

# Optimal Legal Clinics: Perspectives of Access to Justice Actors on In-Person and Virtual Clinics

Claudine Tan, LSPBS

Janelle Lau, Claims Associate Clasis LLC

Marcus Tan, LL.B. student NUS Law (video)

Ng Wei, LL.B. student NUS Law

Helena Whalen-Bridge, A/P NUS Law



# Optimal Legal Clinics: Perspectives of Access to Justice Actors on In-Person and Virtual Clinics

## Session Plan:

1. Panelists provide different perspectives on in-person and virtual legal clinics
2. Breakout rooms: discuss your experiences
3. Return and share your experiences
4. Panelists on different clinic platforms: lessons and going forward



# Optimal Legal Clinics: Perspectives of Access to Justice Actors on In-Person and Virtual Clinics

Session Plan: different perspectives –

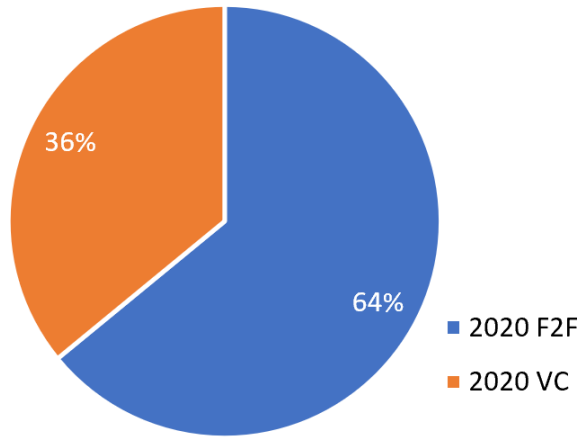
- Client Feedback: Claudine Tan
- Lawyer Perspective: Jannelle Lau
- Student Perspective: Ng Wei and Marcus (video)
- Clinic Organiser: Claudine



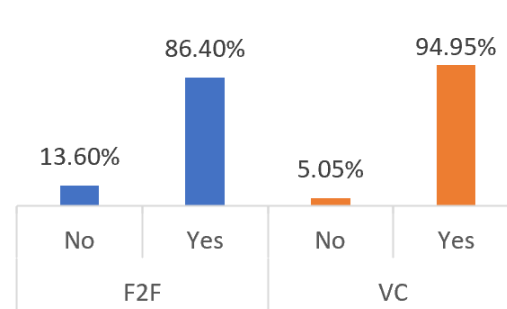
# LAW SOCIETY PRO BONO SERVICES



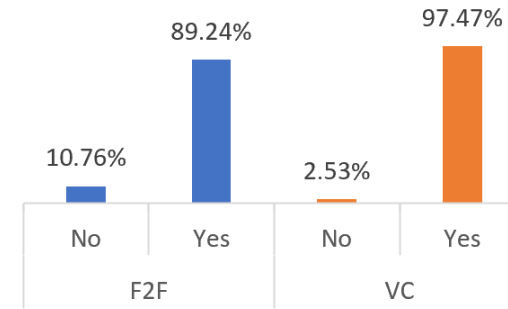
## CLC Satisfaction Survey Results for 2020



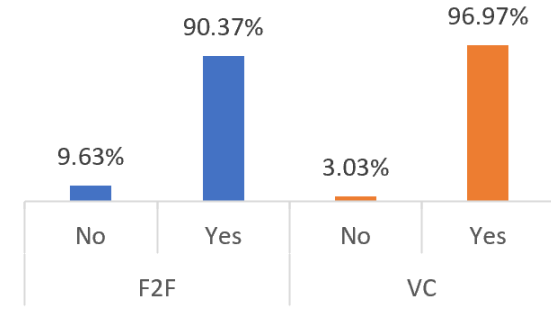
Total Surveys: 551



Would you consider the course of action recommended by lawyer?



Would you recommend our service to others?

