

CHILDREN'S LAW CENTRE

Using the Law to Promote, Protect and Realise Children's Rights

ANNUAL
REPORT
2011/2012



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YOUTH@CLC

“The Road to Rights - Using Rights for Change”

The Road to Rights

Using Rights for Change

“I gained knowledge and confidence in the steps leading to our campaign and realised we won't be alone!”

“I got a better understanding of the work that will be involved in leading my project and who it will benefit...It's not just about us”

“I am very excited about the upcoming campaign and the opportunity to make a difference to other young people”

The highlight of youth@clc's work during the year was the redesign and delivery of the “Road to Rights” training programme to 10 young peer advocates from Belfast, North Down and Carrickfergus. With funding support from the Community Foundation NI and Lloyds TSB Foundation NI, CLC facilitated an 8 day training programme and outreach support workshops between April and November 2011. Using a unique peer advocacy toolkit designed by CLC, the training enabled participants to apply a rights based framework to

identify and analyse local children's rights issues which impact negatively on their lives.

The “Road to Rights” training programme culminated in a 3 day residential in

Corrymeela, which gave the peer advocates an opportunity to explore their ideas for rights based campaigns in their own areas, to acquire the necessary skills and to build the confidence to take the next step in running their own campaigns. On the final day of the residential, when asked what they had gained from the “Road to Rights” training experience, comments from peer advocates included:



Consultations

Article 12

During 2011 youth@clc participated in a number of consultations including the Department of Justice - "Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities" and the Independent Youth Justice Review Team's "Review of Youth Justice in Northern Ireland." Youth@clc members unanimously agreed in their responses to these consultations that positive action is needed to improve relations between the police and young people in all communities and to end the demonisation of young people by many adults in our society.

S.75

Department of Justice -
"Building Safer, Shared and
Confident Communities."

Independent Youth Justice
Review Team "Review of
Youth Justice in Northern
Ireland."





UNCRC: GENERAL COMMENT ON THE RIGHT OF THE CHILD TO BE HEARD

The Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment 12 on the "Right of the Child to be Heard" was formally adopted during the 51st session in June (2009).



Young people, representing five youth groups, are now leading separate "Road to Rights" campaigns in their local areas in an effort to bring about positive change. All five campaigns will enable young people to exercise their **UNCRC Article 12** Right to have their views heard and listened to on matters affecting their lives and the lives of many more young people.

The five campaigns were launched by Junior Ministers Bell and Anderson in the Long Gallery in Stormont on 20 March 2011. "Road to Rights" graduates were delighted by the strong support they received in Stormont from both Junior Ministers and over one hundred attendees including local MLAs, councillors, representatives from government departments, the youth and community sector, parents and their peers.

Building on that support over the coming year, they will be calling on government to realise the promises government made to all children by ratifying the UNCRC in 1991. CLC will be monitoring the progress of all of the "Road to Rights" campaigns in the achievement of their goals. A published report of campaign outcomes will be made available by June 2013.



The current Road to Rights Campaigns are: ●

1 Carrickfergus Youth Council - Community Safety Project

Ellen who is a "Road to Rights" graduate, speaking at the Campaign Launch in Stormont on behalf of Carrick Youth Council, outlined their concerns about community safety issues in "Love Lane" (a main access route for many young people getting in and out of Carrickfergus):

"We have been carrying out research to find out more about what we believe is a problem in the area...Our project also hopes to challenge the stereotype that young people don't care about their environment and are always the ones causing trouble - most want to work with the community not against it. As stated in Article 12 of the UNCRC, we have the right not only to have our say but also be listened to." Ellen



2 Youth@clc - Supporting Positive Mental Health in School

3 Lower Falls Young Women's Group - Suicide Prevention in West Belfast

4 Quaker Cottage - Suicide Awareness in North and West Belfast

Youth@clc, Lower Falls Women's Group and Quaker Cottage all identified access to mental health support services and suicide awareness as their areas of concern.

Speaking on behalf of youth@clc at the launch, Chris Maguire, "Road to Rights" graduate, expressed the groups concerns that...

"...many of our peers in schools across Belfast and the SEELB area, are not aware of support for emotional problems in schools, or are afraid to ask because of the stigma attached to going to a counsellor... The 2009 Young Life and Times Survey (ARK), revealed that only 9% of the 26% of 16 year olds who said they had emotional problems, sought professional help for these problems. We want to know why."

