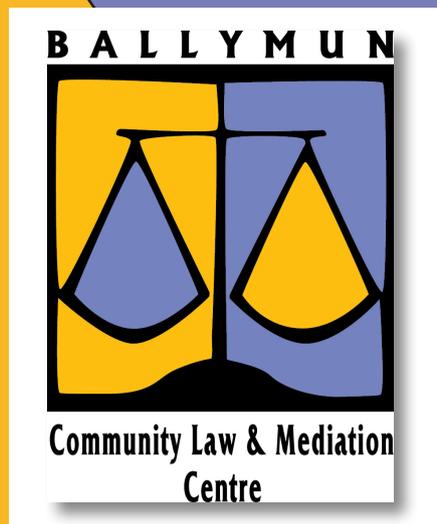


Ballymun Community Law and Mediation Centre Strategic Plan 2016-2018



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Chairperson's Message

It has been a privilege to be leading Ballymun Community Law and Mediation Centre through and beyond its 12th birthday, and I am proud that we continue to achieve so much in addressing our remit to support the people of Ballymun to realise the human right of access to justice.

This achievement has been due to the expertise and energy of board members and the commitment and knowledge of the Law Centre staff and volunteers. There can be no doubt, even in the face of unprecedented stress on the public finances, that excellent legal and mediation services are being delivered in Ballymun due to the unfailingly innovation and determination of the small but dedicated team, conveying enormous public benefit to the people who use our services.

The foremost issue which has faced us as a small local charity has been the on-going reduction in social regeneration funding made available to Ballymun in the past number of years. Such swift and severe decline in public investment has had consequences for many voluntary organisations in Ballymun, and for the community that they work with and support.

Therefore, I believe it is both responsible and necessary that BCLMC now undertakes a review of how it plans, partners, promotes and provides for the legal and mediation needs of its clients. This review will inform future policy and strategy for the next three years and beyond and so ensure the future sustainability and viability of our community law centre in Ballymun.

Evelyn Hanlon
Chairperson
Ballymun Community Law and Mediation Centre

Executive Summary

The scope of this strategic plan is to set out BCLMC's mission, our vision and our principles for the next three years.

It also outlines our areas of business, and identifies the key strategic issues affecting our ability to deliver our services and to describe the plans we have in place to address these issues.

Ballymun Community Law Centre (BCLMC) operates in 5 business areas:

- Legal Services
- Legal Education and Training
- Mediation Services
- Mediation Education and Training
- Public Policy Development and Law Reform Debate

Our three year Strategic Plan addresses 2016 – 2018

BCLMC has identified 5 key goals to address a number of distinct but related areas of responsibility:

1. FINANCE – diversify our income streams
2. COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING – develop our stakeholder relationships
3. RESEARCH – determine the extent and nature of unmet legal need
4. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT – develop our services and programmes
5. OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT – enhance our expertise and effectiveness

Each of the five key goals is supported by a number of objectives.

These objectives are implemented through annual action plans which will be implemented by the Directors, Staff and Volunteers of the Law Centre along with associated resources as specified.

The strategic plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

About Us

Ballymun Community Law and Mediation Centre was established in 2002 to tackle unmet legal need in Ballymun. The community law centre gives people within the community access to justice by providing free legal advice, information and representation. It also delivers a mediation service as well as a legal education programme. The centre also contributes to public policy development and law reform debate.

A Community Law and Mediation Centre is a non-profit organisation which works to provide a range of legal services, education and mediation within a specific community.

Ballymun Community Law and Mediation Centre is a voluntary organisation, a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

The Centre is run by a small team of directors staff and volunteers and is funded by the Social Regeneration Programme for Ballymun via Dublin City Council and also by the Law Society of Ireland.

Our Vision

Ballymun Community Law and Mediation Centre strives to be a well-resourced and pro-active independent agency, strategically focused on the rights and needs of the local population. It seeks to provide and facilitate access to an effective and comprehensive legal service including information, advice, advocacy, representation and mediation to the Ballymun community. It is informed by an education agenda, designed to encourage and animate the people of Ballymun as active citizens. This is supported by a law reform and strategic litigation approach which addresses inequalities and exclusion.

Our Mission

To support the people of Ballymun to realise the human right of access to justice. We seek to do this

- By responding to the unmet legal needs of Ballymun residents through the provision of information, advice, advocacy, representation and Mediation
- By providing opportunities to participate in legal education and training
- By working closely with our partners to maximise our impact
- By influencing policy and bringing about reform

Our Principles

BCLMC is committed to the principles of human rights, social justice, and equality.