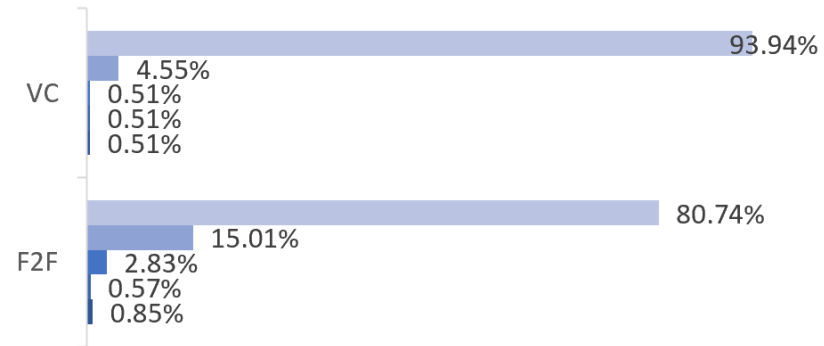


Would you return for new legal issue?

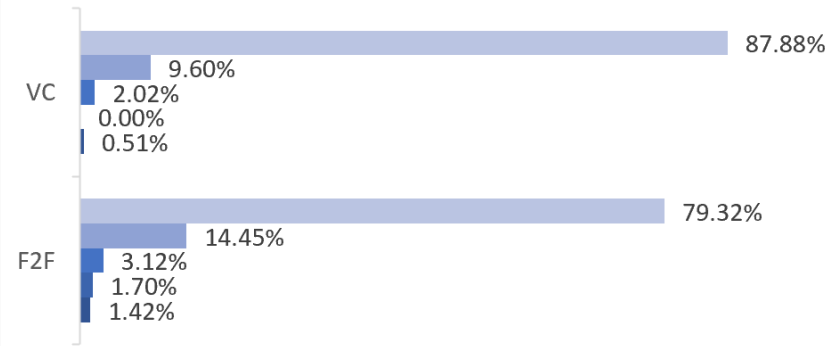


Very Satisfied 5 4 3 2 1 Very Dissatisfied

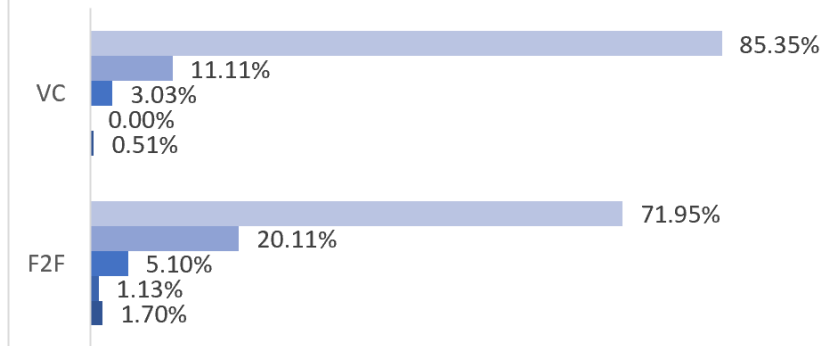
### Friendliness of Helpfulness of Staff