Chris

5 Young NCB Advisory Group - Sectarianism and Young People

Beth from young NCB ("Road to Rights" graduate), outlined the campaign she would be leading:

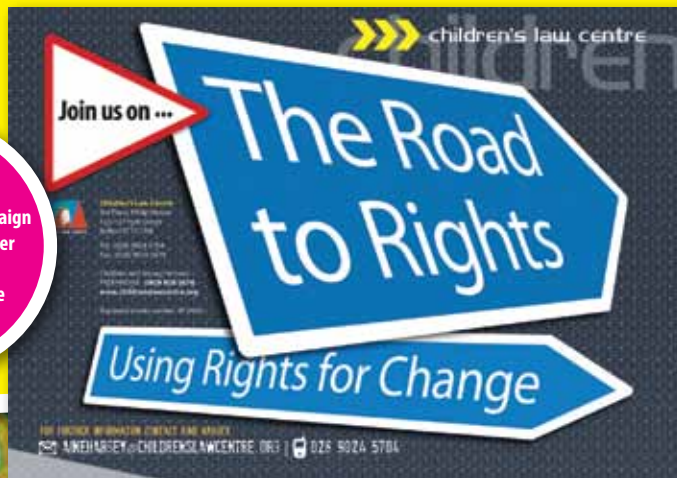
"Our theme will be the impact of sectarianism on young people... we all felt it was still a major issue, even though violence has subsided, sectarianism is still very evident in today's society." Beth

CLC would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who contributed to the highly successful delivery of the "Road to Rights" programme in 2011 including the Lord Mayor, Northern Ireland Youth Forum, NICCY's Participation team, Headliners, NCB, Corrymeela, Claire Bradley, our funders and in particular the young people. Thanks are also due to the youth workers who are supporting the groups in their campaign work.

To keep up to date on the progress of all our "Road to Rights" campaigns or for more information about youth@clc please contact the Youth Participation and Advocacy Worker at the Children's Law Centre - deirdremcmahon@childrenslawcentre.org

UNCRC Article 6

Survival and development
Every child has the inherent right to life, and the State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.



Details of the "ROAD to RIGHTS" campaign can be found in a poster available from the Children's Law Centre

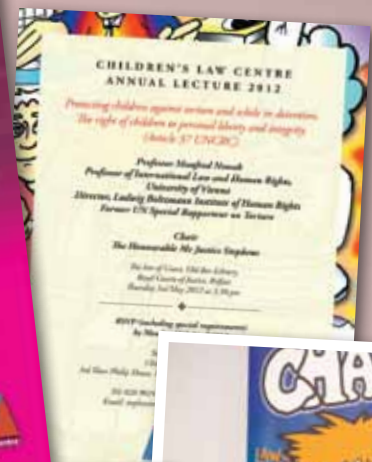
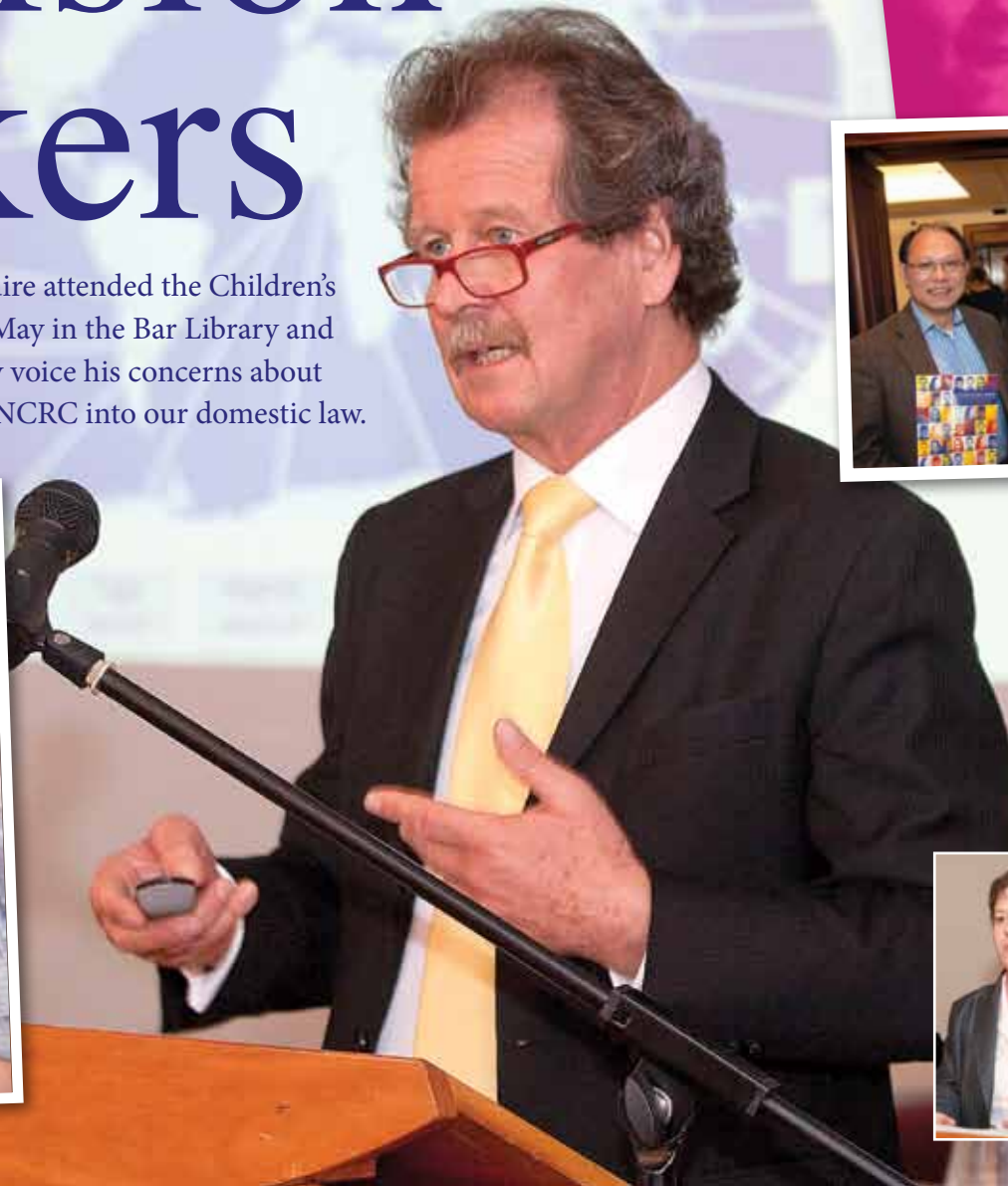
As part of their campaign, youth@clc are planning to survey the experiences and views of Year 11 pupils across a representative range of schools to identify the key issues and develop recommendations for improving services to children. They will present their findings through writing and performing a play. The play will be performed in the MAC theatre in March 2013 reminding government and policy makers of their duty under Article 6 of the UNCRC to protect the right of all children and young people to survive and develop to the maximum extent possible.

