



OPEN JUSTICE CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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OVERVIEW

Open Justice leverages the expertise of The OU Law School for the public benefit. Over the past academic year we have experimented with a range of online and offline projects which draw on the enthusiasm, commitment and professionalism of our students and academics in a variety of ways, but which all seek to reimagine the social justice mission that was at the heart of The Open University's founding vision a little over 50 years ago.

Our work has continued to capture the interest and imagination of the sector and has once again attracted a number of award nominations. The Centre has been the subject of increasing attention, as other university law schools attempt to meet the challenge of continuing to deliver clinical legal education during a pandemic. Our webinar in May 2020, 'Taking clinical legal education online', attracted legal academics from across the globe. This, along with a range of peer-reviewed research outputs, is indicative of the currency and relevance of our work, which aims to realise the potential of digital technologies to deliver high-quality legal education experiences for students while also providing meaningful pro bono legal support for the public.

We remain grateful for the support of the Faculty of Business and Law at The Open University and to our growing list of external partners including, but not limited to, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Support Through Court, Citizens Advice, the Freedom Law Clinic, St Giles Trust, HMP Altcourse, JustRights Scotland, Young Citizens, Inverclyde Advice Centre as well as our school partners across the UK.

Thank you for taking the time to read our annual update on the progress of the Open Justice Centre.



Hugh McFaul
Director



Francine Ryan
Director

A FOUR NATIONS APPROACH

The Open Justice Centre is unique in being able to engage with communities across the four nations of the United Kingdom. The majority of our students are based in England, but a healthy proportion of our student base is drawn from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which has allowed us, with the support of the OU national offices, to develop a range of localised initiatives. This has included public legal education events in Belfast, school-based workshops in Scotland and prison-based engagements in Wales. This is in addition to our online work on policy issues, legal advice and public legal education which reaches across national boundaries.



Open Justice Team in Edinburgh



Open Justice Team in Belfast with colleagues from the Northern Ireland office

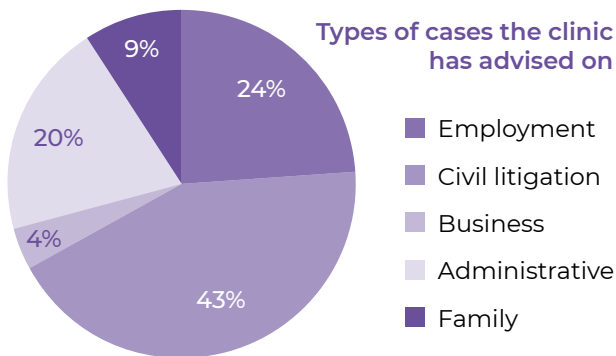
We remain committed to developing opportunities for students across the four nations and are actively seeking opportunities to further develop our portfolio of projects both nationally and internationally in the coming year.

OPEN JUSTICE CENTRE ACTIVITIES AND 2019/2020 UPDATES

Open Justice Law Clinic

The award-winning Open Justice Law Clinic provides free, professional-standard legal advice to members of the public on a variety of different areas of law. The clinic is the result of a successful collaboration between students, ALs, supervising solicitors and academics which has created a unique online, student-led service.

This year we have expanded our areas of advice to include family law, wills and benefits. Since July 2019, we have provided detailed legal advice on 46 cases, and signposted over 150 cases. Since the clinic began in late 2017 it has provided the equivalent of £230,400 worth of free legal advice.



Francine Ryan, Liz Hardie and students at Rawtenstall January 2020

In addition to our virtual law clinic we also ran a pop-up law clinic in Rawtenstall, Lancashire. We delivered this service in partnership with Lancaster University, Rawtenstall Social Justice Centre and MP, Jake Berry. We saw 18 clients and provided advice on welfare benefits, employment, consumer and family law issues. Jake Berry visited the clinic and talked to the students about the value of pro bono legal work and supporting communities. We are continuing to develop links with MPs and hope to replicate the pop-up clinic project in other parts of the country. Although COVID-19 has meant we have been unable to continue with our pop-up clinics, the virtual law clinic has been able to increase its capacity to support clients during the pandemic. We are seeing a rise in employment and family cases. We have been particularly busy during the pandemic supporting other law clinics to transition to online delivery.



I'm incredibly happy with the service I received from the Open Justice Law Clinic; they dealt with my case professionally, communicated well and I'm very grateful for the advice they gave. Their guidance really helped in a time of hardship where I otherwise would have had no access to legal advice. Their work and mission are admirable.

Client feedback



Prison PLE projects

Our prison projects are just one strand of the public legal education (PLE) service provided by the Open Justice Centre. Five prison projects ran from January to March 2020 across England and Wales, for prison peer advisers trained by St Giles Trust. A sixth project which ran at the same time was for ex-prisoners working within St Giles Trust. In all, around 35 law students took part across the six projects.

Five projects in partnership with St Giles Trust

In 2020 these projects took place at: HMP Leicester, HMP Wandsworth, HMP High Down, HMP Send and St Giles Peer Hub in Cardiff.



Tutor Kate Ritchie (L), Piero Izzolino from St Giles Trust (4th from L) and students at HMP High Down, March 2020)

Each project provided law seminars for prisoner and ex-prisoner peer advisers trained by St Giles Trust. The peer advisers chose the subjects, which have included: family law; sentences of imprisonment for public protection; release on temporary licence; deportation; and legal issues around employment after prison. Students develop resources, seminar activities and give interactive presentations on the chosen subjects. One project was successfully completed but the other four unfortunately had their final seminar cancelled during the first week of lockdown.

These prison projects were finalists in the LawWorks Pro Bono Awards 2019 in the 'Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership' category.

HMP Altcourse prison radio project



Keren Lloyd Bright, prison project lead (L), students and Paul Dale, tutor (R) at HMP Altcourse March 2020

This project has now been running for three successive years. Internally, the prison's education department has named the project 'The Legal Eagles'. Prisoners pose general legal questions during a tour of the prison. The students then record a radio show called 'Castaway' which is broadcast on prison radio. It takes a 'Desert Island Discs' style format, with student presentations, a Q&A and a piece of music chosen by each student. This project was completed the week before lockdown began. Unfortunately, two of the five students could not take part in the final programme this year because they were self-isolating.

