**Press Release – Mercy Law Resource Centre’s Final Hour Campaign**

*For immediate release*

**Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC) Launches “Final Hour” Campaign**

*The end-of-year campaign will ask law firms to donate the last hour of the working year to help MLRC to continue to provide free legal advice and representation to those at risk of homelessness.*

23 November 2022

Today, Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC) has formally announced the launch of its first-ever “Final Hour” campaign, a donation programme to support the charity’s work providing free legal advice and representation to those at risk of homelessness.

The 2022 Final Hour Campaign will ask law firms from across Ireland to consider donating the last billable hour of the year to support MLRC to continue its work in 2023.

In summary:

* 2022 Final Hour Campaign is being launched on 22 November 2022.
* The idea involves donating the value of the last hour of the working year before the seasonal festivities begin.
* Legal professionals have a chance for their last billable hour before the holidays to contribute towards helping the homeless, who are among the most marginalised in society.

Speaking on the launch of the campaign today, Mercy Law Managing Solicitor Aoife Kelly-Desmond said: “Lawyers are used to accounting for every minute of their time. This year, Mercy Law Resource Centre is asking law firms and legal professionals to consider donating the value of their final billable hour of 2022. This contribution will help MLRC support people facing homelessness through legal barriers preventing them from accessing safe, securing housing.”

* So far in 2022, MLRC has seen a **180% increase** in queries from those who were **refused access to emergency homeless accommodation** when compared against 2021.
* In 2021 MLRC:
  + **Received over 2,000 phone calls**
  + **Assisted** **503 individuals and families at risk of homelessness**
  + **Opened new 276 legal advice files**
  + **Advised 44 organisations**

Firms who wish to donate to the Final Hour Campaign can find more information on the Mercy Law website at: [www.mercylaw.ie](http://www.mercylaw.ie)

**ENDS**

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**Notes to editors**

1. Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC) 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 for change in laws, policies and attitudes which unduly and adversely impact people who are at the margins of our society.  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; and a befriending service.  MLRC’s 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 who may be struggling with issues often linked to homelessness e.g. discrimination, addiction, leaving prison, mental illness and relationship breakdown.
2. MLRC has built strong working relationships with other organisations working in the field of homelessness, including Focus Ireland, Crosscare Advocacy Service, and the Citizens Information Centres. Since our inception in 2009, MLRC has provided free legal advice and/or representation to over 10,000 individuals and families.  For more about our work, see [www.mercylaw.ie](http://www.mercylaw.ie)