MAC
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MAC
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.COM

Engaging with

Decision Makers

Youth@clc member Chris Maguire attended the Children's Law Centre Annual Lecture in May in the Bar Library and took the opportunity to publicly voice his concerns about the non-incorporation of the UNCRC into our domestic law.



Staff - Children's Law Centre

Emma Campbell

Aine Hargey (left 30.12.11)

Rachel Hogan

Cathy Johnston (left 28.10.11)

Paddy Kelly

Liam Mackle

Sarah McAuley (started 07.02.12)

Anna McBeigh

Stephanie McIlroy

Ann-Marie McLaughlin

Eamonn McNally

Christine Quinn (left 29.02.12)

Helen Rafferty

Kathryn Stevenson

Natalie Whelehan

youth@clc Members

Caitlin McManus

Chris Maguire

Clare Louise Mooney

Clare Stevenson

Erin Graham

Niamh Kerr

Niamh McAllistair

Sarah Ferguson

Siobhan O'Donnell

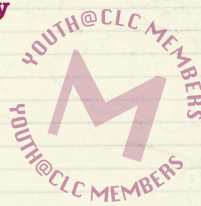
Nicholas Hammond

Frank McCaughey

Anna Monaghan

Rebecca Henderson

Helen Monaghan



CHALKY Volunteers

David Bothwell:

October 2011 - Present

Maedhbh McQuoid:

May 2011 - Present

Rebecca Woods:

October 2011 - Present

Eamon Gallagher:

October 2011 - Present

Michelle Woods:

November 2011 - Present

Patrick Kearney:

November 2011 - Present

Jennifer Lynch:

March 2011 - September 2011

Ciara McNally:

June 2011 - September 2011

Julie McGovern:

June 2011 - September 2011

Michael McGilligan:

November 2011 - January 2012



Management Committee

Margaret Burke

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

David Hayes

Queen's University, Belfast

Anne Marie Kelly

MKB Russells, Solicitors

Mairead McCafferty

West Belfast Partnership Board (left January 2012)

Vivian McConvey

VOYPIC

Therese Moran

Belfast Education and Library Board (left December 2011)

Patricia O'Kane

Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (left December 2011)

Maura Ruoppolo

Edwards and Co, Solicitors (left January 2012)

Suzanne Rice

Edwards and Co, Solicitors (maternity leave cover from May 2011, replaced Maura Ruoppolo January 2012)

David Simpson

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It is not surprising but very regrettable that again in 2011-2012 CLC have to report an increase in demand for all its services and most notably in respect of its legal services. Calls to the Centre's free phone advice line continue to rise and reflect the cuts and in some cases axing of critical services for vulnerable children across all issues impacting on children's lives including special educational needs, child and adolescent mental health services and services for 16 and 17 year olds.



