**Pro Bono Connect – template proposal**

**Summary**

The pro bono connect scheme involves occasional emails containing requests for pro bono counsel. This is different from the usual type of pro bono cases, because the requests come from solicitors rather than the Bar Pro Bono Unit. The solicitors' involvement will make the barrister's work much easier, perhaps obtain a better result for the client, and enable us to build relationships with the various firms. There is also an option for barristers with a pro bono case to seek input from solicitors.

From a Chambers perspective, the clerk's role would be to review any requests (which come in a short form), see whether any of our members are appropriate, available and willing (as with any enquiries), and then accept the instructions as appropriate (unless someone else has done so first). There would also be the usual clerking support as the case progresses.

[Our senior clerk considers this is a good thing, and sees no problem with the proposal from a clerking perspective.]

This is an opportunity to do some high-quality pro bono work, and build relationships with solicitors.

The current participating firms include: Linklaters, A&O, Weil Gotshal, K&L Gates, Mishcon de Reya, Enyo Law, Debevoise & Plimpton, Pinsent Masons, DLA Piper, and Arnold & Porter.

The current participating chambers include: One Essex Court, Fountain Court, Wilberforce, Outer Temple, 11 KBW, Devereux, 4 Stone Buildings, 4 Pump Court, 36 Bedford Row, Maitland Chambers, and chambers represented by the Revenue Bar Association.

**[DRAFT] PROPOSAL FOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**The issue**

The usual source for pro bono work for barristers is the Bar Pro Bono Unit, but it provides no assistance in the conduct of cases. A barrister acting pro bono therefore often does all the work a solicitor would do, in addition to advising, drafting, and presenting the case in court. This burden is particularly significant if the case goes to trial and can be a deterrent to barristers taking on pro bono cases.

**Purpose of the project**

Establish a network to facilitate solicitors and barristers working together on pro bono matters, and thereby increase the amount of pro bono work they are each able to take on.

Pro bono work should be made more manageable by:

1. Obtaining solicitor assistance in order to enable barristers to focus on their traditional functions;
2. Sharing the burden of an ongoing pro bono matter as work capacity fluctuates over time.

**Additional benefits for participants**

These include:

1. Increase the scope, range and volume of pro bono work taken on by barristers and solicitors;
2. Cementing existing barrister/solicitor relationships and/or fostering new ones;
3. Good publicity for barrister, chambers and the bar generally (ditto for law firms).

**Mechanics**

The scheme is intended to build on existing pro bono structures in a simple way.

A range of commercial/chancery/common law/public law/tax law sets of chambers, and city law firms, have agreed to participate in the scheme.

Each nominate a point of contact (clerk/pro bono manager) and a representative (barrister/partner or associate).

Solicitors and barristers from those firms/chambers take on pro bono work from sources they use already. In the case of barristers, this means the Bar Pro Bono Unit.

If either barrister or solicitors feels they would benefit from the support of the other, they make a request for assistance (via the clerks) to the points of contact at participating chambers/firms to find someone to help, using the request form (sample attached). There is no commitment to accept a request, only to consider doing so.

The precise mechanics of the scheme are set out in the Protocol: <https://probonoconnect.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/PBC-Info-pack.pdf>

**What is requested from Management Committee?**

1. Agreement in principle to members participating in pro bono work through the scheme. Encouragement and advertising of the scheme within chambers, if considered to be appropriate.
2. Agreement to the appointment of a clerk as the Chambers point of contact (for making and receiving requests) and to assist with administration.
3. Agreement to the appointment of a barrister as the Chambers representative on the working group committee.