In November 2019 our prison radio project at HMP Altcourse was featured on the BBC Radio 4 programme 'Law in Action'. Recent graduate Sarah Couling, from the previous cohort of students visiting the prison, talked about her experience of taking part in the project and Hugh McFaul discussed how prisoners study with The Open University in general.



Sarah and Hugh are shown with BBC journalist and programme host Joshua Rozenberg, who is holding a copy of the Open Justice Centre's Annual Report 2019, outside HMP Altcourse

Street Law in Schools

The Open Justice Centre and the Open University Law Society paired up in November 2019 to launch a new Street Law project.

The project offers PLE 'Street Law' workshops in secondary schools and community groups with the aim of promoting a greater understanding of law and legal issues. Through the interactive workshops involving a range of activities, audiences engage on legal issues that are of particular relevance to them.

Although the project got off to a promising start with over 12 student groups busy preparing sessions, the timing coincided with the COVID-19 outbreak and in the end only three groups went ahead. One took place in Scotland at Whitburn Academy in Stirling, one at Glenmoor and Winton Academies in Bournemouth, and one with Milton Keynes Police Cadets.

At Whitburn Academy, Kirsty and Sonata delivered a session to promote interest and an understanding of criminal law in Scotland, flag up issues with knife crime as it affects the pupils and discuss awareness of the study of law as a university subject and the role of a solicitor.



Students Sonata Arlauskaite and Kirsty Calder at Whitburn Academy



Lauren Shanahan Smith, Natalie Healy and Sarah Mowlem at Glenmoor and Winton Academies

At Winton Academy, our students delivered an assembly to 150 girls then did workshops with all of them in groups of 30. Plans for the same activity in the boys' academy had to be postponed. In Milton Keynes our students presented to 15 cadets.

Student Lauren Shanahan Smith who was on the Glenmoor and Winton Academies project said:



When the Open Justice team put a call out for volunteers to run a workshop in a local secondary school I jumped at the opportunity. Being able to teach law to the younger generation is something I think is important. The school was great and incredibly accommodating. They picked two topics – consent, and social media and the law. Our workshop was designed for Year 9 students (13-14 year olds). We worked in a group and communicated regularly through the forum, had catch ups in the online rooms and a group WhatsApp. Over a few weeks we built a workshop that was going to run for 13 lessons and two assemblies, speaking to 300 students over four days. It was a fantastic opportunity and working hard pays off. It takes up time but it's all worth it. Sadly, the virus cut short our workshops, but we will be back to the school at the earliest possible opportunity.



We hope to resume our Street Law activities in the early part of 2021.

Online Public Legal Education

Young Citizens



We were invited to undertake a brief on behalf of the Young Citizens charity where we revised and updated its 'SmartLaw' resources. As part of that, our students also created factsheets relating to the areas of law they were supporting on. The group looked at the emergence of social media and how the way people communicate is affected and covered by Law in England and Wales. This project covers important areas such as cyberbullying, defamation, and data protection.

Rights within the workplace

We received a brief from Inverclyde Advice and Employment Rights Centre to produce a handbook which outlines sources of support in the Central Belt of Scotland. This group also produced a handout relating to rights within the workplace.

Open Justice Policy Clinic



In the Open Justice Policy Clinic students work in small groups to provide legal and policy consultancy to a charity or organisation under the supervision of legal academics. Following a brief provided by the organisation, they research a specific area of law or issue and produce a report which the organisation can use in its policy and advocacy work.

In 2019-20 the students worked on a brief provided by JustRight Scotland, a human rights charity. In 2019 the Scottish Parliament brought forward the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Protection (Scotland) Bill, to strengthen and improve protection for women at risk of FGM in Scotland. The Open Justice Policy Clinic was asked by JustRight Scotland to produce a report on the draft bill and to provide policy recommendations to strengthen and improve protection in Scotland for victims of FGM. The report recommended better education in respect of FGM and enhanced protection for victims of FGM. The information provided will be used by the charity in its advocacy work.

More information about the Open Justice Policy Clinic's work with just Right Scotland can be found on our website:

<http://law-school.open.ac.uk/open-justice/open-justice-week>



Open University students join Freedom Law Clinic Race and Policing Forum project

Ten students from The Open University's Open Justice Centre are taking part in a [Freedom Law Clinic](#) project exploring race and policing in the UK and the USA.

The project has been launched following recent events in the USA, namely the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer and subsequent response. The incident inspired global debate and galvanised people worldwide who believe that the US justice system is racist.

2nd September 2020

Freedom Law Clinic

THE FREEDOM LAW CLINIC

The Freedom Law Clinic (FLC) is a not-for-profit company providing pro bono research and advice on appeals for people who have been convicted of very serious criminal offences but who are maintaining their innocence. Law students from eight UK law schools collaborate using the online platform Slack, to research grounds for criminal appeals. OU students have been appointed as case workers to mentor new students from other higher education institutions. Our students have valued the rare opportunity to engage in pro bono criminal work.

More information on the FLC is available here:

<http://freedomlawclinic.org/>

Over the summer, 20 Open University law students took part in two extra-curricular FLC projects with seven other universities.

In the first project, 10 students considered the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on civil liberties.

The students attended online seminars with leading speakers, to support them in creating a research paper looking in detail at the emergency legislation.

The research paper is expected to be published later in 2020 and will include examples of where the emergency legislation has been used, as well as testimonies from those affected by the law. It will be used to develop ways to help people who need support and to offer pro-bono legal advice to those who have been negatively impacted. Post-lockdown, the research will be used to lobby for changes to the law.

In the second project, 10 of our law students explored race and policing in the UK and USA. The project was launched following recent events in the USA, namely the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer and subsequent response.

The OU students compared the legal framework in the UK and USA and considered the historical parallels and important differences between the legal developments in both countries. After reading challenging materials and literature they were invited to form their own views on the issues and submit an essay. The student behind the best essay will be awarded with a £500 prize fund when the project concludes in September 2020.

Feedback we received from students concerning their experiences was positive.



