

This issue's highlight



Grant focus: Mencap

Mencap plan are using an interesting mix of legal education and early legal help, data analysis and legal challenge to tackle unlawful

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[decision-making around social care.](#)
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Mencap received a grant earlier this year to act as a legal 'hub' to support and collaborate around legal action with others in their sector.

They have also recently **redesigned their workshops with social care managers** which others working on capacity building projects might find interesting - more here.

[MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT](#)



News



Birthrights and Birth Companions report spotlights how housing jeopardises women's rights to safe maternity care

A report published last month by the charities Birthrights and Birth Companions highlights the need for a more proactive, integrated approach to addressing the maternity care needs of women experiencing multiple disadvantage during pregnancy and early motherhood.

The research found that, in almost every case, problems with housing acted as a major barrier to women's legal rights to safe, appropriate and dignified maternity care. The resulting report - **'Holding it all together'** - explores these and a range of other rights issues experienced by the most disadvantaged women.

[MORE ABOUT THIS RESEARCH](#)



All Mothers Campaign: ending charging for maternity care

Maternity Action are calling on the Government to end charging for maternity care which tend to affect migrant women who are often already very vulnerable and living in precarious conditions.

They have produced a toolkit with lots of ways to support their campaign.

[WAYS TO SUPPORT #ALLMOTHERS](#)



Unequal regard, unequal protection: the experience of BME victims of domestic abuse in Manchester

This new report by Sisters for Change throws the spotlight on Manchester and raises serious concerns about how local authorities and public services comply with their duties in relation to BME

[MORE ABOUT THE REPORT](#)

Clan Childlaw take action on sibling contact and disclosure of childhood offending

Clan Childlaw have seen considerable movement towards the goals of their Baring Foundation funded project to use law and policy work to improve the lives of vulnerable children in Scotland.

- The Scottish government has committed to strengthening the law in relation to keeping brothers and sisters together in care and Clan Childlaw have been granted permission to appeal on a case concerning siblings' rights in children's hearings.
- Significant changes are underway to change the rules around the disclosure of childhood offences in Scotland. Clan Childlaw also intervened in successful cases in the Supreme Court earlier this year. They have set up a Strategic Litigation Working Group to identify further legal opportunities.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) work with UN committees to push for change

FFT fed into the report on the **UK by the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism**, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Her final report was published last month recognises the systemic racism and discrimination experienced by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

One of the Special Rapporteur's recommendations was the implementation of **a national strategy to tackle the issues and the Government has responded positively to this**. This will be a crucial tool for improving the lives of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families in the UK.

FFT has also submitted evidence to the UN Committee Against Torture, highlighting the inadequacies in ethnic monitoring of hate crime victims in the UK.

FIND OUT MORE



CAJ put pressure on public authorities to apply the Equality Duty in Northern Ireland

CAJ runs an Equality Duty Enforcement Project which supports civil society groups to challenge public authorities over compliance with the NI Equality Duty. The Duty was established as part of the peace process and a vital mechanism in a society with a history of inequality and sectarian discrimination.

They have recently provided a submission to the Equality Commission Northern Ireland's consultation on new policies and procedures for complaints and investigations. It finds delay and avoidance deeply embedded in the proposed procedures and makes robust proposals for change.

This is detailed, legal work but essential if public authorities are to be held to account for properly exercising their duty to ensure equality.

MORE INFORMATION HERE



PLP launch Access to Judicial Review programme in Wales and the South West

This new programme of work by the Public Law Project aims to improve access to judicial review by combining strategic litigation, research and training in a few unusual and pioneering ways. These include looking at how vital frontline NGOs can use public law creatively and strategically, as well as working with local lawyers and advisers to improve access to public law.

This work builds on a new model of very close working with small, mostly frontline, NGOs and civil society organisations to discover together where public law can help solve systemic unfairness.

If you are based in Wales or the South West of England and would like to find out more, please email **I.robins-grace@publiclawproject.org.uk**

[READ A FULLER ARTICLE](#)



Cases



Readers might be interested in the following cases involving civil society actors.

Supreme court rules in favour of single mother declared 'intentionally homeless'

This case (Samuels v Birmingham City Council) concerned the decision of Birmingham Council that the appellant had made herself 'intentionally homeless' after she left her home when she could no longer afford the rent.

Shelter and the **Child Poverty Action Group** intervened in the case, instructed by Doughty Street Chambers. The appellant was represented by **Garden Court North**.

End Violence against Women Coalition seeks to launch a judicial review against the CPS

The Centre for Women's Justice will act on behalf of the End Violence against Women Coalition to challenge through a judicial review the falling rape prosecution rates by the Crown Prosecution Service.

They are **crowdfunding with CrowdJustice** to help fund some of the costs.

Universal credit regulations affecting people with severe disabilities ruled unlawful

This case concerned Government regulations that left some people with severe disabilities worse off than others by about £100 a month when they transitioned from the severe disability premium to universal credit.

One of the three claimants was a client of **Central England Law Centre** which instructed Matrix Chambers.

UK arms sales to Saudi for use in Yemen ruled unlawful

The Court of Appeal ruled that UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen are unlawful in a case brought by **the Campaign against the Arms Trade**. The Secretary of State has suspended

Home Office ordered to return wrongly deported asylum seeker in ruling that could lead to thousands of claims

The **High Court has ruled** that the decision to reject the claim of a gay Ugandan woman five years ago was unlawful and has ordered the Home Office to facilitate her return. The claimant was represented by Doughty Street instructed by the Migrants' Law Project at Islington Law Centre.

And finally...

Max Rutherford of the Association of Charitable Foundations argues that independent funders are well placed to support strategic litigation. **Read the blog here.**

Resources and opportunities



Free online training on torture & asylum

REDRESS have recently made some improvements to their **FREE** online training on Torture and the Asylum and Immigration System. The training is designed for those working in frontline community organisations and for those without formal legal training and is designed to fit into busy schedules. The course covers:

- Module 1: An introduction to international human rights and torture
- Module 2: Torture issues in immigration detention
- Module 3: Redress mechanisms

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