



**Mercy Law**  
Resource Centre

# Annual Report 2016





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# FOREWORD

## Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Sr Helena O'Donoghue



It is with a sense of privilege and of real hope that I present the **Annual Report of Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC)** for the year 2016. The sense of privilege comes from the daily experiences of the Centre in engaging with people who have very distressing and chaotic circumstances, but who with real courage and persistence, try to deal with the crisis of losing their home.

My sense of hope comes from the national conversation taking place at many levels about the urgent need to eliminate this painful stigma from the lives of children, their families and many adults. Mercy Law Resource Centre, through its free legal service of advice and representation, has been able to bring much hope, comfort and new possibility to many such people by using the law to resolve legal difficulties and to vindicate the rights of those treated unfairly.

The numbers of people affected by homelessness continues to rise, reaching a peak of some 7,700, including 2,700 children, in May 2017. The period since our last Report has been marked by a growing and predictable number of evictions and equally marked by an absolute dearth of suitable and affordable homes. Factors at the macro level have combined to bring about this unacceptable situation, leaving individuals and families powerless and, often shocked beyond measure, to find themselves so bereft. Access to emergency accommodation has become more difficult and controversial, and the barriers to

qualification and entitlement have become more rigid. Seeking shelter – a most basic human need and right – is a long and painful journey for those caught in the tragedy of homelessness.

**The numbers of people affected by homelessness continues to rise, reaching a peak of some 7,700, including 2,700 children, in May 2017.**

So, I invite you to read **the Annual Report** and to be encouraged by the detailed account of the extensive work undertaken by MLRC in 2016 to alleviate the situation. Legal help was provided to some **1,077 cases** in that year and support provided to some **50 organisations**. Providing legal clinics in well-known voluntary centres and hostels, developing policy approaches relevant to homelessness, conducting training programmes for the staff of other agencies in differentiating the specific legal issues of their clients, all ensure a very challenging workload for our dedicated and expert staff.

The reputation of **Mercy Law Resource Centre** continues to develop, and it is now a significant presence among the agencies responding to homelessness. Its status and achievements have been recognised by both the voluntary and State sectors, and its contributions have been sought by European and UN agencies. Each year our very effective staff have acquired considerable expertise in housing law and social welfare law. Work at ground level, together with reflection on trends and implications, enables **MLRC** in co-operation



with other parties, to devise relevant policy on specific topics, specifically on the need for legislation to underpin the right to a home.

My sincere thanks go to our solicitors and administrators (Maeve, Rebecca, Sinead, David, Nuala, Caitriona, Danielle, and our generous interns) - all ably co-ordinated by Managing Solicitor Maeve Regan. To each one I express deep appreciation on behalf of the Board for their truly excellent work. We remember, with affection and prayer, Denise who died suddenly early in the year.

To our very active and committed Board of Directors who generously share their expertise on a voluntary basis, I say a very special 'thank-you'.

**As MLRC does not receive any State grants, our yearly expenses must be met by fundraising. We are most grateful to those who have pledged financial support to us, and who continue to support us year on year, which helps to boost our confidence in being able to continue the necessary and demanding work of MLRC.**

Mercy Law Resource Centre is a full-time not-for-profit organisation, providing free and independent legal services, and it relies completely on the generosity of donors, volunteers, interns, friends and allies. To all who have contributed in any way, financial and otherwise, particularly to our pro bono barristers, solicitors, auditors, befrienders, I express our sincere and deep gratitude. As MLRC does not receive any State grants, our yearly expenses must be met by fundraising. We are most grateful to those who have pledged financial support to us, and who continue to support us year on year, which helps to boost our confidence in being able to continue the necessary and demanding work of MLRC.

Mercy Law Resource Centre, with kindness and skill, seeks to bring relief by making home and hope a reality for many suffering people. We most earnestly invite you to be part of that urgent work and to consider making a donation (see [www.mercylaw.ie](http://www.mercylaw.ie)). Let the blessing of home and hope prevail for all who are without.

**Thank you for taking the time to read the Annual Report 2016.**

**Helena O'Donoghue RSM,**  
Chair, Mercy Law Resource Centre - August 2017

# INTRODUCTION

## MLRC Managing Solicitor, Maeve Regan



In 2016, the crisis in homelessness that Ireland has been in the midst of since at least early 2014, deepened. **At the end of 2015, 3,625 adults, 1,616 children and 775 families were homeless. At the end of 2016, 4,643 adults, 2,505 children and 1,205 families were living the chaos and despair of homelessness.**

In 2016, MLRC provided free legal advice to 1,077 individuals.

In the vast majority of these cases, MLRC was representing families and individuals who had been refused adequate emergency accommodation by the housing authority. This basic shelter is often refused because the housing authority is misapplying the law or failing to recognise the basic human needs of people, including families and children, in the emergency accommodation that is offered to them.

In 2016, MLRC identified and worked on a number of very urgent issues relating to the provision of emergency accommodation by housing authorities to families and people with particular vulnerabilities. Among these issues are the high number of unlawful refusals of emergency accommodation by housing authorities, leaving families and individuals who are homeless, sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough; housing authorities failing to carry out comprehensive needs assessments of individuals and families who present as homeless. This failure results in the authorities not sourcing a placement that best suits the family's or individual's needs and not referring them to appropriate

services; the absence of suitable emergency accommodation for people who are homeless and who have a disability or who have particular health needs and vulnerabilities; housing authorities over-relying on the self-accommodation option, obliging families to secure their own emergency accommodation, which is often not possible and puts families at risk of rough sleeping; families and individuals being placed in unsuitable hotel and B&B accommodation for very prolonged periods, with no upper time limit, causing severe detriment to families and, in particular, children.

**In 2016, MLRC identified and worked on a number of very urgent issues relating to the provision of emergency accommodation by housing authorities to families and people with particular vulnerabilities.**

In May 2016, MLRC published a report, the Right to Housing in Ireland. This report is a cornerstone of our work in advocating for the protection of the right to housing in the Constitution. MLRC submitted to the UN Universal Periodic Review in respect of the failure of the State to adequately protect the right to housing. MLRC travelled to Geneva for the Review and met with international delegations to raise these issues. MLRC presented to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness on the Right to Housing Report. MLRC is building on this work in 2017, along with our policy work including calling for legal aid for evictions, and advocating in relation to conditions within and the suitability of emergency accommodation.

Home is central to every person's dignity and potential. MLRC's work is carried out in recognition of this. The MLRC team do this with vigour, compassion and care. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the MLRC staff, who each day do this work, bringing their talents, commitment, diligence, great humour and bright energy. They are truly excellent. Our volunteer befrienders are at the heart of the MLRC's work. We thank them for their generosity and compassion which helps in a real and practical way those that MLRC is here to help.

**MLRC's work is deepened and invigorated also by the work of our volunteers - legal and administrative. We are immensely grateful to them.**

I would like to also thank most gratefully the Chairperson and Board of Directors of MLRC, who give clear, practical and visionary guidance to support and enable the development of MLRC.

MLRC's work is possible because of the support of our funders, those who so generously give philanthropic grants and donations to MLRC. We are deeply grateful for this support.

In 2017, MLRC continues to work to ensure that the very urgent needs of families and vulnerable people who are homeless are met in a way that is humane, appropriate and dignified. We thank you for your interest and support for this, and we look forward to continuing to build on this work, creatively, imaginatively and constructively into the future.



