

SPOTLIGHT ON: PRO BONO WEEK 2022

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ROSS BEATON



advocate



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THE PRO BONO
CHALLENGE

advocate

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For #Probonoweek2022, Chambers speaks to Ross Beaton about the importance of barristers getting involved with pro bono.





Why do pro bono?



Like a lot of barristers, one of my key motivations for coming into the profession was wanting to help people. Devoting a proportion of my time to pro bono work is an obvious way of doing that. It can also be a good opportunity to stretch myself in an area of law or a type of hearing which is slightly outside my day-to-day practice.

Pro bono work can be a great opportunity to connect with people across the profession as well.





Tell us about your recent pro bono cases



This year I worked on two fairly sizeable cases and then became a reviewer for Advocate.

Case one was a complicated weeklong discrimination case in the Employment Tribunal. The Claimant alleged race discrimination by his employer against himself and another colleague. The case had been going on for several years before I got involved. With the help of a team of specialist solicitors working through Pro Bono Connect, we worked to get the huge volume of documents which the case had generated in good order, make sure that the issues were properly defined, and present the strongest possible case to the Tribunal.





Tell us about your recent pro bono cases



Case two was an appeal arising from a personal injury case with a complicated procedural history. The case had been handled by multiple different solicitors and was then struck out on procedural grounds. When the Court of Appeal then effectively changed the law in a similar case, the Claimant sought to mount an appeal herself to have her case reinstated. I came on board to help her focus the key arguments for the appeal hearing. While the hearing ultimately didn't go ahead, it was satisfying to be able to assist someone who had previously been struggling with complex legal arguments with no representation.





Tell us about your role reviewing cases for Advocate



This is a new role I have taken on this year which involves looking at cases where litigants are applying for pro bono representation from volunteer barristers. There are always more people wanting help than can be provided with it so my role involves using my professional experience, usually focusing on inquests and personal injury matters, to triage the requests for help, applying Advocate's criteria, and either identify what help should be authorised or give an explanation as to why help isn't available.