



BALLYMUN COMMUNITY LAW CENTRE

ANNUAL REVIEW 2010

Chairperson's Letter

Ballymun Community Law Centre which was founded in 2002 continues to provide a much needed legal service to Ballymun; 2010 was an extremely busy year, take up of all three of our core services: legal services, legal education and mediation increased in 2010 with more people availing of services than ever before.

In 2010, the founding solicitor Frank Murphy who has been on secondment from the Legal Aid Board for many years, was asked to go back to work in one of the LAB centres for part of each week. Frank's reduced hours in Ballymun has not reduced the capacity of the service as much as was initially feared because in May 2010 we were able to employ an additional full time solicitor Mikayla Sherlock.

In October our very own Christina Beresford who has been with the centre since it was founded, successfully completed her law degree; Christina continues to work in the centre as a Law Clerk. In 2010 BCLC took on its first trainee solicitor, Yvonne O'Neill, who along with Mikayla has further increased the capacity of the service. Yvonne made a very valuable contribution to the centre and we wish her the best in her legal career.

In 2010 as in previous years, Ballymun residents continued to avail of the free legal services provided by BCLC - the focus has been on housing, debt and employment related issues. However it has become increasingly obvious that there is a huge need for a comprehensive family law service in Ballymun. The board and staff met to consider this issue as part of a strategic review of the service in November 2010.

It was decided to investigate what form of family law service could be provided by the centre without adversely affecting the provision of legal services in the core areas of housing, debt, equality and employment. It was decided to introduce a family advice and information service only service on a pilot basis from the middle of 2011.

This new service will not provide representation and will not seek to replace the family law services provided by the State's Legal Aid Board - rather it will provide a bridge to support people who need information and advice about how to deal with their issues in relation to

family law; most people will need to engage a solicitor or attend a LAB centre after meeting with the solicitor in Ballymun and some may well decide that their best course of action is to go straight to the LAB centre so that they go on the waiting list as soon as possible.

An important part of the pilot will be research into whether the new service is meeting the needs of the community in Ballymun and how it can be improved within the resources available in a Community Law Centre setting.

Chiefly due to the inspirational leadership of Frank Murphy the centre continues to deliver an ambitious legal education programme and provides a wide array of legal courses and seminars. BCLC also delivered the first part of the family mediation training. We recognise that there is an appetite for an advanced family law course and are currently in discussions with third level education institutions to see if this need can be met.

The mediation service continued to expand its work with the delivery of peer mediation training to six of the eight primary schools in Ballymun. The goal of peer mediation is to reduce conflict and provide children with problem-solving skills.

This is a truly unique initiative and one that will have a tangible impact on the young people in the area.

As in other areas of endeavour Ballymun schools are leading the way in peer mediation and they are to be commended for their commitment.

The board want to acknowledge the opportunity that the Law Reform Commission provided to Ballymun by offering residents the opportunity to contribute to the process of law reform on major issues; the centre will continue to support these consultations in the future.

As an organisation we continue to be indebted to all the individuals and organisations that provide ongoing support and assistance. The centre's core funding and indeed its very premises are provided by DCC and BRL.

In addition I would like to thank the solicitors and the Law Society of Ireland for their continued financial support and the Family Lawyer's Association for their valuable assistance.

We are grateful to both DCU and NUI Galway for their ongoing involvement and interest in the work of the centre's legal education programmes.

To all those who contribute to the work of the centre by offering their services on a "pro bono" basis by delivering courses and seminars, to the volunteer mediators, we thank you for your expertise, time and your belief in the principle of a community law service.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution which national and local organisations represented on the board make to the service particularly FLAC which was instrumental in the establishment of the centre in the first place.

To the staff and directors of BCLC thank you for your ongoing commitment and engagement in this worthwhile and inspiring area of work.

Evelyn Hanlon

Chairperson

Ballymun Community Law Centre

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY LAW CENTRE?

A community law centre is a non-profit organisation which works to remove and reduce barriers to the law.