**Maeve Regan, Managing Solicitor**  
Mercy Law Resource Centre, July 2017



# ABOUT MERCY LAW RESOURCE CENTRE

**Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC)** was set up in 2009 by the Sisters of Mercy. It is an independent law centre, registered charity and company limited by guarantee. **MLRC** provides free legal advice and representation for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. It also seeks to advocate change in laws, policies and attitudes which unduly and adversely impact people who are at the margins of our society.

## Mission Statement

**To provide free legal advice and representation, in an accessible way, to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the areas of housing and related social welfare law.**

## MLRC provides five key services:

- Free legal advice clinics.
- Legal representation in the areas of housing and social welfare law.
- Legal support and training to organisations working in the field of homelessness.
- Policy work.
- Befriending service.



## Who we assist

**Our clients are local authority tenants and people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. They include people who are trying to move away from homelessness or are struggling with issues often linked to homelessness e.g. addiction, leaving prison, mental illness and relationship breakdown.**



## The need for the service

Advice and representation in housing and social welfare law are not adequately catered for by either the private sector or the State legal aid system. The legal assistance which is available is frequently limited to advice only and is often fragmented, ignoring the cluster of problems, legal and non-legal, which our client group often experience. Accessing legal help can also be extremely difficult. People who are homeless are on the extreme margins of society and have additional hurdles in accessing legal services, rights and entitlements. They are often in highly, urgent chaotic and distressing situations without the supports and means, financial and emotional, to access legal help.

*The Wisdom Centre, Sophia Housing*

## A unique service

MLRC provides a unique service, a unique legal service. Our service is accessible and, as far as possible, shaped to meet the individual needs of each client. We meet clients at venues which are easily accessible and comfortable, and where possible, in their own environment. Our clinics are in hostels for people who are homeless, and in centres linked to organisations working in the field of homelessness.

## MLRC's ethos

**MLRC's ethos recognises the dignity of each person. We seek to ensure that all people are treated with respect and compassion and are enabled to achieve their full potential as human beings. We are committed to the principles of human rights, social justice and equality.**



# FREE LEGAL ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION

Since our inception in 2009, MLRC has provided advice and/or court representation to approximately 5,000 individuals, families and organisations. In 2016 MLRC advised over 50 organisations and/or their clients, including Dublin Simon, Focus Ireland, FLAC, Crosscare and Merchants Quay Ireland.

## MLRC's Clinics

MLRC holds free legal advice clinics in hostels for people who are homeless and in other centres that are easily accessible for people facing homelessness. Our clinics are staffed by qualified solicitors. The solicitors deal with all legal issues raised, predominantly housing law, related social welfare law and family law. The solicitors determine if a case file needs to be opened to legally represent the person to assist in a more long-term and detailed way with the individual's issue.



We hold seven free legal advice clinics:

- Crosscare, Haven House (every second Tuesday)
- Crosscare, Cathedral Street (every second and fourth Thursday of the month)
- DePaul, Back Lane (every Tuesday)
- Focus Ireland Coffee Shop (every Wednesday)
- Dublin Simon, Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 (every second Tuesday)
- Liberties Citizen's Information Centre, Meath Street, Dublin 8 (every Wednesday)
- Saoirse Women's Refuge, Tallaght (every second Tuesday)

## What clients have said about MLRC

“

*I found my solicitor at Mercy Law Resource Centre to be extremely helpful and the service provided by the Centre invaluable. My solicitor helped me access emergency homeless accommodation when I was at risk of sleeping rough with my young children. When I was then allocated very unsuitable homeless accommodation for me and my family by the local authority, my solicitor kept working on my case to ensure I accessed appropriate accommodation. I was pregnant during all of this time and it was very stressful. Without the solicitor's help, I would have gotten nowhere. She helped a tremendous amount and I would recommend the service to anyone in a similar situation.”*

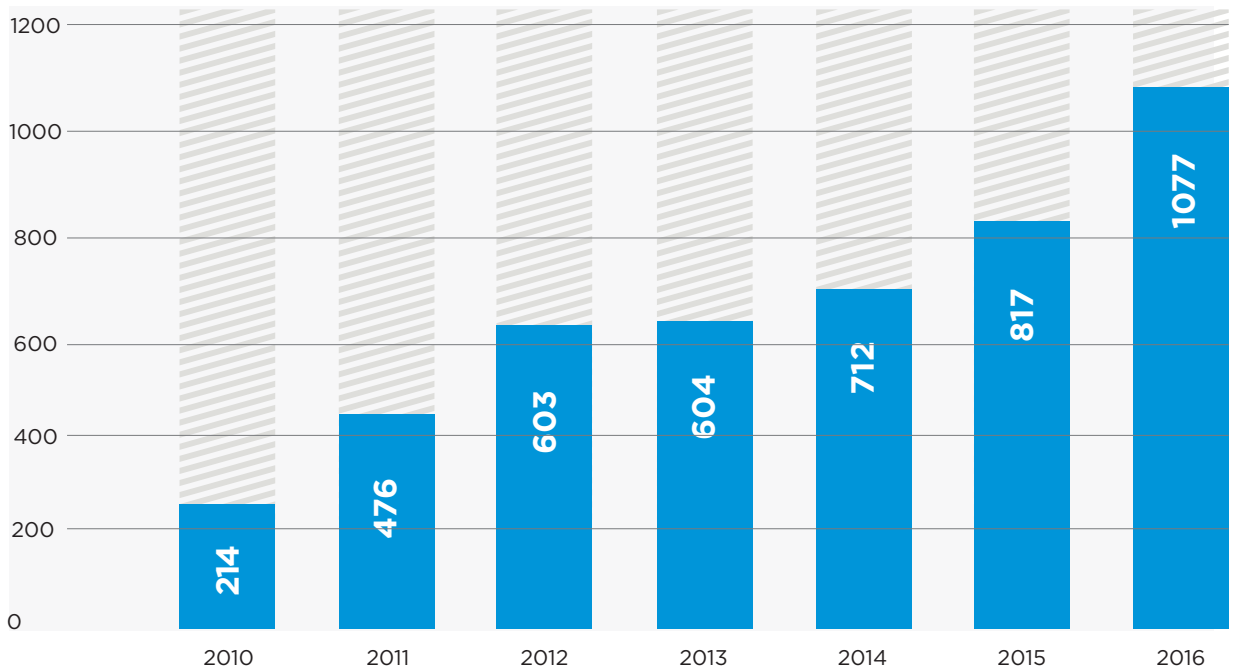
“

*Mercy Law Resource Centre is a very good service; the team really helped me - they saved me. I was referred to Mercy Law by Focus Ireland, after I was refused emergency homeless accommodation by the local authority. From the day I attended Mercy Law, I worked very closely with one of the solicitors. She was very good, encouraging and supportive to me and my family. I could never have resolved my difficulties without her help. All of the staff at the Centre were courteous and understanding of my situation. The support from the Centre has made a real difference to my life and the life of my children. Others have spoken to me about their service and how it has helped them hugely.”*

In 2016 we provided advice and/or court or tribunal representation to approximately **2,267** clients.

This resulted in clients realising rights and entitlements that they would otherwise have been denied.

