**XX Law School Clinic**

**Information for clients**

**This document describes what the XX Law School Clinic is and sets out the rights and responsibilities that apply to the services offered. Please read the following carefully and if you have any questions or concerns please contact us.**

1. **Our service**

We offer a confidential and professional legal advice service. Student advisors, who are studying law at the University, will interview you and find out what your concerns are. They will then discuss your case, in confidence, with their supervisor to see if we can help you. If we can the students will look into your case and, after consulting with professionally qualified lawyers, advise you of your position and what you may be able to do. If we cannot you will be told a soon as possible with the reason why.

The Clinic provides an opportunity for the students to gain experience and apply their knowledge and skills in a practical setting. At the same time it offers free help, focusing on areas of law where people may find it difficult to find or otherwise afford legal services.

We also work closely with other lawyers in the area to make sure that what we do complements rather than competes with their work. Everything that the Clinic does is overseen by an experienced solicitor. We aim to hit the high standards required of any solicitors’ practice.

We may not be able to assist in every case but if we can, we will. It is important to note that the Clinic is, initially, advice-only. We are unable to take cases beyond this advice unless we specifically confirm, in writing, that we can. If having read the advice you wish to ask us to do more for you we will consider it but cannot at this stage guarantee doing so. If we cannot we will however try to refer you to other possible sources of help if you wish us to do so.

1. **Confidentiality and our Data Protection statement**

In order to provide you with our services the York Law School Clinic may need to ask you for information, including “sensitive” and personal details.

**Your right to withhold information.** You do not need to provide us with any information if you do not want to, although we may be limited in the help we can give if you do not. Any information you give us, or which someone else gives us on your behalf, will only be used as set out below. It sets out certain circumstances, including in relation to money laundering, terrorist activities and disclosures of abuse, in which we may breach confidentiality without your agreement.

**We may share or use the information you provide**:

1. **Within the Clinic.** The information will be used in order to provide you with our services. This includes our internal arrangements to provide support and supervision to our staff and students
2. **To carry out conflict of interests checks.** We are required to check that no conflict of interests arises between your interests and that of any other client we may be acting for. Instructing us **you therefore consent to us checking records to prevent such a conflict arising**
3. **To contact other organisations on your behalf.** The information you give us will only be used to contact other organisations on your behalf if you give us permission to do so.
4. **With our suppliers.** We may use other organisations to supply goods and services for us. For example, we sometimes use costing services, bookkeepers and accountants. These people need enough information from you, on a confidential basis, to supply goods and services
5. **With XX Law School management.** The Law School’s senior management is ultimately responsible for running the Clinic and may need to know about our cases. If they do they will respect the confidentiality of your case.

In all other respects we will not share information about you or your case without your express consent.

1. **Professional indemnity insurance**

If you think that the Clinic has delivered a service that falls below the professional standard expected of solicitors you may use our complaints procedure and if necessary report us as set out in section E below. The University carries insurance to ensure that if we do carry out work that falls below the expected standard compensation may be payable. This is called professional indemnity cover and our policy is held with: XX. Their address is: XX. Our policy number is: XX. The cover is for up to £10,000,000 in respect of any one claim and applies in respect of any claim that arises in England and Wales. If we do fall short of the expected standard we are obliged to advise you of this and of your rights to complain and seek advice and possible compensation.

1. **The Code of Conduct regulating solicitors**

The solicitors working in the Clinic regulated by the Solicitors’ Regulation Authority (SRA) and are treated for professional practice purposes as an in-house legal practice within the University of York. This means that we must ensure that we meet all of the relevant standards about managing a law office, conducting our casework professionally and otherwise looking after our clients. If you would like to see what these rules are in detail you can do so by visiting the SRA website at: [www.sra.org.uk](http://www.sra.org.uk) and clicking on ‘SRA Handbook’ and ‘Code of Conduct’. The rules are set out in the Code.

1. **Our equality and diversity policy**

The University and the Clinic is committed to equality of opportunity as a provider, a purchaser of services and and/or an employer. If you feel that we have been unfair because of your race, gender, sexual practice, disability, religion, age, your health, your appearance or your preferred lifestyle or anything else, then we need to know. The Clinic however reserves the right to withhold or withdraw services from you if your behaviour towards others prompts a complaint against you (which is upheld) under this policy.

The Clinic believes that a quality service can only be achieved where organisations are actively committed to being challenged on the shortfalls in their services and to bringing about change. The Clinic and the University is proud of the rich diversity that the communities and people of the region bring to our daily experiences. We are committed to complying with our legal duties under relevant anti-discrimination legislation, but our commitment goes beyond our duties under this legislation, and is not limited to those groups protected by this legislation. A copy of our full equality and diversity policy is available on request.

1. **How to complain: our complaints procedure**

We welcome feedback about any aspect of our service. We use all feedback, positive or negative, to review our service and where appropriate provide you with redress. If you wish to complain, your complaint does not need to be in writing. However, it does need to be a formal expression of dissatisfaction with our service, so please be clear if you want to make a formal complaint.

**The first stage – informal resolution:** You should normally try to resolve your complaint with the Clinic’s Director. Whether or not that leads to a satisfactory solution, a record will be maintained of your concerns and our response. You will be informed in writing, enabling you to take the matter further if you wish.

**The second stage – formal investigation:** If you are still unhappy you should contact the Head of the Law School, who has ultimate responsibility within the Law School for complaints. He/she will carry out an investigation, which may involve inviting representations from all concerned including you, and he/she will compile and provide a report including conclusions and a proposed way forward. If he/she is the subject of the complaint, or if you remain dissatisfied, you may proceed to:

**The external stage:** You may take the matter further by complaint to: The Legal Ombudsman. The website is: <http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/consumer>

The telephone number is: 0300 555 0333. You can e-mail: [enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk).

1. **What we expect from you**

As our client we expect you to be co-operative, frank and truthful about all aspects of your case, to tell us as soon as possible about any changes in your circumstances as they affect your case and to follow our Equal Opportunities statement.

1. **Who pays for our services?**

The Clinic does not charge clients for the work it does for them. We are funded by the University of XX and by grants and other donations. In some cases we may be awarded costs by the courts or tribunals in which case these are used to help fund our services. We are part of a registered charity and are non-profit making.

Whilst we do not charge you we may need to advise you of the possibility of applying for Legal Aid to cover costs and any associated expenses.

If you are granted Legal Aid you may have to pay a contribution towards the costs if your income or other assets are above a certain level. Also if you are granted Legal Aid and win your case and get compensation (or preserve property) the Legal Aid authority may reclaim some or all of the compensation or property. If you lose your case you could be ordered to pay the costs of your opponent although this is very unlikely if you are legally aided.

It is possible to take out insurance against this risk. We will advise you about all of these things as and when necessary.

Given the limited nature of our service we reserve the right not to act for you at any point although we would always explain why and if we are unable to act for you we will try to find someone else who can.

1. **More details about who we are:**

**We (the University of XX) are a company established by Royal Charter. –** our number is: RC XX. Our registered office is XX. We are also registered under the same name for data protection purposes.

**We are a registered charity established for educational purposes –** thecharity number: XX.

**We are registered for VAT –** the registration number is**: XX**.

If you wish to contact the XXLaw School Clinic please write, fax, telephone or e-mail:

**XX**

**Solicitor**

**Director of Clinical Programmes**

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

## I confirm that I agree to XX Law School Clinic handling my case on the basis described in this document.

**Signed...................................................................**

**Dated...................................................................**