

**PILA Bulletin, 9 July 2010**

The Bulletin on Public Interest Law is issued by the Public Interest Law Alliance, a project of FLAC.

A new and comprehensive PILA website is now online. The archive of PILA and PILN bulletins can be found at <http://www.pila.ie/bulletin/>.

If you wish to have an item included please contact [bulletin@pila.ie](mailto:bulletin@pila.ie).

Please feel free to distribute the bulletin as widely as you wish. If you would like to suggest a friend for our PILA Bulletin mailing list, please forward their contact details to us at the same address.

\*\*\*\*\*

**In this week's bulletin:**

- 1. FLAC welcomes interim recommendations of Mortgage Arrears and Personal Debt Expert Group;**
- 2. Department of Justice orders relocation of asylum seekers in Mosney;**
- 3. *Justice for Magdalenes* group approach Irish Human Rights Commission to conduct inquiry;**
- 4. Further sections of Charities Act 2009 to be commenced;**
- 5. 'Defending Human Rights in Contemporary Ireland', paper from Michael Farrell as keynote speaker to LLM Students Annual Conference, June 2010;**
- 6. N. Ireland: Report released on Human Rights analysis of budgeting for social housing in Northern Ireland;**
- 7. UK: Appeal won in Supreme Court by homosexual asylum seekers;**
- 8. UK: Supreme Court overturns previous landmark finding, ruling British troops not protected by human rights legislation outside of military bases;**
- 9. UK: Anti-terror stop and search powers to be scrapped;**
- 10. U.S.: Supreme Court upholds law which permits advocates advising banned organisations to be prosecuted as terrorists;**
- 11. UN: In historic move, UN to establish single entity to promote equality for women;**
- 12. Prison Law Seminar Series: 'Litigating Prison Conditions' 13 July 2010;**
- 13. Call for Tender: A Critical Review of Anti-Discrimination Law in Ireland;**
- 14. Events: Advocacy Initiative call for expressions of interest in developing next phase, July 2010;**
- 15. Law Centre (NI) hosts one day training course 'Mental Health and Criminal Justice', 5 August 2010;**
- 16. Upcoming courses with Respond Housing Association, September 2010.**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **1. FLAC welcomes interim recommendations of Mortgage Arrears and Personal Debt Expert Group**

FLAC have welcomed provisions contained in the interim report of the Mortgage Arrears and Personal Debt Expert Group but noted that major issues remain to be addressed by the Group which are of utmost concern to many thousands of households around the country.

"This interim report contains many positive measures which will improve the current situation and will be of assistance to people," said Noeline Blackwell, FLAC Director General. "FLAC is hopeful that this Group is on course to deliver workable solutions for people in mortgage arrears in Ireland."

Key advances in the interim recommendations include:

- A standardised procedure- Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP) - to be developed by all lenders to handle mortgage arrears cases, involving the establishment of Arrears Support Units in each lender to ensure uniform processes for dealing with cases.
- Improvements to Mortgage Interest Supplement (MIS) including the removal of the ban on paying MIS to a couple where one partner is in full-time employment and the suspension of the rule which excludes the payment of MIS when a house is up for sale, as well as the suggestion that the MIS scheme be more consistently applied.
- The ban on penalty interest and arrears charges to borrowers involved in the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process.
- Improvements to the Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears, particularly that it will be admissible in legal proceedings and will apply to all lenders including credit unions and local authorities.
- A recommendation that urgent consideration be given to reforming judicial bankruptcy proceedings and establishing an effective non-judicial debt settlement process, work currently being finalised by the Law Reform Commission.

FLAC notes that the Group will be conducting further work on advanced forbearance measures including loan modification and will be examining approaches to manage shortfalls and other options for borrowers in cases of unsustainable mortgages.

"FLAC will continue to contribute to the workings of the Group in a constructive manner through the membership of its Senior Policy Researcher Paul Joyce. Our focus in the area of debt has always been and will continue to be the protection of vulnerable consumers," concluded Ms Blackwell.