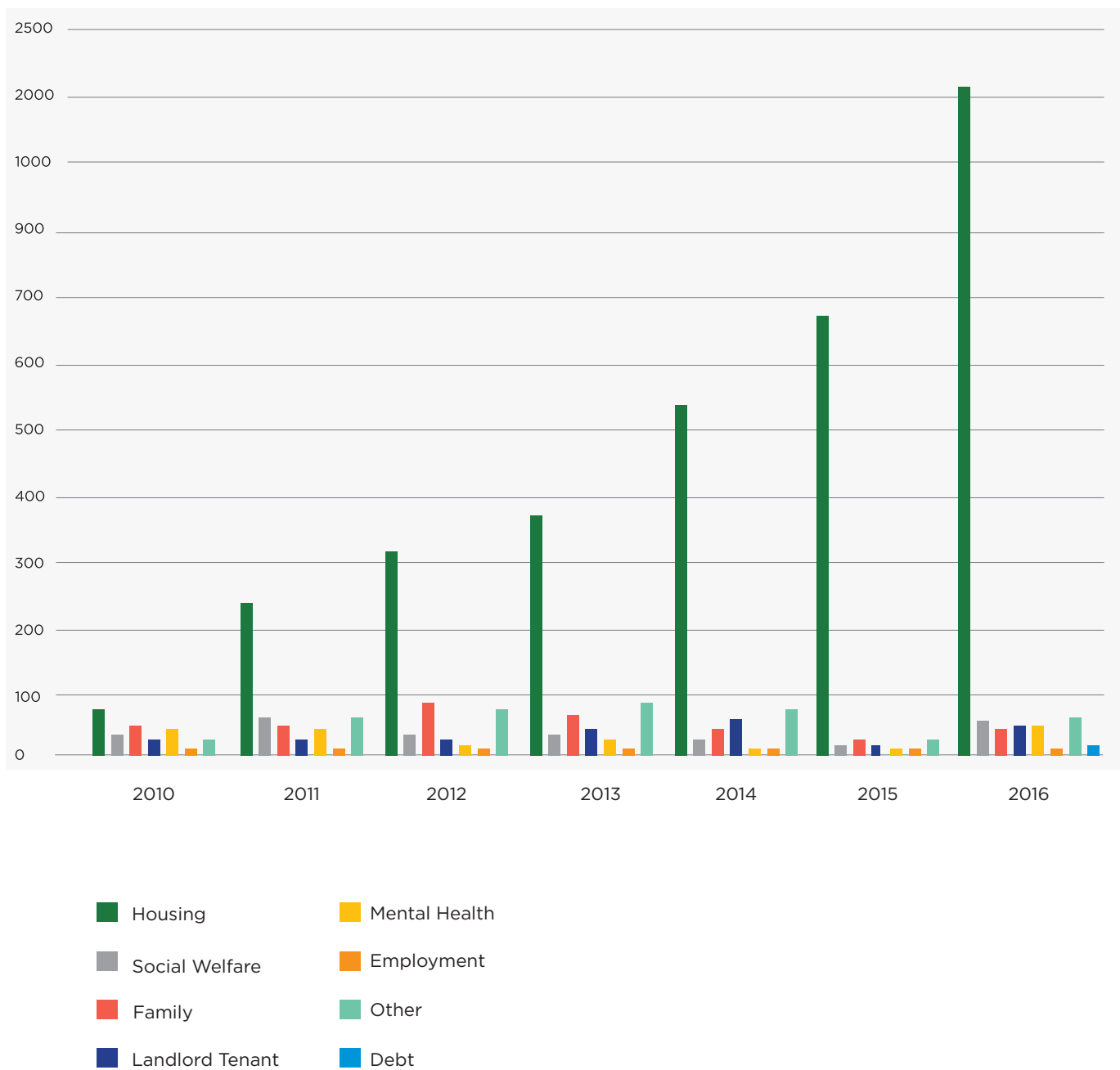
## MLRC Legal advice and representation



■ Individuals/families provided with legal advice and/or representation



## Types of queries advised on in 2016



In 2016, the following organisations referred clients to MLRC and/or consulted MLRC for legal advice.

## Citizens Information Centres

- Ballymum CIC
- Ballyowen CIC
- Bantry, Cork CIC
- Bray CIC
- Clondalkin CIC
- Crumlin/Dublin 12 CIC
- Dublin City North West CIC
- Dundalk CIC
- Dundrum CIC
- Finglas CIC
- Galway CIC
- Green Street CIC
- Inchicore CIC
- Liberties CIC
- Louth CIC
- Naas CIC
- Newbridge CIC
- O'Connell Street CIC
- Offaly CIC
- Rathmines CIC
- South City Cork CIC
- Tallaght CIC
- Thurles CIC
- West Cork City CIC
- Wicklow CIC

## Organisations

- Anna Liffey Project
- Aoibhneas
- Ballyfermot Social Initiative
- Barnardos
- Beaumont Hospital
- Bentley House
- Bolt St. Hostel
- Bray Travellers Development Group
- Bray Women's Refuge
- Bridge Street Community
- Probation
- Brú na Bhfiann Hostel
- Cairde
- Camden Hall Hostel
- Cara Nua
- Carlow Housing Network
- Clondalkin Travellers Group
- Cluid Housing
- Community Action Network
- Community Law and Mediation

- Coolock Women's Refuge
- Crosscare
- Cumas
- De Paul Ireland
- Deaf Village Ireland
- Department of Education:  
Home - School Liaison
- Department of Environment
- DLRCC: Housing Section
- Dolphin House Regeneration
- Donegal Traveller Movement
- Dublin Bay Housing
- Dublin City Council: Housing Section
- Dublin Inquirer
- Exchange House
- Fingal County Council: Housing Section
- FLAC
- Focus Ireland
- Fold Housing Association
- Galway Traveller Movement
- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Inclusion Ireland
- Irish Homeless Networks
- Irish Housing Network
- Irish Human Rights and Equality  
Commission
- Iveagh Hostel
- Laois Traveller Action Group
- MABs
- Merchants Quay Ireland
- Mercy Family Centre
- Migrant Rights Centre
- MS Society
- Nigerian Embassy
- North Dublin Bay Housing
- Offally Traveller Movement
- Peter McVerry Trust
- Right of Place
- RPMA Integration Project
- Ruhama
- Saoirse Women's Refuge
- Simon Community
- Sonas
- Sophia
- South Dublin County Council:  
Housing Section
- St. Michael Family Resource Centre,  
Inchicore
- Teach Mhuire
- Thompson Clinic
- Threshold, Dublin
- Threshold, Galway
- Trinity Court Drug Treatment
- Tus Nua
- Tusla
- Wexford Housing Action Group

## Individuals who we have worked with

- Addiction Services
- State TDs and local councillors
- Community Workers
- Medical Social Workers, The Coombe  
Women and Infants University Hospital
- Medical Social Workers,  
Rotunda Hospital
- Primary Care Health Workers
- Medical Social Workers,  
The National Maternity Hospital

## Our Casework In 2016

**MLRC had an exceptionally busy year in 2016 and during the year saw a very substantial increase in the number of people contacting the Centre for advice. MLRC also saw an increase in High Court litigation brought on behalf of our clients.**

### Cases on unlawful refusal by housing authorities to provide emergency accommodation

One particularly common and acute issue that came up was the refusal by housing authorities to provide emergency accommodation to families and individuals who are homeless. MLRC litigated in two cases on this issue in 2016 and were successful in both cases. There were several other cases that our solicitors worked on, submitting detailed legal submissions to housing authorities arguing that such refusals of emergency accommodation were unlawful, and these other cases were fortunately resolved before escalating to litigation. The refusals were most often

based on a decision of the housing authority that the homeless persons presenting had alternative accommodation available to them that they could occupy, and in some cases, the housing authorities determined that applicants had become intentionally homeless and therefore did not qualify for emergency accommodation. These cases for the most part involved vulnerable non-national families and families who are members of the Traveller Community. The cases were acute and pressing and securing a positive outcome averted families with young children having to rough sleep.