We are dedicated to the provision of high quality, accessible services. Our systems and practices demonstrate integrity, transparency, and accountability.

We are committed to developing community engagement with the law so that returns on public investment in our centre benefits as many as possible.

We understand the importance of partnership and we work with others in the legal environment, in central and local government, in education and in the community and voluntary sector to deliver co-ordinated and targeted services.

Our Work

Four pillars underpin our work

- Advocacy
- Education
- Partnership
- Debate

We operate in five business areas:

Legal Services

Direct assistance to clients in the form of advising them, advocating on their behalf and acting for them in court or tribunal proceedings as appropriate.

Indirect assistance by way of general advice and information, including referrals to other services as appropriate.

Legal Education and Training

Facilitation of increased knowledge of the law by residents of Ballymun.

Facilitation of increased levels of progression into formal legal education and legal professions by residents of Ballymun.

Access to BCLMC legal education programme materials by other communities around Ireland.

Mediation Services

Promotion of mediation as a concept for dispute resolution in Ballymun.

Provision of a mediation service in Ballymun, using trained volunteer mediators.

Mediation Education and Training

Provision of Peer Mediation Training and Family Mediation Training. Access to BCLMC mediation education and training programme materials by other communities around Ireland.

Public Policy Development and Law Reform debate

Engagement in Irish public policy development and law reform debate

Strategic Issues for 2016-2018

BCLMC has identified 5 key goals to address a number of distinct but related areas of responsibility. Our strategic approach addresses our external working environment and it also looks inwards to address our own work priorities.

It has been agreed by all relevant stakeholders that the significant priority issue for 2016-2018 is our need to achieve a secure and predictable funding situation for the future development of BCLMC. The capability assessment of the organisation shows that this is the dominant strategic issue over the next three years, affecting the Centre's ability to deliver services in its business areas.

Along with most community-based projects and organisations in Ireland since the onset of the economic recession, the Law Centre in Ballymun has experienced significant reductions in funding from government sources. Social Regeneration Funding for BCLMC from the DOE has been reduced, year on year; In 2015 the centre received a 20% reduction on the previous year's funding. This reduction impacts on all areas of the centre's work but can be best understood as limiting the number of appropriately trained and skilled staff that can be funded to carry out the work. Staff costs form the largest part of the total cost of operating the centre and its services.

There is a need to maintain certainty of income to enable forward planning.

The implementation of an income diversification strategy over the next three years gives BCLMC an opportunity to reduce the risk of over reliance on any one revenue stream while testing additional development opportunities across our various areas of expertise.

The ability for the centre to generate income lies primarily in the widening of our funding base away from dependence on Social Regeneration Income, towards aligned government departments, and also in developing our capacity to generate additional earned income through the provision of appropriate services to markets both within and outside of Ballymun.

The following plan outlines the proposed actions within the five service areas of BCLMC which reflect this direction, whilst continuing to maintain the high standards of service delivery and service development within our existing programmes.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. FINANCE

Diversify our income streams

- Objective 1. Develop a fundraising plan to increase income from aligned government departments and alternative grant funding sources
- Objective 2. Increase self generated income revenue from chargeable services to existing and potential new target groups
- Objective 3. Reduce overheads

Goal 2. COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Develop relationships with our service users and other stakeholders

- Objective 4. Develop a communications and marketing plan for BCLMC
- Objective 5. Increase the profile of BCLMC with local service users
- Objective 6. Increase the profile of BCLMC in the Irish legal environment
- Objective 7. Increase the profile of BCLMC with existing and potential funders

Goal 3. RESEARCH

Determine the extent and nature of unmet legal need in Ballymun

- Objective 8. Seek funding to finance unmet legal need research
- Objective 9. Implement and manage research project
- Objective 10. Utilise report findings to further direct our strategic plan and to develop our services

Goal 4. SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES

Develop services and programmes of BCLMC

- Objective 11. Develop legal advocacy services in Ballymun
- Objective 12. Develop legal education and training in Ballymun
- Objective 13. Widen the target audience for our legal education and training programme
- Objective 14. Develop community and family mediation services in Ballymun
- Objective 15. Develop mediation training and education programme in Ballymun
- Objective 16. Widen the target audience for our mediation and education training programmes
- Objective 17. Engage in the development of public policy and in Law reform debate

Goal 5. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Enhance the expertise & effectiveness of BCLC

- Objective 18. Adopt best practice policies, processes and service provision
- Objective 19. Invest in human resources



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