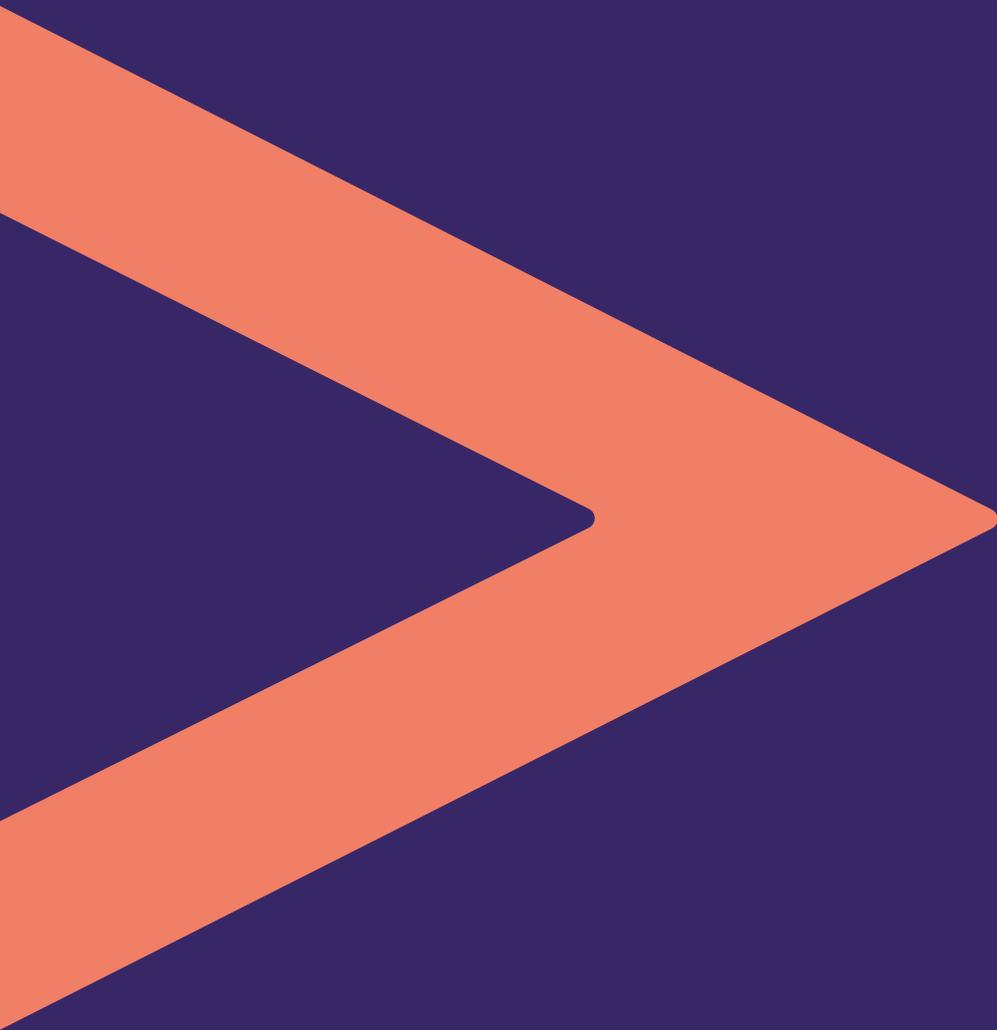


Ballymun Community Law Centre



Strategic Plan 2020 - 2022

Strategic Plan 2020 – 2022

Introduction

Ballymun Community Law Centre was established in 2002 to tackle unmet legal need in Ballymun. The Law Centre has been granted Independent Law Centre status by the Law Society of Ireland and operates as an independent not-for-profit community organisation.

The Law Centre provides legal advice, representation, legal education and alternative dispute resolution services to the community. We aim to empower individuals to achieve equality and realise their human rights through increased access to the law.

Our legal focus is on areas of unmet legal need in Ballymun. For example, we provide legal advice services in the areas of housing, employment, social welfare, and equality related issues. Our alternative dispute resolution services include family and community mediation and we also provide a comprehensive peer mediation programme in local schools. Our education programme delivers courses in areas such as Family Law, Child Law and Social Welfare Law as well as providing talks on topical legal issues.

Governed by a voluntary board of directors, the Law Centre is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Our work is delivered by staff and volunteers and is currently funded by Dublin City Council and the Law Society of Ireland. The Law Centre is also assisted by individual members of the Law Library, the Law Society, and other professionals expert in their field.

Our Vision

Our vision is for an inclusive community based on the principles of equality and social justice, where the people of Ballymun have access to justice and the law as a human right.

Our Mission

Our mission is to empower the community of Ballymun to exercise their rights and achieve social justice and equality. To do this we provide accessible legal, educational and alternative dispute resolution services.

Our Values

We are an independent community organisation committed to increasing access to the law. To meet this commitment our work is delivered with the following core values:

- Social justice
- Equality
- Integrity
- Independence

Strategic Issues 2020 - 2022

Ballymun Community Law Centre in common with many community organisations has experienced a significant reduction in funding. Since 2010 our funding from Dublin City Council (formerly Social Regeneration funding) has reduced by 40%. This reduction in income directly impacts on the services we provide as without adequate resources the Law Centre cannot effectively meet the legal needs of the Ballymun community.

Due to the reality of this challenging environment our small team must concentrate on optimising our core business - delivering legal, educational and alternative dispute resolution services to the people of Ballymun. To do this effectively with few resources requires an increase in effort to drive efficiency and ambition in our work, an ambition driven by the following strategic objectives.