### Cases on completely inadequate and highly inappropriate emergency accommodation

MLRC also dealt with several cases involving completely inadequate and highly inappropriate emergency accommodation and also cases involving placements of families in unsuitable emergency accommodation for a very long period. MLRC prepared detailed submissions in these cases, and obtained medical reports and other supporting evidence, to argue

that families should be moved to more suitable emergency accommodation or to long term stable accommodation. MLRC had some success in these cases and continue to work on the issue of long term homelessness and suitability of emergency B&B and hotel accommodation, seeking creative solutions both on the casework and policy side.

### Cases on unlawful barriers to getting on the housing list

A recurring theme in the casework of MLRC is barriers to getting on the housing list and through the year, MLRC assisted many clients overcoming these barriers. Getting on the housing list can be a crucial step in moving out of homelessness and accessing support services, as well as ensuring access to rent supplement/Housing Assistance Payment.

MLRC assisted one client for example who had been trying to get on the housing list for over a year and had been homeless

throughout this period. He had been refused access to the housing list on the basis that he did not have a sufficient connection to Dublin. In that case, MLRC argued on behalf of the client that accessing homeless services for in excess of one year established such a connection and that it would be wholly irrational for the client to return to his original council area, where he had not resided since 1981.

In another case, MLRC challenged by way of



High Court litigation a refusal to put a non-national on the housing list on the basis that she did not satisfy the provisions of Circular 41/2012. Circular 41/2012 was issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (as it was then called) in December 2012 and is entitled "Access to social housing supports for non-Irish nationals". Our client was

married to an Irish national but was a victim of domestic violence. The housing authority said she would not be eligible to go on the housing list unless she made a joint application with her husband. It was only by recourse to High Court litigation that MLRC secured a positive outcome for that client and secured her inclusion on the housing list.

### **Cases in relation to termination of tenancies of voluntary housing association tenants**

April 2016 saw a change in the law with respect of Approved Housing Bodies and brought them under the remit of the Residential Tenancies Board.

Towards the end of 2016, MLRC acted in several cases before the Residential Tenancies Board Tribunal arguing that termination of a tenancy of a tenant in voluntary housing, constituted an interference in their right to home and violated their rights under Article 8 of the

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the right to privacy and family life). The core argument that runs through these cases is that the Residential Tenancies Board, as a public body, is obliged to act in a manner compatible with the Convention and must have due regard to Article 8 and the requirement that any person at risk of interference with the right to respect for the home must be able to have the proportionality of that measure decided on by an independent tribunal.

### **Cases in relation to the new evictions procedure for local authority tenants**

Related to changes in the law, MLRC advised on several cases during the year which concerned the new evictions procedure set out in the Housing

(Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014. MLRC has noted that housing authorities are becoming increasingly ready to rely on the new procedure.

### **Cases on succession to tenancy**

MLRC also acted in several succession cases, arguing successfully that occupants or tenants of a Council property enjoy a right to home that is protected by Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights

(ECHR) and any decision to evict may only be lawful and proportionate if due regard is had to that right and in some circumstances, an offer of alternative accommodation is made.

### **Summary**

This is a summary of the areas that the bulk of MLRC work has been focused on but there are several other issues we have worked on. The queries MLRC are encountering are becoming increasingly varied, complex and urgent.

MLRC works with clients who are in an acutely vulnerable position and often come to MLRC as a last resort having made extensive efforts to resolve the issues arising themselves. MLRC is without exception in awe of the resilience of our clients and want to thank them for working with the Centre.

## Case Studies

### MLRC assisted a client to be put on the housing list based on his normal residence, after the Council had refused on the basis that he did not have a “local connection” to the area

We assisted a client to access the housing list after 18 months of being homeless. Our client had been on the Freephone number for 18 months. The “Freephone” is a service operated by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive for people who are homeless. Through this service, the person may be booked into a hostel bed for the night.

Our client had only ever secured a bed about one in every ten days due to the shortage of hostel beds. Because he was not on the housing list, he had not been able to get an ongoing booking through the Council for a bed for the night.

MLRC, in representing our client, submitted to the local authority that it must, in accordance with law, first assess whether or not the applicant is normally resident in the functional area of the local authority. It is only after that test has not been satisfied that they can then apply the local connection test.

#### The relevant law

In this argument, we relied on s 22(6) of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. That section states what links to an area a person must establish to be eligible for the housing list:

**22(6)** *An allocation scheme **may include** conditions subject to which the preference of a household to reside in a particular area or areas **may be taken into account** in allocating a dwelling to such a household, **including, but not necessarily limited to**, conditions relating to:*

- *whether the household or any member of it **currently resides**, or at any time has resided, and for what period, in the area or areas concerned,*

- *the distance of the area or areas from the place of employment of any member of the household,*
- *whether any members of the household are attending any university, college, school or other educational establishment in the area or areas concerned, and*
- *whether any relatives of any member of the household reside in the area or areas concerned.*

Regulation 5 of the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011 provides:

**5.** *A household may apply for social housing support to one housing authority only (the “housing authority of application”), which authority shall be either:*

- *The housing authority for the functional area in which the **household normally resides, or***
- *The housing authority for the functional area with which the **household has a local connection, or***
- *The housing authority that agrees, **at its discretion**, to conduct a social housing assessment in respect of that household on receipt of an application from the household.*

We noted to the local authority that our client had been living in its functional area and accessing homeless services there for well over a year and that he was engaged in various services there including medical services. We argued that on that basis he was normally resident in the local authority’s area.

The local authority, in response to our submissions, accepted our client onto the housing list. The local authority based this acceptance on Regulation 5(c), noted above,

i.e. its discretion. MLRC considers that it is clear that our client normally resided in the local authority's area and was entitled to be on the housing list for that reason also.

Before this was finally resolved, our client was understandably becoming increasingly frustrated and desperate as the months of rough sleeping and uncertainty continued. While our client still faces the challenge of finding a permanent stable home, because he is now on the housing list he can at least have a bed on an ongoing basis. In this way, he no longer has each day the great uncertainty and instability of finding a bed for the night through the Freephone service.

### **Successful outcome for MLRC client, Social Welfare Appeal and Residential Tenancy Board Adjudication**

Our client, we shall call him, Joe, came to Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC) as he was destitute and literally sitting in the dark as he had no funds for electricity.

Joe had secured accommodation and moved in to his one bed apartment in January of 2016. He had explained to his landlord that he was searching for employment and was currently on social welfare. Joe's landlord continually refused to give Joe a rent book or to sign the rent supplement form. This meant that Joe was unable to prove his address to the Department of Social Welfare and his social welfare payment was stopped in March leaving Joe without any income and therefore he was unable to pay his rent.

Joe had to rely on the generosity of charities for food and sustenance. Joe came to MLRC in April and we made several attempts to contact his landlord in

order to resolve this matter. His landlord refused to engage in any negotiations and issued several invalid notices to quit. MLRC subsequently made a complaint to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) on his behalf.

