



Legal Advice Centre

Annual Report

August 2020 – August 2021



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1) Foreword

After a successful three-month pilot from January 2020 to March 2020, the Legal Advice Centre opened its doors more fully to members of the public. We did so whilst facing the Covid-19 Pandemic. We have had a lot to reflect on over the last year, and our services have highlighted the need for free legal advice and assistance, especially as the Pandemic has only amplified pre-existing inequalities and access to justice.

Our Legal Advice Centre converted its services online so that our student volunteers could continue interviewing and assisting our clients. We delivered a flexible approach so that our most vulnerable clients could still access free advice. We rolled out Skype-to-Phone, which is toll free so that we could call our clients who did not have access to smart phones. We also delivered our services via Teams.

We saw a surge in online enquiries, and in particular advice sought on housing and family law matters.

This report showcases some of the excellent projects that our students have been working on, as well as the Clinic work undertaken. This report also provides a roadmap of our future plans. The Legal Advice Centre has been extremely lucky to have received funding from the College's Greatest Needs Disbursement to continue our services this year.

This year has been a long and challenging one but what I am most impressed with is the resilience, dedication and commitment of our students at the Legal Advice Centre. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all students who have volunteered at the Legal Advice Centre, as well as our volunteer solicitors and partner law firms, and academic members of staff that feature in this report.

Finally, I would like to thank staff behind the scenes at the College who have kindly provided support or assistance: Head of School of Law and Social Sciences, Professor Matthew Humphreys and Head of Department (Law and Criminology; Social Work), Robert Jago; School office, I.T, Governance and Legal Services, Director of Health and Safety, Insurance Manager, Jo Pennington, Volunteering Team, Communications and Marketing, and Design Team.

I hope you enjoy reading this report!

Nicola Antoniou
Director of Legal Advice Centre
Department of Law and Criminology
August 2021

2) Our Staff and Partners

Director / Supervising Solicitor of the Legal Advice Centre (LAC)

Nicola Antoniou is our LAC Director and Supervising Solicitor. Ms Antoniou is responsible for all Student Volunteers and Advisers at the Legal Advice Centre.

Legal Assistant

Greg Smith undertook the role of Legal Assistant for the LAC, providing administrative and logistical support to Ms Antoniou. We would like to thank Greg for his services and contributions made.

Student Staff

Remi Gruszka is the Student Business I.T. Development Manager for the LAC, identifying and implementing solutions to facilitate a more efficient service. In the midst of the pandemic, Remi helped the Director of the LAC overhaul its I.T systems so that the LAC could go paperless. Remi, utilising his expertise, created a bespoke SharePoint system for the LAC using fancy programming and script!

Molly Chappell is the Student Office Manager for the LAC, assisting the Director of the LAC and legal assistant with a variety of projects and administrative tasks. Molly has been extremely efficient and smoothly facilitated key communications between staff and students at a time when it was most needed!

Project Leads

Reena Chohan, Rachel Harvey, Adriana Futejova, and Ammar Abbas were the project leads of the 'I See You' project (detailed below).

Lucy Owen was the project lead of the leaflet project.

Partners and Advisory Group

We are extremely grateful for all the endless support we have had during first full year in operation. The following law firms and independent solicitors have provided our Clinic with support and have contributed to its success:

- [Duncan Lewis Solicitors](#) (David Head - Patron of Legal Advice Centre)
- [Alexander Rose Solicitors](#)
- [Creighton & Partners](#)
- [Horne, Engall & Freeman](#)
- [Legal Lifelines](#)
- James Elliott - independent Volunteer Solicitor
- Meena Oduru Kamath - independent Volunteer Solicitor

- [LawWorks](#) - A charity working in England and Wales to connect volunteer lawyers with people in need of free legal advice, and with the not-for-profit organisations that support them.

3) Our Student Volunteers

This year we recruited 40 Students from years 2 and 3 from the School of Law and Social Sciences.

Once recruitment was complete, the Student Volunteers and Advisers underwent an intensive training course and they also received training from the College's Data Protection Officer. All students were presented with a certificate for their training and participation in the LAC.

- ***Student Advisers***

Our Student Advisers participated in our Legal Advice Clinic and HMP Coldingley Law Clinic. Their main responsibilities were interviewing clients, preparing case notes, researching the legal issues of cases, and drafting advice letters. In more complex cases, where our partner law firms provided free pro bono advice, our students were able to shadow/observe some of those specialist volunteer solicitors.

- ***Student Volunteers***

Our Student Volunteers participated in various activities:

- Street Law
- Leaflet Information Project
- Legal Round-Up
- 'I See You' Project
- Research-led projects

These are covered in more detail in the next section.

4) Our Work at the Legal Advice Centre

Our Legal Advice Centre is split into three main areas, namely our Clinics, Projects and Research-led projects. The majority of what we do involves the Clinic work providing pro bono legal advice and assistance to those whose community needs are often unmet.

- **Legal Advice Clinic**

Our Legal Advice Clinic provides free legal advice and information services to the community. Our students within the Department of Law and Criminology are trained to be Student Advisers and are supervised by the Director of the LAC.

Appointment-only service

During the Legal Advice Clinic's opening period from October 2020 – April 2021, we operated an appointment-only service. We also offered summer appointments during August 2020 to help those most vulnerable during the Pandemic.

Due to COVID-19 guidance and restrictions, the Legal Advice Clinic pivoted to provide a 100% remote interview service via Teams, telephone or Skype.

Our appointments were booked via our online contact form. Our Legal Assistant contacted all clients that requested an appointment. Each client was allocated a time slot and emailed a booking confirmation with all logistics and administrative requests included.

Our Student Advisers interviewed the clients, and following this fact-finding interview the clients either received, in writing, free legal advice and/or information from our Student Advisers, or a free telephone consultation with one of our partner law firms/volunteer solicitors.

Our Student Advisers also reflected on their sessions and learning journeys.

Our sessions operated on Wednesdays (fortnightly) from 1.30pm until 4.30pm. Our sessions often went later into the afternoon, and our student advisers demonstrated admirable commitment.

Our advice areas

- Family law
- Contract
- Consumer
- Housing
- (Others – depending on the availability and expertise of our partner law firms).

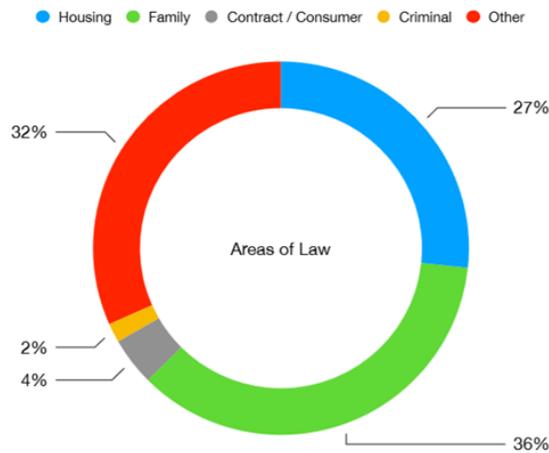
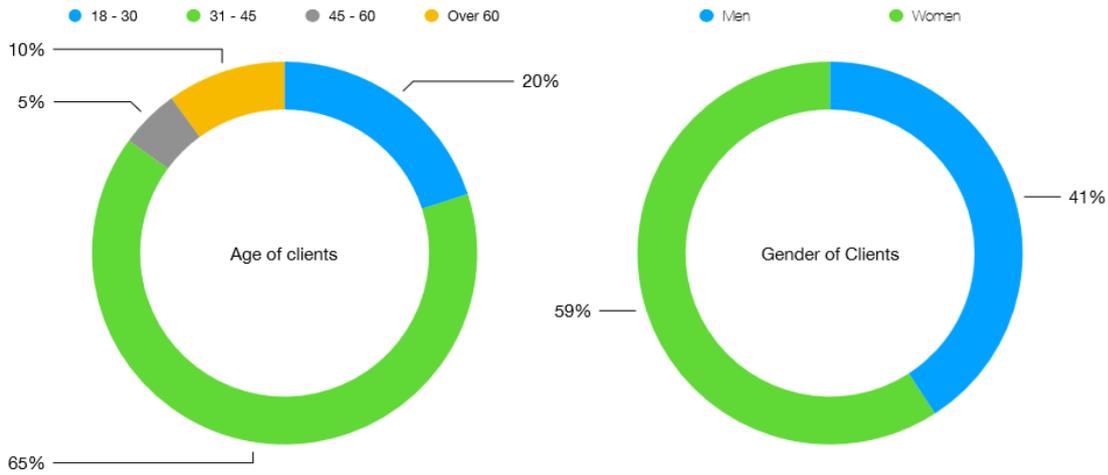
- **HMP Coldingley Law Clinic**

We are delighted that the LAC set up a new Clinic, called the HMP Coldingley Law Clinic in the midst of the pandemic in 2020. This is a partnership between Creighton and Partners Solicitors, The Forward Trust, HMP Coldingley and Royal Holloway’s LAC. This Clinic is a remote-only service, and we provide family law advice to prisoners at HMP Coldingley.

- **Statistics**

The Legal Advice Centre’s Clinics had 120 queries seeking legal assistance from October 2020 to December 2020 – March 2021 (including our August 2020 summer Clinic). We have been able to deliver high quality legal advice, information or signposting to 92 of those who have contacted our Legal Advice Clinic, including the HMP Coldingley Clinic.

The majority of our clients were women (59%) and the most prevalent area of laws were family (including domestic abuse) and housing matters. We anticipate that we will continue to see a surge in these areas of law following the effect of the pandemic. The majority of our clients were from the age group of 31- 45 years old.



Our services have had a significant impact on clients being able to access free legal advice and assistance and our students have been provided with positive feedback from our clients.

- Street Law Workshops

What is Street Law?

Street Law is a phrase which originated from Georgetown University, US in the 1970s, and has been described as;

"... a vehicle by which the public can be made more aware of their rights and responsibilities.

[...]

the law students learn a great deal more ... about the communities they serve and the role that law and lawyers have in addressing the legal needs of the public."

Our student volunteers have delivered informative and interactive legal workshops. They have had the opportunity to put their presentation skills to the test as well as working with academics and legal professionals:

11th November 2020: The UK's Future Immigration System and the New Student Routes

The above workshop was co-delivered by one of our Student Advisers at the Legal Advice Centre and leading barristers – Ian Wright and Satinder Gill at Fiver Paper Chambers.