Our strategic objectives

- **Increase community engagement.** Communicate effectively with the Ballymun community in order to increase the number of people we serve and appropriately meet their needs.
- **Build organisational resilience.** Improve and consolidate our administrative systems, work practices and governance to ensure efficiency, maximum output, high professional standards, and legal compliance.
- **Develop relationships.** Identify and engage with supporters of the Law Centre, communicating effectively the need and benefit of investing in a community-based law centre.

The work of the organisation and our strategic actions

Legal Services

The Law Centre provides free legal advice, assistance and representation services. Depending on the needs of the client this may take the form of legal information and advice, referral to an appropriate service or we may act for a client on a matter that requires representation.

Our representation work is targeted at unmet legal need in the community, areas not currently served by the Criminal and Civil Legal Aid Schemes; for example, we may act for a client dealing with a housing, employment, social welfare or disability related issue. We also provide legal advice in our outreach advice clinics and the Law Centre provides a weekly specialist family law advice clinic.

Outputs

Casework.

Outreach drop in advice clinics (Tuesday mornings 10-12 am at four rotating locations in Ballymun).

Specialist advice clinic (Family Law/appointment only).

Telephone information/advice service.

Networking with other organisations at local and national level.

Identifying legal areas that require policy and law reform.

Strategic Actions

- Optimise our internal administrative systems to support an increased level of casework.
- Evaluate, review and amend internal practice and procedures to ensure best practice and compliance with relevant legal standards.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our current outreach legal service with a view to introducing specialised legal clinics. For example, in the area of Social Welfare Law.
- Devise and implement actions to increase community awareness and engagement with our legal services.
- Publicise services more effectively through social media/website and in person.
- Identify, devise and implement actions in legal policy areas relevant to community need.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

The Alternative Dispute Resolution services provided by the Law Centre are delivered by a core team of qualified volunteer mediators led by our Project Officer. The service supports two or more parties resolve areas of conflict and where possible reach a mediated agreement. This service is delivered in a non-adversarial setting and can support people dealing with a wide range of conflict situations including; family and neighbour disputes, landlord/tenant and workplace relations issues.

The Law Centre also provides an intensive schools peer mediation programme aimed at providing primary and secondary students with problem-solving techniques which they can use to reduce conflict.

The Law Centre is currently introducing a new conflict coaching service. Conflict coaching is a structured process that helps people, on a one to one basis, develop their skills to effectively manage interpersonal conflict.

Outputs	Strategic Actions
<p>Family Mediation: Family mediation is a service for married and non-married separating couples and families. The service is also available in Inter-family conflict situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain existing level of service. • Evaluate, review and amend internal practice and procedures to ensure best practice and compliance with relevant standards. • Optimise our internal administrative systems to support an increased level of casework. • Devise and implement actions to increase community awareness and engagement with our alternative dispute resolution services. • Publicise services more effectively through social media/website and in person.
<p>Community Mediation: Community mediation works on improving the quality of life for those living in the community and can assist in mediating a wide variety of issues.</p>	
<p>Peer Mediation: The peer mediation programme is provided to children in local schools.</p>	
<p>Conflict Coaching: One to one coaching to manage interpersonal conflict.</p>	
<p>Shared Learning and Support forums for mediators.</p>	

Education and Training

The Law Centre provides an extensive education and training programme. Our courses aim to make the law accessible to all, increase community access to alternative dispute resolution solutions to conflict and to encourage people in Ballymun to access the law, legal education and the legal professions.

This programme is delivered through accredited training, talks on topical issues and tailor-made learning for individual organisations within the community.

The Law Centre also delivers a schools-based Law Club designed to introduce students to key areas of law. As part of this programme students participate in a mock trial presided over by a member of the judiciary.

Outputs

Accredited training in Family and Employment Law.

Introductory courses in Family and Child Law.

Social Welfare Law Course.

Lunch time talks on topical legal and alternative dispute resolution issues.

The Law Club.

Tailored talks and courses.

Accredited mediator training.

Strategic Actions

- Maintain current level of service.
- Consult with relevant stakeholders in order to review programme and implement change where required.
- Devise and implement actions to increase community awareness and engagement with our legal education programme.
- Publicise education programme more effectively through social media/website and in person.

Governance and Organisational Development

Each core area of service provision must be adequately resourced by staff and an effective organisational infrastructure. This infrastructure includes a sufficiently resourced administration, effective leadership at board and management level, and robust governance structures.

Additionally, for the Law Centre to operate we must adhere to specific standards and reporting requirements demanded by our funders and various regulatory bodies. This is challenging for a small organisation and therefore it is important that adequate resources are allocated to meet these requirements.

Outputs	Strategic Actions
The Board of Directors meetings and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and recruit potential new directors committed to the work of the Law Centre. • Evaluate and review governance structures and implement change and appropriate supports where required. • Ensure ongoing compliance with relevant statutory authorities and funders. • Optimise organisational infrastructure to ensure that current services can be maintained to a high professional standard while also increasing our outputs. • Devise an operational plan for year one, prioritising immediate internal and external actions that must be completed. • Devise and implement a communications strategy to ensure more effective community engagement and consultation with stakeholders. • Identify sources of funding and support to sustain and increase capacity for our core business.
Reporting to funders.	
Regulatory compliance (Companies Act, Charities Regulator, Revenue Commissioners, Regulation of Lobbying Act, General Data Protection Regulation).	
Professional standards (Law Society, Institute of Legal Research & Standards Q Mark).	
Internal policies and procedures.	
Sourcing of Funding and Support.	
Communications.	
Operational Planning.	
Optimising facilities to enable effective provision of services to the community.	

**We understand
legal problems and
we're here to help.**



**Ballymun
Community
Law Centre**

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Legal Advice



Education



Mediation