Student Lisa Gamble (pictured left) said: "It was my first experience volunteering for a law clinic. I didn't know what to expect so everything was a new experience. It opened a door for me into civil liberties, something I

am now passionate about. I learned to work as part of a wider clinic team in allocating and delivering tasks that included reading and interpreting statute, writing a daily development diary (for 100 days), listening and contributing to debates and expert seminars, speaking to a protestor and making attendance notes on several occasions. I also attended a lot of webinars from Chambers. It has refreshed my interest and reminded me why I wanted to study law."

Lisa has since completed a second research programme with the FLC on Race and Policing and was invited to work with the clinic on a more permanent basis. Lisa is now a caseworker at the clinic and working on an international civil liberties research project.

Mediation



Our e-Mediation Project transfers traditional mediation training to an online environment. Students undergo training in online mediation skills including online training sessions, group work and individual work. They then have the opportunity to put these skills into practice by acting as co-mediators in two training-simulated mediations.

Our two trained mediator solicitors wrote and delivered three online training sessions and provided additional work for the students to complete between sessions, both individually and in small groups. This included the theory of

mediation, introductions to different mediation techniques, consideration of the differences in face-to-face and online mediation and the various skills needed to successfully complete a mediation.

In 2019-20 we trained 15 students who then successfully mediated two different scenarios, the last one involving other tutors and students who played the part of clients in an employment law dispute. The clients provided feedback on the students' work and this was overwhelmingly positive, as students put into practice the skills and techniques they had learnt during the project. All students brought their mediation to a successful conclusion which was agreed by both clients.

The training and experiences students received also prepared them well for the move to online communication following the COVID-19 lockdown, which occurred towards the end of the project. The skills they developed in online communication and conflict resolution will be of wider benefit to them going forward.

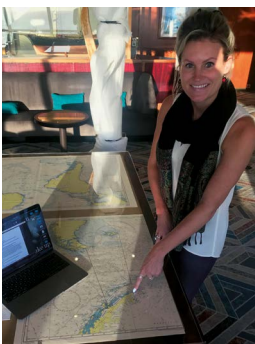
Digital Justice and technology



The team is committed to embedding our pedagogic practice across disciplines.

Our Digital Justice project was introduced in 2018-19 and involves collaboration with the OU's computing and learning technology departments.

Students have explored the challenges of exploiting technology to provide legal help and acquire technical and project management skills. This year we were the first English university to partner with Josef which is a world-class legal automation platform in Australia. Our students designed and developed chat bots that enable self-help in an area of family law. They can be accessed at the Digital Justice page of our website.



One of the strengths of this project is that our students can collaborate anywhere across world including from a ship bound for Antarctica!

Digital Justice student Lucy Pettinger studying from her base in Antarctica

Student feedback on the project has been very positive:



"The digital justice project was a very insightful practice on the work of translating legal instruments into the everyday language of the potential user of services. The project allowed me practice teamwork in the legal field. The support I received from the course mentors/instructors was very professional and courteous. I would recommend any law student goes through this experience."

Eily Kimmerling, Digital Justice student



"I would highly recommend this to future students as it is a great way to spice up your CV and also to widen your views on different sectors of law. Team leaders are amazing too, they were there to aid whenever we needed help as a group or individually. Overall, an amazing experience."

Kelsey Armoogum, Digital Justice student

We are delighted with the success of this project and we will be continuing to use Josef to engage more students in developing and designing chat bots.

Developing student professionalism

Providing opportunities to participate in pro bono activities is a means by which we assimilate our students into professional legal culture. For this reason, we have prioritised the development of a professional partnership relationship with our students. The execution of each project relies on students taking ownership of their project, in close collaboration with their tutors and the core team. We provide a set of clear aims in project handbooks which outline professional standards, training, safeguarding and levels of supervision and support expected. This includes fostering online skills to support the development of a culture of collaboration amongst dispersed teams.

St Giles Trust

We have developed a strong partnership with the St Giles Trust, a national charity with award-winning prison and ex-offender projects, to develop OU student-led prison-based projects. We have run projects with around 100 students serving prisoners in 11 prisons across England and Wales. Projects consist of between three and five half-day visits over a three-month period and have included legal research and guidance projects in collaboration with prison-based peer advisors, and an innovative prison radio project. Students taking part in Open Justice projects are encouraged to reflect on their experiences on the Open Justice Blog, which provides a public forum to raise the profile of our project in and beyond the University. Blog posts on the prison projects illustrate the impact of these opportunities on our students:



I began to look forward to each visit, not only to present the prisoners with the legal information they wanted, but to learn from them. I found their positive attitude infectious and I was pleasantly surprised at their legal knowledge and enthusiasm to acquire more.

“I was not expecting the prison project to benefit me in the way that it did. I feel privileged to have met the prisoners we worked with. I was also incredibly happy to discover at the final session that one of the prisoners who had been incarcerated for quite some time was finally able to access the professional legal help they required and was due to be released a few days later.”

**HMP High Down project student
Roseline Egbejimba**





Support Through Court

Support Through Court (STC) provides support for litigants in person, who are attending court without legal representation, helping them to navigate our complex civil and family legal systems. We are now in our third year of this partnership and are delighted that our students are continuing to make a positive contribution to the work of this important charity.

We recently collaborated with STC to launch a free open online resource for learners, themed around domestic abuse. Its timely launch coincides with the rapid rise in numbers of people in domestic abuse situations seeking help during the UK lockdown. The Open Justice Centre has produced the digital course to train STC's 750 volunteers to work with both survivors and alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse. Approximately one in 10 cases they work on involves domestic abuse.



According to Refuge, the number of calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline rose 25 per cent during the first two weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown period. Following media coverage, visits to the Refuge website increased by 700 per cent overnight and helpline calls increased by 120 per cent.

The online course's domestic abuse modules will make useful learning for anyone who is thinking of volunteering to work with domestic abuse charities, as well as STC's own volunteers. It has been made available to the public through OpenLearn Create and is totally free of charge. Learners can enrol at any time and work at their own pace.



This work was raised by Milton Keynes North MP Ben Everitt during oral questions to the Justice Secretary Robert Buckland MP (pictured above) in the House of Commons in July. It was referenced together with that of the Milton Keynes-based charity MK Act which offers domestic violence support.