To view the Interim Report of the Mortgage Arrears and Personal Debt Expert Group in full, please follow the link

<http://www.finance.gov.ie/documents/publications/reports/2010/mortgagearrearsjul.pdf>

[Back to top](#)

## **2. Department of Justice orders relocation of asylum seekers in Mosney**

This week, FLAC appeared before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights alongside migrant women's organisation AkiDwA to inform legislators about the operation of the direct provision system and the state's human rights obligations in this regard. Both organisations were invited to make presentations on their respective reports which were issued earlier this year.

FLAC also took this opportunity to express its concern at the proposed transfer of more than 100 asylum seekers from the Mosney Accommodation Centre to hostel accommodation elsewhere, under the direct provision scheme. The Department of Justice and Law Reform has stated that this is part of a 'value for money audit'. FLAC is concerned that due consideration has not been given to the individual needs and requirement of each of the residents. Residents were not consulted and received very little notice of the transfers. The news about the transfer led to a number of peaceful protests at Mosney and was widely reported in the media. Following the initial protests the Department stated that nobody would be forced to board buses which were sent to take residents from Mosney to a centre in Dublin. However, a spokesperson for Minister Aherne has stated that some people will have to move as the Department has renegotiated its contract with the centre to accommodate 650 people rather than 800 as it previously did. The matter has yet to be resolved. FLAC has issued a background note on the situation which can be downloaded from [http://www.flac.ie/publications/background-note-for-mosney-campaign-email\\_jul-2010/](http://www.flac.ie/publications/background-note-for-mosney-campaign-email_jul-2010/)

Direct Provision is a scheme whereby asylum seekers and people seeking other forms of protection are provided with accommodation on a full board basis with all their basic needs apparently provided for directly. It was introduced by the government as a pilot scheme in 1999 and introduced on an administrative basis in April 2000 in response to growing numbers of people seeking asylum in Ireland. Direct Provision residents receive accommodation and meals and receive a small weekly payment of €19.10 per adult and €9.60 per child.

For more information and campaign resources please go to <http://www.flac.ie/campaigns/current/direct-provision-campaign/>. There is also a "take action" section on this page where people can send an email asking the Minister for Justice and Law Reform to ensure that in making the decision to relocate any direct provision resident that consideration is given to their individual circumstances and that their human rights are fully respected and upheld.

[Back to top](#)

### **3. *Justice for Magdalenes* group approach Irish Human Rights Commission to conduct inquiry**

An application has been made by the Justice for Magdalenes (JFM) Group, an advocacy group for survivors of the Magdalene laundries, for a formal inquiry to be conducted by the Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) into the obligation of the State to apologise to and provide redress for survivors of the laundries. The application was made following a meeting between representatives from JFM with the IHRC and the Chief Executive of Amnesty Ireland.

The advocacy group holds that even though the laundries were run privately, the State is not absolved from its "responsibility to protect the women and girls from abuse endured". Further it is argued that the State "knew the nature and function of the Magdalene laundries" and thus failed in its duty to provide protection. The inquiry is being sought under Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights which governs the right to a remedy if rights and freedoms under the Convention are violated, with JFM outlining that they have no choice but to apply for this inquiry following the Government's refusal to take responsibility.

One of the central functions of the IHRC is to conduct enquiries, either at their own initiative or as in this case, at the request of any person who considers it to be the best way for the IHRC to perform its function of reviewing law and practice in the State relating to the protection of human rights. Under the Human Rights Commission Act 2000, the IHRC can compel the production of

information, documentation or things in the course of its inquiries and it can require persons to attend before the IHRC for that purpose.

Following the meeting with the IHRC and Amnesty Ireland, JFM met with Department of Justice and Law Reform officials who are designated by government "to take the lead role and coordinate" the State's response on this issue, informing them of their application to the IHRC.

To view the press release from the Magdalene Laundries website, please follow the link <http://www.magdalenelaundries.com/press/JFM%20PR%2024-06-10.pdf>.

[Back to top](#)

#### **4. Further sections of Charities Act 2009 to be commenced**

Two sections of the Charities Act 2009 have been commenced, with announcement coming from Minister of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs Pat Carey T.D. who has responsibility for the regulation of charities. The relevant sections are section 4, which allows the Minister to make regulations under the Act as moves are made towards the introduction of the new regulatory framework for charities in Ireland, and section 90, which will "grant power to the courts, in the event of proceedings against a charity trustee, to grant relief to such trustees from personal liability for breach of trust, where it appears to the relevant court that the trustee acted honestly and reasonably".