As a result of MLRC's advocacy Joe's social welfare payment was reinstated in May and the RTB adjudication was successful: it was negotiated that Joe did not have to pay 6 months' rent and a future date was agreed for him to leave the property. Joe was very happy to do so as the relationship with his landlord had irrevocably broken down.

Joe secured employment in June 2016. He is relieved to be settled back to work and with the support and assistance of MLRC, has moved on from this traumatic affair.

## LEGAL SUPPORT AND TRAINING TO ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN THE FIELD OF HOMELESSNESS

**MLRC provides legal support and training to organisations working in the field of homelessness. This can include general legal advice on individual cases and staff training. MLRC holds focus groups with organisations that we work with to identify issues on which MLRC can advise and provide support.**



### What organisations have said about working with MLRC

#### Focus Ireland

*“Mercy Law Resource Centre runs a weekly clinic for our clients who need specialist advice or advocacy, particularly for families linking in with our service who are in crisis situations. The staff are professional, client-centred and dedicated to the work they do. Mercy Law Resource Centre has provided excellent training to our staff so we can further support our clients in our everyday work. Their service is invaluable in improving our clients’ situation and strengthening the work that we do. They are a vital service in the sector at the moment and consistently campaign for clients’ rights to be met through legal advocacy and representation.”*

#### Liberties Citizens Information Centre

*“The housing crisis has resulted in an unprecedented rise in the numbers of people accessing homeless services. Many families have been left languishing in unsuitable temporary accommodation where they are denied the right to a normal family life. The Mercy Law Resource Centre provides an invaluable legal service to these families and to individuals, upholding their rights, ensuring their voices are heard and challenging those in authority to meet their statutory obligations. The Liberties Citizens Information Centre has worked closely with the Mercy Law Resource Centre for many years and we commend your work and the role your service plays in advocating for the rights of those seeking access to housing.”*

### Legal training for organisations working in the field of homelessness

It can be very difficult to access clear, comprehensive and accurate information on the law regarding entitlements in relation to homelessness, housing and social welfare. Housing and related social welfare law can be complex.

MLRC provides training in the law for those working in the field of homelessness to support their clients, to help them identify legal issues and when it may be appropriate to refer a person for legal advice. MLRC solicitors deliver the training. The training is designed to be interactive and responsive to the issues seen by the attendees. We use a combination of presentations on the law and discussion of case studies so that attendees can enjoy interactive, lively and practical training sessions.

In 2016 MLRC held training workshops in housing and related social welfare law for organisations and those working in the field of homelessness including Threshold, Crosscare, CIC's in Kildare, Laois, Offaly, Carlow, Munster, and North Midlands, De Paul, HSE, FLAC and elected representatives.

*“It was excellent, inclusive and interesting  
- excellent use of materials”*

*“It was very enjoyable, especially the case studies”*

*“Very well delivered in an understanding manner”*

*“Trainer very knowledgeable and open to questions.  
Good use of case studies”*

MLRC also held a comprehensive training on social welfare law, delivered over a six week period, one day per week, by Professor Gerry Whyte.

*“The training sessions were excellent in content, presentation and venue. Thank you. And great value for money.”*

*“Well pitched. Gerry was excellent but also got great insight from the comments and questions of other course participants.”*

*“Very clear, structured and concise notes - really useful for further reference.”*

*“Found it very useful, will be using it in my day-to-day work.”*



## POLICY WORK

MLRC'S policy work is informed and grounded by our advice clinics, case work, focus groups and roundtables. Our policy work goes hand in hand with our case work, to achieve practice and policy change that helps those at the margins of our society.

The focus of our policy work in 2016 was in relation to advocacy on the right to housing. MLRC published and launched a detailed

report, the Right to Housing in Ireland, in May 2016, and subsequently presented to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness. As well as this focus, MLRC was also an active participant in the Universal Periodic Review of Ireland and as well as making a submission, travelled to Geneva in March and in April 2016 to lobby Missions on the major gaps in the protection of the right to housing in Ireland.



### Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Following the launch of the MLRC report on the Right to Housing on 4th May 2016, MLRC was invited to make a submission on the Right to Housing to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness. MLRC made this submission and presented it to the Committee on 10th May 2016.

The Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness published their report on Friday 17th June 2016. The Right to Housing is noted by various contributors and the contribution of MLRC is referenced in particular.

MLRC was happy to see that the Committee included in its report a recommendation on the Right to Housing to the incoming Oireachtas Committee on Housing,

Planning and Local Government, and this recommendation was included at page 142 of the report:

*"Acknowledging –*

- the submissions and evidence provided to the Committee;*
- the provisions in the Programme for a Partnership Government 2016; and*
- the work of the Convention on the Constitution in relation to enshrining the right to housing in the Constitution, the Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government (which is expected to be established shortly by Dáil Éireann) should bring the deliberations in this regard to a conclusion as quickly as possible by bringing a recommendation on the matter to the Government."*

Advocacy on the right to housing continues into 2017.

## The Right to Housing report

On 4th May 2016, MLRC launched its report on the Right to Housing in Ireland. Judge Catherine McGuinness formally launched the Report. Paul Sweeney, Chair of TASC Economists' Network also presented at the launch on the economic context for the right to housing. The launch took place in the Georgian Suite, Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

MLRC's report on the Right to Housing in Ireland assesses the protection of the right to housing in Irish law and outlines the impact that a Constitutional right to housing would have.

TDs, local councillors, and staff of organisations working in the field of homelessness were among the attendees. MLRC was very grateful to both Judge Catherine McGuinness and Paul Sweeney for presiding over the launch and to all who attended. MLRC particularly welcomed the vibrant and engaged Q&A that followed the formal launch of the report.

At the launch, MLRC called for the protection of the right to housing in the

Constitution. MLRC advocated that the right to housing would help those who are facing homelessness now and would be a fundamental safeguard against the

recurrence of this gravely unacceptable crisis. The report states that such a protection would recognise that a home is central to the dignity and potential of every person. The protection of this right would represent and be part of a long-term solution to go alongside the short-term remedial measures such as the very welcome decision to increase rent supplement rates, made earlier in 2016.

The report launched in May 2016 set out that a right to housing in the Constitution would not mean the right to a key to a home for all. A Constitutional right to housing would however put in place a basic floor of protection. It would recognise that a home is central to the dignity and possibility of every person. The report contends that protection of the right would mean that the courts could look at the decision as to whether it was 'proportionate' by reference to the right. It would mean that Government and State policies and actions would have to respect the right.



## Participation in the Universal Periodic Review

The UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) took place in 2016 in relation to Ireland. This review is of countries' records of compliance with all human rights obligations. The UPR was created through the UN General Assembly on 15 March 2006 by resolution 60/251, which established the Human Rights Council itself. It is a cooperative process which, by October 2011, has reviewed the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. Currently, no other universal mechanism of this kind exists. The UPR is one of the key elements of the Council which reminds States of their responsibility to fully respect and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The ultimate aim of this mechanism is to improve the human rights situation in all countries and address human rights violations wherever they occur.

MLRC had made several submissions in 2015 in advance of the UPR itself. In September 2015, MLRC sent its submission to the UN High Commission for Human Rights for the the UN Universal Periodic Review. Among MLRC's recommendations in the light of this crisis in homelessness, were that the right to housing be protected in Irish law, that civil legal aid be extended to cases of eviction,

and that legislative and policy measures be put in place to ensure rent supplement and the new Housing Assistance Payment can meet market rent. MLRC also submitted to the ICCL Your Rights Right Now stakeholder report, Your Rights Right Now. In addition, MLRC submitted to the Department of Justice, in response to its request for submissions ahead of the UPR, and participated in the consultation held by the Department of Justice on the submissions.