In Northern Ireland according to the Chief Medical Officer over 20% of children under 18 years of age suffer significant mental health problems and this comprises the commonest form of severe disability in childhood. Despite the scale of the need, the risk of young people taking their own lives and the fact that children and young people under 18 represent approximately 25% of Northern Ireland's population, in 2009/10 only 2.65% of the mental health budget or approximately 0.16% of the overall health budget was spent on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. There is currently no forensic inpatient paediatric psychiatric provision in Northern Ireland and only limited inpatient adolescent facilities.

In this context it is incomprehensible to CLC that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Department of Justice (DoJ) are proposing to exclude the vast majority of under 16s from the proposed Mental Capacity (Health, Welfare and Finance) Bill. In practice this will mean that the Bamford Review will have failed to deliver for a significant number of children with mental health needs in this jurisdiction. CLC in addition to providing legal representation for children who have been unable to access critical mental health services have been very actively advocating for all children to benefit from the proposed new legislation. In addition to making detailed submissions to both Departments, appearing before the Health, Social Services and Public Safety Committee and engaging with key decision makers, CLC also sits as a member of both the DHSSPS's and the DoJ's Legislation Reference Groups. During the last year in all of its detailed and intensive representations to the DHSSPS, the DoJ and others, CLC has consistently detailed its concerns with regard to the particular circumstances and vulnerabilities of children with mental ill



health in Northern Ireland and will continue to do so as the DoJ consults on how to legislate for people with mental health needs in the criminal justice system. CLC will critique the forthcoming draft legislation against children's rights standards and continue to advocate strongly for legislation which will protect all those who live in this jurisdiction, especially the most vulnerable.

It is CLC's view that one of the legacies of fiscal cuts has been an increased number of calls to our legal advice line in respect of homeless 16 and 17 year olds. Such was our concern about this issue that this year CLC took a judicial review on behalf of a homeless 17 year old young person who was refused suitable accommodation although he should have been entitled to such accommodation as a 'child in need' under Article 21 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, *In the Matter of an Application by JR 66 (child in need accommodation duty) for Judicial Review [2012] NIQB 5*. The Trust conceded that the child was an 'eligible child' under Article 34A of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 during the course of the leave hearing.

A Regional Good Practice Guide on Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of 16 - 21 year olds was agreed by the NIHE and the Health and Social Care Trusts and was published in 2009. At the leave hearing for JR 66, the Judge directed that CLC and the legal advisers to the Northern Health and Social Services Trust should consult jointly to agree any amendments necessary to the Regional Good Practice Guide to fully reflect the legal requirement upon Trusts to provide Article 21 assessments to some children. Final judgment was issued by the Honourable Mr Justice Treacy on 10th February 2012. Paragraph 4 of this judgment sets out a 7 step legal test for assessment of 16 and 17 year olds' entitlement to be accommodated under Article 21 of the Children (NI) Order 1995. These 7 sequential questions were defined by Lady Hale in the House of Lords case of *R (on the Application of G) (FC) v London Borough of Southwark [2009] UKHL 26* and include a duty to consider the child's wishes and feelings regarding the provision of accommodation by the Trust.

In a postscript to the JR 66 judgment, it is recorded that the Regional Homelessness Group (co-chaired by the Director of the HSCB and the Director of the NIHE) had agreed to consider the contents of any submissions or proposals made by the Children's Law Centre about the existing "Regional Good Practice Guidance on Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of 16 - 21 year olds." Following the judgment, CLC submitted its proposals including detailed suggestions for amendment of the Regional Good Practice Guidance to the HSCB and the NIHE. A majority of CLC's recommendations were subsequently incorporated into the revised guidance. CLC were also invited to participate



children's law centre

in a training session for senior practitioners from both agencies in order to raise awareness of the new guidance. CLC are now working closely with both the HSCB and the NIHE to ensure the effective implementation of the guidance.

Many years experience has consistently proven that children and young people are powerful advocates for children's rights. Recognising this and reflecting its commitment to Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), CLC this year undertook a comprehensive rights based advocacy training programme "Road to Rights-Using Rights for Change" with 10 young people from 6 Belfast, North Down and Carrickfergus based groups. The programme equipped them with the knowledge of children's rights and advocacy skills to enable them to employ a rights based approach to bring about change in their local communities. Following an event in the Long Gallery in Stormont in March 2012, attended by Junior Ministers Anderson and Bell who have lead responsibility for children and young people, 5 of the groups are now undertaking rights based campaigns. We look forward to reading youth@clc's research on mental health provision in schools and working with them to advocate on their recommendations.