Ballymun Community Law Centre provides a range of free legal services and mediation in Ballymun.

OUR PURPOSE

- To provide free legal advice, information and representation to the people of Ballymun.
- To deliver an accessible legal education programme.
- To offer mediation as an alternative solution to potential problems.

OUR VALUES

We are committed to work in a professional, responsive, respectful and timely manner for the benefit of the client and the community.

CONTACT US

Ballymun Community Law Centre
165-166 Balbutcher Lane
Ballymun
Dublin 11

Tel: (01) 862 58 05
Fax: (01) 862 58 00

Email: info@bclc.ie
Website: www.bclc.ie

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday
9am - 1pm
2pm - 5pm

LOCAL LEGAL ADVICE CLINICS

Local Employment Office, Ballymun Shopping Centre
First Tuesday of every month, 10am - 12 noon

Ballymun Library, Ballymun Road
Second Tuesday of every month, 10am - 12 noon

Poppintree Community Forum/Sports Centre, Balbutcher Lane North
Third Tuesday of every month, 10am - 12 noon

Drop In Well Family Resource Centre, 22 Santry Way
Fourth Tuesday of every month, 10am- 12 noon

The clinics operate on a drop-in basis so no appointment is necessary.

Please note that we can only advise you if you live in the Ballymun area.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Ballymun Community Law Centre was very pleased to welcome Mikayla Sherlock to the position of Community Solicitor on 19th May 2010. Together with Frank Murphy BCLC can offer an enhanced legal service in Ballymun. For the most part, the job of the Community Solicitor is to run the case files, represent and advise clients where appropriate and to attend and advise at the outreach clinics

Despite popular belief, the summer was quite busy. While July was next only to December and January in terms of lack of appointments, August and September each recorded the second highest number of appointments all year.

BALLYMUN LAW

The Law Centre provides both direct and indirect legal services to clients. Direct assistance takes the form of advising the client and writing on their behalf and where appropriate acting for them in court proceedings.

Indirect assistance takes the form of more general advice to clients and often drafting a letter on their behalf which they can send to the other party – in this way the person is both empowered to try to resolve the matter themselves and the other party (be it a business, local authority, public service etc.) may be more inclined to respect the consumer acting for themselves. There are currently 35 open files approximately being dealt with by the solicitor.

CASE WORK

The case work continues to benefit greatly from the pro bono assistance of Bar Council members. New barristers are coming forward to assist and support the Law Centre which is very positive for the case work, clients and efficiency of the Law Centre. The Bar Council's Voluntary Assistance Scheme under the direction of Jeanne McDonagh is a great asset to the community.

HOUSING

The Community Solicitor is involved in the work of the Housing Group which is a group of representative organisations involved in housing issues of one sort or another. The group shares information and ideas and works towards improving the experience people have with the social housing infrastructure.

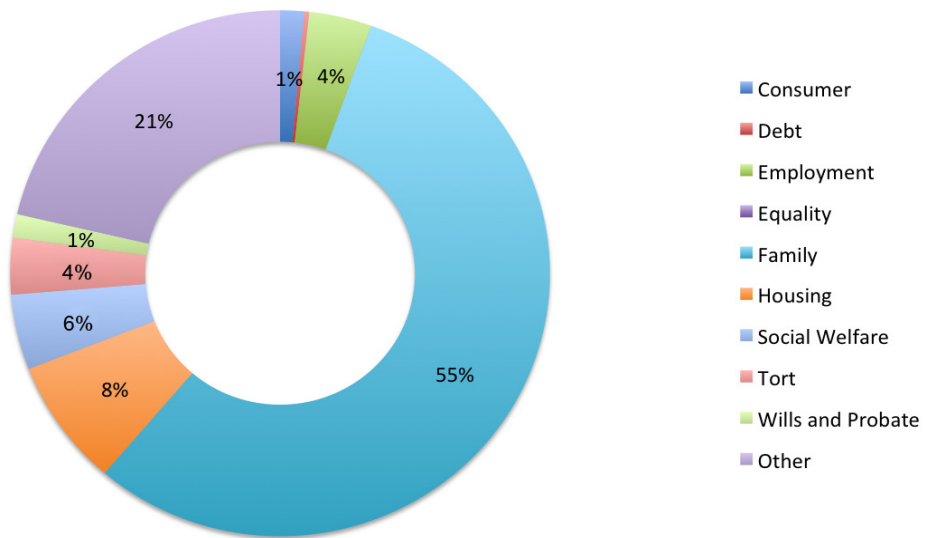
The group has made submissions to the various Dublin Housing Authorities in relation to anti-social behaviour strategies. The group has also successfully engaged the local authority to agree the format of certain legal documents for housing applications.