To view the Charities Act 2009 in full, please follow the link <http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2009/a0609.pdf>

[Back to top](#)

#### **5. 'Defending Human Rights in Contemporary Ireland', paper from Michael Farrell as keynote speaker to LLM Students Annual Conference, June 2010**

Michael Farrell, Senior Solicitor at FLAC, delivered the keynote speech at the second annual Mastering Law Conference at NUI Galway in June 2010. The Mastering Law conference is one in which the planning, organisation and participation is restricted to LLM students, and is designed to serve as an introduction to the world of academic events, a forum to exchange ideas, and a chance to explore the ways in which their respective fields of law intersect. The theme of this year's conference was "Conflicts, Challenges and Solutions in Today's Society" where the main developments and future obstacles to Irish, European, and International Law were addressed.

Michael's paper, entitled "Defending Human Rights in Contemporary Ireland" (attached), looks at the changing climate which human rights advocates face in recession times. The following is an extract from the paper, commenting on the dismantling of the equality and human rights infrastructure with the closure and budget-cutting of numerous agencies;

*"It is not, of course, as if poverty has been eradicated, the danger of racism eliminated and human rights established across the land.*

*The official explanation is that all these agencies must share in the general burden of paying for the years of profligacy; but that does not explain why some of the human rights and equality bodies have been closed down and the others have been subjected to cuts that are far more swingeing than the national average.*

*The most charitable explanation is that the Government views human rights and equality as luxuries or optional extras that are all very well when we have money to throw around but that*

*we cannot afford when times are tougher. Another view is that the commitment of some of our rulers to human rights and equality was only skin deep and that some of the post 1998 reforms would not have happened had they not been seen as part of the price that had to be paid for inserting human rights protections into the settlement in Northern Ireland.*

*And a third view is that there are elements in some government departments that are still deeply suspicious of human rights organisations that criticise Government policies in sensitive areas like rendition, immigration, and anti-crime measures, or that take cases against public bodies under the Equal Status Acts. It does seem as if not everyone in the public administration – or the Government – has accepted the concept that in a modern democracy the State should fund independent bodies to act as watchdogs for the public interest.”*

[Back to top](#)

## **6. N. Ireland: Report released on Human Rights analysis of budgeting for social housing in Northern Ireland**

The recent launch of the QUB Budget Analysis Project’s report on *Budgeting for Social Housing in Northern Ireland: A Human Rights Analysis* has highlighted the worrying fact that social housing provision in Northern Ireland is not adequately funded to comply with international human rights standards. The study found that the Northern Ireland Government’s spending policy does not comply with international legal obligations to use the maximum available resources to ensure progressive realisation of the right to adequate housing set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The report urges an increase in government spending for new social housing as well as ensuring that the price paid for land to be used in these schemes does not unduly profit groups such as landowners, at the expense of other groups such as taxpayers and those requiring social housing. The study notes that the use of the private rented sector should not be used as a long term answer to the housing crisis and further is critical of the policy which allows housing benefit payments to be diverted to the private sector.

To view the QUB Budget Analysis Project’s report on *Budgeting for Social Housing in Northern Ireland: A Human Rights Analysis* in full, please follow the link

<http://www.law.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofLaw/Research/HumanRightsCentre/ResearchProjects/BudgetAnalysis/Documents/filestore/Filetoupload,198690,en.pdf>

[Back to top](#)

## **7. UK: Appeal won in Supreme Court by homosexual asylum seekers**

An appeal has been won in the UK Supreme Court by two homosexual men seeking asylum in the UK. The applicants, from Iran and Cameroon, sought asylum on the ground that if they were returned to their home countries, they would face the risk of persecution because of their sexual orientation. In both their home countries, the act of consenting adults engaging in homosexual acts is a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment and in the case of Iran – death.