During the year a number of staff left the employment of the Centre. We wish Aine, Cathy and Christine well in the future. We welcomed Sarah to the Centre as a part-time Receptionist in February 2012. Sarah will be job sharing with Ann-Marie who gave birth to beautiful baby Daniel in April 2012. Congratulations to Ann-Marie and Gerard. Despite the departure of colleagues and friends, as Director of the Centre I remain fortunate to work with a small group of highly committed and talented people; staff, youth@clc, Management Committee and volunteers who are intent in proving that "a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world" (Margaret Mead).

Thank you all for helping change the world for children.

PADDY KELLY
Director

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

This year I have had the honour of serving as Chairperson of the Children's Law Centre (CLC). In this role as well as in my paid employment as Chief Executive of the Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) I have had significant insight into the excellent work the staff, young people and volunteers at CLC undertake on a daily basis. VOYPIC staff and in particular our advocacy staff, work very closely with CLC staff to protect the rights of children who are looked after or who are otherwise in the care of the state. The legal information and representation provided by CLC to frontline VOYPIC workers has proved invaluable in securing children's rights and ensuring their voices are heard and taken into account when decisions are being made about their lives. The partnership working between VOYPIC advocacy services and CLC's legal services, which is a model of good practice, has accessed accommodation for homeless young people, secured services for children with mental health needs and has ensured the necessary support mechanisms are in place for children leaving the Juvenile Justice Centre. Together VOYPIC and CLC are making a real difference to the lives of these very vulnerable children at a time when austerity cuts are threatening already over stretched services.

Evidence and research indicates that hearing the voice of the child is central to protecting children and vindicating their rights. Nowhere is this more critical than when decisions are being made in respect of our most vulnerable children. CLC is to be congratulated on their focus on ensuring that children's Article 12 Rights are vindicated including and importantly in the legal system. As a jurisdiction we have made huge strides in giving effect to Article 12 in our courts, but children tell us we still have a distance to travel. CLC's excellent seminar in February 2012 for legal practitioners on the Voice of the Child in Legal Proceedings, which focused on family law proceedings was an important event in allowing legal practitioners to reflect on their practice and consider how they might better ensure children's voices were heard. The participation of care experienced young people in the event brought a focus which sometimes gets lost in the cut and thrust of an adversarial legal system and is reflected in the evaluations of that event. Participants considered that listening to the views and experiences of a young person who had been in care was particularly beneficial. The comment of one participant reflects my experience of the ethos of all of the work of CLC "I was impressed that speakers kept the focus on the needs, wishes and rights of the child..."

As CLC Chair I had the privilege of hosting the Centre's 2012 Annual Lecture. The Centre's Annual Lecture continues to attract internationally renowned speakers whose insight into children's rights and the standards of protection required of our government benchmark our delivery of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in this jurisdiction. Professor Manfred Nowak, Professor of International Law and Human Rights at the University of Vienna, Director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights and former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture gave this year's lecture entitled "Protecting children against torture and while in detention. The right of children to personal liberty and integrity (Article 37 UNCRC)" in the Inn of Court in the Royal Courts of Justice. Professor Nowak's excellent lecture, which was very kindly chaired by the Honourable Mr Justice Stephens, focused on the definition of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and outlined the frightening scale of the use of these practices against children at a global level. Professor Nowak also reflected on CLC's concerns in respect of local policing practices breaching international human rights standards and commented: "Many issues raised by the Children's Law Centre in Belfast, such as the use of plastic bullets (attenuating energy projectiles), tasers, mosquito devices, or stop and search practices by the Northern Ireland police forces would fall in this category of ill-treatment. Whether these practices amount to cruel, inhuman or at least degrading treatment depends on whether they can be regarded as proportional to a legitimate purpose of law enforcement or as excessive use of force. The proportionality test might lead to differences between adults and children on the basis of their higher vulnerability. While the legitimacy of the use of tasers as a less intrusive weapon than fire-arms against adults is still disputed, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has taken the view that tasers and plastic bullets should never be used against children. Similarly, the Committee has expressed concerns at the use of mosquito devices, which are only targeting children and young people."

Securing children's rights compliance in respect of the use of these weapons will undoubtedly remain one of the many denials of children's rights CLC will continue to challenge in the future.

VIVIAN McCONVEY
Chairperson

TRAINING & EDUCATION

This year our training strategy continued to focus on the areas of both domestic and international Children's Law and Policy most relevant to ensuring the survival and development of all children in this jurisdiction. All members of the CLC staff team either delivered or presented at over 40 training workshops and seminars during the course of the year. For the first time, nearly half of all participants were the "Rights Holders" themselves - children and young people (over 300). This increase in participation by young people in our training events was largely due to our re-launch of the "Road to Rights" programme for young peer advocates in April of this year.

Feedback from other training events included:

"I have gained a more in-depth knowledge of human rights and how to apply them to children and to my role as a social worker in ensuring that the voice of the child is heard at a practical level ..."