26th November 2020: Strode's College- Young People and the Law (Stop and Search)

Supervised by Nicola Antoniou, Dr Charlotte Wick, and Michael Herford of Legal Lifelines, Student Volunteers at Royal Holloway's Legal Advice Centre presented to Strode's College on the law around stop and search. Students were praised for their knowledge of law and making it very engaging.

24th September 2020: Strode's College – Careers in Law

Delivered by student volunteers at Royal Holloway's Legal Advice Centre, supervised by Nicola Antoniou and Dr Charlotte Wick. Back by popular demand for new students!

17th March 2021: Waingels College – Careers in Law

Student Volunteers (in attendance with Dr Charlotte Wick and Nicola Antoniou) delivered an interactive workshop to Waingels College on Careers in Law. It was well received, with the student volunteers getting great feedback; we were invited back to deliver a second workshop on 30th June as part of the students LAC's summer vacation placement.

29th March 2021: Strode's College – Social Media and the Law

Supervision and help of Nicola Antoniou, Dr Charlotte Wick, Dr Aislinn O'Connell and Michael Herford Founder/CEO of Legal Lifelines, our students delivered an online interactive street law workshop on social media and the law. Again, fantastic feedback from Strodes!

- **Legal Round Up**

This is a new project created by our student volunteers that combines our former Legal Information Leaflet project. This is an internal newsletter for our LAC members that wish to write about hot legal topics and to share with their fellow volunteers the brilliant work that they have been doing! The first Newsletter was published 19th May 2021, which showcased the students leaflets and discussed the hot topics of protest rights and the removal of religious garments in a legal context.

- **'I See You' Project**

In support of the Black Lives Matter movement, our students at the LAC have written powerful blogs that demonstrate issues of racial inequalities and the justice system. Students also created a factsheet on Stop and Search. These have been produced in the Annex. This project was supported by Legal Lifelines, Dr Rita D'Alton-Harrison and Nicola Antoniou.

- **Research – based projects**

Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Hargeisa, Somaliland (Led by Dr Alexander Gilder, Nicola Antoniou, Dr Michelle Bentley, Reader in International Relations and Director, Centre for International Security (PIR), Dr Daniela Lai, Lecturer in International Relations (PIR))

- This was a collaboration with IPCS (led by Dr Nasir Ali) and internally between the Legal Advice Centre, Department of Law and Criminology (Nicola Antoniou and Dr Alexander Gilder) and the College's Centre for International Security Dr Michelle Bentley, Reader in International Relations and Director, Centre for International Security (PIR), Dr Daniela Lai, Lecturer in International Relations (PIR).
- The project allows students (both UG and PG) from both the Department of Law and Criminology and the Department of Politics and International Relations to work together with an international partner.
- Students are working in small teams to produce accessible materials on a website on a topic related to peace and security in Somaliland.

Royal Holloway's Legal Advice Centre has collaborated with the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association (ACAA) (Led by Professor Jill Marshall, Nicola Antoniou and Dr Alex Gilder)

During COVID-19, with social distancing and self-isolation measures in place, the student volunteers at Royal Holloway produced legal and right-based factsheets and a report on the effects of COVID-19 in Afghanistan (see annex).

Our student volunteers also featured in our published article in the International Journal of Clinical Legal Education:

<https://www.northumbriajournals.co.uk/index.php/ijcle/article/view/1058>

See the below quotes:

"This research has allowed me to delve deeper into the financial consequences of the pandemic in England and has developed my understanding of not just the basic economic impacts of Covid-19, such as job losses, but also how this has led to greater struggle in the lives of the public. These struggles causing devastation specifically within the refugee population within England, a group that society seems to massively overlook when it considers those most effected by the pandemic." Jasmine Urry (BSc Sociology and Criminology).

"I'm currently in the process of investigating the mental health implications for the Afghan community during the global pandemic. Prior to Covid-19, this minority have faced hardship when dealing with mental health; often excluded from their local communities, victims of racism and xenophobia mean they're more likely to suffer from anxiety and PTSD. Unfortunately, the pandemic has only served to exacerbate these experiences and research indicates that little is being done nationally to ease these struggles. This has been particularly eye-opening and frustrating to research as minority demographics within the UK are so frequently side-lined and their struggles ignored." Rosie Cannon (BSc Sociology and Criminology).

"I have been responsible for looking into the effects coronavirus has had on the psychological

and societal resilience of the Afghan and Central Asian community. So far, the area has been very interesting to research as psychologists have scrambled to identify factors that may be affected by the current pandemic, which has produced some fascinating papers. I hope to be able to use this present research to formulate a useful insight into the effect the coronavirus is having on this community." Will Rawson (MSc Forensic Psychology).

Royal Holloway and ACAA: 'Afghan Women Small Spaces Café: Sewing Pathways to Human Rights' - Project led by Professor Jill Marshall, ACAA and our Legal Advice Centre

- **Being Human:** a Festival of Humanities programme organised and set up annually by the School of Advanced Study, University of London and funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy.
- 'Afghan Women Small Spaces Café: Sewing Pathways to Human Rights' took place in ACAA's community hub, via Zoom.
- Meeting over Afghan tea and cake during English and sewing classes, Afghan diaspora women and researchers used mixed participatory methods including artwork, sewing and conversation to explore what everyday habits and material objects tell us about ourselves and each other. These and other culturally specific lived experiences were connected to human rights law's purpose of ensuring universal dignity, equality and rights (based on research by Professor Jill Marshall).
- Some of the students who worked on the literature review and leaflets joined us in this event.



This event inspired Professor Jill Marshall and Nicola Antoniou, Director of the Legal Advice Centre to create the Autism Legal Rights Café event:

Autism Legal Rights Cafe: Professor Jill Marshall and Nicola Antoniou

- This project was based on an application to the School's Reid Research Funding scheme.
- The Café event with the young women's group at the Sycamore Trust U.K. took place on the 24th June 2021. Girls and young women are often underrepresented in

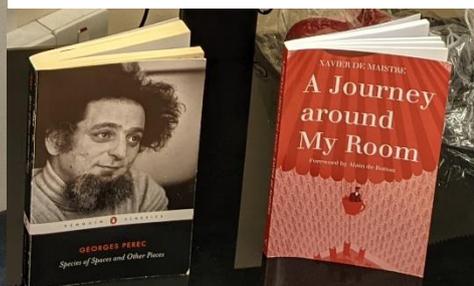
autistic provision. The Sycamore Trust's group encourages friendship and activities for girls over 18.

- We hosted a law and arts café for the young women's group (based on Professor Jill Marshall's research), including a legal workshop on SEN, delivered by Talem Law.
- This new work will be linked to how people with autism see and think of the law.
- For public benefit specifically to develop collaborative networks with a disability charity, legal professionals and link theory to practice through knowledge production offering alternative ways of rethinking law and its discriminatory yet transformative potential (based on research of Professor Jill Marshall).
- This will also help develop further research into how policy and legal documents, that are often accessed by these groups of people, can be re-written so that they are informed by their own views and more accessible to them.

News features:

<https://su.royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/departments-and-schools/law-and-criminology/news/autism-caf%C3%A9-an-exploration-of-how-our-everyday-surroundings-connect-to-our-understanding-of-law/>

<http://www.sycamoretrust.org.uk/latest/article/A-Royal-event%21>



Professor Jill Marshall



- **External Projects**

The Legal Advice Centre also formed partnerships with the below:

- **Citizens Advice Witness Service:** x3 students are currently being trained as accredited witness support workers.
- The [Refugee Law Clinic \(School of Advanced Study\)](#): this is an inter-collegiate project of the University of London and has involvement from ten of the University's Member Institutions, who each send 5 students to volunteer in the clinic. The project has also partnered with two commercial law firms, Clifford Chance LLP and Macfarlanes LLP. Royal Holloway currently has 5 students assigned to this Clinic. The staff at the Refugee Law Clinic have been happy with our students at Royal Holloway and appreciated their efforts in being flexible to the online learning and volunteering format, especially in the first year of operation. The LAC will send 5 new Royal Holloway students to join this Clinic next term.

- **Summer Vacation placement**

The student advisers/volunteers took a break from examinations but have been working on the activities ready for the summer vacation scheme at the LAC, including working on the Legal Roundup project and Street Law.

30th June 2021: Summer Street Law – Waingels College – Social Media and the Law

Student volunteers, along with the Director of the Legal Advice Centre and CEO/Founder of Legal Lifelines, Michael Herford joined Waingels College for an interactive workshop on Social Media and the law. Our volunteers comprehensively covered various offences that could be committed by the use of social media, and both Nicola and Michael spoke about how this could be used evidentially at court. The student volunteers delivered a brilliant

workshop, with newfound confidence. Well done to the students who received positive feedback from Waingels College!

- **Conferences, presentations, and features:**

LawWorks presentation by our student managers and legal assistant: The team presented at LawWorks on 23rd February 2021 about the use of technology and our Clinics. They received great feedback!

Director of Legal Advice Centre, Nicola Antoniou presented at the College: "The Advance Prog: External Engagement Showcase" on the 10th March, and spoke about the development of the LAC.

Conference: GAJE/IJCLE/ACCLE Worldwide Online Conference (16th June 2021) (co-presenters: Antoniou, N. Marshall, J. Gilder, A. Title: Clinical Legal Education, International Collaborations, Human Rights and Virtual Opportunities).

Features in the Magna Carta's Student Law Gazette (as well as our Department's social media handles).

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/departments-and-schools/law-and-criminology/your-future-career/magna-carta/>

LawWorks: Pro Bono Facing The Future - Clinics Workshop, 9th July 2021 (co-panel included Nicola Antoniou)

<https://www.lawworks.org.uk/solicitors-and-volunteers/resources/legal-pro-bono-facing-future#CW>

5) Student and external testimonies

Student Testimonies

Students have provided some great feedback, which we are delighted to share:

Olivia Smith, Senior Student Adviser

"The legal advice centre provides truly unique and invaluable opportunities. It provides students with the chance to get hands on experience interviewing clients. This enables us to learn and more importantly develop the key skills required for a future career in law."