### Efficiency of Registration

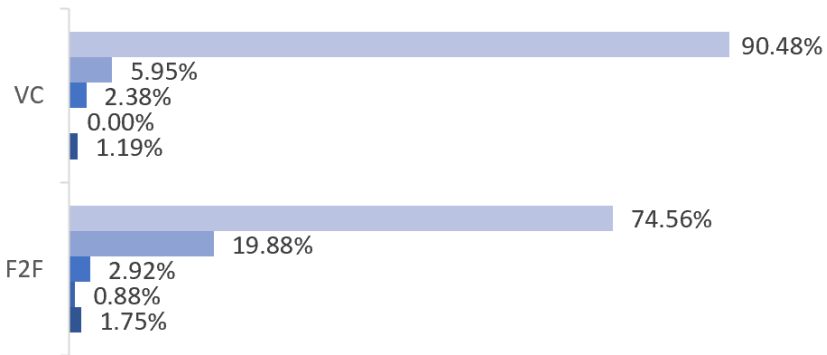


### Ease of Finding Premises / VC Platform

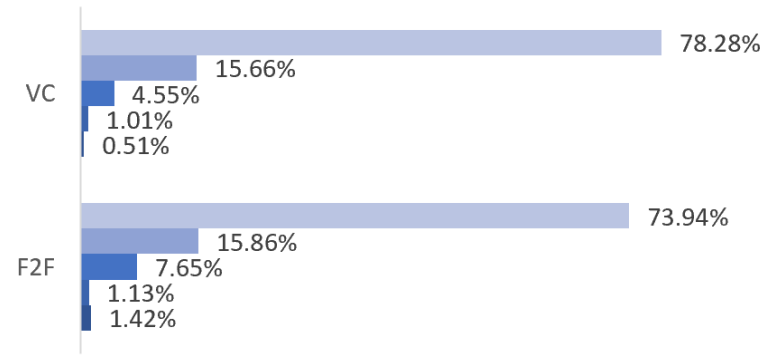


Very Satisfied   5   4   3   2   1   Very Dissatisfied

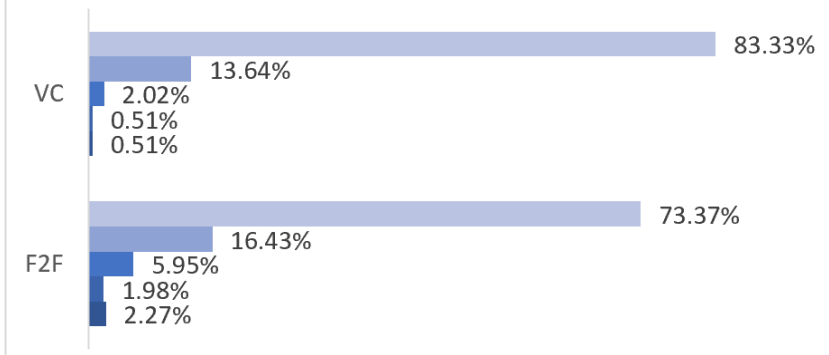
### Waiting Area and Consultation Room



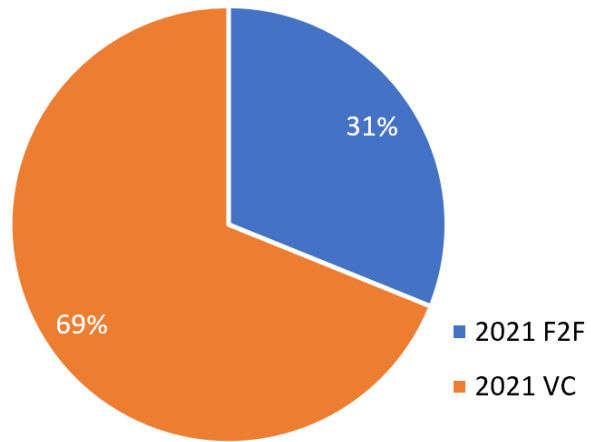
### Length of Session with Lawyer



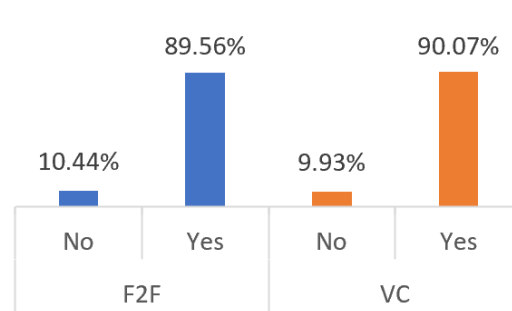
### Helpfulness of lawyer's Advice



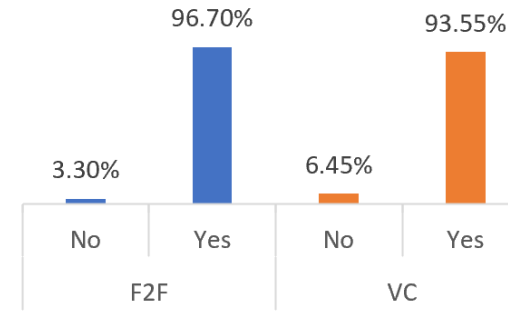
## CLC Satisfaction Survey Results for 2021



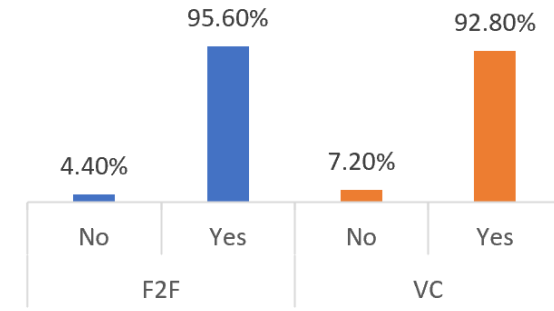
Total Surveys: 585



Would you consider the course of action recommended by lawyer?