(Northern Area Child Protection Committee - Multi-disciplinary training - March 2012)

"I was impressed that speakers kept the focus on the needs, wishes and rights of the child..."

(Voice of the Child Seminar - February 2012)

When asked how they will use the knowledge and skills gained one manager commented:

"...by training staff in recognising and recording improvement in achieving children's rights and how to promote a positive view of children's rights to parents..."

(Eastern Childcare Partnership - February 2012)

Between April and November 2011, with funding support from the Community Foundation NI and Lloyds TSB Foundation NI, we delivered a revised 8 day "Road to Rights - Using Rights for Change" training programme to 10 young people from Belfast, North Down and Carrickfergus. Using a peer advocacy toolkit designed by CLC, the training enabled participants to apply a rights based framework to the identification and analysis of issues for young people in each of their local areas. Using the skills and knowledge gained and with the ongoing support of CLC's Youth Participation and Advocacy team, 5 youth led "Rights in Action" campaigns were up and running by December 2011 in association with Carrickfergus Youth Council, Quaker Cottage, Divis Young Women's group, NCB and our own youth@clc. The themes of the campaigns include mental health in schools, suicide awareness, community safety and the impact of sectarianism on young people.

Over the past year our annual training calendar events continued to raise awareness of the duties and responsibilities placed on government and public bodies by government having ratified the UNCRC in 1991, as well as their obligations to children under the ECHR, equality law and other domestic legislation. Against the backdrop of ongoing public sector cuts, we have continued to highlight the deficit in "rights based" service provision for children and young people with mental health needs, special educational needs and disability.

TAILORED TRAINING

- **Children's Rights workshops** (16 April 2011)
- **"Road to Rights" information session** (18 April 2011)
- **Presentation Forum Discussion on youth justice issues with Baroness Harris** (19 April 2011)
- **Presentation at QUB conference - implementing the UNCRC** (1 June 2011)
- **"Road to Rights" Peer Advocacy Training including 3 day residential** (8 days, July - September 2011)
- **CHALKY information session and youth project with Young Radicals (Yorkshire based)** (23 September 2011)
- **Children's rights workshop pre "Road to Rights" campaign** (19 October 2011)
- **UNCRC presentation for Human Rights Consortium** (24 October 2011)
- **Children's Rights workshop** (25 October 2011)
- **Presentation on youth justice issues at Include Youth conference** (27 October 2011)
- **"Road to Rights" Campaign workshops** (7 days November 2011)
- **PILA/PILS Project Joint Annual conference** (11 November 2011)
- **Children's Rights workshop with Belfast Met students** (17 November 2011)
- **Children's Rights are Human Rights** (9 December 2011)
- **Children's Rights and Early Years** (14 February 2012)
- **Children's Rights and Youth Work** (1 March 2012)
- **Children's Rights and Age Discrimination workshop** (10 March 2012)
- **Children's Rights are Human Rights** (14 March 2012)
- **Launch of "Road to Rights" Campaigns** (20 March 2012)

TRAINING CALENDAR

- **Mental Health Law and Policy** (10 May 2011)
- **Children's Rights are Human Rights** (20 May 2011)
- **Advocating for Children in Need** (1 June 2011)
- **Children's Rights are Human Rights** (15 June 2011)
- **Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Mental Health - A Children's Rights Perspective** (26 October 2011)
- **Special Educational Needs - A Children's Rights Perspective** (30 November 2011)
- **Special Educational Needs - A Children's Rights Perspective** (25 January 2012)
- **The Voice of the Child in Legal Proceedings** (22 February 2012)

POLICY WORK

CLC made a very significant number of policy responses during the year across a broad range of issues impacting on children's lives. All responses are available on CLC's web site.

Our policy work reflected the organisation's overall strategic priorities most significantly in respect of youth justice, education and child and adolescent mental health. The Centre's policy work is also intimately integrated with the legal advice work and training. One example which illustrates the broad impact of CLC's multi-disciplinary strategic approach through the utilisation of policy and case work is the work undertaken by CLC in response to the South Eastern Education and Library Board's (SEELB) proposal to close Knockmore Primary School and Special Unit. CLC's advice line was contacted by a number of parents of children with special educational needs who attended the school and whose special educational provision would have been impacted upon by the proposed closure. CLC's policy and legal staff collaborated to draft a detailed submission to the SEELB highlighting among other breaches the SEELB's breach of their S75 Equality Duty. This submission significantly influenced a reversal of the Board's decision to close the school. This provided a speedy outcome for the children and parents directly affected by the decision and also circumvented the need for costly formal legal proceedings to challenge the Board's decision on behalf of individuals adversely impacted upon by the proposed school closure.