Dayana Moldazhanova, Senior Student Adviser

"It was an amazing opportunity to work at the Legal Advice Centre (LAC). This experience allowed me to further hone my interviewing and drafting skills. Working at LAC also gave me a taste of Family Law, which in turn I found quite fascinating. Furthermore, it taught me how to quickly think on my feet, as I faced various unpredictable circumstances. As a result, this incredible experience contributed towards the formation of my legal career.

Looking forward to continuing working with you next term.

Thank you for the opportunity!"

Molly Chappell, Student Office Manager

"Being the student office manager for the Legal Advice Centre has been a very good experience for me. The responsibilities have helped develop my organisational skills, knowledge and understanding of administrative tasks and my collaborative abilities. It has given me a fresh perspective into how a legal advice centre works and what is required to keep it running smoothly. Regarding the management side, I have helped with the administrative roles, like emails, files, and rota's. This has required me to use other platforms, which I was previously unaware of, like SharePoint. My excel skills have also benefitted from my new role. I think the LAC has been a success, and moving into 2021, with the prospects of new projects, it will only succeed further".

Remi Gruszka, Student I.T and Business I.T. Innovation Manager

"Unknowing to some we are actually bigger than some law firms out there with over 40 people working for us; in addition to the resources that we have from the college, we are looking to be the best when it comes to IT usage, IT Security and Compliance, as well as innovating with new solutions, and I have worked hard alongside Nicola to overhaul our IT Strategy, putting us into a new digital age, especially in the light of the global pandemic! As a student and as a LAC volunteer, I would STRONGLY recommend any students who are thinking about joining the legal advice centre to do so! It really gives students a feel into what being a solicitor is like, with not just problem questions like they have during their teaching but real live cases that they can work on, cases that can have an impact on the lives of the people that they are helping, with real cases and gaining real experience".

Lucy O'Donnell, Student Adviser

"The work I did over the summer for Royal Holloway LAC in collaboration with HMP Coldingley was incredibly rewarding and eye-opening. It provided an opportunity to refine my interviewing skills and gain experience in a completely unfamiliar setting, overcoming the obstacle that COVID-19 presented! This experience was invaluable for developing the ability to demonstrate empathy verbally, as well as drafting documentation and being very specific. I am really grateful for this opportunity and the skills that I gained that I am able to take forward in my career".

Vanesa Yakimova, Student Adviser

"HMP Coldingley Clinic provided me with the opportunity to gain invaluable real work-experience like no other. It allows you to help clients with real life problems that you cannot see in the Law Text Book. I am tremendously proud to be part of the project."

HMP Coldingley Law Clinic:

Quote from The Forward Trust, Connections Family Worker at HMP Coldingley:

"Since commencing my role at HMP Coldingley, it became apparent that legal advice was limited. Many men were struggling with issues around family law and child contact. The legal advice provided by the Royal Holloway University, in conjunction with Creighton & Partners Solicitors has been invaluable. The men are now more confident that things will progress more positively and they can achieve some level of contact with their children. The staff, students and solicitors have not only provided advice, but also reassurance and compassion. I am very grateful, as are the men, for the support being provided".

Anonymised extract/quote from a client, who provided the student volunteers with great feedback:

"I would like to confirm, I found the experience extremely helpful..... From the very first phone call I was informed clearly what to expect and a consultation was arranged. The consultation was on time and your students were very thorough, asking pertinent questions showing a great deal of patience with my " long, extensive" replies. They displayed a professional approach filling me with confidence that I had finally reached the right place to receive the legal advice I so desperately needed, and I was very impressed. All steps involved in the processes involved were thoroughly explained to me and a referral to your legal advisor was swift. He telephoned me, promptly and on time, providing legal answers to my queries stating I could contact your services again if the matter was not resolved. Your services are invaluable to people in my position, they are run smoothly and efficiently and I am very grateful I was finally able to access them".

6) Awards

Student Volunteer award: Outstanding Community Action Volunteer Award

The LAC was thrilled to be awarded the Outstanding Community Action Volunteer Award in June 2021, which celebrated student engagement on various projects within the LAC (Legal Advice Clinic, I See You Project, COVID-19 ACAA, Leaflet Project) and is a superb reflection on the hard work and dedication of the students to volunteer work during a challenging year.

[Royal Holloway Volunteering Awards 2021- Outstanding Community Action Volunteer \(Internal\) - YouTube](#)



News:

<https://su.royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/departments-and-schools/law-and-criminology/news/the-volunteers-at-the-legal-advice-centre-won-a-prize-in-the-royal-holloway-volunteering-awards-2021/>

College Teaching Prize: Excellence Teaching Prize 2021

The Legal Advice Centre won the College's Excellence Teaching Prize 2021.

Team Prize Commendation 2021 for the IPCS project

Project on *Inclusion, international collaboration, and peer learning: A student-created legal advice website on human rights and peacebuilding with the University of Hargeisa (Somaliland)*.

News feature:

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/departments-and-schools/law-and-criminology/news/college-teaching-prizes-2021/>

7) Our Future

- Future partnerships and projects

Future research-led projects:

The LAC hopes to engage in more research-led projects. For example, the LAC will work with Dr Eugenio Vaccari who has developed the project "Speak Out to Help Out: Helping Ethnic Minorities and Members of the LGBTQ+ Community Dealing with Personal Debt".

Business Clinic:

The LAC has now received approval from the College insurers to operate a Business Clinic, which is a unique joint venture between the School of Law and Social Sciences and the School of Business and Law. Students will work with Dr Elton Xhetani and Nicola Antoniou over the summer to work on a website. The Business Clinic's formal pilot will commence in January 2022, and in the interim the team will work hard to set this up. Both Dr Leonardo Oliveira and Dr Eugenio Vaccari have agreed to help lead this Business project with Nicola and Elton.

Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact):

The LAC and Professor Nick Hardwick are looking forward to engaging in further fruitful discussions with the Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact), to form an exciting partnership.

Policy Clinic:

The Policy Clinic will commence next term, with the first external project with Citizens Advice researching social justice policy issues. This latter project will be open to two master-level students from the Department. Professor Jill Marshall and Nicola Antoniou will co-ordinate this project with other academics leading on research projects.

8) Conclusion

Our LAC has a clear mission statement, and we believe that we have achieved this during this year's LAC operation:

'Empower, enhance and encourage'

Our aim and vision:

- is to deliver a wide range of legal services that empowers our users by enhancing their legal knowledge to make informed decisions about their legal matters.
- is to encourage our volunteers to give-back to the community and address the needs that are often unmet.

During the operation of the LAC, we faced unprecedented times with the outbreak of COVID-19. Despite facing this global pandemic, we were still able to complete our sessions remotely, and our clients received the help that they needed.

We hope to continue to provide such invaluable services to those whose community needs are often unmet.

The LAC has achieved a lot within such a short space of time, and we look forward to providing more students with practical experience, as well as offering legal services to our local community and beyond.

We look forward to reporting further on our activities next year, and once again thanks all the student volunteers, solicitors and staff (both academic and support) for their invaluable contributions.

LAC Team

August 2021

ANNEX

Leaflet Information Project – Leaflets

Domestic Abuse and Covid-19 – Information sheet

During the pandemic statistics and other Charities that support victims of domestic abuse, have reported an increase in the number domestic-abuse related matters.

When victims are forced to stay in the home or in close proximity to their abuser more frequently, the perpetrator can use a number of tools to exert power and control over the victim.

Between April and June 2020 there was a 65% increase in calls and contacts logged by the National Domestic Abuse Helpline compared with the first three months of the year.

The police recorded a 9% increase in number of domestic abuse-related offences from March to June 2020 when compared with the same period in 2019

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseduringthecoronaviruscovid19pandemicenglandandwales/november2020>

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse can include behaviour from a family member, partner or ex-partner that is controlling, coercive, threatening, violent or abusive.

Domestic abuse happens between people aged over 16 years old and can happen to men or women. Abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. This can include harassment, stalking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based abuse and trafficking.

<https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse/what-is-domestic-abuse/>

Coercive behaviour is an act of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation used to harm, punish or frighten a victim. Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make the victim become dependent by isolating them from support and resources.



Domestic Abuse – Covid -19
Information sheet

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This may be in the form of financial abuse such as stopping the victim from working, controlling the household finances, forcing the victim to hand over money and persuading the victim to take out a loan in their name.

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-intimate-or-family-relationship>

Controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship is a crime under section 76 of Serious Crime Act 2015. This is a crime when behaviour is performed repeatedly or continuously and is controlling or coercive. At the time of the behaviour both parties must be personally connected, such as in an intimate or family relationship, and the behaviour has a serious effect on the victim, such as fear, alarm or distress.

If you feel that you have been a victim of domestic abuse, then there is a range of support and help. You are not alone.

Family Court Intervention

What if you live with the abuser?

Non-Molestation Orders and Occupation Orders

A non-molestation order is used to stop an abusive partner from molesting the ordering partner in the future. This order may prohibit general molestation or specific acts. Molestation has not been defined in statute and therefore has been taken to having a wide meaning and may include things such as harassment. Section 42 of the Family Law Act 1996 provides details on non-molestation and provides that an associated person can apply for an order. Associated persons are then defined under section 62(3) of this Act and include partners and relatives.

Occupation orders aim to remove an abuser from the home and again only an associated person (taking the same meaning as that for a non-molestation order) can apply. The courts will look at the party applying for an order as an entitled person or a non-entitled person depending on whether the individual has existing rights to the home. An occupation order may be in the form of a declaratory order which simply states the rights of the party or a regulatory order which enforces the party's rights. These orders are usually short term but are useful

when a victim is in need of removing their abuser whilst more permanent help is arranged.

<https://www.gov.uk/injunction-domestic-violence>

Hotlines

If you are in an emergency situation: 999 (If you cannot talk or it is not safe to do so press 55 when prompted to speak and the call will be dispatched to the police who will try to locate you).

Free 24-Hour Helpline: 0808 200 0247
Nationaldahelpline.org.uk has a live chat service online Mon-Fri 3-10pm with a quick exit option to leave the website if necessary.

NCDV provide rapid relief such as free injunctions:
0800 970 2070

The Women's Rights Organisation highlights that minority communities often face additional barriers that prevent them from accessing services including lack of ability in English, lack of knowledge of their rights in the UK and cultural constraints around seeking help outside the family, as well as legal problems around citizenship. Therefore, accessible advice for minority communities is essential.