Would you recommend our service to others?



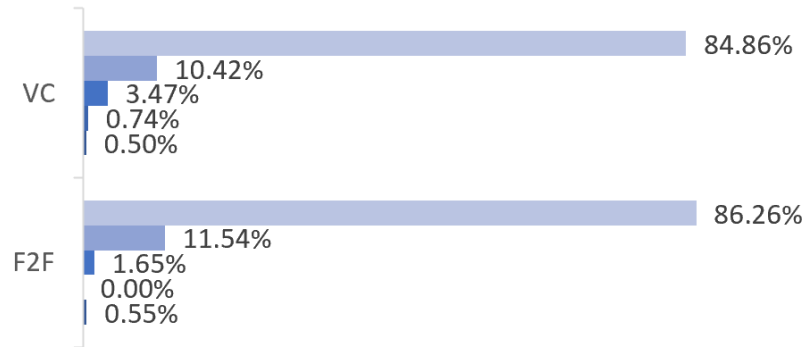
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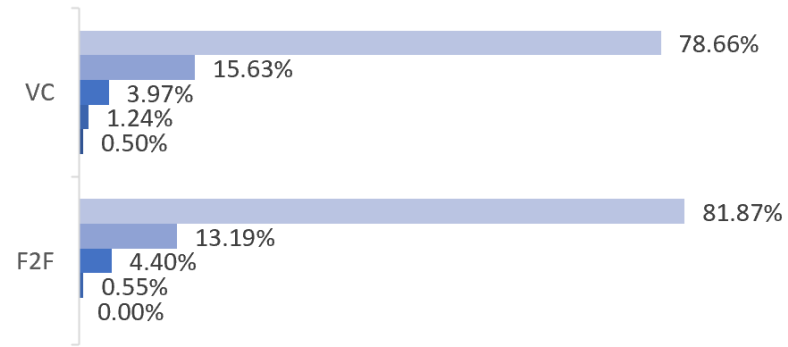


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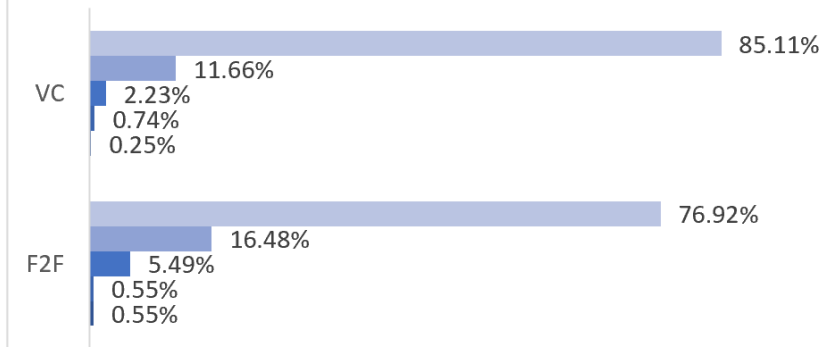
### Friendliness of Helpfulness of Staff