The ongoing Review of Youth Justice in Northern Ireland has been a major focus for CLC's policy work throughout the year. CLC had voiced its concerns that the Review established by the DoJ fell short of what had been envisaged in the Hillsborough Agreement. The fault lines exposed by the failure of the DoJ to adhere to what was agreed in Hillsborough continued through to the Review Team's Report. CLC in its response to the Youth Justice Review Team's Report again highlighted the lost opportunity to develop a children's rights compliant youth justice system that results from deviation from what was agreed at Hillsborough. CLC will continue to closely monitor the outworking of this Review.

At the request of the Health, Social Services and Public Safety Committee CLC's Policy Officer and Mental Health Solicitor gave evidence to the Committee and responded to the Department's Consultation on the Proposed Statutory Rule - the Mental Health (Private Hospital) Regulations in January 2012. CLC informed the Committee about the rights and needs of children and young people with mental health difficulties who require admission to hospital and the need to ensure that there is a robust system of checks and safeguards to assist those young people.

SOME KEY POLICY RESPONSES MADE IN 2011-2012

- Response to the Department of Justice Consultation on Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities - A New Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland (Community Safety Strategy) (April 2011)
- Response to the Department of Justice's Consultation on the Retention and Destruction of Fingerprints and DNA in Northern Ireland (June 2011)
- Response to the Department of Employment and Learning's Consultation on Pathways to Success (NEET) Strategy (June 2011)
- Response to the Northern Ireland Assembly Youth Panel on its Proposals for the Creation of a Northern Ireland Youth Assembly (September 2011)
- Response to the Consultation on Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011: Guidance on Fixed Penalty Notices (September 2011)
- Response to the DHSSPS's Consultation on its Draft Policy for Developing Advocacy Services (October 2011)
- Youth@clc Response to the DHSSPS's Consultation on its Draft Policy for Developing Advocacy Services (October 2011)
- Response to the Northern Ireland Law Commission's Consultation on its Equality Impact Assessment of the Reform of Bail Law and Practice in Northern Ireland (October 2011)
- Response to the South Eastern Education and Library Board's Consultation on its Proposal to Close Knockmore Primary School (November 2011)
- Response to the Department of Education's Equality Scheme (November 2011)
- Response to the Report on the Access to Justice Review Northern Ireland (December 2011)
- Response to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's Consultation on the Proposed Statutory Rule - the Mental Health (Private Hospital) Regulations (January 2012)
- Response to the Independent Youth Justice Review Team's Report of its Review of Youth Justice in Northern Ireland (January 2012)
- Response to the Northern Ireland Executive's Consultation on the Draft Programme for Government 2011 - 2015 (February 2012)
- Response to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's Consultation on the Draft Service Model - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (March 2012)

CHALKY

ADVICE SERVICE

FREEPHONE 0800 808 5678

'CHALKY' Freepost BEL 3837 Belfast BT15 1BR

Email: chalky@childrenslawcentre.org



CLC's CHALKY advice service has continued to provide legal advice and information to increasing numbers of children, young people, their parents and professionals working with children. During the year from April 2011 to March 2012 the service dealt with some 2106 issues, an increase of 4.5% on the previous year.

Concerns raised covered the full range of legal issues which may arise throughout a child's life, from registration of births and parental responsibility to ensuring access to benefits and accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year-olds. Education accounted for 36% of all issues raised with Special Educational Needs accounting for over 16% of all enquiries. Other key concerns within Education included Pupil Welfare (raised 79 times), Admissions (raised 72 times) and School Exclusion (62 times). Family Law accounted for 30% of all enquiries with Contact/ Residence (313 calls) accounting for just over half of the total. The General category accounted for 18% of the total with some of the main issues being Social Security (72), Child Protection (42), Mental Health (43), and At What Age? (33). Human Rights and Justice issues accounted for 5% of the total and the Care category 5%. There were also 132 (6%) requests for information during the year.



ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE UNIT

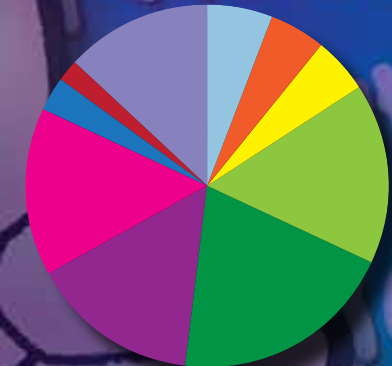
The Administration Unit at Children's Law Centre has had a busy year supporting the entire CLC team. The work of the Administration Unit is core to the efficient operation of CLC through providing financial management, human resource support and assistance with planning and organising of all CLC training, lectures and seminars. Administration is the backbone within all organisations and here at CLC we have a strong backbone that is critical for the effective working of the entire CLC team.