Take Action

If you are a victim of domestic abuse:

- If you cannot stay safely at home, try and find somewhere safe to stay
- Get help

Calling the police – if you are immediate danger – call 999.

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Author: Aliyah Spacey-Smith / Duncan Lewis Solicitors

Employment

Understandably, there is massive amounts of concern over the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on all areas of employment. This essential part of life has also suffered the most during this challenging time. The section below hopes to advise on areas ranging from unemployment benefits, the furlough scheme and universal credit.



Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – being a ‘furloughed worker’

Your employer may be able to apply to the furlough scheme in order to pay employees whilst they are not working. If an employer applies to the scheme it means that employees will be paid 80% of their normal pay (up to a maximum of £2500) This is often utilised when the place of work is closed.

Eligibility

It is important to remember that employees can only be furloughed with agreement of the employer. The scheme is guidance and not law. In guidance with recent changes to the scheme you can still be furloughed if:

- You're on a temporary contract
- You're on a zero-hours contract
- You're an agency worker
- You're employed by more than one company
- You can be furloughed full-time or part-time – for example, you could work 3 days a week and be furloughed for the other 2 days
- If you're working from home, you should get your normal pay from your employer

A graphic showing a row of ten lightbulbs hanging from a cord. The ninth lightbulb from the left is glowing yellow, while the others are white outlines. The background is dark grey.

Employment during the Coronavirus Pandemic

 Duncan Lewis Solicitors

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For additional guidance on eligibility visit:

- For employees: search 'guidance for employees' at gov.uk (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-could-be-covered-by-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>)
- For employers: search 'guidance for employers' at gov.uk (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>)

Self-Employment

If you've lost out on income or had to stop working to look after someone or your business is being affected due to coronavirus there are schemes through which you can claim for money from the government.

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme

Benefits:

- You could get 80% of your average profits up to a maximum of £7,500 for 3 months
- The government have said you'll be able to apply for a payment to cover income you lost from 1 February 2021 to 30 April 2021, which can be claimed until 1 June 2021.
- You won't have to pay the money back, but you'll have to pay tax on it

Eligibility:

- You can't apply for money to cover income you lost before 1 February 2021
- Your self-employed profits must not be more than £50,000 per year and they must make up at least half of your total income
- You'll need to expect a significant loss of profits between 1 November 2020 and 31 January 2021 because of coronavirus – fewer customers or if you have to stop working to care for someone
- You need to have done self-employed work in the tax year 2019-20 and be planning to do self-employed work in the tax year 2020-21

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Universal Credit:

- Note that any money you get paid by the Scheme after you apply for Universal Credit will count as income.

For additional guidance to the scheme and self-employment during the pandemic search 'Support for businesses and self-employed people during coronavirus' at gov.uk (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>)

Self-Isolation

- If you can't work from home, you might be able to get a self-isolation payment of £500 from your local council. You can get this as well as a payment from the Self-employment Income Support Scheme

REMEMBER: The law says you have to stay at home and self-isolate if:

- You or someone you live with tests positive for coronavirus
- The NHS tell you to self-isolate because someone you had contact with has coronavirus

For additional guidance on different benefits that you can claim during the pandemic visit the citizens advice website ([citizensadvice.org](https://www.citizensadvice.org)) and click on the 'benefits tab' and the 'Coronavirus - check what benefits you can get' (<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/coronavirus-check-what-benefits-you-can-get/>)

Universal Credit

This is a short summary on Universal Credit – which is gradually replacing certain benefits. If you receive one of these benefits, you'll have to move onto Universal Credit by 2023:

- Housing Benefit
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits (WTC)
- Income Support

You can choose to move onto Universal Credit at any time if you want to.

- If you claim Universal Credit you won't be able to go back to the benefits

Claiming Universal Credit

Make sure you have received your biometric residence card before applying for any benefits. If you are still in the process of waiting for a decision on an asylum application or are subject to any kinds of immigration control, then you cannot claim Universal Credit.

- You'll need an email address and phone number to apply for universal credit
- It's better to wait until you have received your last wages from work (if applicable) before applying
- You can apply for Universal Credit online on <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim>
- To make a phone claim or arrange a home visit, you'll then need to ring the Universal Credit helpline: 0800 328 5644 (calls to the helpline are free)

For additional guidance: search 'Universal Credit' at gov.uk or on [citizensadvice.org](https://www.citizensadvice.org)

Eligibility

If you're not on any of the mentioned benefits you might be able to get Universal Credit if:

- you're on a low income
- you're not working (unemployed)
- you have a disability or illness
- you're caring for someone
- You can get Universal Credit even if you're self-employed or on a zero [hours](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/zero-hours-contract) contract

For additional guidance visit the citizens advice website and click on the 'benefits tab' and the 'Coronavirus - check what benefits you can get'

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Impact of Covid-19

Concern and uncertainty have dramatically increased, especially for students during such unprecedented times. Your tenancy contract, is legally binding and rent will need to be paid for the fixed term **HOWEVER**:

University Accommodation:

- You **MAY** be entitled to a refund, waive or termination of the contract altogether

Privately/Landlord Renters:

- Your landlord may reduce your rent, but they are under **NO** legal obligation to do so. Most landlords are on the solid legal ground, even if you wish to return home.

It is still worth checking for any break clauses in your tenancy agreement (although more common in halls accommodation). This break clause will nearly always be partnered with the condition that it is required the original tenant to find a replacement tenant.

Student's tenancy protection:

Support – the Government has suggested the importance for landlords to offer understanding and support for student's whose income might have been affected by the pandemic. Negotiate and discuss, students may be able to arrange for a lower rental payment or an agreement to pay at a later date.

Coronavirus Act 2020 – This act protects tenants from being moved out of accommodation without a court order, whilst in line with Public Health England advice.

- We encourage a conversation with your landlord. Open the discussion, be prepared to negotiate and always remember to put anything in writing!

The Process

Before you start looking:

Budget - if living with friends, have a pre-agreed budget for anything you want to share.

Housemates – who you are going to live with. Your deposit is a single fund, so any damage, will impact the entire deposit.

When to look? – Start looking around eight weeks before your course begins.

Where to look? - Use letting agents with the ARLA, NALS and/or SAFE agent logos or private landlords

What to look for when viewing properties?

Damp – check walls and ceilings – particularly around windows, corners, and behind wardrobes



Student Tenancy Guide (Covid-19)



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Pest problems – do not be afraid to check kitchen cupboards, work surfaces, and around bins

Location of the property – is it near university? Look around the area and transport links.

Security and safety – check for working fire alarms, extinguishers, fire blankets and working locks.

Furnishings and fittings – consider what you may need to buy. Is there a suitable desk and chair?

The contract

Will most likely be an *Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement* and it may ask to provide a guarantor who accepts legal and financial responsibility should anyone fail to pay their rent.

Things you need to do

1. Contact energy suppliers – if bills are not included. Give names of all tenants to ensure shared responsibility for payments.
2. TV license – go to <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk> if needed.
3. Insurance – discuss with your flat mates if you want insurance.

Moving out

-Leave in the same condition as you arrived. Take pictures when you first move in as a reference, as well as the inventory.

-Contact energy supplies – Supply them with your gas and electricity meter readings for your final statement.

Obligations of the Landlord

Fire Safety-

- Adequate means of fire escape in the property **must** be provided
- At least one smoke alarm on every floor is to be installed
- Carbon monoxide detector should be fitted
- Fire extinguishers must be fitted on each floor

Entering Property –

- Visitation to the property not allowed without prior warning
- Legally required to give at least 24 hours' notice before showing up
- In case of emergencies, the notice is exempt
- Check what it states in your tenancy agreement

Appliances-

- All *gas appliances* must be safely installed, maintained and annually checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer--it is recommended

to ask to see the record of checks before signing your contract.

- Also required to ensure any *electrical equipment* they provide is safe to use.

Repairs –

- Responsible for most major repairs including faults with:
 - The structure of the property (windows, doors, walls, roofs etc)
 - Sinks, baths & toilets
 - Pipes & Wiring
 - Heating & hot water (including boiler)
 - Safety of gas & electrical appliances

Obligations of the Tenant

Paying Rent-

- Pay rent **at all times**- otherwise, you risk eviction
- Your tenancy agreement will normally provide you with information in regard to how much the rent is, what it includes, to whom it should be paid, when it should be paid and how it can be increased

Reporting Repairs-

- Reporting repairs tend to be a condition of your agreement
- You have an obligation to report any problems (no matter the extent of concern)
 - The landlord for repair is said **NOT** to be held responsible for repair work until they are notified.

Taking Care of Premises-

- The tenancy agreement outlines a *range* of duties expected of you which may or may not include the following:
 - Change light bulbs
 - Keeping the garden neat and tidy
 - Maintaining internal decoration, appliances and furniture
 - Turning water off (at the mains) during periods of absence in winter months
 - No pets without written agreement from the landlord
 - Ensuring property is well ventilated

Adhering to the terms of your tenancy agreement-

- It is important to spend some time reading through and understanding the terms before deciding to sign the agreement.

- Do not feel hesitant to ask for help or seek additional support.

Tenancy Deposit

When securing a property, the landlord or letting agency may ask for a 'Security Deposit' or a 'Tenancy Deposit'. This should only be *used* by the landlord at the **END** of the tenancy.

IMPORTANT! Since the 1st June 2019, the Security Deposit have been limited to 5 weeks' worth of rent (where annual rent is less than £50,000; 6 weeks' if the annual rent is over £50,000). Contact your letting agent, if not.

Your deposit **MUST** be within one of the 3 government-approved deposit schemes:

- **Deposit Protection Service (DPS)**
- **MyDeposits** -Any deposits held by Capita, are now dealt with here.
- **Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS)**

The deposit must go within one of the schemes above, within 30 days are receiving the deposit from you, this is normally confirmed via email.

Getting Your Deposit Back

The landlord can deduct money from the deposit if:

- You owe any rent
- There is damage to the property- note this cannot be fair, wear and tear.
- An item from the inventory is either lost or missing.

Examples of charges that should **NOT** be made:

- They want to replace the carpet because it has worn over time
- Fix a repair that has been neglected by them over your tenancy, for example, you have told them about a leak in the ceiling and it has caused significant staining.
- Decorating a whole room because of some scuff marks on the walls.