MLRC then travelled to Geneva in March and in April 2016 to lobby Missions on the major gaps in the protection of the right to housing in Ireland. MLRC met there with a number of Missions to discuss the crisis in homelessness, and the causes and effects. MLRC also presented to Missions at a Pre-Session information session for Missions organised by UPR Info, a Geneva based NGO. Over 40 Missions attended that Pre-Session and it was a very useful forum to raise the issues for delegates from a very wide range of countries. The aim of the lobbying is that Missions will be informed as to the major housing and homelessness issues here, the breaches of the international human rights law right to housing that are occurring and the lack of protection of the right to housing.

## Other policy issues

In 2016, MLRC worked and continues to work on other more particular policy issues which present great problems for people who are facing homelessness.

Among those are:

- The difficulties people who are homeless face in accessing appropriate emergency accommodation due, for example, to the unlawful refusal to recognise people as "homeless";
- The standards of emergency accommodation for people who are homeless, which are frequently deeply inappropriate, especially where a person has serious health issues. We are seeing adults and children now, after enduring these conditions for months, with no end in sight, suffering very severely in their physical health and their mental health.
- The lack of supports for local authority tenants with serious mental health issues. The State provides little support for people with such serious issues. People with these issues often encounter major difficulties in sustaining a tenancy. Even when the person's immediate legal issue is resolved, which is not always possible as the person may not have the capacity and tenacity needed at this chaotic time to see the process through, the issue is likely to recur as they do not have the supports to stabilise their lives on a long-term basis.



## Collaboration on policy-informing and strengthening policy and advocacy

MLRC identifies serious and recurring issues to inform our policy work through collaboration with organisations working in the field of homelessness and human rights. MLRC does this through:

- MLRC holds regular focus groups and roundtables with organisations working in the field of homelessness.

- MLRC meets regularly with the housing lawyers of the independent law centres. This informal network discusses case work and policy work to identify current issues and areas of useful policy collaboration.

- MLRC is a member of a housing group, the Housing Advocacy Network, which is a forum to share information and identify and consider policy issues. Other members of the group include Dr Padraic Kenna (NUI Galway), Community Action Network (CAN), Focus Ireland, the Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA), Community Law and Mediation Northside and Limerick, and Ballymun Community Law Centre.

- MLRC is a member of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Initiative. The ESC Rights Initiative is a network of organisations and individuals with a shared belief that strengthening the protection of ESC rights would play a fundamental role in the creation of a more just, inclusive and socially sustainable society. The aim of the Initiative is to ensure that ESC rights contained in the International Covenant of Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), are made legally enforceable in the Constitution. Through this group, MLRC works to advocate for the right to housing to be provided for under Irish law.



## BEFRIENDING SERVICE

In 2016, our befrienders assisted our clients with a range of valuable supports including: accompanying clients to appointments with the local authority and social welfare offices, completion of forms for immigration applications, completion of social welfare forms, and emotional support particularly with respect of family matters and upcoming court dates.

MLRC recognises that the legal system can be bewildering and daunting for many people. Our aim is to provide our

clients with a service that is friendly and easy to access. To make this possible we provide a service to befriend clients who particularly need support in order to be able to assert their rights. The role of a Volunteer Befriender is to support and accompany the client by, for example, helping to fill in forms, accompaniment to appointments or court and providing an additional listening ear. Training is provided to all volunteers who also have the support of regular group meetings where peer support is provided.

HOPE LOVE  
acceptance  
SUPPORT  
forgiveness  
PEACE  
LOVE



...You are  
not alone

### Befriender's Story

Michael Liddy has been a part of our befriending programme with MLRC for the past four years.



*If you are a person who wants to give some help, like charitable work, and want to provide someone with some friendship and charitable guidance then you are suited to the befriending programme. MLRC are an excellent organisation who are efficient and pleasant to deal with at all times. MLRC has provided guidance to me as a befriender when needed and they are doing a much needed job for which there is real need. Even, as a befriender if you provide an hour a week, you can be doing a lot of good and make a tremendous difference to someone's life. You could be assisting a range of individuals, from someone who suffers with low levels of literacy, individuals from abroad, those with financial difficulties, or just someone who needs support and a friend."*

# ORGANISATION

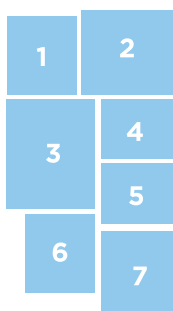
## MLRC's Offices

Apart from the clinic outreach work, MLRC works primarily from its offices on 25 Cork Street, Dublin 8. These offices are open Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 5.30pm.

## Staff

In 2016, MLRC had seven staff members:

1. **Maeve Regan**  
Managing Solicitor
2. **Rebecca Keatinge**  
Solicitor
3. **Sinead Kerin**  
Solicitor
4. **Shauna Curran**  
Administrator
5. **Danielle Curtis**  
Administrator
6. **Denise Fitzgerald**  
Legal Secretary
7. **Nuala Monaghan**  
Legal Secretary



In 2016, our Administrator Shauna Curren began a period of leave. MLRC wishes Shauna the very best for this leave.

MLRC welcomed Danielle Curtis as Administrator and is delighted to have her as part of our team while Shauna is on leave. Danielle is a Stage 2, Master in Common Law student in University College Dublin. She is a former Sabbatical Officer from UCD Students Union



*Photo of MLRC staff, volunteers, Board members and befrienders*

(UCDSU), serving as Education Officer from 2015 – 2016. Danielle has a keen interest in both human rights and public interest law, participating in a Model United Nations competition each year in New York. In 2017, she served as the Director for United Nations Forum on Indigenous Issues. We warmly welcome Danielle to the team and are delighted to be working with her.

In late 2016, MLRC was delighted to welcome Nuala Monaghan to the the role of Legal Secretary. Nuala has worked with MLRC, as legal secretary, providing locum and extra cover, for periods since 2013. Nuala has worked for the legal profession for many years in small, medium and large legal firms. She has wide experience in all areas of law. Nuala has been involved throughout her life with issues that affect people on the margins of our society. During the 60s and 70s she was heavily involved in the Dublin Housing Action Committee which campaigned for the alleviation of the housing crisis at that time. During the 1990s she was involved in the Regeneration Programme for Rialto contributing to the general issues of the programme and in particular to the area of employment and training and was the independent member on the Board of the FAS Management Project. We were delighted to welcome Nuala back to the team in 2016.

## Denise Fitzgerald Rest in Peace

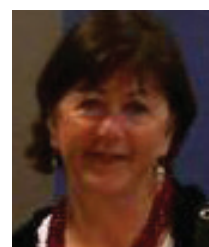
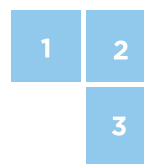
On 3rd October 2016, we were deeply saddened at the passing of our great friend and colleague, Denise Fitzgerald. Denise was legal secretary of MLRC and worked with MLRC almost from the very beginnings of the Centre. Denise was an inspiration to us and to our clients. She embodied MLRC's values. Denise is sorely missed by all her friends and colleagues at Mercy Law where her memory will live on, in our ethos of compassion, dignity and social justice. May she rest in peace.