Mr Buckland responded by saying: "I am delighted to hear of the excellent work done by those organisations in Milton Keynes ... I am aware of the collaborative work done between The Open University and Support Through Court. That work was funded, in part, by a Ministry of Justice grant."

We hope to continue this collaboration over the coming year.



Citizens Advice

Our students are continuing to volunteer with Citizens Advice (CA) and can use their experience towards the assessments in the W360 'Justice in action' module.

COVID-19 has affected the CA Witness Support Service this year but we are hoping that this can resume once it is safe to do so. We continue to liaise with the Employer Engagement team at The Open University and have recently assisted with a recruitment drive for CA where students can volunteer for the organisation but still work from home.

Mentoring scheme – UK Government Legal Profession

This year (2019-20) included the third iteration of the Open Justice professional mentoring project. A result of close collaboration with the OU Careers and Employer Engagement team, we have succeeded in developing a prestigious link with the UK Government Legal Profession which provides practising Government lawyers to mentor 10 competitively selected students over nine months. Sustained contact with UK Civil Service lawyers is an invaluable tool in raising our students' career aspirations.

United Nations



Hugh McFaul and Francine Ryan with colleagues from UNODC in Bandung, Indonesia 2020

The Open Justice Centre and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are continuing their partnership to deliver the Education for Justice (E4J) initiative. E4J has been developed to prevent crime and promote lawfulness – by supplying integrity and ethics education resources for schools, colleges and universities around the world.

The original certified five-hour online train-the-trainer course, launched in November 2019, introduces the core teaching methods, learning principles and ethical concepts that underpin the E4J Integrity and Ethics modules. UNODC has now asked us to update the course with additional material from the E4J anti-corruption modules. The update – which has just gone live in September 2020 – will also be translated into Spanish, further widening its appeal.

E4J is part of UNODC's Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration, which calls for the integration of crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider agenda of the United Nations. E4J is one of the Programme's four components, with the others being: judicial integrity; prisoner rehabilitation; and youth crime prevention through sports.

Sigall Horovitz, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer at UNODC, said:



The course is particularly appropriate in the current global circumstances, as an innovative distance learning tool which guides lecturers on integrating anti-corruption, integrity and ethics issues in their curricula as they move to a digital or blended teaching environment.



To find out more, visit <https://e4jlearning.org/>

LEARNING AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

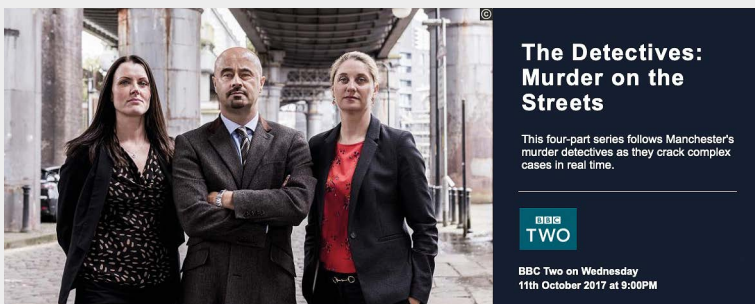
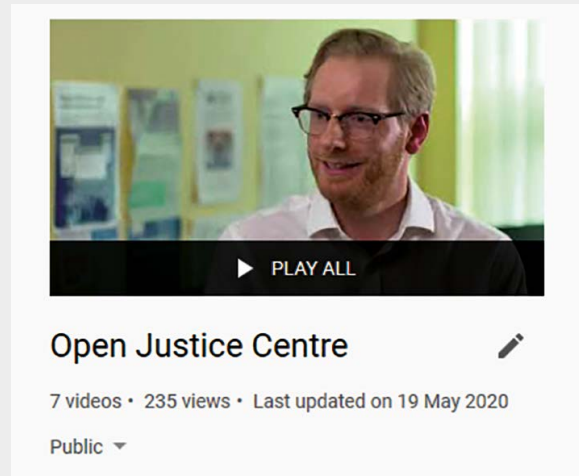
Video and YouTube resources

The Centre is continuing to expand its presence on the Law School's YouTube channel and we now have a dedicated playlist. Titled 'Open Justice Centre', it features videos about our student projects, messages from the centre directors and a recording of our 'Taking clinical legal education online' webinar.

OU and BBC Collaborations

Hugh McFaul and Francine Ryan have been appointed as Academic Advisors to *The Detectives*; a three-part BBC2 documentary following Greater Manchester Police as they tackle complex and organised crime. This is due to be broadcast early in 2021 and is an excellent opportunity to raise the public profile of the OU Law School and the Open Justice Centre.

Hugh was advisor for the previous series which reached millions of viewers who were invited to explore the legal issues raised in the series on OpenLearn, the OU's public platform.



W360: JUSTICE IN ACTION 2019/2020



W360: Justice in Action provides our Open Justice students with an opportunity to gain academic credit for participating in our pro bono projects. Since 2017 we have supported approximately 800 students through the module and related extracurricular projects. For 2019/20 the module was updated to provide more flexibility for students and to provide a greater emphasis on the development of online collaboration skills. During the module, students engage with topics of social justice, professional identity and legal ethics which help them contextualise their experience of engaging in pro bono work. Student numbers increased to 150 in 19/20 and we expect 183 students to be studying the module in 20/21.

Despite the disruption caused by the lockdown, our students performed very well and once again achieved the highest pass rates in the OU Law School. For 20/21 we have focused on offering online pro bono projects, until we can be sure that our face-to-face engagements can safely resume.