### Efficiency of Registration

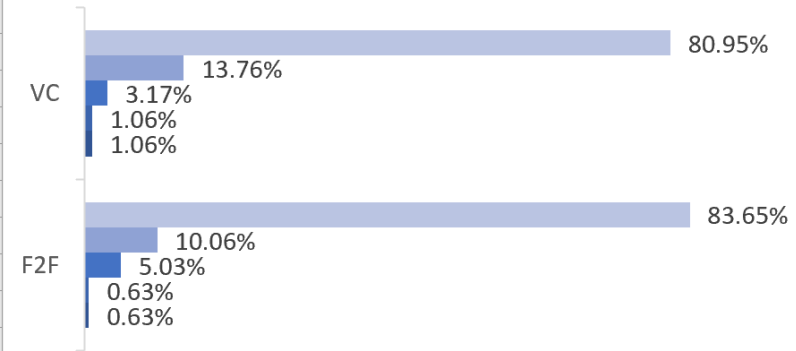


### Ease of Finding Premises / VC Platform

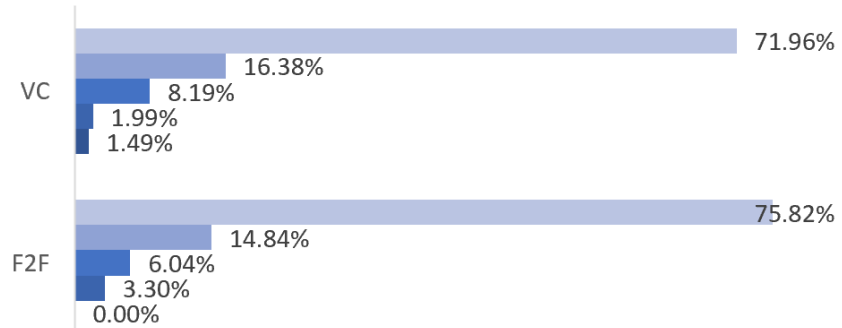


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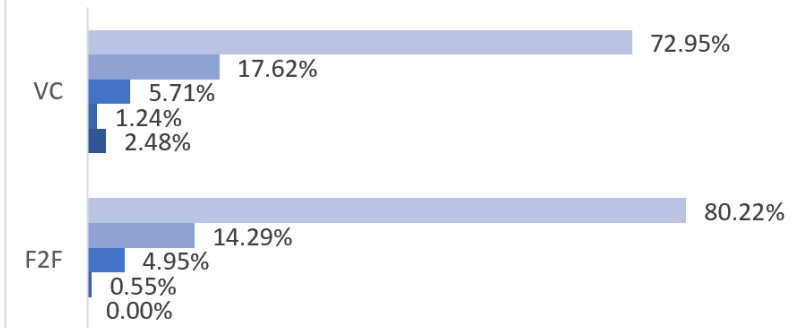
### Waiting Area and Consultation Room



### Length of Session with Lawyer



### Helpfulness of lawyer's Advice



- Deepest thanks to Mr Edwin for his succinct advisory, regarding the tenancy matters. It was very useful in my decision-making process & it has also addressed my financial concerns. I am utterly grateful to Law Society Pro Bono Services for the one-off free legal session with the legal professional.
- **Really appreciate the advice from the helpful and friendly lawyer and the cheerful staff. It is really not an easy task for people who have no money and/or are landed in such unfortunate circumstances.**
- **Thank you so much. You are a big help to people like me.**
- **Very informative session. The lawyers are extremely helpful and friendly. Keep up the excellent work for the needy. Thank you so much!!**

- **Appreciate this service. The whole session was conducted in a professional manner. The volunteer lawyer did his best even on a pro bono service. The session was well used as a training session for the intern who was an observer. Thank you.**
- **Efficiently conducted and well organized. Much appreciated for the time and trouble taken by your team to render professional legal advice.**
- **I am really impressed with the service of the staff and the lawyer. Thank you very much for hearing me out.**
- **I am very thankful and grateful to get such a pro-bono service where the lawyer spent his time at an opportunity cost to give free advice to people who needed help.**
- **It's very convenient to use video conferencing.**

- The advisor was very clear, easy to speak to. Sets my mind at ease. Thank you so much for everyone's time setting these meetings to help us out!
- The lawyer was prepared with the case, making it straight-forward during the clinic session.
- The whole process was very smooth and clear. The staff has been very helpful and patient during the testing of Zoom call and called me when there is a delay and when the call ended. The lawyer who advised me also gave 2 options to choose from. He is very knowledgeable and transparent when I asked questions on the cost (refundable), complexity and he also guided me where to get further help on write of seizures. Thank you once again!