Your landlord **MUST** give reasons why and they are deducting an amount, and this **SHOULD** be in writing.

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Authors: Mia McClenaghan, Gabriela Golebiewska, Lucy Owen and Vanesa Yakimova / Duncan Lewis Solicitors

Stop and Search – Factsheet

Stop and Search Statistics

Stop and Search: by legislation

According to the Government statistics, between April 2019 and March 2020:

- 97% of all stop and searches in England and Wales were under section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
- 3% of stop and searches were under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- no stop and searches were conducted under section 44/47A of the Terrorism Act 2000
- there were 17,927 stop and searches under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- 6,396 section 60 stop and searches involved White people, the highest number out of all ethnic groups for this legislation (35.7% of all section 60 stops)
- 4,480 section 60 stop and searches involved Black people (25.0% of all section 60 stops)

Stop and Search: by ethnicity

- between April 2019 and March 2020, there were 563,837 stop and searches in England and Wales (excluding vehicle searches)
- there were 11 stop and searches for every 1,000 people, down from 25 per 1,000 people in the year ending March 2010
- there were 6 stop and searches for every 1,000 White people, compared with 54 for every 1,000 Black people



'Stop and Search' Factsheet

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- stop and search rates have fallen for every ethnic group since 2009
- almost half of all stop and searches took place in the Metropolitan Police force area in London
- there were 34 stop and searches for every 1,000 people in London, the highest rate out of all police force areas
- London had the highest stop and search rates for all ethnic groups except for the Other ethnic group (where it was highest in Kent) and the White ethnic group (Merseyside)

Source: Government statistics:
<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-the-law/policing/stop-and-search/latest>



Why can I be stopped and searched?

Some examples....

- Section 1 Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 – a police officer that has reasonable grounds for suspecting he will find stolen or prohibited articles may search a person.
- Code A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE Code A) which accompanies

PACE 1984, sets out guidance on stop and search powers

- Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971– allows officers to search a person for illegal drugs
- Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994– allows officers to search people for dangerous weapons in a defined area and during a specific time period to prevent acts of violence, or to find weapons where violence has already occurred (see more below)
- Sections 43 and 47A of the Terrorism Act 2000 – gives officers the power to search you if they believe you have a connection with terrorism

What are my rights?

Before you are searched, officers must tell you:

- Grounds: why are you being searched?
- Law: which law are being detained under for the purposes of a search?
- Object: what does the officer expect to find on you?
- Warrant Card: has the officer produced his official ID on request?
- Entitlement: have you asked for a search record copy at the time of the search?
- Station: have they informed you of the exact name of their police station?

What is a Section 60 Stop and Search?

- Why is it called 'section 60' stop & search?

It is a power under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

- What is a 'section 60' stop and search?

This is when a senior ranking officer can authorise a stop and search without the need to establish 'reasonable suspicion', in a defined area during a specific time period, if they reasonably believe that:

- Serious violence may take place;
- Serious violence has occurred; a weapon used in the incident is being carried by a person in that area; or Persons are carrying weapons without good reason

- This power can only be applied to a specific area for a maximum of 48 hours.
- An officer is permitted to search for weapons and to request the removal of masks.
- If an officer stops you because they believe you look like you are 'going to' behave antisocially, this not a sufficient reason to search you.
- Entitled to a written statement of stop and search if apply within 12 months.

How should I behave if stopped and searched?

It can be a nerve-wracking experience being stopped and searched by a police officer but it's important to remain calm, polite and respectful.

Stop and Search App

Legal lifelines are a pioneering law practice that proudly serves the community with elite legal advice on the issues that impact us.

They have created an app to help you out if you are ever stopped and searched, this short video explains some features of the app.

<https://articles.legallifelines.co.uk/293-2/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OPnV8MCF2s>

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Editors: By Student Volunteers on the "I See You" Project
 Matthew Woo, Adriana Futejova and Rachel Harvey and Legal Lifelines



"I SEE YOU" Project

Below are two blogs/articles written by our student volunteers

Student Volunteers authors: Adriana Futejova and Zarmeen Mirza
I See You project

A History of Racial Discrimination Law in the UK

Society has made significant progress when it comes to the rights and protections granted to those from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, racial inequality still exists, and both direct and indirect discrimination is still pertinent in modern society. Most discriminatory practices were eradicated and prohibited by law. To get to this point in society, there have been several attempts to achieve some form of racial equality in all areas and to tackle problems of racial inequality and injustice. Nonetheless, the fundamental question remains: are the protections offered by the law reflective of our increasingly diverse society?

Prior to any legislation being implemented to try and address racial injustice, there was oppression of racial minorities, which was common during and prior to the 20th century. Known as the Race Riots of 1919, violent attacks against people of colour were widespread, including those in Liverpool, Manchester, London, Hull, South Shields and some parts of Scotland and Wales. In Liverpool, white workers went on strike in 1919 to protest working alongside Black people, which resulted in 120 Black workers being made redundant. Additionally, people from racial minorities were prevented from obtaining work, accommodation, joining the armed forces or serving as officers. White British landlords displayed derogatory and racist signs on their properties to make it clear that housing rights did not apply to certain racial and ethnic groups. This racism was further legitimised by overtly discriminatory legislation, such as the Coloured Alien Seamen order of 1925, which restricted the entry of what the Government called 'alien' seamen into the country. Black and Asian seamen were typically threatened with deportation or denied employment, and they had to register to the police if they failed to prove their nationality. This shows how racial and ethnic minorities were both segregated from society and stripped of any material rights, due to the lack of protection offered. As a result, racial and ethnic minorities found difficulty in accessing the labour market, discouraging them from pursuing the same opportunities white people enjoyed.

These trends persisted until the 1960s and 1970s, by when a systematic hierarchy was set in stone. It placed white Europeans at the top with Black and Asian minorities at the bottom. Although racial minorities were encouraged to settle in the UK, they were put in far worse conditions and had no legal protection against this discrimination until the Race Relations Act of 1965 was introduced. This Act made, for the first time, racial discrimination in public places unlawful. Racial discrimination was defined as treating one individual less favourably than the other on the grounds of race. It made any act of hate (including accessing services) in public places based on colour, race, ethnicity, or national origin unlawful. To monitor compliance with the law, a race relations board was set up which heard cases concerning incidents of unfair treatment. In addition, the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants was also set up. However, although racial discrimination was made an offence, the application of the legislation was fairly narrow. Discrimination in the workplace, housing and accommodation

was not covered, which meant that while racial discrimination offences were unlawful in the public places, the rules were not applied in other areas. As a result, between the Act's enactment in 1965 and 31 March 1967, only 85 offences fell within its scope. The remainder related to either housing or employment and therefore did not fall within the protection of the Act. Such defects led to the introduction of the Race Relations Act 1968.

The Race Relations Act 1968 extended previous legislation to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race in housing, employment and public services. This widened the scope of discrimination to include housing and employment. It made it unlawful to deny housing, employment and public services to a person because of colour, race, ethnicity, or national origin. It also strengthened the powers of the Race Relations Board and established a National Committee on Immigrants from the Commonwealth and created a Community Relations Commission aimed at promoting harmonious community relations for people of different racial backgrounds. Nevertheless, the 1968 Act was criticised for not applying to the duties of the Police, thus affording no protection against police discrimination. It also left people of different racial backgrounds underrepresented and made it difficult for them to make claims if their rights were violated during an arrest or if they were mistreated due to their race. Eventually, the 1968 Act was later repealed by the Race Relations Act 1976.

The Race Relations Act 1976 added the definition of discrimination to include indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination is the legal term used to describe situations that occur when a policy appears to treat everyone equally, but in practice results in people from a particular protected group being treated less favourably than others. Indirect discrimination is less obvious. By outlawing a more implicit form of it, greater protection to victims of racial discrimination is offered, which was an important improvement in our legislation. There were three important innovations in the 1976 Act; firstly, the extension of protection from discrimination to indirect discrimination. Secondly, it gave individuals direct access to civil courts and industrial tribunals in hearing cases regarding racial discrimination. Thirdly, it replaced the Race Relations Board and the Community Relations Commission with the Commission for Racial Equality. Its role was refined to eliminate racial discrimination, promote equality and good relations, review the effectiveness of policies, and enforce the provisions of the Act to promote harmony and greater protection.

However, there were further criticisms and concerns about the 1976 Act, as it still did not address racial discrimination in the public service, for example, in the police and within prisons. As a result, this led to a lack of trust and growing tension between the police and some ethnic minority groups.

The Equality Act 2010 made the UK's legislation relating to racial discrimination a single coherent Act of Parliament. The 2010 Act constitutes the current legal framework for racial discrimination. It mandates equal treatment in access to employment, private and public services regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, maternity or pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, now known as protected characteristics. What impact has this had? The 2010 Act replaced previous anti-discrimination legislation with a single Act, which made it easier to understand while strengthening protections in some areas that had not previously been adequately covered. The statute also consists of codified "protected characteristics" that cannot be used to discriminate against. Furthermore, it also draws a distinction between race and ethnicity for the first time.

One disadvantage of the 2010 Act is that, if you were discriminated against before this Act

came into force, applicants are unable to issue a claim under the 2010 Act, and instead will need to bring a claim under the 1976 Act. This means that individuals who have been racially discriminated against pre-2010 by the police cannot pursue legal action as the 1976 Act fails to offer protection in this area. This is rightfully criticised as individuals who were victimised by the police on the grounds of race should not be restricted from taking legal recourse just because the incident occurred before 2010. It exposes inconsistency and injustice in the legal system.

Substantial improvements have been made throughout the years to promote and uphold equality between all races. Ethnic and racial minorities are legally entitled to more rights today than they have historically and they are also entitled to the same protections as white nationals. Individuals of all races and ethnic backgrounds have the freedom to access public and private services without discrimination, obtain employment and are protected against being disadvantaged or treated unfairly due to their race. Despite such advances, racial discrimination continues to be an ongoing issue, with minorities being exposed to differing, less favourable treatment. Although on paper every individual is to be treated equally, this is not reflected through all lived experiences. It is important that better enforcement strategies are needed to hold accountable all those who are responsible for racial discrimination.