The group continued its work seeking that the Legal Aid Board includes eviction summonses under Section 62 of the Housing Act 1966 within its remit. Other initiatives include plans to launch a detailed Tenant Handbook.

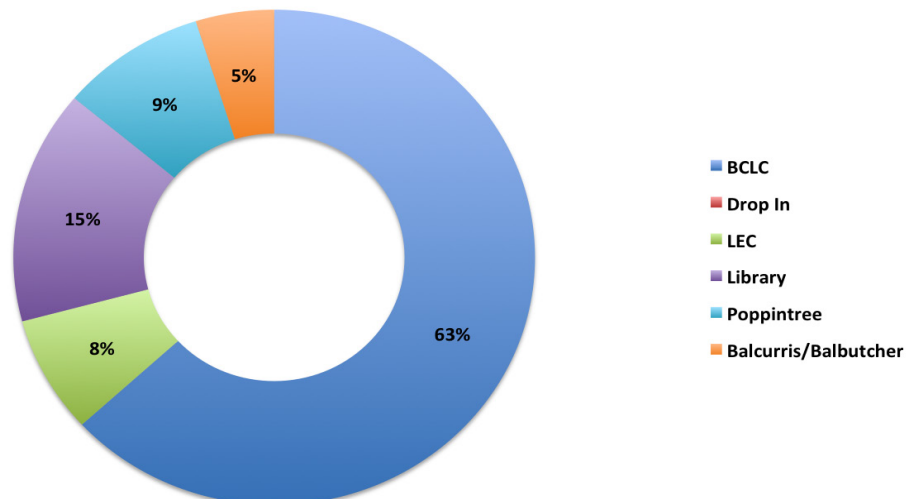
Following the substantial increase in legal professional indemnity insurance costs in 2009, a group of Independent Law Centres worked together to get very competitive premiums. Unfortunately, the insurer will not be in the PI insurance market in the future.

We have also benefited from the assistance of PILA (Public Interest Law Alliance) and its Lawyers' Register and follows closely the developments of PILA in trying to establish a register of other professionals to assist Independent Law Centres with case work.

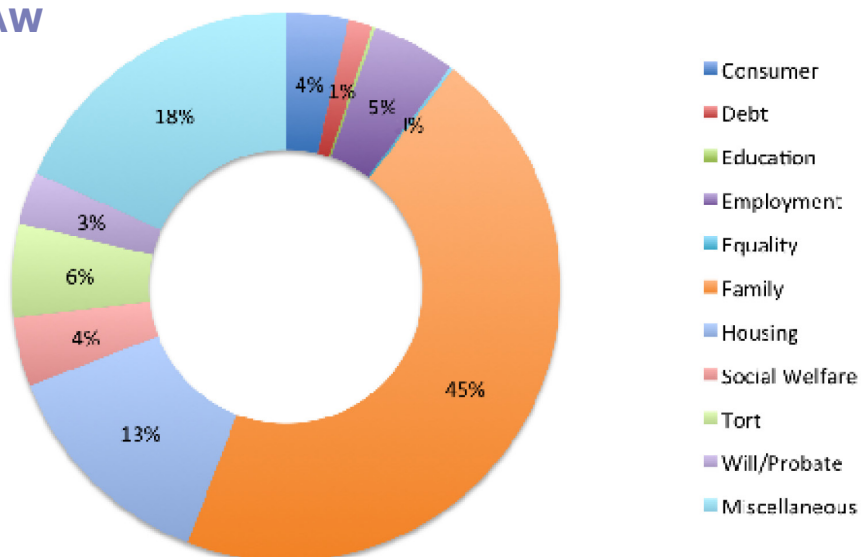
CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY QUERIES