Under Article 1 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is defined as someone who is outside their country of nationality and has a “well-founded fear” of being persecuted for one of five reasons; namely “race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”. “Members of a particular group” can include groups defined by common sexual orientation. Relying on this provision, the asylum seekers here argued they were entitled to asylum in the UK.

At the Court of Appeal stage, it was found that if returned to their home countries, the two men would conceal their sexual identity from State authorities and thus would avoid risk of persecution. It was ruled that it was therefore permissible for the UK to refuse asylum to a homosexual person who, upon return to their home country, would conceal their sexuality to avoid persecution so long as their situation could be regarded as "reasonably tolerable". The applicant would only be entitled to Convention protection if their hardship would exceed this threshold.

The appeal contended that this "reasonable tolerability" test was incompatible to the Convention, an argument which was unanimously accepted by the UK Supreme Court. Remitting the applicants' cases for reconsideration with detailed guidance, they ruled that this test should not be followed in the future. The UK Supreme Court found that to compel a homosexual person to pretend that their sexuality does not exist is to "deny their fundamental right to be what they are". The Court ruled that homosexual people are as much entitled to freedom of association with others of the same sexual orientation, as well as freedom of self-expression in matters that affect their sexuality, as straight people. It was found that persecution does not cease to be persecution for Convention purposes because those persecuted could "eliminate the harm by taking avoiding action within the country of nationality".

To view the case of *HJ (Iran) and HT (Cameroon) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2010] UKSC 31 on Appeal from: [2009] EWCA Civ 172 in full, please follow the link <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c3456752.html>

[Back to top](#)

## **8. UK: Supreme Court overturns previous landmark finding, ruling British troops not protected by human rights legislation outside of military bases**

The UK Supreme Court has overturned a previous landmark decision by ruling that British troops abroad are now not protected by human rights legislation when outside military camps. The case was originally taken by the mother of Private Jason Smith, who died of heatstroke in 2003 while on a UK base in Iraq.

At the High Court, it was found that that investigations into deaths similar to Private Smith's must be independent, open to scrutiny and involve the family. It was also found that the Human Rights Act applied to all armed forces personnel serving abroad, whether or not the death took place on a military base or not. The decision was appealed to the Court of Appeal who upheld the High Court ruling. The Ministry of Defence then appealed further to the UK Supreme Court.

Confirming that a full inquest be conducted into Private Smith's death in compliance with Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Court upheld the previous ruling that it would be investigated whether the Ministry of Defence had proper systems in place which protect soldiers from the risk of exposure to extreme temperatures, as well as assess whether there were systemic failures which contributed to the soldier's death.

The UK Supreme Court was further faced with the question whether a British soldier on military service in Iraq is covered under human rights legislation no matter where they were serving i.e. whether on or off the military base. Overturning the decision that the Human Rights Act applies to British troops when off base, the Supreme Court (6-3) ruled that the legal obligation of the Ministry of Defence to ensure the safeguarding of the lives of British troops abroad does not apply while *outside* of military bases.

Commenting on the case, John Wadham, Group Legal Director at the Equality and Human Rights Commission, outlined disappointment with the Court's finding that "British nationals serving in the British army do not enjoy the same human rights safeguards as other individuals". He

continued "Soldiers are often required to lay down their life for their country and in return, should be afforded human rights protection...However, we welcome the fact that Private Smith's death will now be investigated fully and that open, independent investigations will have to be held into deaths which take place in similar circumstances in the future. These investigations can help prevent future deaths, which is something for which we all wish"

To read the judgment in the case of *R (on the application of Smith) (FC) (Respondent) v Secretary of State for Defence (Appellant) and another* [2010] UKSC 29 in full, please follow the link <http://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKSC/2010/29.html>

[Back to top](#)

## **9. UK: Anti-terror stop and search powers to be scrapped**

Following the European Court of Human Rights judgment in *Gillan & Quinton v UK (4158/05)* 12 January 2010, the Home Secretary recently announced that the police's use of counterterrorism stop and search powers against individuals will no longer be valid. The European Court of Human Rights decided that the UK's anti-terrorism legislation allowing police to stop and search individuals without reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing breached Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (right to private life).