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Student volunteer authors: Aryana Zarkesh, Rohan Tugnet
I See You Project

The Shooting of Breonna Taylor

In the summer of 2020, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement gained notoriety in many countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. While the brutal murder of George Floyd provided a call to action in support of these movements, the death of Breonna Taylor further brought to the forefront discussions of systemic racism within the police force in the U.S. and signalled the need for changes in the law in the U.S. This event shone a light on the deaths of many other civilians at the hands of police and reignited justifiable frustration with the ongoing discrimination experienced by Black communities around the world. Thus, this article aims to address the impact of Breonna Taylor's death with a focus on the subsequent 'Breonna Law', the BLM movement, and the changes legislators have made in light of the protests. Despite evident changes resulting from Breonna's death, one question remains: Are these changes enough?

Who is Breonna Taylor?

Breonna Taylor was a 26-year-old emergency room technician at two local hospitals who was brutally shot to death in her home on March 13, 2020. Her death sparked international outrage. Police officers, wearing plain clothes executed a 'no-knock' warrant shortly after midnight. They used a battering ram to enter the home of Breonna Taylor, where she was asleep in bed with her boyfriend Kenneth Walker. Police suspected there were drugs on the premises, but in fact, there were not. Breonna's boyfriend, shot back, not realising that the plain clothed individuals were in fact police officers. His shot hit Officer Mattingly in the leg. Mattingly fired back at Taylor and Walker. Another police officer, Officer Cosgrove, fired 16 shots from the entrance of Taylor's home. Taylor was shot six times in a matter of seconds. Another officer, Officer Hankison, fired another 10 shots from the patio door and window. [His bullets also damaged a neighbouring flat.](#)

What is 'Breonna Law'?

Despite the tragic event of Breonna's death, it has led to some significant legal developments in the United States that represent a very important change in trying to reduce the impact of police brutality against citizens from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Following Breonna's death, the controversial 'No-Knock Warrants' were banned in Louisville, Kentucky. This law was dubbed "Breonna Law" as her death marked a change in the partial ban of no-knock warrants. It was first introduced as a Bill in Kentucky and [officially passed in 2021.](#)

The law now requires no-knock warrants to be permitted when the individual under investigation would qualify as a 'violent offender' if convicted. The warrants must be executed between the hours of 6am and 10pm. Judges are also required to leave legible signatures [on approved warrant documentation.](#)

Despite the changes that have been implemented, it is tragic that an innocent person had to die for the American legal system to realise that the law regarding the no-knock warrants needed to be changed.

An unfavourable aspect of the 'Breonna Law', however, is that it was only passed in Kentucky and '...it's not the full legislation ... in terms of a complete ban on no-knock warrants'¹ as Lonita Baker rightfully states. This means that it will only have a small-scale impact, since the United States is made up of 50 states. This means that the law will have a limited and minor impact in the United States, and it will not have a substantial affect as no-knock warrants have not been banned completely. This demonstrates that no-knock warrants will continue to be issued in other states, potentially resulting in other deaths similar to Breonna's, which is both disappointing and disturbing.

It appears that Breonna Taylor has become symbolic in the ongoing battle against the racial injustice that many have and continue to reflect on. This law marks the beginning of a major battle to ensure that the 'Breonna Law' is accepted by all states in America and is implemented as a full ban on no-knock warrants, as it is critical that deaths like Breonna never happen again.

By way of comparison, under the law of England and Wales, police officers must follow the rules set out under section 8 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, with the relevant safeguards to be observed under s.15 of PACE 1984, and the manner in which search warrants are executed under s.16 PACE 1984. Officers are also required to adhere to the codes of practice that accompany PACE. Code of practice B paragraph 3 sets out that when there is evidence to support an application being granted, the officer must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the evidence is accurate, recent, and has not been provided irresponsibly or maliciously. An application for a warrant cannot be made based on evidence from an anonymous source if not corroborated.² Section 8 sets out that a warrant will only be granted if there are reasonable grounds that an indictable offence has been committed, there is material on the premises which is likely to be of substantial value to the investigation of the offence, and that the material is likely to be relevant evidence.³ Moreover, sections 15 and 16 set out the manner in which the warrants have to be declared and executed. It sets out that a police constable must state the grounds on which they believe an application should be granted and the enactment under which the warrant would be issued.

Defunding of the Police:

The harrowing case of the death of Breonna Taylor sheds light on another important discussion - police defunding - an issue that has attracted mainstream attention. The notion of defunding the police has always been around. However, the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor pushed this further sparking an uproar among the public, leading to subsequent calls for the defunding and abolition of police forces across the country. The idea was discussed for many years by community groups who advocated for the law enforcement budget cuts and even gained the support of elected officials who proposed the idea of divestments from police.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/apr/09/kentucky-no-knock-warrants-partial-ban-breonna-taylor>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pace-code-b-2013>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/section/8>

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the cost of policing has tripled since 1977, rising to \$115 billion. Defunding and reallocation of funds allows for reinvestment in communities and programmes that can directly improve citizens' well-being, livelihood, and job prospects, and ultimately reduce crime rates. Professor and Chair of Sociology at New York University, Patrick Sharkey, confirms this hypothesis in his research, noting that "in a typical city of 100,000 residents, every ten additional organisations created to address violence and build stronger communities results in a 9% decrease in the murder rate."⁴

The fallout from Breonna Taylor's death has led cities across America to enact or abolish policies to prevent situations like Breonna Taylor's or George Floyd's from happening again. In total, 31 out of the 100 of the largest cities in America have passed policies to restrict the use of chokeholds by law enforcement.⁵ Chokeholds are defined in multiple ways, but the widely accepted definition as 'any technique used to restrain an individual which restricts breathing or occludes both carotid blood vessels simultaneously'.⁶ In addition, policies have been put in place that allows officers to intervene when they witness excessive use of force by their fellow officers to protect victims of police brutality and abuse.

Police Corruption and Deep-rooted Racism in the United States

Now, why has this conversation come to the forefront since the death of Breonna Taylor? It is no surprise to anyone that the police have not arrested the killers that are responsible, which is evidence of the deep-seated corruption within the Criminal Justice System. An investigation into Louisville Metro Police, the police department responsible for Breonna's death, found that it concealed 738,000 sexual abuse records by two police officers.⁷ Brett Hankison, an officer-involved in Breonna's shooting, was accused of using his power to assault and prey on young innocent women.⁸ Unfortunately, this case is one of many, as police officers all over the U.S. have abused their power in this way. According to a study by Bowling Green State University, there have been 405 cases of police officers being charged with forcible rape.⁹ This shows how some police officers abuse their power and are granted a degree of immunity as they are rarely held accountable for such abuse of authority. Therefore, this indicates that it is not surprising that the "Breonna Law" is so narrow as there are many issues that are embedded in the US police that have not been addressed.

⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-sharkey-violence-community-investment-20180125-story.html>

⁵ <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/16/877527974/how-decades-of-bans-on-police-chokeholds-have-fallen-short>

⁶ <https://www.wftv.com/news/9investigates/orlando-police-define-chokehold-new-use-of-force-policy-that-bans-maneuver/PN4RPYNS5ZCXPJRWQ6GHHSNGM/#:~:text=New%20language%20now%20defines%20a,as%20he%20sat%20and%20watched>

⁷ https://news.yahoo.com/louisville-police-hid-738-000-161627046.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAB7MOTe5BKNK4XVWEeMqrD-9aL-ftNgaljy3EdJjxCP9uOECG6USobZPPJRqutLOWMvXLFx7uKeh8ecio_g2Q3E065YmvX43VIJWyuTK7sF_8ue2hzm4A9IXE4XLw25ZviROgsXSKZUB_mO3C7PkyhjLJuOSXsbcxT7eT9FarPrR

⁸ <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/11/11/us/louisville-breonna-taylor-officer-sexual-assault/index.html>

⁹ <https://www.wcpo.com/news/national/us-police-officers-were-charged-with-more-than-400-rapes-over-a-9-year-period>

In discussing police corruption in the United States, it is important to address how the creation of this institution is rooted in racism. The first instance of policing in the southern United States was Slave Patrols, groups of White volunteers who took the law into their own hands by returning and punishing enslaved people and suppressing any slave uprising. Although they were disbanded with the abolition of slavery, institutionalised oppression of the people of colour persisted. This can be seen in the Jim Crow laws that served to dictate every aspect of African Americans lives while failing to punish the heinous crimes of lynching against them. This institutional racism evidently persists, as reflected in the Breonna Taylor shootings and will persist as the “Breonna Law” will have a minimal impact to address the deep-rooted racism in the US, and it shows that there will never be a time when people of colour will not be victims of police violence. Ultimately, this means that changes in policing have stagnated and reforms to date have done little to address this problem or issue. Therefore, the push to limit excessive police powers would mark a step forward in improving the safety of people of colour from such violence.

Concluding thoughts

The death of Breonna Taylor was a significant catalyst for change and opened the eyes of many around the world to the systemic racism within the institutions that serve to protect the safety of the citizens they harm. For example, in the UK in the summer of 2020 there were widespread protests in the whole of the UK as police were flooded to prevent any property damage or violence. Breonna’s death has strengthened the BLM movement and subsequently launched uncomfortable conversations about racism, police brutality, and corruption. The U.S. responded by creating the “Breonna Law”, which has proven insufficient to curb abuses of power against black citizens by police across the country. Calls have been made to defund the police, an initiative that has been met with significant public backlash, and to take further action to ensure that police brutality no longer occurs. As a result, there are calls for further reform and consistent implementation by police across the country to improve community safety while protecting people of colour from the harms and crimes perpetrated against them by police officers in hopes of solving at least part of the problem.

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LITERATURE REVIEW



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Literature Review: Impact of COVID-19

Economic Impact

Measurements of economic disadvantage involve many factors, such as household income and socio-economic indicators (Barnett, 2008). It is clear that minority groups face an acute economic disadvantage in terms of ‘employment/unemployment rates, earnings levels, occupational attainment and progression in the workplace, and levels of self-employment’ (Block, 2007, p. 24). A minority group at the forefront of these disadvantages is the refugee and migrant population.