LOCATION OF SOLICITORS' APPOINTMENTS



BALLYMUN COMMUNITY LAW CENTRE SOLICITORS' STATISTICS



CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY QUERIES

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Consumer	1	1				1			1	1			5
Debt					1								1
Employment	2	4		1		1	2	2			1		13
Equality													
Family	16	19	21	22	19	22	14	12	13	17	12	6	193
Housing		2	3	6	2	3	1	1	4	3		1	26
Social Welfare	4	3	3	1	1	1		1			1		15
Tort	1	1	3					1	1	4	1		12
Wills & Probate								2		3	1		6
Other	11	12	3	10	11	8	3	4	5	5	1	1	74
Total	35	42	33	40	34	36	20	23	24	33	17	8	345

BALLYMUN COMMUNITY LAW CENTRE SOLICITORS STATISTICS 2010

Solicitor	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
New Appointments													
BCLC	6	4	9	11	8	14	6	16	18	7	9	6	114
Drop In													
LEC	0	1	5	c	c	3	0	0	2	0	3	0	14
Library	1	4	6	c	2	0	2	5	2	1	1	1	25
Poppintree	1	0	3	3	3	0	1	2	0	1	3	1	18
Balcurris/ Balbutcher	0	0	3	2	1	0	c	1	2	c	0	c	9
Total	8	9	26	16	14	17	9	24	24	9	16	8	180

CATEGORIES OF QUERIES DEALT WITH BY SOLICITOR

Consumer	15	Housing	50
Debt	12	Social Welfare	5
Education	1	Tort	19
Employment	13	Wills & Probate	11
Equality	1	Other	20
Family	33		
		Total	180

LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

As part of its aim to make legal studies accessible to the people of Ballymun a series of courses and special interest seminars were delivered throughout the year.

- Three courses in Family Law Matters at FETAC level 4 took place. Ballymun Community Law Centre was delighted to be invited back to The STAR project to deliver the course to a group of their clients. The course includes a trip into the family law courts and the Four Courts. Students had the opportunity to talk to and question Judge Furlong about what happens in the family law courts. Law students from DCU's School of Law were a great help as study buddies during the courses.
- Employment Law Fundamentals at FETAC Level 6 was delivered in partnership with Northside Community Law Centre.
- The National University of Ireland Galway Housing Law & Policy course was broadcast live by video link to Ballymun from Galway. The students gained a valuable insight into the history of housing law in Ireland as well as the current issues around housing policy.
- Barry Fitzgerald BL presented a very insightful six-week course on Cherishing all the Children Equally. The course was very positively received by the twenty six participants who had the opportunity to explore the latest developments in child law in Ireland.
- The series of specialised seminars featured Kevin Liston with a very thought provoking seminar on addressing issues following marriage breakdown. Dr. Padraic Kenna of NUIG had a full house in the council chambers for the lecture on the new Housing Act, 2009. Dr. Kenna is Ireland's leading expert on housing law.
- Family Mediation training was delivered by Geoffrey Corry. This training incorporated the theory based element of the family mediation syllabus and is the first step to obtaining MII (Mediation Institute of Ireland) practitioner membership in family mediation.
- In 2010 Ballymun Community Law Centre delivered the 60 hour Basic Conflict Resolution and Mediation Training Skills training programme. There were seven participants on the course which is MII approved and has FETAC certification at level 6.
- BCLC also facilitated the Law Club in Trinity Comprehensive secondary school. The aim of the Law Club is to increase transition year students understanding of the Irish legal system. The activities included lectures on various legal themes; students participated in work experience in a number of solicitors' firms around the city and they attended the national Mock Court competition.



