

Foreword

This book is written at a time when the need for pro bono legal services has never been greater. Far reaching governmental cuts during 2010 and 2011 will mean that many more vulnerable people may be unable to access vital legal services they will need in order to seek recompense following devastating events in their lives.

Some say that law and justice are two different things which should never be confused. Yet, every good lawyer knows that the skill is using the former in order to deliver the latter. Within our meritocratic society, it is essential for lawyers to bridge the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. The 'haves' are those who can access and afford legal services. The 'have-nots' are the disadvantaged, the vulnerable and the disenfranchised; not just because of their finances but because the legal services they need just do not exist within their area.

Clinical legal education and pro bono service are a powerful force for good. I do not need to explain the ethical meaning and implications of the words *pro bono publico*; this book is testament to that. However, I would urge practitioners to take note of the framework set out within this book and breathe life into it to enable pro bono services to grow and underpin legal services for all, and not just for the privileged few.

To students who will pick up this book as part of their reading list, or in passing: I hope you use this to take the first step towards helping people in ways they could never have imagined. Use the experience you gain as part of your clinical legal education to hone the skills you will need: independence of mind, sound judgement, integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. These values will carry your name far and wide, for all of the right reasons. I believe pro bono is part of every good lawyer's DNA and the thirst to deliver justice for those who need it lies at its root.

Saving the best until last, I commend authors of this book: Kevin Kerrigan, Victoria Murray, Carol Boothby, Caroline Foster, Jonny Hall, Judith Gowland, Paul McKeown and all of the members and students at The Student Law Office at Northumbria University. Your work to document a vital area of our practice has provided an immovable stepping stone towards universal access to justice for all.

Best wishes,

The Rt Hon the Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC PC

The Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC PC was the Attorney General between 2007–2010 and the first woman to hold the post since its creation in 1315.