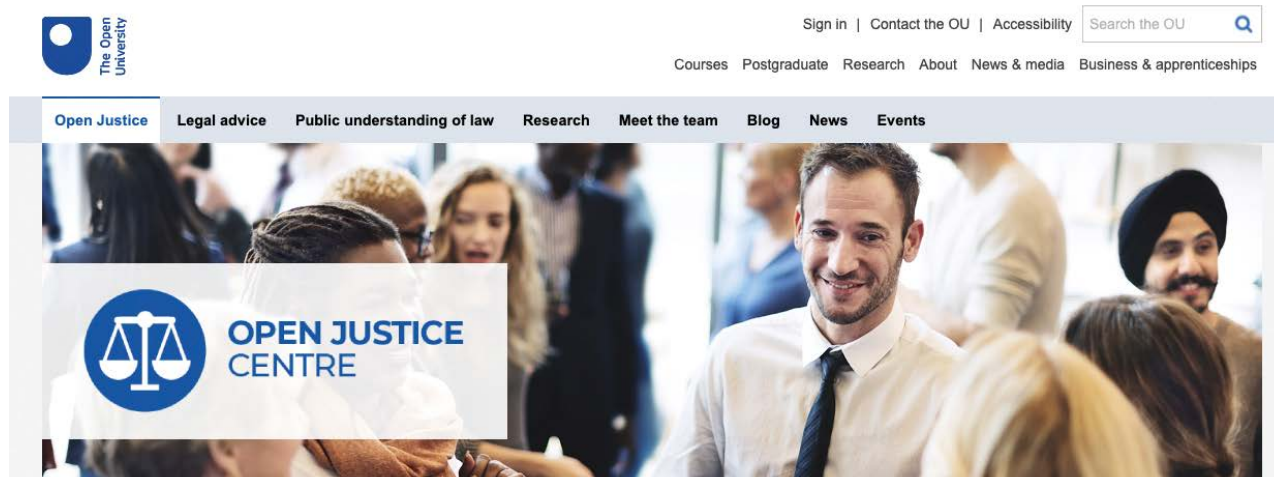
“

So far it has been the best module during these three years. I have been waiting for it since my first year and it is worth waiting and paying for. I am so grateful to Open Justice administration for letting me join prison radio project. It changed my life and me. My tutor was incredible, one of the best I had. Well done.

”

W360 19J Student Feedback

PUBLICITY, KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS



Open Justice Centre website open.ac.uk/open-justice

The Centre website is a source of updated information about our activities, public access to the online law clinic, knowledge exchange, events and news. Our new website (which is now independent from the main Law School site) went live in June 2020.

Between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020 there were 4,342 unique visitors to the site, 572 more than during the same period the previous year. Including return visits, the total rises to 5,825.

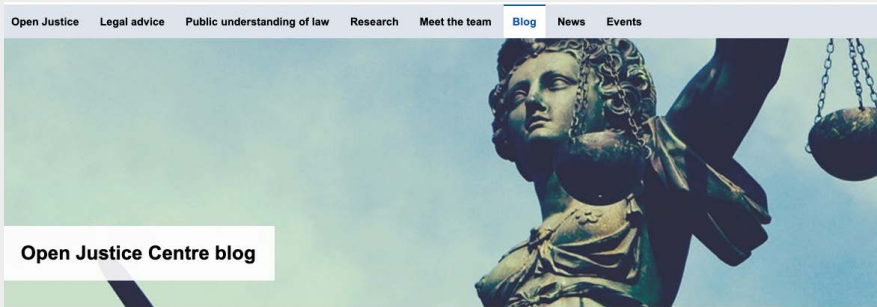
Some 47.4% of users typed our address directly or bookmarked us to find us, 43.2% used a search engine. 8.8% came from social networks and just under 1% accessed us through other websites.

The site was accessed by users in five geographic locations: the UK (85%); United States (5.4%); Finland (0.6%); Ireland (0.6%); and the Netherlands (0.6%).

The site was accessed by means of a variety of devices, 73% being 'unspecified' (most likely through a PC or Mac), 22% with an Apple iPhone, 3% with an Apple iPad and 2% with a Samsung Galaxy.

Most popular pages 2018/2019

Total visits	5,292
open justice the open university law school	3752
get legal advice the open university law school	1326
public legal education the open university law school	738
news and events the open university law school	440
open justice law clinic – online form the open university law school	421
meet the open justice team the open university law school	408
open justice week 2019 the open university law school	313
open justice week 2020 the open university law school	282
open justice research the open university law school	152
frequently asked questions the open university law school	106
becoming a client the open university law school	75
open justice week 2018 the open university law school	18



The Open Justice Blog open.ac.uk/blogs/openjustice

The Open Justice Blog is where students, alumni, team members, wider OU staff in associated areas of the University (and anyone that wishes to apply) can publish writing that is accessible to the public. The Blog was incorporated into our new website in spring 2020 and visitors now have the option to sign up for a monthly newsletter that details the recent blog posts.

We published 25 blog pieces from July 2019 to July 2020, below is a screen shot of a popular post.

Technology – helping or hindering victim-survivors of domestic abuse?

In this latest blog post 'Digital Justice' student Heather Gordon looks at the role technology plays in domestic abuse issues.

Domestic abuse cases have soared during the Covid 19 crisis, with many victims increasingly isolated and perpetrators exploiting lockdown rules [1]. Present difficulties in securing access to traditional avenues of support and legal relief, mean the Government must consider alternative methods and procedural changes to best safeguard

Twitter account report

Between June 2019 and August 2020, we gained 285 new followers taking us to over 1,000 followers. We are delighted with this progress.



This year we continued to concentrate our efforts on promoting our events, student activities, webinars, news coverage and blog posts which resulted in more than double the amount of visits to our Twitter page than we had during the previous year.

The busiest period traffic wise was between November 2019 and May 2020 when we had 1,804 visits and 102,686 'impressions' (the number of times a tweet showed up in somebody's timeline).

Our student visits to prisons and the Rawtenstall pop-up clinics provided us with some popular tweets as well as Open Justice

Week. Our most viewed tweet was about the Support Through Court domestic violence course which was mentioned in the Houses of Parliament in July 2020.

Top mention earned 196 engagements



How's this for a study space?! 😊

From her base in Antarctica, @OU_OpenJustice 'Justice in action' student @lucypettinger is currently studying for her law degree AND volunteering on our Digital Justice project.