The Covid-19 pandemic that hit the UK in January 2020, subsequently leading to a national lockdown in March 2020 (Prime Minister’s Office, 2020), has had extremely detrimental impacts on the economic status of many individuals across the country. A House of Commons report (2020) notes that the average number of hours worked in the UK fell dramatically (c. 20%) from April to June. Clearly, this figure is only going to worsen due to the significant recession we have experienced. This will undoubtedly lead to further job losses and unemployment, compounded by the fact we are now, as of January 2021, heading into our third national lockdown in the UK (Prime Minister’s office, 2021).

Though Covid-19 is dramatically affecting all aspects of the economy, we must recognise that certain groups are currently more vulnerable than others. The refugee population in the UK were already more vulnerable to unemployment prior to Covid-19, with an employment rate of only 51% (Kone et al, 2019). Hence, with large-scale unemployment growing, the refugee population is at serious risk of living without the income provided by a paying job. We also know that some of the industries most heavily hit by the pandemic, including hospitality and manufacturing (House of Commons, 2020), are the ones that most regularly employ migrants. Fernandez-Reino (2019) notes that the retail and manufacturing industries employed a third of the UK’s workers from EU member states. We also see that many Afghans living in the UK work in hotels, shops and takeaway services (Khan, 2013). Hotels have suffered massively

during Covid-19, with no output in April to May of 2020 (Office for National Statistics, 2020). Though takeaway services were still able to operate (Department for Business, 2021), there has undoubtedly been a devastating impact on restaurant businesses during this period, as food service activities have decreased overall by 90% from the year previous (ONS, 2020).

The refugee and migrant community also face disadvantages in obtaining jobs, due to issues of marginalisation that existed before the pandemic (which have only increased since then). For the Afghan community living in Hounslow and West London, the main language spoken is 'Farsi' (SPRC, 2014), which creates numerous difficulties in areas of public life, such as understanding policies, applying for jobs and applying for welfare benefits; English language skills are also needed for other educational opportunities and for work. The SPRC notes that there was already a lack of language education available to refugee and migrant adults, making it harder for them to overcome these barriers. This has been compounded by the introduction of lockdowns and social distancing measures (Cabinet Office, 2021), with the consequent closing of schools and classes both for adults and children. Any classes that might have been available have moved online, which is also problematic due to the digital poverty experienced by migrant and refugee communities (Alam & Imran, 2015). Where individuals have managed to keep a job during the pandemic, it is also difficult if the job requires home-working and internet usage.

We must also consider the immediate barriers of nationality and obtaining citizenship (SPRC, 2014), which can have a detrimental impact on economic standing but also on social standing and health. The long and expensive process of acquiring citizenship (Fernandez-Reino & Sumption, 2020) has only been made worse by Covid-19 owing to long delays (RIGHT TO REMAIN, 2021). For migrants, waiting for citizenship can delay their ability to work in certain sectors, obtain vital benefits and housing, and delay access to healthcare (Ministry of Defence, 2020; Fernandez-Reino & Sumption, 2020; Public Health England, 2021). This could impact an individual's ability to work and trigger health complications, as non-citizens are only entitled to primary, not secondary, care. In other cases, they may be required to pay. It is important to note, however, that non-citizens do obtain free Covid-19 treatment in the UK (Public Health England, 2021).

In addition, the inability to obtain benefits and social housing will leave many migrants living in fear of homelessness (SPRC, 2014) and an inability to support their individual and familial needs. We also see that much information and policy detail on housing, benefits and other support systems is inaccessible (SPRC, 2014), due largely to the aforementioned language and digital barriers. The pandemic has only worsened these issues, as public information on the government's response has changed rapidly. For instance, the information surrounding citizenship was updated more than 50 times between March 2020 and January 2021 (Home Office, 2021), meaning many migrants and refugees were unable to keep up to date. This, unfortunately, will only worsen now that the Brexit transition period is over (as of January 2021) and a points-based immigration system is being introduced (Home Office, 2020). Changes and developments in immigration policy, such as citizenship acquisition, will further impinge upon migrants' lives.

Migrants who have obtained work during the pandemic have also faced recent issues. The Change Institute (2009) notes that many migrants have opened businesses selling and importing products from their home countries. However, with tightening regulations and disruption to importations due to Covid-19 (ONS, 2020), many of these businesses have suffered. We also know that a lack of importing ability may cut migrants' links with their home countries, potentially leading to feelings of isolation that can have a negative effect on mental

health. This, again, may be further impacted by Brexit trade restrictions that are to be implemented this year (2021).

Niccollini (2013) states that many members of the Afghan community in London operate market stalls. This business avenue has largely closed during lockdown, due to an inability to accommodate social distancing measures, especially if stalls were not deemed to be selling 'essential' goods such as food (Cabinet Office, 2021). Again, this has damaged many livelihoods.

Issues will also occur when considering the migrant population that may have been placed on furlough during this time. HM Revenue and Customs (2021) has announced that the furlough scheme will be extended to September 2021 in order to help retain staff and support workers. Though this is positive in terms of saving staff members' livelihoods, we may see issues occur as individuals are only eligible to receive 80% of their usual wage, up to £2,500 a month. This is immensely problematic when considering that the migrant population is already earning less than the rest of the population within the UK (Kone et al, 2019). The wage gap currently stands at UK-born individuals earning £14 an hour, with migrants only earning £9 an hour. Hence, the loss of 20% of earnings will have a harsher socio-economic effect on migrant communities.

Haines et al (2018) note that, within Australia, individuals seeking asylum are more likely to experience food insecurity due to their extreme socio-economic disadvantage. When considering the aforementioned disadvantages in this review, it is likely this may also be the case in the UK. During the pandemic, groups such as the Thrussel Trust (2020) have noted a stark rise in individuals seeking help from food banks, with half the individuals utilising these banks for the first time. This form of food insecurity is worrying, as those who experience it tend to face negative physical and mental health effects (Haines et al, 2018). With the figures of food bank usage dramatically increasing, and in the knowledge that asylum seekers are amongst the UK's most vulnerable communities, we may discover a large proportion of this figure is made up of migrants and refugees.

All these compounding variables during the pandemic will have greater repercussions on the mental and physical health of refugees and migrants. Bradbury-Jones and Isham eloquently conclude that the virus 'brings with it multiple new stresses, including physical and psychological health risks, isolation and loneliness, the closure of many schools and businesses, economic vulnerability and job losses' (2020, p. 2047). We have previously outlined many of the economic effects the pandemic has caused, so now we must turn our attention to the physical and mental health effects. Specifically, we must understand how these economic factors have affected physical and mental well-being.

Mental & Physical Health

Notably, since the first announcement of lockdown measures in the UK, a domestic violence helpline reported an increase in calls (c. 25%) (Bradbury-Jones and Isham, 2020). With the implementation of 'stay at home' measures, we see how many previous avenues of support or detection of domestic violence have been closed. Adults are not attending workspaces, children are not attending school, and other areas where evidence of domestic violence may be noticed and reported are no longer open (Campbell, 2020). This heightens the control a domestic violence perpetrator has over the victim, and the isolation felt by a victim. We also observe the restrictions impacting organisations that help survivors, reducing avenues for victims to escape perpetrators. Unemployment also dramatically increases the likelihood of a perpetrator becoming abusive, as stress and 'frustrations' (Cramer, 2011, p. 7) felt from joblessness have

been linked to intimate partner violence. Krishnan et al's (2010) study only provides greater support for this. The study concludes that the majority of women who participated, each of them victims of domestic violence, had partners or husbands who could not find or keep a regular job. Campbell notes that 'stress and associated risk factors for family violence such as unemployment, reduced income, limited resources, and limited social support are likely to be further compounded' (p. 1), highlighting the correlative nature of economic damage and increased cases of domestic violence. With refugees being more likely to face unemployment and other economic disadvantages, we can see how these individuals may be most at risk of domestic violence. Furthermore, migrant and refugee populations may struggle more when seeking help, due to general language barriers (SPRC, 2014) and technological barriers when seeking help online (Alam & Imran, 2015).

It is evident that unemployment and financial concerns have an impact on an individual's mental health. Murphy and Athanasou (1999) conclude that long-term unemployment causes negative effects on mental health. In a similar vein, Paul and Moser (2009) argue that the mental health level of an unemployed individual is half that of an employed person. They subsequently follow up with many different mental health symptoms individuals could face, such as depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, and low self-esteem. The migrant and refugee population will be at the most vulnerable here as they are more deprived, as shown, than most other populations when it comes to unemployment and financial concerns.

A recent study was conducted to research the link between poverty and mental health. It considered the richest and poorest fifth of the UK's population who reported a depletion in their finances since the first lockdown (Finch, 2020). The study found that of the richest fifth, 48% reported poor mental health. Conversely, of the poorest fifth, 72% reported experiencing poor mental health, a significantly larger proportion. This study demonstrates the differences in mental health between those who struggle to make ends meet and those who do not. Thus, there is a strong correlation between poor finances and poor mental health. This can be attributed to numerous reasons, but Mia and Griffiths (2020) note that an important factor involved in this is the fear about not being able to provide for one's family. They continue by stating that this can lead to psychological stress and anxiety. Furthermore, another study found that 56% of Britons reported being more stressed or anxious as a result of financial insecurities since the beginning of the pandemic (Marshall and Bibby, 2020).

However, this stress is not the same for all Britons. Research shows that BAME groups are consistently excluded from higher-status employment and thus exposed to further employment-related stresses (Berthoud, 2020). Ethnic minorities are more likely to work in frontline employment during the pandemic, for example in National Health Service (Deuakumar, 2020). Incidentally, this places them at a higher risk of contracting the virus. Deuakumar (2020) adds that these workers are also more likely to live in shared accommodation where social distancing is difficult. These factors can lead to psychological stresses and insomnia (Delexis and Canet, 2020). Smith, Bhui and Cipriani (2020) elaborate on this by arguing that these health care workers are under significant stress and have reduced access to mental health support.

Additionally, working in lower-status employment means workers are more likely to be laid off (Mia and Griffiths, 2020). This is reflected in the fears of many workers who wonder how they would provide for their families, should they become unemployed as a result of the coronavirus (Mental Health Foundation, 2020). This can significantly increase risk of depression and suicide (Mental Health Foundation, 2020, Marshall and Bibby, 2020). For those working within these sectors, some may have experienced a loss in their socio-economic status; Hopkins (2009) points to the demoralising effect this is likely to have on employees.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also affected how people attend mental health services, as social distancing rules require online sessions rather than face-to-face experiences. However, for migrants, these services are less available due to a lack of access to laptops, smartphones and internet (Sieffien, Law and Andermann, 2020). The poorest in society, who often need the most mental health aid (Finch, 2020), can thus become systematically excluded from such services.