The daily administrative support structure of CLC is provided by a very small but highly effective and efficient administration team - Helen Rafferty (Head of Administration and Finance Unit), Ann-Marie McLaughlin (Receptionist/Admin. Assistant) and newly appointed Sarah McAuley (Receptionist/Admin. Assistant) job sharing. Sarah joined our dynamic team in February and has already proven to be a real asset. The Administration Unit is also supported by Stephanie McLroy (P.A. to Director and Head of Legal Services). Additional maternity cover was provided by Meadhbh McQuoid, Rebecca Woods and David Bothwell; Ann-Marie having taken time off to have her second baby, a beautiful little boy - Daniel who was born in April. Congratulations Ann-Marie and Gerard. Many thanks to David, Meadhbh and Rebecca for all their volunteer work and for bringing their own special dynamic to our team with their lively and helpful approach. We hope they have gained valuable experience through working with us. We have certainly benefitted from their work.

This year also saw a review of our IT systems and we benefitted from a very kind donation of a Server from McCartan, Turkington and Breen Solicitors, facilitated and installed by our IT support service - Leaf Consultancy. This has vastly improved our IT systems and as a result enabled the entire CLC team to provide a fast, efficient and high quality service to help improve the lives of all children and young people in Northern Ireland.

General Issues April 2011 - March 2012

Information	6%
Care	5%
Human Rights/Justice	5%
Special Education	16%
Other Education	20%
Other Family Law	15%
Contact/Residence	15%
Social Security	3%
Mental Health	2%
General	13%





STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
for the year ended 31 March 2012

	2012 Unrestricted Funds £	2012 Restricted Funds £	2012 Total Funds £	2011 Total Funds £
Incoming resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds:				
Voluntary income:				
Donations and grants	21,760	-	21,760	8,375
Investment income	7,276	-	7,276	7,460
Incoming resources from charitable activities:				
Grants received	-	574,688	574,688	557,497
Other income	11,951	54,597	66,548	30,348
Total incoming resources	40,987	629,285	670,272	603,680
Resources expended				
Charitable activities	25,399	595,849	621,248	669,387
Governance costs	-	2,520	2,520	2,250
Total resources expended	25,399	598,369	623,768	671,907
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year	15,588	30,916	46,504	(68,227)
Transfer between funds	19,559	(19,559)	-	-
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources after transfers/net income/(expenditure) for the year	35,147	11,357	46,504	(68,227)
Total funds brought forward at beginning of year	151,121	103,427	254,548	322,775
Total funds carried forward at end of year	186,268	114,784	301,052	254,548

The above Statement of Financial Activities includes all information as required to be disclosed by the Companies Act 2006 and includes all recognised gains and losses.

All of the activities of the company are classed as continuing.

There is no difference between the net incoming resources for the year stated above and their historical cost equivalents.

The company has no other recognised gains or losses and therefore no separate statement of total recognised gains and losses has been presented.

BALANCE SHEET
at 31 March 2012

	2012 £	2011 £
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	27,717	23,233
Current assets		
Debtors	11,222	17,693
Cash at bank and in hand	367,502	219,321
	378,724	237,014
Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	(105,389)	(5,699)
Net current assets	273,335	231,315
Net assets	301,052	254,548
Funds		
Unrestricted general funds	109,182	151,121
Designated redundancy reserve	77,086	-
Restricted funds	114,784	103,427
Total funds	301,052	254,548

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

A complete set of the Children's Law Centre audited accounts for 2011/12 is available on request.



INCOMING RESOURCES

	2012 Unrestricted Funds £	2012 Restricted Funds £	2012 Total Funds £	2011 Total Funds £
Voluntary income:				
Donations and grants				
Donations	21,760	-	21,760	8,375
	21,760	-	21,760	8,375
<i>Activities for generating funds:</i>				
Investment Income				
Bank interest	7,276	-	7,276	7,460
Incoming resources from charitable activities:				
Grants received				
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	-	71,969	71,969	71,969
Health and Social Care Board	-	109,985	109,985	109,985
Save the Children	-	-	-	12,500
Comic Relief	-	-	-	6,000
The Atlantic Philanthropies	-	368,500	368,500	296,000
Children in Need	-	19,199	19,199	23,248
Big Lottery Fund	-	-	-	5,020
The Atlantic Philanthropies/NICVA	-	-	-	30,000
Belfast City Council	-	-	-	800
Northern Ireland Electricity	-	-	-	1,000
Tesco Charity Trust	-	-	-	975
Community Foundation NI	-	4,000	4,000	-
Lloyds TSB	-	830	830	-
King George Award	-	205	205	-
	-	574,688	574,688	557,497
Other Income				
Sales	11,951	-	11,951	15,727
NI Legal Services Commission income	-	54,597	54,597	12,430
Miscellaneous income	-	-	-	2,191
	11,951	54,597	66,548	30,348
TOTAL	40,987	629,285	670,272	603,680