Sections 44-47 of the Terrorism Act 2000 provide senior police officers with the power to issue an authorisation, if they think it "expedient for the prevention of acts of terrorism" which allows uniformed police officers within a defined geographical area to stop anyone and search them. These provisions go beyond the normal stop and search powers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which require that the police officer has a "reasonable suspicion" that the individual possesses a "prohibited article" or is about to or has committed a crime.

The case of *Gillan & Quinton v UK* was brought following stops and searches of the applicants at a demonstration against an arms fair in London in 2003. The applicants complained that being stopped and searched by the police under sections 44-47 of the 2000 Act gave rise to violations of their rights under Articles 5, 8, 10 and 11 of the Convention.

The Home Secretary has amended the test for authorisation for the use of Section 44 powers from requiring a search to be 'expedient' for the prevention of terrorism, to a stricter test of it being 'necessary' for that purpose. The Home Secretary also announced that there will be a new suspicion threshold introduced. "Officers will no longer be able to search individuals using section 44 powers. Instead they will have to rely on section 43 powers, which require officers to reasonably suspect the person to be a terrorist. And officers will only be able to use section 44 in relation to the searches of vehicles. I will only confirm these authorizations where they are considered to be necessary, and officers will only be able to use them when they have 'reasonable suspicion'."

To view the judgment in the case of *Gillan & Quinton v UK (4158/05)* 12 January 2010 in full, please follow the link <http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?item=1&portal=hbkm&action=html&highlight=Gillan&sessionid=56504122&skin=hudoc-en>

[Back to top](#)

## **10. U.S.: Supreme Court upholds law which permits advocates advising banned organisations to be prosecuted as terrorists**

The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld a wide-ranging law which allows Americans who offer advice to banned organisations, including legal assistance and information on conflict resolution, to be

prosecuted as terrorists. The case was brought over ten years ago by a number of human rights organisations who were involved in the giving of advice and training to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), both listed as terrorist groups in the US.

It was argued that the assistance given by the humanitarian groups was non-violent and was not in promotion of the goals of the PKK. The U.S. government counter-argued that while the groups were free to speak in support of the PKK's aims, they could not provide advice. Following a strike-down of the law by the lower court as being unconditionally vague, the Supreme Court upheld the law by a majority. It was ruled that the U.S. government had the right to "prohibit providing material support in the form of training, expert advice, personnel, and services to foreign terrorist groups, even if the supporters meant to promote only the groups' non-violent ends". It was found that even support in the form of intangibles like human rights training, had the effect of freeing up resources for other illegal uses. Combining this with the government's interest in denying terrorist groups any sort of legitimacy, it was found that the plaintiff's freedom of speech right under the First Amendment was trumped.

To view the judgment in the case of *Holder, Attorney General et al. v. Humanitarian Law Project et al.* 21 June 2010 in full, please follow the <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/09pdf/08-1498.pdf>

[Back to top](#)

## **11. UN: In historic move, UN to establish single entity to promote equality for women**

The UN General Assembly has reached an "informal agreement" over the establishment of a single UN body to promote equality for women. A resolution has been passed which will set up a new UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as "UN Women". The new body will be a merger of four agencies and offices: UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW).

Having declared the adoption of the resolution a "watershed day", Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon announced to the Assembly that the "newest member of the UN family has been born". He said that by merging the four parts of the UN system already dedicated to women's issues, a much stronger voice for women and for gender equality at a global level has been created.

UN Women is a result of many years of negotiation and advocacy both by UN member states and women's movements globally. It is set to come into operation early 2011, and will have an annual budget of at least \$500 million, which is double the current combined resource of the four agencies. The new body will have a core goal of supporting the Commission on the Status of Women as well as other inter-governmental bodies in devising policies. It will oversee gender mainstreaming and will carry out both normative and operative activities. According to the UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, UN Women will give women and girls the strong unified voice they deserve on the world stage.

To view details of the Press Conference on Establishment of New Gender Entity, "UN Women", please follow the link

[http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs//2010/100702\\_UN\\_Women.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs//2010/100702_UN_Women.doc.htm)

[Back to top](#)

## **12. Prison Law Seminar Series: 'Litigating Prison Conditions', 13 July 2010**

The sixth in the IPRT Prison Law seminar series will take place on 13th July, 2010 on the topic 'Litigating Prison Conditions'.

