



the jeanie project
access to justice through active goodwill

In conversation with **Lucy Scott-Moncrieff CBE**, Founder and Managing Director of Scott-Moncrieff & Associates and Chair of Trustees at The Jeanie Project



24th October 2018

As Pro Bono Week 2018 launches, The Jeanie Project sat down with Lucy Scott-Moncrieff CBE, Founder and Managing Director of Scott-Moncrieff & Associates and Chair of Trustees at The Jeanie Project, to find out more about leveraging technology for the effective delivery of legal services and her new ground-breaking initiative, The Jeanie Project.

There is a lot of ‘talk’ at the moment about legal tech and using technology to facilitate the delivery of legal services. What does it really mean?

There are many ways in which tech can deliver legal services. For me, it’s a tool that allows lawyers to use their expertise more effectively. It allows them to offer quicker and cheaper high-quality services than were previously possible. For instance, Skype and FaceTime allow easy face to face contact even when the client and solicitor are many miles apart. Smartphones allow a solicitor to ‘visit’ a disputed site remotely using Google Maps, have a video conference with a client or collect evidence and information on the locale.

You founded Scott-Moncrieff & Associates over thirty years ago. Tell us more about the firm and your motivation for setting it up.

To begin with, it was just me, building up a practice as a sole practitioner after the birth of my first child. As all my clients were detained in hospital or on remand in prison, I had to visit them as they could not visit me, and so I did not need an office. This was long before the internet, so I dictated my work onto cassettes which were then processed by an agency. All my work was legal aid and saving money was always important. As more people joined the firm I realised the potential of using technology not only to keep overheads down but to give our people flexibility in how they work. This meant that we attracted brilliant and dedicated solicitors and we developed a reputation for taking on ground breaking cases.

It’s pro bono week this week (22nd – 27th October). As a founding Co-Chair of the Legal Aid and Access to Justice Committee of the International Bar Association, and now the Chair of its Advisory Board, how important do you think pro bono work is in maintaining our justice system?

Pro bono week is an annual, global, celebration of this commitment to helping vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalised people achieve justice, despite their inability to pay. It recognises that pro bono work is good for the client, good for society in supporting the rule of law, and good for the lawyer doing the work. They may be

working very far from their comfort zone, but in doing so, they gain invaluable skills from dealing with all kinds of people and make an invaluable contribution to maintaining our justice system. It is wonderful that lawyers all around the world care about justice, and support the rule of law, of which access to justice is an essential element.

How can solicitors/barristers get involved with The Jeanie Project and what benefit they would gain from doing so?

The project helps civil society organisations obtain legal advice for their clients. The Jeanie Project's technology enables the organisation to collect information from their clients that can then be passed to pro bono legal advisers for consideration. We hope that because the technology means pro bono advisers don't have to spend time travelling to deliver advice face-to-face, they will have greater capacity to do more pro bono work in the time they have available. It effectively enables legal advisers to undertake pro bono work from the comfort of their office or their home. The Jeanie Project is currently seeking volunteer pro bono advisers – if you're interested, visit www.thejeanieproject.org.uk/probono to find out more.

Why does the success of the JP matter to you?

I know, from my work at the Law Society, just how much time, effort and thought is put into pro bono by the lawyers who belong to the profession I love. Our goal at The Jeanie Project is to make it possible for you to help more people in the time you have available, maximise the results from your efforts and encourage you to think outside the box by embracing this ground-breaking technology.

To volunteer as a pro bono legal adviser or to find out more about The Jeanie Project, see <https://thejeanieproject.org.uk/probono>.