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Session Plan: different perspectives

- Client Feedback: Claudine Tan
- **Lawyer Perspective: Jannelle Lau**
- Student Perspective: Ng Wei and Marcus (video)
- Clinic Organiser: Claudine



# Optimal Legal Clinics: Perspectives of Access to Justice Actors on In-Person and Virtual Clinics

Lawyer Perspective: Jannelle Lau

## Brief Background

### Advantages:

- Easier for lawyers to participate

- Less need for travel for clients

- Documents provided in advance – can ask for clarifications or further documents

### Disadvantages:

- Not as easy to review voluminous documents

- Technical issues

- Restricted to oral communication

- Uncertainty of who is listening in



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# COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS (Organiser's Perspective)

Covers legal issues:

- on personal matters only (investment, business and professional matters are not covered)
- legal advice has never been sought before

These clinics run nightly, Mondays to Fridays  
(excluding public holidays and eve of public holidays).

Pre Covid-19:

- over 3,000 registrations a year which were through emails and hotline
- Clinics were conducted physically in different locations with up to 6 lawyers on one night, seeing up to 6 applicants each.

With increasing Covid-19 community cases in early 2020, we started urgently exploring running these clinics online so as to be able to continue running them.

- shortage of laptops;
- which virtual meeting platform?
- staff, volunteer and applicant training;
- resistance met; lost some volunteers, gained others; not all applicants have a smart device;
- no interns (important resource!) to help process applications through hotline.

- New vendors
- Mobile phones for staff and had the Clinics hotline number forwarded to these phones, round robin.
- Digitalising all forms (registration, Terms and Conditions, Attendance Notes etc) which made for easy retrieval of records.
- Zoom – familiarity and had waiting room feature
- Trial sessions for applicants and volunteers
- Older or those less comfortable with technology, came physically to the clinics but had their consultations online with the lawyers.
- Publicity through various channels that our clinics were ongoing.

- Protocol for interns which guided the students on the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the applicants and their cases.
- Interns started helping to process online applications and with clarifications under the guidance of our staff using Microsoft TEAMS under with an account setup for them, so secure and monitored by the team. They also sit in consultations and take notes.
- Expanded our services to offer Syariah law guidance during Circuit Breaker.
- Updated referral processes as new assistance measures were rolled out as the pandemic affected many in the community.
- Overseas Singaporeans and foreigners who needed help with Singapore law within reach now, virtually.

- Open and continuous discussions
- Brainstorming
- Tweaking and enhancing forms and processes

By the time the Circuit Breaker started on 7 April 2020, we had already moved the entire process online.

Legal clinics could proceed without much difficulties, subject to internal manpower considerations.

Where hiccups occurred (technical issues as well as ever-changing COVID-19 requirements), we continually finetuned and adapted throughout the period, and along the way, saved many trees!

Passion and drive by the team to ensure that the vulnerable who need legal guidance able to access it.

- Superb team members, unity in purpose and mission.
- Committed volunteer lawyers who in general too were happy as there was time saving, and in safe pair of hands. Also appreciated that all supporting documents were emailed across ahead of time.
- Applicants who appreciated that clinics were ongoing and more convenient in terms of time and access.



# LSPBS Community Legal Clinic - Registration Form

This form is used for applicants who wish to register for the free **Community Legal Clinics ("CLC")** administered by **Law Society Pro Bono Services ("LSPBS")**.

It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete this form.

Please note that CLCs are only for needy and vulnerable individuals who require general legal guidance on personal matters.

## To be eligible for the CLCs you must also fulfil the following conditions:

- (1) You have NOT sought any legal advice before or engaged a lawyer previously regarding this matter.
- (2) You are seeking general legal guidance for your OWN personal matter (i.e. not for a spouse or family member)
- (3) This matter is NOT:
  - related to your business (except sole proprietor business issues)
  - corporate or professional matters
  - investment matters, such as timeshares, memberships, banking/financial issues

## Please note the following:

- (1) We will require your full personal particulars, details of adverse parties, case details and supporting documents. These are required for registration and will be retained for our records. We will NOT be able to delete your personal data even if you decide not to attend the clinic subsequently, as such data is required for our business and legal needs. The information will also be sent to the volunteer lawyers.
- (2) The legal consultation is a **20-minute session** during which the volunteer lawyer will provide **general legal guidance**. The lawyer is NOT representing you, acting on your behalf or providing any drafting services during the consultation or thereafter.