#JusticeWeek2020
pic.twitter.com/rmD5YcCho1



Top media Tweet earned 2,093 impressions

The Open Justice team have collaborated with @SupportTCourt to launch a free open online resource for learners, themed around domestic abuse. To view the course details, visit open.edu/openlearncreate... pic.twitter.com/qqodhW2d94

Course **Support Through Court: Domestic Abuse**



Top Tweet earned 2,082 impressions

Great to see students from The @OpenUniversity and @LancasterUni working together at the first pop up law clinic at Rawtenstall Unitarian church supported by the Office of Jake Berry, MP for Rossendale and Darwen. @JakeBerry lancaster.ac.uk/law/rawtenstallunitarians.org pic.twitter.com/Ev8CEm1aVa



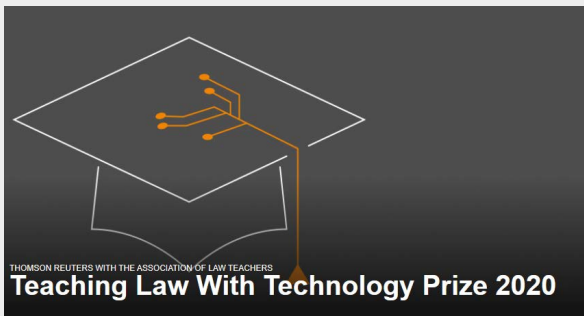
AWARDS SHORTLISTS

NOMINATIONS IN 2019/2020

Open Justice was shortlisted with St Giles Trust for 'Most Effective Pro Bono Partnership' at the 2019 Annual Law Works Pro Bono Awards in recognition of our prison project collaborations.



W360 tutors Paul Dale and Kate Ritchie with colleagues from St Giles Trust at the award ceremony in December 2019



Open Justice was shortlisted for the prestigious Thomson-Reuters Teaching Law with Technology Prize 2020.



Francine Ryan, Co-Director of the Open Justice Centre, has been nominated for a prestigious Law Teacher of the Year Award. Sponsored by Oxford University

Press (OUP), the Award is designed to recognise exceptional teachers in the legal field. Francine is one of six shortlisted.

The winner was due to be announced at the OUP Annual Celebrating Excellence in Law Teaching (CELT) Conference, but this has been postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.



The Co-Director of the Law School's Open Justice Centre, Hugh McFaul (pictured), was chosen as the University's submission in the 'Most Innovative

Teacher of the Year' category for the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards 2020, in which he has been announced as a shortlisted nominee. This recognises the academic whose imagination and passion have transformed a course and inspired students. The Awards will take place virtually on 26 November 2020.



Open Justice Student Awards 2020

Our annual awards are given to individual students or groups of students that make outstanding contributions to the projects they are involved in. Students are nominated by their tutors or project managers.

Outstanding individual contribution to Open Justice | joint winners: Heidi Key and Olivia Leeper



Heidi Key – Individual winner

Heidi took part in a group project with the Freedom Law Clinic (FLC).

Heidi said: “This opportunity changed my life. I had a great team and tutor that helped boost my confidence giving me the ability to make the most of the skills I had and work on new skills. I worked with the Freedom Law Clinic (FLC) on a complex criminal case which I thoroughly enjoyed; I have also been accepted to further work with the FLC. This experience has resulted in my growth as a person and professionally. I intend to go into pro bono work in the future.”



Olivia Leeper – Individual winner

Olivia also took part in the Freedom Law Clinic project.

Olivia said: “I was excited about the Open Justice course for both the practical exposure to different elements of the world of law and also because it gave me the opportunity to contribute towards social justice by providing advice and support for those who were unable to access it through other means. What I did not anticipate was how incredibly helpful the activities would be for my personal development. The skills I have learnt have not only given me a much-needed boost of confidence, but I have also gained insight into where my skills lie. This has been invaluable when applying for training contracts. I have loved studying for my LLB with the Open University, and for me, Open Justice can best be described as the icing on the cake.”



Neil Burlinson – Individual runner up (Prison project)

Neil took part in a group project visiting HMP Send in Surrey.

Neil said: “W360 was a great opportunity to put some legal skills into practice, helping others whilst also helping myself. It allowed me to develop and apply existing skills in a very different environment to what I am used to, meeting and learning from some interesting people.”

Outstanding individual contribution to Open Justice | Daniel Doody, Elizabeth Walker, Jack Brown, Kelly Louise Martin, Lilly May Seddon

The team award this year went to a group of students who worked on a face-to-face pop-up law clinic in Rawtenstall, Lancashire.



Elizabeth Walker from the team said:

“The Rawtenstall legal clinic was truly a unique experience to apply the knowledge I have learnt during my studies with the OU along with giving back to the community. It distilled in me that once I am qualified I wish to practice in a social area of law relating to family and housing and aid in bridging the gap for those accessing justice.”

Daniel Doody from the team said:

“W360 Justice in Action has been by far the module that has knitted together all the work put in over the past years whilst studying. The pro bono project work in the ‘pop-up law clinic’ not only provided great experience in the practical side of working in law, but also allowed me to give something back to a community I grew up in.”

Team Runners up (Street Law)

Lauren Shanahan-Smith and Natalie Healey worked together on our Street Law project which was unfortunately cut short this year by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Lauren (pictured here with her award certificate) said:

“Taking part in the open justice projects will help develop the kind of skills valued by future employers.”

INTERNATIONAL LECTURES, CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

Open Justice academics have contributed to a range of national and international public engagement events this year.



Hugh McFaul, UN colleagues and students at Padjadjaran University, Bandung, Indonesia

In addition we have disseminated our practice internally via OU events including the 'Learnabout Fair – Business and Law Festival' in July 2019, Law School Research Seminar presentations and the Student FBL Conference and Open Fest in October 2019. We presented as part of an online eLearning Community Event – The Open Justice Centre: Innovations in Teaching and Learning in November 2019.

We have been active in supporting international workshops to support the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Education for Justice initiative. Hugh McFaul spoke at events in Moscow (pictured right), Vienna (pictured right) and Bandung and

the Open Justice Centre continues to develop online resources to support the programme's aim of delivering the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.



2019 STREET LAW CONFERENCE

Septemberber 2019

W360 'Justice in Action' alumni and Open Justice team member Lidia Dancu and OU Tutor Gillian Mawdsley presented a session on preparing Street Law activities at the 2019 Street Law Conference, Queen Mary University in London.