The focus of the seminar will be on current substantive and procedural issues around litigating prison conditions. Speakers Paul O'Higgins SC and Michael Lynn BL have recently been involved in significant actions around prison conditions (slopping out and prison overcrowding), drawing on both constitutional and ECHR arguments, while Des Hogan of the IHRC will present a paper on the potential role of the Irish Human Rights Commission in prison related actions.

The seminar builds on the recent prison law seminar which addressed the procedural issues surrounding the application of the ECHR Act in a prison law context.

The seminar will take place at 5pm, on Tuesday 13th July, 2010 at 5pm in Distillery Building, Church St, Dublin 7.

Speakers include Paul O'Higgins, SC; Michael Lynn BL and Des Hogan, Director of Enquiries, Legal Services and Administration /Deputy Chief Executive, Irish Human Rights Commission.

*This seminar series is hosted jointly by Irish Penal Reform Trust, the Irish Criminal Bar Association and the Dublin Solicitors Bar Association, and seminars qualify for Continuing Professional Development for both solicitors and barristers.*

Attendance fees:

- IPRT members: free
- ICBA/DSBA members, prison staff: €10
- Others: €20

You can register for the event on the IPRT website here <http://www.iprt.ie/contents/1706> For more information about the seminar or to reserve a place, please contact Mary at [info@iprt.ie](mailto:info@iprt.ie) or tel: 01-874 1400.

[Back to top](#)

## **13. Call for Tender: A Critical Review of Anti-Discrimination Law in Ireland, deadline 27 August 2010**

The right to equality and to be free from discrimination is a central feature of all major international human rights treaties. In the case of Ireland, legal protections from discrimination are found in the Irish Constitution, under EU law and in domestic statutes. In particular, the Employment Equality Acts (EEA) 1998-2004 and the Equal Status Acts (ESA) 2000-2004 are the principal pieces of anti-discrimination law in Ireland.

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) is commissioning an external consultant(s) to examine these laws with a view to evaluating their effectiveness in combating discrimination and prejudice in Ireland (see tender document attached). It is proposed that the Review will:

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the relevant legislation, recognising any gaps
- Identify the difficulties in implementing existing legislation
- Review the scope and impact of exemptions
- Assess the extent to which EU anti-discrimination directives are upheld in Ireland
- Recommend positive changes

- Examine equality proofing duties, particularly in light of the equivalence commitment contained in the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement

The deadline for this tender is 5pm, Friday 27 August 2010. Tenders can be sent by email or post to:

Joanne Garvey  
Administrator  
Irish Council for Civil Liberties  
9-13 Blackhall Place  
Dublin 7  
Tel: ++ 353 (01) 799 4504  
Email: [joanne.garvey@iccl.ie](mailto:joanne.garvey@iccl.ie)

If you have any queries regarding the above information, please do not hesitate to contact Joanne Garvey the ICCL.

[Back to top](#)

#### **14. Events: Advocacy Initiative call for expressions of interest in developing next phase, July 2010**

The Advocacy Initiative has called for expressions of interest in preparation of their next phase. The Advocacy Initiative is a project that is conducting an analysis of the principles, practice and experience of policy advocacy, with a view to enhancing its practice among Civil Society Organisations in Ireland. It is organised by a group of organisations in the Community and Voluntary Sector. The first phase of the Initiative, which explored the views and experiences of stakeholders on the principles, practice and experience of policy advocacy in Ireland, has just been completed. The findings were presented at a Conference on the subject for representatives of the Community and Voluntary sector on 10 June, with a report based on the findings being published in July 2010.

The Steering Committee needs consultancy assistance in scoping and developing the next phase of the project to ensure, in particular, that it fully covers, in a carefully planned way, the issues identified in the first phase. Provision for appropriate consultation and sustainable debate around the issue of Community and Voluntary Sector advocacy is a key aim, rather than focusing on a single event or time-limited project. The process will involve, in particular, the development of Terms of Reference in conjunction with the Steering Committee, building on the work completed to date. The output from this scoping exercise should also include a proposed work programme, estimated budgets and suggested timelines for the next phase of the project.