## Volunteers

We have a number of administrative, legal and befriending volunteers working with MLRC, who greatly enhance the work of the Centre. We are very grateful for their support and assistance.

1. **Liz Fletcher**  
Volunteer Administrator
2. **Caitriona O’Hara**  
Volunteer Administrator  
and Befriending Service  
Coordinator
3. **Geraldine Hynes**  
Volunteer Solicitor



## Internship Programme

In 2016, MLRC was delighted to welcome the following interns: **Mary Hastings**, law student, Trinity College Dublin; **Blánaid Ní Bhraonáin**, law student, Trinity College Dublin; **Kate Heffernan**, law student, Trinity College Dublin; **Sarah Burns**, Clinic Legal Education student, Trinity College Dublin.

**We are very grateful to them for their great and practical contribution to MLRC’s work.**



*Interning at Mercy Law Resource Centre was an incredible experience, both personally and professionally. The team was so kind and welcoming; they made sure the internship was as hands-on and educational as possible. I got to participate in clinics, cases, legal research, policy work, and advocacy. The fascinating work, and its positive impact on so many lives, fuelled my determination to pursue a career in public interest law.*



*During my time there, Mercy’s annual report was launched, which illustrated how much the centre has achieved and how many people it has assisted. The team works tirelessly for their clients, providing dignity, respect, and service to people struggling in very difficult situations. People who have lost their home encounter a stream of indignities and rejections and find themselves more and more powerless. Mercy’s clients have often suffered more in the past few weeks than many of us have in our whole lives. They are in desperate need of an advocate, someone to fight their corner; the Mercy team fulfils this role with skill, dedication and empathy. They are an inspiration to any law student and I am so grateful for the opportunity to experience their work first-hand”.*

**- Blánaid Ní Bhraonáin**  
Intern with MLRC  
in the summer of 2016



*I was fortunate to have got the opportunity to spend three weeks working with the excellent team at Mercy Law Resource Centre. From the moment I stepped into the office on a Monday morning I was made feel welcomed and valued. Each member of the team selflessly gave time out of their busy schedules to help and assist me with any questions I had.*



*Each day I was struck by the passion, enthusiasm and hard-work of the staff. Through meeting clients at weekly clinics I became increasingly aware of how vulnerable and marginalised members of our society are and how important it is to have organisations such as Mercy Law willing to stand up and give a voice to these individuals.*

*It was a privilege to have worked at Mercy Law Resource Centre. The placement opened my eyes to the inequality and social exclusion that is present in Irish society today. The work of Mercy Law is invaluable and each member of staff should feel immensely proud that each day they are taking steps to bring about change to the lives of individuals and tackle one of the biggest problems facing this country”.*

**- Sarah Burns**  
Clinical Legal Education student,  
Trinity College Dublin, interned with  
MLRC during the autumn of 2016

## Communications

In 2016, MLRC issued four e-zines. MLRC’s e-zine gives information to subscribers on MLRC’s work and developments relevant to homelessness, housing law and related social welfare law. The website was updated regularly with blogs of relevance to MLRC’s work. MLRC maintains an active social media presence on **Twitter** (@MLRCLaw) and **Facebook** (Mercy Law Resource Centre). MLRC is active with these very useful tools in spreading the awareness of MLRC’s service and developments in the law that are of interest to those we work with. To subscribe to our quarterly e-zine, please visit **[www.mercylaw.ie](http://www.mercylaw.ie)**.



## GOVERNANCE

Mercy Law Resource Centre CLG is registered as:

- An Independent Law Centre with the Law Society of Ireland.
- A Charity with the Revenue Commissioners (CHY No: 18698)
- A Charity with the Charities Registration Authority (Charity Registration No: 20072254)
- A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having share capital with the Company Registration Office (Company Registration No: 471072)



The Centre is governed by a Board of Directors who meets with the Managing Solicitor and the Administrator every six weeks or so. The Managing Solicitor presents to the Board a report on case work, policy work, compliance matters, employment matters and future development of the Centre. The Administrator presents the accounts and a report on the Befriending Service. The Chair of the Board meets frequently with the Managing Solicitor during the interval between Board meetings.

### **MLRC is registered with the Charities Registration Authority.**

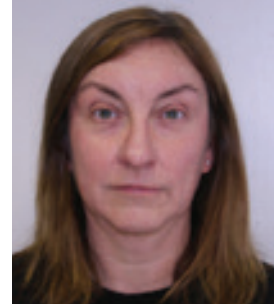
MLRC is on the “adoption journey” of the Governance Code. This Code is a voluntary code of practice for good governance of community, voluntary and charitable organisations.

Since 2013, MLRC has been signed up to the ICTR’s Guidelines of Principles of Fundraising. MLRC is fully committed to maintaining the standards contained within the Statement of Guiding Principles of Fundraising, to improve fundraising practice, promote high levels of accountability and transparency and to provide clarity and assurances to donors and prospective donors.

## The Directors

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10

1. **Helena O'Donoghue** (Chairperson) since 2009 - Mercy Sister and Director, Sophia Housing, Ceist Ltd, Mater and Campus Hospital Development Limited, NRH Ltd, ECPL Ltd.
2. **Anne Doyle** - Director since 2009, Mercy Sister, Director of St Paul's Child and Family Centre Ltd, Rachamim Company Limited.
3. **Niall Farrell** - Director since 2011, Managing Partner, Solicitor, Patrick J Farrell and Company Solicitors, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, Chairman of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal, Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for Ireland.
4. **Jo Kennedy** - Director since 2009, Mercy Sister.
5. **Ciara McGrath** - Director since 2009, Project Leader, Crosscare.
6. **Deirdre Quigley** - Director since 2011, Project Manager.
7. **Patrick Stagg** (Company Secretary) since 2009 - Manager, Bluebell & Dublin 8 Citizens Information Service.
8. **Liam Twohig** - Director since 2011, Chartered Accountant & Business Partner RSM Ireland, Director of Endosurgical (NI) Limited.
9. **Gerry Whyte** - Director since 2009, Professor, Law School, Trinity College and Director of Kenya Orphan Aid Ltd.
10. **Margaret Roche** - Director since 2014, Administrator.





# FINANCE

## Cost of our service

The cost of running MLRC in 2016 amounted to approximately €253,000. MLRC is totally dependent on fundraising and to date has not received any main public grants or State monies. In 2016, we received some €283,000 in grants, donations, court costs and from fundraising. One third of that amount was covered by the Sisters of Mercy. Out of the total of €283,000 received, €125,000 was received by way of donations and €50,000 was secured through successful grants applications. We also received monthly donations by individuals supporting our service for which MLRC is very grateful.

The value of our service far exceeds the cost as a result of a large number of in kind donations we receive, e.g.:

- Reduced rent and utilities
- Free conference and reception facilities
- Pro bono legal services by barristers
- Pro bono expert reports from doctors/ engineers etc.
- Pro bono auditing and accounting service
- Volunteer befrienders
- Volunteer administrators
- Volunteer part-time solicitor

We estimate the value of these donations to be approximately €150,000 for which we are very grateful.

Our main costs include:

- Office, such as: telephone, postage,

stationery/printing and equipment/ maintenance

- Core salaries and employer costs of administration staff and solicitors
- Travel
- Advertising/explanatory booklets/leaflets
- Project costs, i.e.:
  - Outreach clinics
  - Befriender programme
  - Internships
  - Volunteer expenses
  - Training
  - Case-work research
  - Policy research

MLRC continues to work towards becoming self-financing. We aim to do this by developing a training programme, continuing to apply for appropriate grants, and expanding our fundraising programme, including our donor programme and internal fundraising events.