9TH PAN COMMONWEALTH FORUM

Septemberber 2019

In September 2019 Open Justice Centre Manager Jon-Paul Knight represented the Centre at the Pan Commonwealth Forum in Edinburgh, raising awareness and brokering collaboration with delegates from across 61 nations.



CONFERENCE ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND INNOVATIONS IN LEGAL EDUCATION 2019

October 2019



In October 2019 Francine Ryan presented a paper entitled 'The integration of technology into clinical legal education: an exploration of a virtual law clinic' at the Hong Kong University (HKU). The presentation was simultaneously broadcast to universities in China. In September 2020 an e-book containing the conference presentations was published, a PDF of the e-book can be found at https://50.law.hku.hk/ELNI/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Conference-Publication_Full-Version.pdf

STREET LAW WORKSHOP (IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY)

October 2019

To support our Street Law training we ran our annual weekend event at Middlesex University in October 2019 with colleagues from the University of Middlesex, The Law Society of Ireland and Georgetown University.

Although COVID-19 may cause delays we hope to be running a workshop for the new student cohort in early 2021.



GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE EDUCATION (GAJE) CONFERENCE

December 2019

In December 2019 Hugh McFaul and Francine Ryan presented an interactive session on 'legal technology and education' at the GAJE conference at Pasundan University in Bandung, Indonesia.



IMPLEMENTING THE E4J INITIATIVE IN YOUR UNIVERSITY

December 2019

Open Justice launched its new course which was co-produced with the UNODC (@UNODC).

'Implementing the E4J initiative in your university' was presented on 4-5 December at University of Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE – LAW AND CRIMINOLOGY IN THE NEW DIGITAL ERA

January 2020

In January 2020 Francine Ryan, Hugh McFaul and David Byrne presented a paper on 'The Impact of new technology on legal education' in Seville, Spain.



OU EMPLOYABILITY CONFERENCE

March 2020

Francine Ryan and David Byrne presented a paper at the 'OU Employability Conference: expanding the narrative for a rapidly changing world' in Milton Keynes on 11 March 2020.

They presented on the Digital Justice project with a paper entitled 'Digital Justice: Designing Smartphone Apps to Promote Legal Literacy'.



'TAKING CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION ONLINE' WEBINAR

May 2020



The Open Justice team held a 90-minute online workshop on 15 May 2020, designed to support legal industry colleagues who have suddenly found themselves needing to teach clinical legal education online due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sixty educators from as far as Australia and Trinidad took part in the event. It focused on how the Open Justice Centre successfully uses the OU's widely celebrated expertise in online teaching within the clinical legal field.

You can access a recording of the webinar or on our YouTube channel.

LAW TECH EDUCATION NETWORK (ONLINE) / CONNECTING LEGAL EDUCATION EVENT (ONLINE)

June/July 2020

Liz Hardie presented the work of the Open Justice Policy Clinic at the Connecting Legal Education event on 14 July 2020. Joining Liz on the panel were Dr Rachel Dunn from Northumbria University and the Law Commissioner Professor Nick Hopkins who talked about how academics can become more involved with the Law Commission's work.

The Centre's co-director, Francine Ryan, also presented at the Law Tech Education Network on 25 June 2020 where she shared her experiences of running the Digital Justice project. Professor Rebecca Williams from the University of Oxford started the network to bring together legal academics interested in the emerging trends in legal technology education.



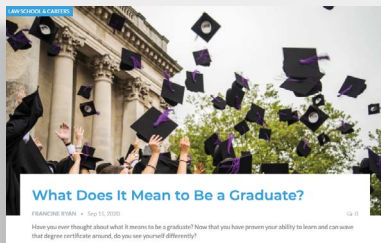
IRISH ASSOCIATION OF LAW TEACHERS SEMINAR SERIES (ONLINE)

September 2020

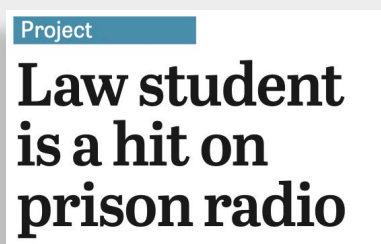
Neil Graffin (pictured right) and Francine Ryan were invited to give a presentation to the Irish Association of Law Teachers on online teaching. Neil discussed online pedagogy and the particular challenges and opportunities this might create. Francine focused on the work of the Open Justice Centre in developing and delivering online experiential learning projects for students. The event was well attended by law schools across Ireland and it was a really good opportunity to share the OU's expertise in teaching law online.



OPEN JUSTICE IN THE MEDIA



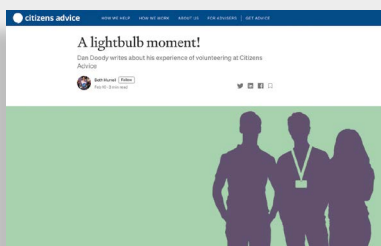
Francine Ryan has continued to publish regular blog posts in Lawyer Monthly, a well-respected legal publication with a UK readership of 43,100. They can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.lawyer-monthly.com/?s=francine+ryan>



We have also published blog posts in the National Association of Licensed Paralegals.

The Wigan Observer covered our prison radio project at HMP Altcourse in July 2019 as did Wigan Today.

We appeared on the BBC Radio 4 programme 'Law in Action' taking about our HMP Altcourse radio project and also appeared on Radio Lancashire where we talked about our pop-up clinic in Rawtenstall.



