and the loosening of regulations for the safeguarding of vulnerable children. In particular, we supported Coram's CEO to give testimony at the inquiry hearings, which also heard oral evidence from a range of prominent figures, including former Prime Minister Boris Johnson and former Education Secretary Sir Gavin Williamson.

Without Jenner & Block's pro bono representation, Coram would not have been able to participate in the Inquiry. The work is a case study in how specialist legal proficiency can be deployed to give a voice to those whose views may otherwise go unheard.

Special Counsel Will Jones, Partner Joanna Ludlam, and Associate Joshua Kell led the Jenner & Block team representing Coram. They were supported by Partner Ed Davis, Special Counsel Clare Hennessey, Associates Florence Sandberg, Connor Gray, and Jonathan Cowe, and Senior Paralegal James Shaw, who provided invaluable assistance on the review of the large body of written evidence disclosed by the Inquiry ahead of the hearings.

Supporting Global Impact: A Decade of Partnership with Homeless World Cup Foundation

For a decade, Jenner & Block's London office has provided comprehensive legal support to the Homeless World Cup Foundation (HWCF), a charitable organisation that runs an annual street soccer tournament bringing together homeless men and women from around the world to compete for the Homeless World Cup.

Since shortly after the inaugural 2003 tournament, Of Counsel John Runeckles has served as legal advisor to HWCF, initially helping develop tournament agreements for the 2004 Sweden event and negotiating a crucial license with FIFA to use the "World Cup" trademark in connection with the tournaments. Between 2008 and 2009, John negotiated a film production contract with Blueprint Pictures for a fictionalised movie about the tournament, which after years in development was ultimately funded by Netflix and released in March 2024 as "The Beautiful Game," bringing significant new visibility to HWCF's mission.

Following the film's premiere, which John attended alongside the cast including Bill Nighy, FIFA's leadership expressed renewed interest in supporting the tournament, leading to John's most recent work advising HWCF on a landmark cooperation agreement with FIFA signed during the 2024 Paris Olympics, including a new trademark arrangement that strengthens the partnership between these organisations and supports the continued growth of a tournament that now features more than 450 players from nearly 40 nations.

Protecting Charitable Missions: Securing Trademark Rights for Vulnerable Children's Advocate

Jenner & Block's London office provided comprehensive trademark protection services to SHiFT, a UK charity dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable children at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and involvement in the criminal justice system.

Our pro bono assistance included securing the initial registration of SHiFT's name and distinctive logo with the UK Intellectual Property Office in 2022, establishing their intellectual property rights for education and training services. When a Saudi Arabian company subsequently filed an application for a confusingly similar logo that threatened SHiFT's trademark rights, we successfully opposed the application through proceedings before the Trade Mark Registry. In 2024, the Registry ruled in SHiFT's favour, protecting the charity's brand identity and awarding costs in their favour, which ensured SHiFT could maintain exclusive use of its trademark and continue its vital work

providing employment skills, life skills, parenting programmes, and education and literacy training to vulnerable UK children without brand confusion in the marketplace.

The team included Christine Braamskamp and John Runeckles.

Related Locations

London

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