

Intouch



legal action for the community
coventry
 law centre

Welcome to the Coventry Law Centre's Newsletter!

Welcome to the new and revamped CLC newsletter! We will be providing you with plenty of information and articles to keep up to date with all the news and happenings at CLC. Features will include 'department spotlight' which will concentrate on giving an overview of a particular department and the work carried out. Look out for our feature which introduces members of staff and provides an insight into the work they carry out. This edition we introduce ourselves!

Enjoy!



Lydia, Katherine and Rav

Inside this issue:

LEGAL WALK	2
OUTREACH	2
FAMILY DEPARTMENT	3
COMMUNITY CARE	3
ABOUT CLC	4
CONTACT	4
WORD FROM SUE	4

Introducing The Law Centre's Trainee Solicitors

Ravinder Sandhu

Rav is a trainee solicitor who commenced her training contract in July 2011 and will qualify in December 2012 after completing her seats in Immigration/Asylum, Public Law and Employment.

Rav studied Criminology at the University of Leicester and then went on to work as a Special Constable in West Midlands Police for a year. Rav went on to study her GDL at the College of Law and gained employment at Coventry Law Centre in June 2008.

Rav is employed in the Immigration team and is accredited as a Level 2 Immigration advisor. Throughout her time at the Law Centre Rav has also

completed her LPC at the College of Law.

Rav has considerable experience in a wide range of immigration and asylum issues and has worked on a number of Judicial Review and Court of Appeal matters.

Katherine King

Katherine is a trainee solicitor who recently commenced her training contract. She is due to qualify in October 2013 after completing her seats in Employment, Welfare Benefits and Family.

Katherine started working at the Law Centre in May 2009 as a specialist Welfare Benefits adviser before joining the Employment team. Katherine has

been awarded a degree in Sociology and Social Policy and an LLB from Coventry University. She studied part time for her LPC at De Montfort University.

Katherine has several years experience working in the voluntary sector and has provided general advice on social welfare law and specialist advice and representation in both Welfare Benefits and Employment Law. Katherine has a keen interest in social policy campaigning.

Lydia Nash

Lydia is a trainee solicitor who commenced her training contract in July 2011. Lydia will qualify in December 2012 after completing her seats in Employment, Community Care and Housing.

Lydia studied LLB Law at De Montfort University and graduated in 2006.

She has worked at Warwickshire Employment Rights Service for a number of years providing specialist Employment advice and representation to claimants.

Lydia has a particular interest in discrimination law and especially disability Discrimination. Whilst working at Warwickshire Employment Rights Service Lydia completed her part time LPC at De Montfort University.

Lydia joined the Law Centre in March 2012 and is a member of the Community Care team providing advice on a wide range of social care issues.

Intouch

We are raising money for Midland Legal Support Trust!



The Midland Legal Support Trust has been established to give financial and other support to charities and advice agencies in the Midlands that provide free legal advice. It aims to enhance the availability of access to these services in the Midlands by raising funds, principally through an annual 10k legal walk, which this year took place on 21 May.

Our team of troopers in-

cluded Lisa, Emmett, Sue, Sat, Phil, Anne, Vicki, Lydia and David.

The team arrived in Birmingham early to have time for the mental and physical preparation needed to undertake such an arduous activity. We are told the team set off quite slowly but picked up pace about half way around, overtaking arch rivals Birmingham Law Centre, with only Sue

chatting amiably to colleagues from Birmingham and simultaneously managing to be at the back of the entire convoy!

The team had a refreshment stop for a samosa and some juice at the Sikh temple and then finally arrived at the Pitcher and Piano, where a free drink and a few additional ones were very welcome.

“WE BELIEVE FREE, INDEPENDENT ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION ON LEGAL MATTERS IS ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE FOR ALL. LEGAL RIGHTS HAVE NO MEANING IF YOU CAN'T ENFORCE THEM.”



Please sponsor our advisors!

A huge thanks to everyone who sponsored the team and to anyone who might yet do so - it's not too late and we are very grateful for all the support. Every year, we provide free advice and representation to over 6,000 people. We take on test cases and try to use the law to change society.

£50 sponsorship would buy an hour of free advice for someone, but any contribution to our work would be very welcome! The walk was to raise funds for legal advice agencies all over the Midlands and our team was raising funds for Coventry Law Centre.

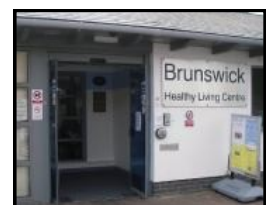
If you would like to sponsor us, albeit after the event, it's very easy – just go to <http://www.charitygiving.co.uk/suebent1>. Once again, a massive thanks to everyone who sponsored us. We really appreciate it.

Community Care Team in Warwickshire

The Community Care Team have been awarded an LSC contract to provide advice to residents of Warwickshire on a wide range of social care issues. We are currently oper-

ating a drop in service at the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre in Leamington Spa where we are able to offer both initial one off advice and full representation.

Currently we are at the Brunswick on Thursday of each week between the hours of 10am – 2pm. We are able to take on clients throughout the Warwickshire area subject to the LSC eligibility criteria.



DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

The Family Law Department

The Family Law department is new area of law available at the Law Centre this year. John Hickey is a family law solicitor with many years experience working in Family Law.

The Family team is looking to develop particular areas of family law, with a focus on helping victims of domestic violence and families who are working with children's teams in Social Services.

John says: "Court proceedings are a major part of my work, but there is also the

wider support that families need, and in cases involving children there is quite an involved pre-court process."

"Changes to legal aid funding in 2013 mean that public funding will only be available for those cases involving care proceedings, and also cases involving elements of domestic abuse woven in to them"

There can be few more serious cases than those that are concerned with the protection of children from harm. Equally the removal of a child from a family can have a devas-

tating effect on parents and children alike. The Family team can provide specialist legal advice and representation to parents and other concerned family members.

The effects of Domestic Abuse in a relationship can be wide ranging and long lasting. We can provide advice assistance and representation to obtain the protection of the Court to those who have been the victims of Domestic Abuse. We will also provide advice and assistance in relation to Housing and Welfare Benefits.



John Hickey hard at work. John is a qualified solicitor having recently joined Coventry Law Centre with 20 years experience as a Family Solicitor in private practice. John has extensive experience in a wide range of family matters and is a member of The Law Society Accredited Family Panel.

"CHANGES TO LEGAL AID FUNDING IN 2013 MEAN THAT PUBLIC FUNDING WILL ONLY BE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE CASES INVOLVING CARE PROCEEDINGS, AND ALSO CASES INVOLVING ELEMENTS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE WOVEN IN TO THEM"

The Community Care Team

The community care team consists of Ellen Williamson who is a solicitor and supervisor of the department, Lydia Nash a Trainee Solicitor and Val Moore the team administrator.

The team primarily deals with matters concerning health and social care ensuring that people's statutory rights to services are upheld. The Community Care team acts on behalf of both carers and service users. Typical enquiries received are from members of the community who are not sure as to what services are

available for them, persons who have been told that their care packages will be reduced, persons requiring aids and adaptations to their homes, persons in unsuitable housing due to disabilities and persons having general issues with their health provider or social services.

The team also assist with cases enabling people to be safely discharged from hospital, assisting homeless families to access housing and assisting disabled children access appropriate care provision.

Ellen says "the primary aim of the team is to ensure that members of the community who are disadvantaged due to age, illness or disability are advised and appropriately represented to ensure that their rights are upheld thereby enabling them to live safely and well with the maximum level of support available to them"

We seek to secure real improvements in people's day to day lives, including the right to be safe and protected from harm, the right to be treated fairly and with dignity and the right to autonomy and control over your own life and interactions with society.



Lydia Nash and Ellen Williamson. Ellen is a solicitor and supervisor of the community care department.

Coventry Law Centre
Oakwood House
St Patrick's Road
Entrance
Coventry
CV1 2HL



(024) 7622 3053



enquiries@covlaw.org.uk

Fax - 024 76.228551

Visit our website for further details of our organisation and the work we provide

www.covlaw.org.uk

About Coventry Law Centre

Coventry Law Centre was set up in 1976 to provide free legal advice and representation to people facing disadvantage in Coventry. We believe in using the legal process to fight inequality, poverty, discrimination and injustice.

The Law Centre concentrates on its role as a specialist provider of advice, representation and advocacy. Coventry Law Centre seeks to empower local people by promoting legal solutions to many of the problems they face. We currently specialise in the following areas of law: Community Care, Discrimination, Employment, Family, Housing, Immigration and Asylum, Money and Debt, Public Law and Welfare Benefits.

The Law Centre believes that it is important to challenge the way that law affects the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our community. We therefore seek to use our knowledge, experience and skills in a variety of ways to meet our core objective of combating social exclusion.

We take on around 2000 cases each year and have secured tens of millions of pounds for clients in arrears of benefits, additions to income, and compensation over the years. Our work also includes advice and representation which cannot be given a monetary value, such as preventing evictions, advising about immigration and asylum matters and combating discrimination.

The Law Centre is an independent charity, a company limited by guarantee. We have a management committee of Trustees and we maintain a membership which links us with the community we serve and reflects the diversity within our communities.

A word from our Director, Sue Bent



Coventry Law Centre Director Sue Bent speaking at a Warwickshire Fabians meeting with Lord Willy Bach about 'Access to Justice'

I hope you've enjoyed reading our revamped newsletter. I'm really pleased that our three trainee solicitors are editing it for us. Offering traineeships to young lawyers is a very important part of what we are about: they are the future of social welfare law.

We are at a testing point in the life of Law Centres and other not for profit advice agencies: cuts to legal aid and other funding are creating a difficult environment for all of us. But we are strong; and our lawyers and advisers are dedicated and passionate about what they do. We know that equality before the law is critical for a civilized society; and we know that access to advice and representation can transform lives.

We are finding new forms of funding to keep our services going and we will continue to seek out those who need our help most: people and families who are marginalised and excluded, those who suffer discrimination and unfair treatment.