

Data Collection Programme

2007 Summary



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Centre participation

During 2007, 4,815 data collection forms were returned from 35 Legal Advice Centres around the country. These comprised of 16 centres in the Dublin area, and 18 centres outside the Dublin area.

Centre	D.C.F.s	Centre	D.C.F.s	Centre	D.C.F.s
Aungier Street	111	Meath Street	9	Navan	79
Ballyfermot	362	Cork	267	Sligo	144
Blanchardstown	306	Ballina	62	Tralee	93
Athy	13	Pearse St	58	Wexford	96
Clondalkin	371	Ballymun	213	Bantry	44
Crumlin	340	Rathmines	126	Leitrim	51
Dundrum	209	NAD	12	Tullamore	113
Finglas	392	Clonmel	119	Athlone	60
Listowel	56	Thurles	58	Mullingar	50
Tallaght	439	Naas	26	Castlebar	7
Prussia Street	52	Newbridge	89	Lucan	18
North King Street	356	Whitehall/ Beaumont	2	Centre not recorded	12

Areas of law

Callers attending FLAC centres seek legal information and advice regarding one or more areas of law. The total number of legal queries recorded in 2007 was 5,323. In 2007, FLAC callers mainly sought legal information and advice on civil law matters; only 5% requested information on criminal law matters.¹ When examining the sort of civil legal matters on which advice was sought, we see that the most frequently discussed area of law was family law, with 32.7% of the total number of the queries. However, the remaining 67.3% indicates that two-thirds of FLAC callers needed legal advice and information on a wide range of non-family matters. Other common areas of law brought to FLAC centres included personal injury, civil litigation and road traffic accidents.

Does the caller have a solicitor?

Callers were asked whether they currently had a solicitor². Of the 4,230 respondents who answered this question, the majority said that they had no solicitor (87%). Less than one in five callers said they had a solicitor (13%).

¹ The Criminal Legal Aid Scheme is more straight-forward than the Civil Legal Aid Scheme. It is a matter for the judge to consider whether the person can pay to their legal representation. This entitles the party to free legal aid where no contribution is paid.

² FLAC does not supply a second opinion service. However, callers sometimes have queries relating to costs or other questions which for reasons of expense or embarrassment they do not feel comfortable bringing to their solicitor.

Areas of law discussed at FLAC Centres			2007	
			Count	%
Civil law	Family	Family	1,683	31.6
		Domestic Violence	58	1.1
		Total family	1,741	32.7
	Non-family	Employment Law	508	9.5
		Succession/Probate	393	7.4
		Property	436	8.2
		Housing	330	6.2
		Consumer Law	348	6.5
		Credit and Debt	153	2.9
		Dispute with another person	205	3.9
		Immigration/Refugee Law	222	4.2
		Social Welfare Law	99	1.9
		Other civil matters	591	11.1
		Total non-family	3,285	61.7
Criminal law			297	5.6
Total legal queries			5,323	100

Client referral

Callers attending FLAC centres receive first stop/ initial legal information and advice relating to their query. Where further legal advice or legal representation is needed FLAC advisors make referrals to appropriate agencies. The data collection form for 2007 asked the legal advisors whether they referred the client on to another agency or body. This information was gathered in 4,290 cases, and showed that of these 2,702 (63%) clients were referred on to another body, while 1,588 (37%) were provided with sufficient legal information/ advice by FLAC volunteer advisors. Other agencies to which clients were referred in 2007 included the Small Claims Court, the Gardaí, PIAB and the District Court Office.

Advice only	1,588
Legal Aid Board	840
Private solicitor	1,274
Family mediation	122
MABS	48
FLAC	63
CIC	61
Other	658

Cases brought to FLAC's attention

At the end of each data collection form the volunteer advisor is asked whether they would like to bring the clients case to FLAC's attention. 50 forms were returned with details of the client's case.

**Telephone Information Line
2007 Summary**

Areas of law discussed on Telephone Information Line			2007	
			Count	%
Civil law	Family	Family	1,373	22.8
		Total family	1,373	22.8
	Non-family	Children's Rights	7	0.1
		Civil	301	5.0
		Company	49	0.8
		Consumer	347	5.8
		Contract	148	2.5
		Debt	93	1.5
		Discrimination/Equality	14	0.2
		Employment	850	14.1
		Housing	54	0.9
		Immigration	110	1.8
		Landlord & Tenant	127	2.1
		Legal Aid	270	4.5
		Legal Services	1,094	18.1
		Personal Injuries	77	1.3
		Probate	326	5.4
		Property	223	3.7
		Social Welfare	52	0.9
		Solicitor/Client Issues	241	4.0
	Total non-family	4,383	72.6	
Criminal law			278	4.6
Total legal queries			6,034	100

Calls to FLAC's Information and Referral Line in 2007

FLAC head office operates a telephone information and referral line, which is open to individuals, local organizations, advice agencies and social workers during office hours, Monday to Friday. The line assists callers in identifying the appropriate services for their legal needs. Advice is not given over the phone line, but legal information is provided as well as referral to appropriate agencies and/or FLAC centres.

In 2007 FLAC head office received 6,034 telephone enquiries to its information service. This trend is up from 5,786 calls in 2006, 4,480 calls in 2005 and 4,303 calls in 2004, showing a growing awareness of FLAC's service. Family law was again last year the largest area of enquiry, with one-in-five calls to the information line being in this sector. The next largest area of enquiry was Legal Services, followed closely by Employment Law.