## Clinic Attendance Note

Date: \*

Start Time \*

▼

:

▼

PM ▼

HourMinutes

Legal Clinic Location: \*

Select from list... ▼

Name of Applicant: \*

Case Number [Follow Caselist]: \*

Facts / Issues: \*



## Terms And Conditions

The legal consultation and/or referral service at this legal clinic is provided free of charge as a community service by the Law Society Pro Bono Services ("LSPBS"), its volunteer lawyers and volunteer support assistants, and is based on information believed by LSPBS and its volunteer lawyers to be complete, accurate and up-to-date. Such legal consultation and/or referral service provided is only of a general nature based on the information furnished to LSPBS and/or the volunteer lawyer and/or the social worker, and is not specifically provided for the purpose of, or use in, any court case. In addition, the legal consultation and/or referral service given during these sessions has been done as a matter of general guidance and by way of broad pointers only. It is not intended to replace, supplement or do away with the need for professional legal advice and/or legal action.

I, \*

(name as per NRIC)

and ID Number: \*

(last 4 characters of NRIC, including the alphabet )

## Terms and Conditions for accompanying person at legal clinic

Full name of accompanying person \*

(as in NRIC / Passport)

Last 4 characters of NRIC / Passport number of accompanying person \*

Role / Relationship to Applicant \*

e.g. spouse, sibling, social worker, translator etc.

Applicant's name \*

1. I confirm that I have obtained the applicant's consent to assist him/her in his/her registration for the legal clinic and/or during the legal clinic.

2. I confirm that all information that I have provided to LSPBS are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.



LAW SOCIETY  
PRO BONO SERVICES

English (UK)

## Satisfaction Survey Form

Dear Sir/Madam

We hope that the legal clinic you had attended, arranged by the Law Society Pro Bono Services, was helpful to you.

To help us serve you better, we would appreciate if you could give us your feedback by taking a few minutes of your time to complete this survey.

Legal clinic date:

07-09-2021



Legal clinic location attended: \*

- ☐ North West CDC @ Woodlands
- ☐ South East CDC @ Geylang
- ☐ South West CDC @ Jurong
- ☐ Central CDC @ Toa Payoh
- ☐ Civil Legal Clinic @ State Courts
- ☐ Family Legal Clinic @ State Courts
- ☐ Family Legal Clinic @ Family Justice Courts
- ☐ Video Conference - Community Legal Clinic (Mondays to Thursdays)
- ☐ Video Conference - Youth Legal Clinic (Fridays)
- ☐ Video Conference - Advocates For



LAW SOCIETY  
PRO BONO SERVICES

### Volunteer Roles

- ☐ Legal Clinics Student Volunteer Assisting with Note Taking
- ☐ Community Legal Clinic (CLC) Student Volunteer Office Attachment
- ☐ Criminal Legal Aid Scheme (CLAS) Student Volunteer
- ☐ Family Justice Support Scheme (FJSS) Student Volunteer
- ☐ Ad Hoc Pro Bono Scheme (AHPBS) Student Volunteer
- ☐ Law Awareness Weeks (LAW) Student Volunteer
- ☐ Others

# COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS

## IF YOU NEED LEGAL ADVICE


on **personal** matters such as employment, contract, family and personal debt and can't afford legal advice...

Call **6536 0650** or e-mail **[clc@lawsocprobono.org](mailto:clc@lawsocprobono.org)** to arrange for a for a **20-minute** pro bono legal advice session.

Due to the current COVID-19 circuit breaker, legal clinics are conducted via video-conferencing.

Eligible applicants who meet our criteria will be scheduled for an appointment at the next available slot and taught how to use the video-conferencing platform before the appointment\*.


*\*Applicants who are not comfortable with video-conferencing can request for phone consultation or a face-to-face session after the circuit breaker.*




**FREE LEGAL ADVICE  
FOR YOUTHS IN NEED**

# Youth Community & Legal Clinic

**For 18-35 year olds**

 **20-minute free legal advice session via Zoom  
with our volunteer lawyers**

 **on personal matters e.g. contractual matters,  
employment, abuse, harassment, personal debt**

NOTE: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA APPLIES.  
THE LEGAL CLINIC IS FOR GENERAL ADVICE ONLY. THE VOLUNTEER LAWYER CANNOT  
PROVIDE ANY DRAFTING SERVICES, REPRESENT YOU, NOR ACT ON YOUR BEHALF.