## Funders

MLRC would like to acknowledge and thank our funders for their generous support. MLRC's funders are a combination of corporate and philanthropic organisations and individuals acting in their private capacity. We gratefully received grants and donations ranging from €50 up to €80,000. Among our funders are:



## There are three ways to support and become a friend of MLRC

- Online: To donate online just click on the “Donate” button on our website at [www.mercylaw.ie](http://www.mercylaw.ie) and enter your details. Donations are made through Pay Pal.
- Post: You can post cheques, bank drafts or postal orders, made payable to the “Mercy Law Resource Centre”, to our office at 25 Cork Street, Dublin 8.
- Bank transfer: Donations can be made by sending money directly to our bank account by either bank transfer or standing order. Please contact MLRC for further details.

As a friend of MLRC, you help us to continue our work of helping those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, through free legal advice and representation, policy work, our befriending service and education and training for those working in the field of homelessness. You will receive our quarterly e-zine and annual report and invitations to MLRC events.

For more information on becoming a Friend of MLRC please contact [info@mercylaw.ie](mailto:info@mercylaw.ie), or call the MLRC office on 01 4537459, or visit [www.mercylaw.ie](http://www.mercylaw.ie).

Your support would be most gratefully received.

## Fundraising Events

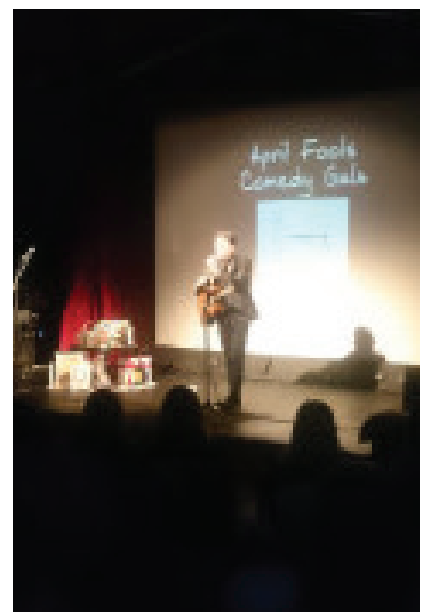
On 13th April 2016, MLRC held our third annual fundraiser – the April Fools Comedy Gala. This night was a great success, with a full house in the Sugar Club in Dublin! The show was produced and hosted by Jarlath Regan, comedian.

MLRC is most grateful to Jarlath Regan for this light-filled event which brings together the community that we work in and supporters of MLRC. MLRC is very grateful to the comedians who performed on the night, John Colleary, Alison Spittle, Joe Rooney and Colm O'Regan. All of these artists performed completely for free. Thanks to them and all who supported the show, the event raised almost €5,000 for MLRC.

**THE ANNUAL APRIL FOOLS DAY  
COMEDY GALA**  
IN AID OF THE MERCY LAW RESOURCE CENTRE

APRIL 1ST SUGAR CLUB LEESON ST. TICKETS FROM [MERCYLAW.IE](http://MERCYLAW.IE)

With *David O'Doherty*  
*Jarlath Regan*  
*Barry Murphy*  
Plus *Secret Special Guests*



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The value of our service far exceeds the cost as a result of the large number of in-kind donations we receive. MLRC would like to acknowledge and thank all those who provide services to us:**

## Sophia Housing Association

Free conference and reception facilities.

## Barristers

Pro bono opinions, drafting, advocacy and legal support and advice

Aideen Collard BL  
Alan DP Brady BL  
Andrea Mulligan BL  
Anne Marie Maher BL  
Aoife Gillespie BL  
Brian Barrington BL  
Brian Foley BL  
Claire Bruton BL  
Colin Smith BL  
Columb Fortune BL  
Conor Dignam SC  
Conor Power BL  
Cormac O'Dúlacháin SC  
David Leonard BL  
Derek Shortall BL  
Eoin Coffey BL  
Eugene Hill BL  
Feichin McDonagh SC  
John Finlay SC  
Kevin Baneham BL  
Mark de Blacam SC  
Martin Giblin SC  
Mel Christle SC  
Michael Dillon BL  
Michael Kinsley BL  
Michael Lynn SC  
Michael P O'Higgins SC  
Neil Maddox BL  
Nóra Ní Lionsigh BL  
Olwyn Bennett BL  
Oran Doyle BL  
Siobhan Phelan SC  
Sunniva McDonagh SC  
Suzanne Kingston BL  
Teresa Blake SC  
Una Cassidy BL

## Auditor

Natalie Kelly, Anne Brady McQuillans DFK

## Legal Cost Accountant

Tommy McEvoy, Cyril O'Neill & Co. Legal Costs Accountants

## Fundraiser - Comedy Gala

Producer and host: Jarlath Regan  
Comedians: John Colleary, Alison Spittle, Joe Rooney and Colm O'Regan

## Volunteers

Volunteer Administrator and Befriending Service Coordinator: Sr Caitriona O'Hara  
Volunteer Solicitor: Geraldine Hynes  
Volunteer Befrienders  
Volunteer Heading: Mary Hastings, Blánaid Ní Bhraonáin, Kate Heffernan, and Sarah Burns.

## Layout Design

Persuasion Republic

## Photographers

Gareth Chaney  
Derek Speirs  
Sean Kinsella



# APPENDIX

## Finance Report Update With 2016 Figures

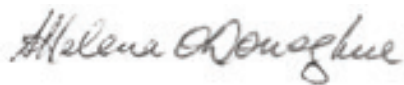
MLRC’s financial year runs from 1 May to 30 April. The following extracts are from the audited accounts for MLRC’s financial year 1 May 2015 to 30 April 2016. Extracted from Audited Accounts for the financial year 1 May 2015 to 30 April 2016

### Income and Expenditure Account for the financial year 1 May 2015 to 30 April 2016

	Notes	2016 €	2015 €
Income	6	264,348	188,742
Expenditure		(232,153)	(201,829)
Total Comprehensive Income		32,195	(22,087)

The company has no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the year. The results for the year have been calculated on the historical cost basis. The company’s income and expenses all relate to continuing operations.

Approved by the Board on 23th November 2016 and signed on its behalf by:



**Helena O’Donoghue**  
Director

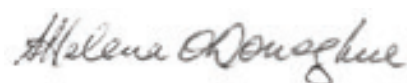


**Patrick Stagg**  
Director

## Balance Sheet as at 30 April 2016

	Notes	2016 €	2015 €
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	9	1,338	3,590
Tangible assets			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	10	4,373	3,983
Cash and cash equivalents		<u>178,562</u>	<u>143,770</u>
		182,935	147,753
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	11	(5,001)	(4,266)
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		177,934	143,487
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>		179,272	147,077
<b>Reserves</b>			
Income and expenditure account		179,272	147,077
<b>Equity attributable to owners of the company</b>		179,272	147,077

Approved by the Board on 23th November 2016 and signed on its behalf by:



**Helena O'Donoghue**  
Director



**Patrick Stagg**  
Director



**Mercy Law**  
Resource Centre

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info@mercylaw.ie

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@MercyLawResourceCentre

**Twitter:**  
@MLRCLaw