BALLYMUN MEDIATION

In the year under review our volunteer mediators were involved in eighteen disputes. Of those, eleven were brought to the joint meeting stage. The types of disputes that were dealt with by the mediators included two neighbour disagreements – agreement reached in one case; three family situations – there were agreements in the three cases. There were satisfactory outcomes in three cases involving the community and local authority. Other cases referred to the service came from the District Court and community organisations.



WHAT HAPPENS IN MEDIATION?

When someone contacts the service with a request for mediation the following is a brief synopsis of what happens next:

- Contact is made with the other party to the dispute;
- Initial visits by the mediators to both parties;
- Ground rules of respect are agreed;
- Both sides tell their story at a joint meeting;
- Issues are identified;
- Options are explored;
- Solutions are discussed;
- Agreement is reached.

The process of mediation empowers people to manage and resolve their own disputes.

It would not be possible for Ballymun Community Law Centre to provide the mediation service without its team of voluntary mediators. The role of the mediators is to support people who are in dispute to have a difficult conversation and to help people to reach their own agreement.

Disputes can often be complex especially in situations where the parties haven't been able to communicate. It requires training, great skill and technique to open this process of dialogue between the parties who are often in vulnerable situations. It is a testament to the ability, compassion and empathy of our team of mediators that the majority of cases in 2010 were brought to agreement.

Ballymun Community Law Centre is extremely grateful to the team of mediators for providing an outstanding service during the year.

"It is a testament to the ability, compassion and empathy of our team of mediators that the majority of cases in 2010 were brought to agreement"

PEER MEDIATION

The peer mediation project has so far concentrated on the primary schools in the area. The initiative is aimed at helping children and young people learn to manage their relationships and to deal with their conflicts through mediation skills training appropriate to their ages. The peer mediation programme, in the context of the school as a microcosm of society, seeks to develop a culture of mutual respect and ways of solving problems other than by means of violence. Peer mediation dovetails into the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) component of the school curriculum.

The schools engaged in the project are:

- Holy Spirit Girls' N.S.
- Holy Spirit Boys' N.S.
- Our Lady of Victories Girls' N.S.
- Our Lady of Victories Boys' N.S.
- Virgin Mary Boys' N.S.
- Virgin Mary Girls' N.S.



A key characteristic of the project has been the involvement of many agencies in Ballymun with an interest in the well-being of young people. This includes the community gardai, the Aisling Project, the Homeless Girls' Society and Ballymun Educational Support Team (BEST).

The success of the project to date has been achieved through partnership and collaboration with the staff of the schools involved and the organisations listed above. An evaluation of the peer mediation programme will be conducted during 2011.

Discussions with Trinity Comprehensive began this year with the view to rolling out a peer mediation programme appropriate to the secondary school.

The aim is to capitalise on the skills in conflict management that first year students are bringing with them into secondary, having done the peer mediation training in primary school. A manual specific to peer mediation in a secondary school setting is being written.

Ballymun is the only place in Ireland where a comprehensive peer mediation programme is taking place with the involvement of so many schools and different agencies.

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OTHER MATTERS



STRATEGIC REVIEW

A strategic review facilitated by Pat Tobin from CAN was undertaken by the directors and staff. The three main areas of operation of the law centre remain in legal services, legal education and mediation.

The needs of the community in respect of a family law service were discussed in detail and it was decided to investigate how Ballymun Community Law Centre can meet the legal need around family law without duplicating the state's Legal Aid Board.

RAPID approved the application for a **Restorative Justice** project around engagement with young people who are outside the school system. It will specifically target young people involved in anti-social behaviour.

Ballymun Community Law Centre was awarded second place in the **AIB Better Ireland Awards** – Santry branch for our peer mediation project. Members of the public voted for a charity of their choice and we are very grateful for all the support we received to finish in second place.