Dan Doody wrote about his experience of volunteering at Citizens Advice for Student Volunteer Week in February 2020: <https://wearecitizensadvice.org.uk/a-lightbulb-moment-396971cd6099>

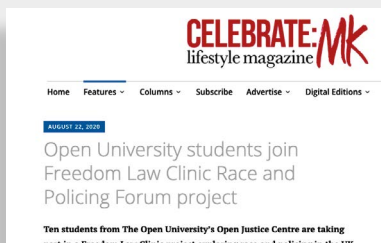
An article about our Digital Justice project appeared in MK Business PLUS magazine (page 30): http://cleverpaper.co.uk/woburn_media/business_plus/mobile/index.html#p=1



Blog posts by Liz Hardie and Hugh McFaul appeared in the blog for Centre for Innovation in Legal and Business Education (SCiLAB):

Liz Hardie – <http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/scilab/index.php/2020/07/01/collaborative-group-work-on-level-3-law-modules/>

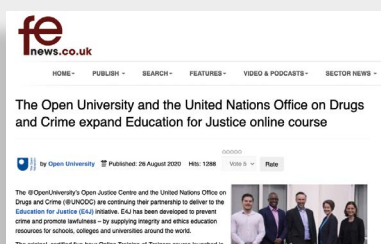
Hugh McFaul – <http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/scilab/index.php/2020/05/13/taking-legal-outreach-online-how-law-students-can-help-bridge-the-justice-gap-during-lockdown/>



A Digital Justice project article appeared in 'The Student Lawyer': <https://thestudentlawyer.com/2020/06/26/ou-law-students-develop-chatbots-to-support-the-public-with-domestic-abuse-injunctions-and-legal-aid/>

The Freedom Law Clinic Project appeared in Celebrate:MK Lifestyle Magazine, August:

<https://celebratemk.co.uk/2020/08/22/open-university-students-join-freedom-law-clinic-race-and-policing-forum-project/> and also appeared in: FE News



The UNODC project update appeared in FE News (September 2020): <https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/79-sp-821/53833-the-open-university-and-the-united-nations-office-on-drugs-and-crime-expand-education-for-justice-online-course>

RESEARCH OUTPUTS



Interest in the Centre's research and scholarship continues to grow and has been the subject of increased attention due to the relevance of online teaching methods during the pandemic. Some highlights are given below.

The Open Justice Centre's Co-Directors, Hugh McFaul and Francine Ryan, have been invited to edit a special issue of the International Journal of Public Legal Education (IJPLE) on responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. This is due to be published in Autumn 2020. This invitation to set the agenda for the pre-eminent international clinical legal education journal follows the Centre's successful 'Taking clinical legal education online' webinar. It is further recognition of the ground-breaking and sector-leading work of the Centre in opening up clinical legal education to distance learners.

All publications below are available for free, for personal use from The Open University's Open Access library or by request to the first author, who can be contacted via open-justice@open.ac.uk

Many are published journal articles which can also be obtained through university libraries for those with access.



- McFaul, Hugh; Hardie, Liz; Ryan, Francine; Bright Lloyd, Keren and Graffin, Neil (2020). Taking Clinical Legal Education Online: Songs of Innocence and Experience. *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education*
- Hardie, E. McFaul H, and Ryan, F. (2020) 50 years of Clinical Legal Education, The Open University, (In Press)
- Ryan, Francine (2020) The Integration of Clinical Legal Education: An Exploration of a 'Virtual' Law Clinic, Conference on Experiential Learning and Innovation in Legal Education, 2019, HKU
- Ryan, Francine (2020). Rage against the machine? Incorporating legal tech into legal education. *The Law Teacher* (In Press)
- Bleasedale, Lydia; Rizzotto, Beverley; Stalker, Rachel; Yeatman, Lucy; McFaul, Hugh; Ryan, Francine; Johnson, Nick and Thomas, Linden (2020). *Law Clinics: What, why and how?* In: Thomas, Linden and Johnson, Nick eds. *The Clinical Legal Education Handbook*. University of London Press, pp. 7–56.
- McFaul, Hugh; FitzGerald, Elizabeth; Ryan, Francine and Byrne, David (2020). A mobile app for public legal education: a case study of co-designing with students. *Research in Learning, Technology*, 28. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25304/rlt.v28.2434> URL: <https://journal.alt.ac.uk/index.php/r>
- Ryan, Francine and McFaul, Hugh (2020). Innovative technologies in UK legal education. In: Jones, Emma and Cownie, Fiona eds. *Key Directions in Legal Education National and International Perspectives*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 67–79.
- McFaul, Hugh (2020). Does Clinical Legal Education Need Theory? *Asian Journal of Legal Education*, 7(2), pp. 152–163.
- McFaul, Hugh and FitzGerald, Elizabeth (2020). A realist evaluation of student use of a virtual reality smartphone application in undergraduate legal education. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 51(2), pp. 572–589.
- Ryan, Francine (2020). A virtual law clinic: a realist evaluation of what works for whom, why, how and in what circumstances? *The Law Teacher* Vol 54 (2) .

Centre Contact details

Hugh McFaul, Centre Director, H.J.McFaul@open.ac.uk

Francine Ryan, Centre Director, F.M.Ryan@open.ac.uk

Jon-Paul Knight, Centre Manager, jon-paul.knight@open.ac.uk

Student Ambassadors 2020



Current student ambassadors: Maurice Doona, Millie Swaby-Pritchard and Hannah Vo

The enduring nature of the benefits gained by students engaging on the Open Justice programme is supported by the wish for alumni to offer their insights to the current cohort. Our 12 student Ambassadors were appointed in 2019 to serve a two-year voluntary term.

The Ambassadors work on different projects providing support and advice to the project leads, as well as assisting with induction and training of students at the outset and then offering ongoing mentoring.

These former students offer a bridge between academic staff and professionals, and the current students, which is invaluable role for current

students who may not have previously had contact with members of the public in an advisory role and often have many questions.

The Ambassadors also represent the volunteer students and ensure the student voice and perspective are heard by the Open Justice team. In return for this voluntary work, the Ambassadors gain valuable skills in mentoring and experience another legal project third-hand, which is useful additional exposure for their own future careers.

Associate Lecturers and project support 2019-2020

Open Justice is an incredible team effort. We work in partnership with our tutors and consultants to deliver our pro bono projects. We want to thank everyone for their commitment and support.

Alicia Babae (publicity and media support), Arj Arul, Elizabeth Benoit, David Byrne (Digital Justice consultant), Hazel Clark, Emma Curryer, Paul Dale, Lidia Dancu (clinic support), Alan East, Bryony Gilbert, Mike Green, Avril Martin, Gillian Mawdsley, Andrew Maxfield, Siobhan McCormack, Tamsin Morris, Kate Ritchie, Allison Wollfreys.



Members of the Open Justice Team 2019-2020 at the OU Edinburgh Office, July 2019



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Visit www.open.ac.uk/open-justice

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