

Limerick Housing Case and implications of Regeneration

In August of this year, a plenary summons was issued in a case that has sprung from the regeneration process in Limerick. With the assistance of VAS, one Limerick family are bringing a case against Limerick City Council, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Ireland and the Attorney General. The family have endured escalating anti social behaviour in the vicinity of their own home since 2010, to the point where they were forced to abandon their home in December 2012 and live elsewhere having suffered anxiety, stress and intimidation. Limerick Community Law and Mediation Centre requested the assistance of VAS earlier this year. Michael Cush SC, Brian Kennedy SC and Niall Handy BL are acting and upon their involvement, proceedings were initiated. It is likely that the case will have an early hearing date in the new year.

VAS Assisting Irish Travellers

In the past number of months, VAS has taken on a number of cases involving travellers’ rights. Three cases are ongoing involving issues around alleged discrimination. Requests have come from the Irish Traveller Movement and from solicitors assisting travellers on a pro bono basis, who require the input of a barrister in their cases. VAS are proud to be of assistance to marginalised communities in Ireland.

VAS Opportunities – get involved!

VAS receives requests for legal assistance from NGOs, civic society organisations and charities all over Ireland. When assigning those cases to a barrister, for the most part, we utilise a database of volunteers who have made their interest in the scheme known to us. We continue to encourage all practising members of the Bar to get in contact with us listing their year of call to the Bar and areas of practice. In the past year requests have ranged from mortgage and debt advice, to charity law, immigration law, housing law and prison law. Types of cases include general opinion work to initiation of proceedings. We have enlisted a

number of Ireland's leading and most innovative law firms and they have made a significant contribution to the working of the scheme. All barristers who carry out a piece of work on behalf of VAS receive 3 CPD points.

Updated VAS website

VAS have recently updated their website to include greater detail on the services provided by VAS, general information for NGOs and for barristers. Check it out in the “Bar Council and You” section of the Law Library website. Please note that you can also follow VAS on twitter - @BarCouncilVAS

Human Rights Week

United Nations Human Rights Day is December 10th 2013. For the past two years, FLAC have hosted a website listing human rights events happening over the days before and after Human Rights Day around Ireland up to December 15th 2013. See: www.humanrightsworld.com.

Reaching out to NGOs

VAS continuously strives to spread the word amongst NGOs about the services and assistance we can provide. Over the past year we have increased the number of organisations we have worked with and are happy to take on more. If you know of any NGO or charity that might find our services useful, please get in touch.

VAS would like to wish all members of the Bar a peaceful Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year



Thank you to all barristers and solicitors who worked on our behalf in 2013. We look forward to working with many more of you in 2014.