Expressions of interest are now invited. Applicants should outline, in no more than 1,000 words, how they consider they could best assist the Steering Committee in planning the next phase of the project, and outline their experience of undertaking similar pieces of work. It is envisaged that the process for preparing the next phase development will be carried out over ten days to be completed by end August 2010.

For inquiries and to send applications please contact: Caroline Fahey, Society of St Vincent de Paul, email: [caroline.fahey@svp.ie](mailto:caroline.fahey@svp.ie) tel: 01 829 9025

Applications should be received by close of business on 16 July 2010.

[Back to top](#)

**15. Law Centre (NI) hosts one day training course 'Mental Health and Criminal Justice', 5 August 2010**

The Law Centre (NI) is hosting a one day training course on "Mental Health and Criminal Justice" on 5 August 2010. This course is aimed at those who work with clients who are involved in the criminal justice system and who have been, or may be placed in a psychiatric hospital either during their remand period or following conviction. The course will look at the legislative framework; pertinent case law; the powers of the courts and hospital authorities; and what rights and recourses are available to the client. The course will also deal with the Mental Health Review Tribunal in so far as particular rules apply to offender patients.

Application forms (attached) should be returned to Deborah Hill at Law Centre (NI), 124 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2GY or by email at [deborah.hill@lawcentreni.org](mailto:deborah.hill@lawcentreni.org) or by fax on (028) 9023 6340 by 23 July 2010.

[Back to top](#)

**16. Upcoming courses with Respond Housing Association, September 2010**

Respond Housing Association is running a Certificate in Applied Social Studies (with a focus on housing) commencing on 20 September 2010. The contents of the course include an understanding of housing policy, legislation and practice, and discussion and debate on core themes in social housing, including housing rights, tenure types, tenant participation and housing finance. It will be delivered over two full days each month over one full academic year.

A Certificate in Housing is also available over six sessions where students will gain a broad understanding of housing policy and practice and will be introduced to some of the skills necessary for work in the housing and community sector. There will be no exams; student learning will be assessed through assignments and a short presentation. The teaching methods used will be a mix of lecture style delivery, discussion, small group work and experiential exercises. The aims of the Certificate in Housing include to provide students with a basic understanding of housing policy and practice in Ireland and to introduce students to some of the skills necessary to participate in housing related activities. The dates for the next course are 13 September, 27 September, 11 October, 26 October, 8 November and 22 November 2010.

There are also places available at a two day Workshop on Community Development with the Community Action Network. This course will be of particular interest to people working or volunteering in Community Development, Housing, Regeneration, Adult and Community Education. The 2 days will take the form of experiential, participative and hands-on workshops with lots of exercises and discussion to ensure peer learning. The dates for the next course are 22 and 23 September 2010.

For further information and/or booking forms for any of the above opportunities please contact [caroline.nolan@respond.ie](mailto:caroline.nolan@respond.ie) or phone 0818 357 901.

[Back to top](#)

\*\*\*\*\*  
*PILA Bulletin Issued on 9 July 2010*  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Public Interest Law Alliance -  
A project of FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres Ltd.)  
13 Lower Dorset Street, Dublin 1**

**Tel: 01-8728048 / 8745690**  
**LoCall: 1890 350 250**  
**Fax: 01-874 5320**  
**Website: www.pila.ie**

***Free Legal Advice Centres Ltd is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital, registered in Dublin, Ireland. Company registration number 49413. Directors: Don Crewe, Iseult O'Malley, Peter Ward, Róisín Webb, Liam Thornton.***

***NB: The information in this e-mail may be confidential and may be legally privileged. It is intended for the listed addressee(s). Access to this e-mail by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any distribution, copying, or other actions taken in reliance on it are prohibited and may be unlawful. The opinions and advice contained in this e-mail may not be those of FLAC.***

***FLAC – promoting access to justice <http://www.flac.ie>***

***We need to protect Human Rights and Equality in Ireland! Join the ERA campaign - today!***

***Sign the petition: <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/erapetition/>***

***Visit the website: <http://eracampaign.org/weblog/>***