**QUESTIONS? EMAIL [CLC@LAWSOCPROBONO.ORG](mailto:CLC@LAWSOCPROBONO.ORG)**

1. Click on the meeting link to join the virtual consultation room.
2. Check your display name
3. Turn on your camera.
4. Watch [video](#) on how to use Zoom, if this is your first time.
5. To ensure good video quality during the session, close all applications running on your computer and refrain from using any large bandwidth-consuming apps (e.g. Netflix, gaming) that share your wifi network.

## **Protocol for offsite student internships during COVID-19**

### **I. General**

1. Do not use public Wi-Fi when working on materials that contain confidential information about applicants.
2. When using your home's Wi-Fi, ensure that the connection is encrypted, i.e. a password is required before connecting to Wi-Fi.
3. Lock your computer/device when not using the same.
4. Do not allow anyone to directly and/or remotely access your computer/device if that means that they will have access to your email account or any other folder/document where confidential information about applicants, including personal data, could be stored.
5. If you share a computer/device with others, make sure that each user has their own user account and password.
6. Ensure that any and all attachments containing confidential information about applicants are encrypted (i.e. password-protected) before sending them via email. For additional security, communicate passwords in a separate email or text message. Do not include confidential information about applicants in the email subject header or body of the email.
7. Do your best to work in an area of your home that allows for privacy. Plan to take calls / virtual meetings in a private space and use headphones/earphones so others in your household cannot overhear your conversation or see your screen.

### **II. Guidelines on Court attendance (if applicable)**

8. In the event that you are permitted by LSPBS and the Courts to attend virtual hearings, you must abide by any and all guidelines and directions issued by LSPBS and/or the Courts on the conduct of virtual hearings, as notified from time to time.



1. Click and complete the online Clinic [Terms and Conditions form](#) before consultation with the lawyer. If you have any family member(s) accompanying you for the consultation, please have them fill in this [Terms and Conditions for Accompanying Person](#) form.
2. Test-run your setup before your actual session, by clicking here between 4–5pm.
3. Wait for arrival of our email closer to appointment time to receive the actual Meeting Link.
4. Indicate your name when you join the meeting session.
5. Your camera must be turned on during the entire session.
6. Ensure that you are in a quiet environment during the session.
7. Watch [video](#) on how to use Zoom, if this is your first time.
8. To ensure good video quality during the session, close all applications running on your computer and refrain from using any large bandwidth-consuming apps (e.g. Netflix, gaming) that share your wifi network.

# Connect With Us

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65360650



enquiry@lawsocprobono.org

## LinkedIn



[https://sg.linkedin.com  
/company/law-society-  
pro-bono-services](https://sg.linkedin.com/company/law-society-pro-bono-services)

## Facebook



[https://www.facebook  
.com/lawsocprobonos  
ervices/](https://www.facebook.com/lawsocprobonoservices/)

## Website



[https://www.lawsoc  
probono.org](https://www.lawsocprobono.org)

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## Session Plan:

1. Provide different perspectives on in-person and virtual legal clinics
2. Breakout rooms: 20 minutes
  - Discuss your respective experiences
  - Best aspects of in-person, most challenging?
  - Best aspects of virtual, most challenging?
3. Return and share your experiences
4. Different clinic platforms: lessons and going forward





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# Optimal Legal Clinics: Perspectives of Access to Justice Actors on In-Person and Virtual Clinics

## Session Plan:

1. Provide different perspectives on in-person and virtual legal clinics

2. Breakout rooms: 15 minutes

- Discuss your respective experiences
- Best aspects of in-person, most challenging?
- Best aspects of virtual, most challenging?

3. Return and share your experiences

4. Panel on different clinic platforms: lessons and going forward



## Lessons and going forward:

- LSPBS: Claudine Tan
- Lawyer Perspective: Jannelle Lau
- Student Perspective: Ng Wei

## LSPBS: What next?

- Automation of processes;
- Longer internship periods / overlaps to avoid churn;
- Look out for signs of fatigue among staff and volunteers;
- Outreach to further publicise clinics to reach more pockets of the community needing legal guidance but unable to afford lawyers.