TELLING WOMENS' STORIES PROJECT

Ballymun Community Law Centre was on the advisory group for this project and facilitated Amnesty International in delivering a session on human rights as part of the International Women's Day celebrations.

YOUNGBALLYMUN LITERACIVIC PROJECT

Ballymun Community Law Centre was invited to join the Literacivic working group. We were delighted to have Barry Fitzgerald BL work with us on the advisory committee.

Literacivic defines 'civic literacy' as:

- our capacity to read our systems and our world;
- our ability to shape and influence systems to serve our needs;
- our communication and celebration of our story, our challenges and our vision to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people.

OFFICE RELOCATION

Having spent nine years in flats on Shangan Road, we were informed in October of the impending move of community organisations from Shangan to Balbutcher Lane. We look forward to continuing to serve the people of Ballymun from a new location in 2011.

LINKS WITH ORGANISATIONS

Since our establishment, Ballymun Community Law Centre has worked in partnership with many different organisations both locally and nationally to advance the cause of access to justice for people in Ballymun and beyond.

CORPORATE AND FINANCIAL REPORT

BALLYMUN COMMUNITY LAW CENTRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

OFFICERS

Chairperson	Evelyn Hanlon
Vice-chair	Paul Kane
Treasurer	Áine Rooney
Company Secretary	Paula McCann

OTHER DIRECTORS

Trish Flynn
Pat Gilheaney
Catherine Hickey
Paula Lally
Frank Murphy
Olivia Smith
John Weston

LAW CENTRE STAFF

Frank Murphy/Mikayla Sherlock (May 10)	Community solicitors
Paula McCann	Manager
Christina Beresford	Law clerk
Sonya Keniry	Project officer
Zuzana Pavlikova (until July 10)	Legal assistant
Janice Harrington (from Aug 10)	Legal assistant
Josie Matthews	Office cleaner

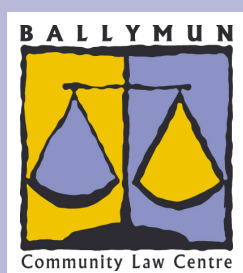
BCLC is a company limited by guarantee and is registered as Ballymun Community Law Centre Ltd.
 We are in receipt of charitable status from Revenue for tax purposes Chy 14610.

Ballymun Community Law Centre is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors and we submit audited accounts on an annual basis and follow all regulations associated with corporate obligations.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF OUR
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2010
BASED ON OUR AUDITED ACCOUNTS.

	2010
	€
Income	
Donations & Fundraising	4,082
Courses & Training Fees	11,720
Grants	15,556
Legal Fees net	48,897
Law Society Funding	52,121
NCI Accreditation Funding	30,112
Ballymun Regeneration Limited	178,436
	340,924
Operating expenses	(265,572)
Net surplus	75,352
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Operating expenses		€	
Year ended			
31 December 2010			
Legal Education Programme			
Facilitator/Tutor Costs	14,631		
NCI Accreditation Cost	30,112		
Community Education			
Administration room hire	2,276		
Miscellaneous Costs			
Bank Charges			
Office Supplies			
Travel, Meals & Accommodation	1,547		
Materials	810		
Miscellaneous			
			49,376
Staff Costs			
Payroll	165,145		
Recruitment			
Pension	3,984		
Staff Training	310		
			169,439
Professional Fees			
Mediation Training & Supervision	2,005		
			2,005
Overheads and Administration			
Marketing & Advertising	1,838		
Printing, Postage & Stationery	5,966		
Insurance	11,561		
Light & Heat	1,070		
Telephone & Communications	5,769		
General expenses	3,123		
Depreciation on FF & Equipment	1,953		
Audit	1,954		
Professional Fees	3,038		
Travelling & Subsistence expenses	1,331		
Equipment Maintenance & Support	4,060		
Cleaning	2,438		
Bank charges	376		
Publications & Memberships	235		
Room hire	40		
			44,752
Operating expenses			265,572



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