Sexism and Mental Health during the Pandemic

Afghan women continue to face adversity within Afghanistan and even after they migrate to other countries such as the United Kingdom (Mahendru, 2017). Women's subordinate position already existed within the public and private spheres of Afghanistan, but Taliban rule imposed the sexist views of a minority onto the whole country, with strict laws designed to curtail women's freedoms (Amowitz, Heisler and Iacopino, 2004). Skaine (2008) argues that this period, during the 1990s, still proves very influential on the freedom of Afghan women today; their economic and social empowerment is restricted. Thus, there is a need to consider how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the rights of these women. Domestic abuse was already considered a serious social problem for the country, with an estimated 87% of the female population within Afghanistan experiencing domestic abuse at some point in their life (Oxfam, 2020). Since the pandemic, these rates have increased, with those in abusive relationships often having to stay at home for long periods of time with their abuser. Below, we highlight research which demonstrates the direct impact this has had on the mental health of those women.

Women's Aid (2020) research shows that 61.3% of women have reported worsening abuse since the pandemic began. Furthermore, Oxfam (2020) showed that 97% of respondents felt that violence against women had increased since the Covid-19 outbreak started. Within the United Kingdom, the British Government's response to Covid-19 has included three national lockdowns (as of January 2021), which has made it significantly harder for women living with abusive partners to utilise their usual coping mechanisms. For some women this includes social interactions which the British government now restricts. However, research shows that a lack of social interaction is also a key factor in depression (Venkatesh, 2020). The inability to socialise outside of a household also means spending longer periods of time working and living with partners, thus increasing strain within a relationship (Sieffien, Law and Andermann, 2020). This consequently increases the likelihood of abusive behaviour developing.

Many women reported feeling anxious throughout the pandemic because of the extended periods of time they spent with their abuser (Women's Aid, 2020). Oxfam also reported that an estimated 50% of the female Afghan population are facing anxiety or depression during the pandemic (2020). There were also fears that the pandemic would result in a rollback of women's rights, with many feeling that the government's authoritarian control replicated that of the Taliban (Oxfam, 2020). Furthermore, these conditions resulted in more women living with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), with research suggesting that of those women who were exposed to Taliban policies, major depression was far more prevalent than for those who lived in a non-Taliban controlled area (Amowitz, Heisler and Iacopino, 2004).

We can also consider how the impact of past abuse changes during the pandemic; with many women feeling the strain of PTSD more predominantly since the pandemic began (Oxfam, 2020). The loss of coping mechanisms such as social interactions (Venkatesh, 2020) is a possible factor to explain this increased strain. Furthermore, research suggests that immigrants

are less likely to seek help with issues regarding mental health (Sieffien, Law and Andermann, 2020). This, along with the added difficulties of getting mental health assistance during a pandemic, means it is more likely that the women suffering will continue to do so alone. Research by Middlesex University (2014) found that Afghan women living in London felt there was a lack of support structures available for them; this is especially important when considering cases where there is a high risk of domestic violence.

However, it is not just because of poor facilities that migrants are far less likely to reach out for help with their mental health. Systemic racism, language barriers, cultural reasons and social exclusion are all factors which help explain this phenomenon (Sieffien, Law and Andermann, 2020). The Department of Global Communications (2020) investigated why there is a lack of communication between migrants and mental health services. They found that since the pandemic, migrants and refugees have faced increased racism and xenophobia, as they are largely scapegoated for the pandemic. Such notions have served to further exclude migrants from the country they have settled in and their local communities. This consequently makes them far less likely to reach out to the services available to them.

Furthermore, difficulties with language barriers can cause stress between both care workers and patients (Ross, Diaz and Starrels, 2020), thus it is likely that patients will avoid such scenarios and any unnecessary stress. One study consolidated this and found that some local organisations aiding mental health issues struggle with language barriers (D'Angelo et al, 2014). Such services therefore exclude those most vulnerable. Devakumar et al (2020) argues that there needs to be more policies aimed at protecting those who need help the most, as without more help the long-term exclusionary consequences on the migrant population will be dire.

Physical and Mental Health

Though the above research shows us how Covid-19 has increased rates of anxiety, as people worry about contracting the virus, some people are more vulnerable than others once they have caught it. For those with underlying health conditions, where the mortality rate is higher, this can be a huge strain and can cause psychological damage in the form of anxiety (Pfefferbaum and North, 2020).

NHS England (2020) highlights numerous underlying health conditions which result in increased vulnerability after catching the virus, including diabetes, cancer, heart conditions, obesity etc. However, the pandemic has also highlighted racial disparities in health outcomes, and the NHS commissioned a report seeking explanation for the disproportionately high rates of Covid-19 deaths within BAME communities. Public Health England (2020) found that death rates from Covid-19 were highest among people of Black and Asian ethnicity. The report concluded that this is a result of racial inequality within the UK, which has led to higher poverty rates, thus increasing underlying health conditions and placing individuals within lower sector occupations at a higher risk of contracting the virus. This report, however, has been critiqued for failing to highlight the presence of discrimination within the NHS as a large factor (Lacobucci, 2020).

Whatever the reasoning, the fact remains that ethnic minority groups within the UK have a far greater mortality rate than the majority white population (Public Health England, 2020) when it comes to Covid-19. This causes increased stress and anxiety for many, and some are forced to shield as a result (Devakumar et al, 2020).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

For many migrants, leaving their home country and resettling in another can be traumatising. The resettlement process and past experiences can lead to the presence of PTSD (Yaser, 2016). In fact, numerous studies show that refugees are significantly more likely than others to suffer from PTSD (Junior et al, 2020). Furthermore, Middlesex University (2014) found that one third of male unaccompanied children who migrated subsequently suffered from PTSD. This can have an extremely adverse effect on the resettlement process, making it harder for individuals to integrate into new cultures (Hopkins, 2009).

Since the pandemic, this issue seems to have worsened, with 53.3% of participants in a study (Women's Aid, 2020) finding that lockdown has triggered memories of abuse and has consequently affected their mental health. Furthermore, as touched upon earlier, the lockdown regulations have proved more trying for refugees (Oxfam, 2020). Further research considered the implementation of the CovidSafe App in Australia (Rees and Fisher, 2020). This found that many refugees felt that the app presented a threat to their new-found freedoms, and the regulations appeared to be oppressive. This caused a strain relating to their past trauma and an inability to cope with the resettlement.

Housing and Deportation fears

The financial issues which have emerged since the pandemic have shown the vulnerability of numerous communities in the UK, especially amongst the poor and many ethnic minorities. These fears have also included the issue of housing, with many worrying how they will continue to pay rent or mortgages without a stable income due to the pandemic losses. This can cause significant stresses as families worry where they will live. For families seeking asylum, this is exacerbated by fears of deportation.

Middlesex University (2014) investigated this stress for migrant communities and found that there was an acute problem with local councils failing to ensure their constituents knew of the services available to them through local government. This meant many were not getting the help they needed. Furthermore, for those who were renting, this lack of communication meant that they were often unaware of their rights with private landlords. Consequently, they were often ill-informed about housing issues and had to deal with these stresses alone, only serving to worsen their mental state and create further complications.

For those seeking asylum, the pandemic added another factor for them to contend with. A recent scandal highlights some of the current issues emerging within the British asylum system. Asylum seekers in the Napier Barracks in Kent have been kept in an old army camp with no way to socially distance from one another (Grierson, 2021). As a result, around one in four of the detainees contracted the virus. The outbreak has also highlighted how migrants are scapegoated within the UK (Mulman, 2021); Home Secretary Priti Patel accused those within the barracks of irresponsibility in spreading the virus.

For those who have successfully migrated to the United Kingdom, there has been an increased fear of deportation. These extra concerns cause individuals to experience further insomnia and psychological distress (Delexis and Canet, 2020). Furthermore, there is a risk that the country

they will be deported to will have higher infection rates of Covid-19 (Mia and Griffiths, 2020), something that will be particularly worrying for those who have underlying health conditions.

Racism

As the incident at Napier barracks (Gierson, 2021) and the mortality rates released by the NHS England (Public Health England 2020) have revealed, racism is a huge issue within the UK, and the Covid-19 pandemic is showing this in ways never observed before. Numerous studies support this, arguing that the pandemic has both exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities. The Centre for Mental Health (2020) highlights this argument, claiming that racism and discrimination have been heightened recently. This is borne out in the starkly iniquitous outcomes of the pandemic, entailing an equally disproportionate effect on the mental health of BAME residents.

It is important to consider the role of political figures during this period and how they affect racism within the UK. Politicians have been accused of exploiting migrants and refugees as scapegoats for the pandemic. We see this with Priti Patel, who used the incident at Napier barracks to blame those seeking asylum for not taking the virus seriously (Mulman, 2021). There has been a similar rhetoric throughout the pandemic – Stone (2020) accuses MPs of using ethnic minorities as scapegoats, blaming them for spreading the virus in order to distract the populace from the government’s failings. This government scapegoating serves to further inequalities, as it ignores the vulnerability of minority communities within the UK and thus exacerbates their predicament. Furthermore, the blame game also creates difficulties with social cohesion in local communities, as minority populations feel excluded and tensions rise. This is likely to make it more difficult for migrants and refugees to seek help when needed (Department of Global Communications, 2020).

For those working on the frontline of the pandemic, the stresses have already been increased (Chirico, Nucera and Magnavita, 2020). For key workers who are from a minority ethnic background, racism and xenophobia are additional stresses to deal with (Delexis and Cenet, 2020). The death of Belly Mujinga epitomises the vulnerability of BAME key workers during this period. In March, Belly was spat on by a man who had contracted coronavirus. Just days later she fell ill and in April she tragically passed away (Croxford, 2020). Since Belly’s death, there have been calls for justice as well as further protection of BAME key workers. The racism behind this act might not have directly caused Belly’s death, but the incident epitomises how the virus and existing inequalities within the UK are taking lives. This is yet another cause of stress and strain for those employed in key sectors, and will undoubtedly have serious implications for the mental health of minority communities (Mia and Griffiths, 2020).

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