

2018 AT A GLANCE



Mercy Law
Resource Centre



OUR VISION

Mercy Law Resource Centre's vision is of a society where each individual lives in dignity and enjoys equal rights, in particular the right to a home, which is fundamental to each human being. MLRC's vision is also of a society where every individual enjoys equal access to justice and legal recourse in order to vindicate those rights.

WHO WE ARE

Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC) is an independent law centre, registered charity and company limited by guarantee which provides free legal advice and representation to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in the areas of social housing and related social welfare law.

WHAT WE DO?

MLRC seeks to advocate for change in laws, policies and attitudes which unduly and adversely impact its client group. We do this through the provision of 5 key services:

-  **Free Legal Advice**
-  **Free Legal Representation**
-  **Training and Legal Support**
-  **Policy Work**
-  **Befriending**



We received **3,400** phone calls



We received **485** new queries



We provided free legal advice and representation to **1,381** clients in 2018



This generated **2,278** pieces of work

OUR CLIENT BASE

Housing Crisis Impact

Through casework, MLRC noted that the housing crisis disproportionately affects non-Irish nationals and ethnic minorities.

In 2018, **88%** of MLRC's new clients presented with issues relating to homelessness. We advised **452** homeless families in 2018.

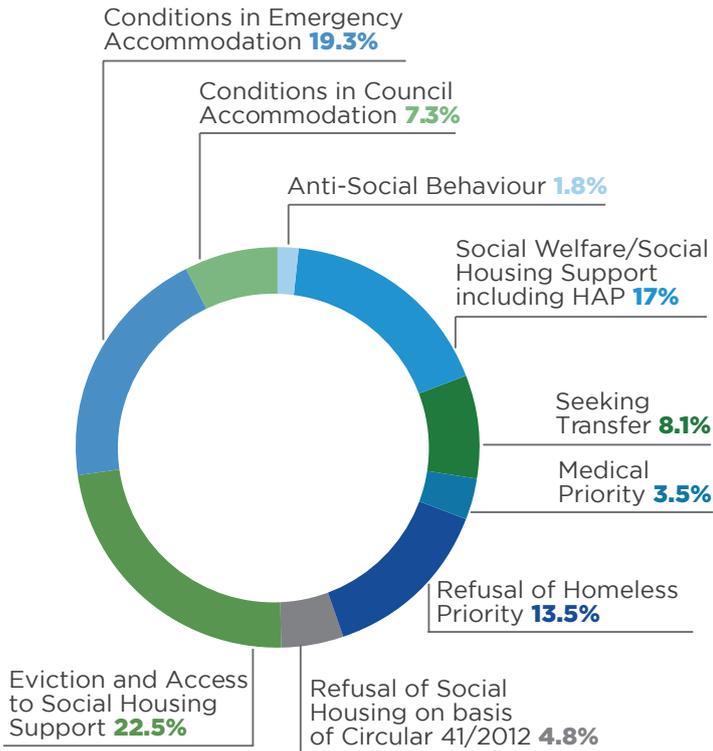
Members of the **Traveller community** constituted **8.8%** of the homeless population, despite only representing **0.7%** of the national population. In our casework, MLRC saw an increase in Travellers accessing our service and received a number of word of mouth referrals of urgent cases.

Graph 1: **Family Homelessness**





Graph 2: Legal Queries



We entered into a pro bono partnership with A&L Goodbody to staff and support one of our legal advice clinics.

“The team at Mercy Law are some of the most tenacious and diligent people I’ve had the pleasure of working with.”

Eithne Lynch, ALG Pro Bono Associate



On 12 June 2018, MLRC presented to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government.



We began the journey of implementing a new Strategic Plan which will run from 2019 – 2024.



We advised and supported over 100 organisations working in the field of homelessness including Crosscare, Liberties CIC, Dublin Simon and Merchants Quay Ireland.



We published two reports on the right to housing in Ireland, making a trilogy of reports which provide a comprehensive and authoritative discussion on how such a right could operate in an Irish context.



We appointed a new Managing Solicitor Rebecca Keatinge and bid farewell to Maeve Regan.



Our solicitor David Joyce was appointed to the Traveller Accommodation Expert Working Group.



MLRC’s commitment to a respectful and dignified approach to each case strengthens the relationships and trust between clients and the team, which is reflected in their many successful cases.”

Crosscare



With the ongoing housing and homeless crisis Mercy Law’s legal expertise and commitment to human rights has been invaluable. The solicitors at Mercy Law have taken on many of our most complex housing cases and supported and advocated for families and individuals in very difficult circumstances.”

Focus Ireland



Don’s Story

Don first contacted MLRC in 2011 when he was refused access to the social housing list and we successfully resolved that issue the same year. Don returned to MLRC in 2018 after he had been refused medical



priority on four occasions. This refusal was despite evidence of his serious and debilitating medical condition being negatively impacted by his overcrowded and inappropriate housing. MLRC submitted an appeal of that refusal on behalf of Don, and he went from number 235 on the housing list to number 8. We hope that Don will be housed very soon and continue to advocate on his behalf.

What MLRC clients say

“We are so grateful to everyone at MLRC. The service they provided was invaluable and they really eased us through an incredibly stressful time.”

“My experience with MLRC was absolutely fantastic. I don’t think I would have got more stable accommodation without the help of MLRC.”