



Disability Legal Information Clinic

Information & Policy Document for Clinic Sessions

Service provided

The clinic provides free, accessible and confidential information on disability related legal issues such as housing, employment, education or discrimination.

The clinic also provides a research resource for service providers, legal practitioners or others who need practical research on disability-related issues.

Clients

University of Galway Students

Disabled students in the University of Galway are one of the key target groups for the clinic. University of Galway students may have a disability or be parents of children with disabilities. Students can also attend the clinic on behalf of a family member (e.g. sibling) or friend with a disability. If University of Galway students attend the clinic with a query on behalf of a family members or friend, the clinic's policy will be to invite the individual in question to attend the clinic so that information can be provided directly to him/her, where possible.

Local persons with disabilities

The information service provided by the clinic will also be of interest to disabled people in the local community, who are not University of Galway students.

Individuals on behalf of a persons with disabilities

Parents and siblings and supporters of disabled people and who are not University of Galway students may wish to avail of the information service provided by the clinic. These individuals may be in a position to support people with disabilities to assert and enforce their legal rights. However, providing information to such individuals may pose problems in terms of ensuring that the information is accurately conveyed to the person who requires it. Therefore, clinic policy is to require the person for whom information is sought to attend the clinic, where possible, and the person may bring someone (a parent, advocate or friend) with them for support if required.

Community organisations (including advocacy groups and service providers)

Service providers or community organisations working with people with disabilities may seek information from the clinic (e.g. regarding service users in difficult situations). However, since the information service is aimed primarily at individuals, organisations will be referred to the research resource aspect of the clinic, or asked to request an appointment for the individual in question (with a support person where appropriate). Anonymised research conducted by the clinic will be made available on

its website, and this will be a significant resource for organisations in the community working with people with disabilities.

Professionals (legal practitioners, social workers, medical professionals)

Individuals working with people with disabilities may seek information from the clinic on issues affecting their work (e.g. restrictive practices, equality legislation etc) however, many of these queries may be more appropriate for the research resource.

Appointments

Requests for an appointment should be sent to email dlic@universityofgalway.ie (for screen readers d l i c at university of galway dot ie)

The clinic cannot respond to queries via email but the team will reply to emails to arrange an appointment at the next session and check that the query is something the clinic can help with. Clients will also be asked to fill in a short form with details of the issues to be discussed. This is to help the student volunteers prepare for clinic sessions. The form also asks clients to consent to the clinic's use of their information to set up an online meeting via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or a similar platform.

Clients who cannot attend the appointment are asked to notify the clinic at least 24 hours in advance so we may offer this slot to another client.

Clinic Sessions

Clinics are staffed by law student volunteers who are not qualified legal practitioners. Therefore, clients are only provided with legal information as opposed to legal advice. If formal legal advice or representation is required clients should contact a solicitor. Contact with or attendance at the clinic and any subsequent exchange of information does not create a solicitor/client relationship.

Before an appointment the team will contact the client with details of how to access the online clinic session. If a client has any questions regarding this process or accessibility requirements they should notify the clinic as soon as possible and we will do our best to accommodate them.

At the start of each clinic session, a student volunteer will greet the client and the team will introduce themselves and outline their role. Every session will have at least one legal practitioner, one member of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy (CDLP) team, and one or two student volunteers in attendance. Clients who would like to speak to just one or two people instead of the full team are asked to let us know.

Clients may then be asked to outline their query in more detail and any questions they have for the student volunteers before the student volunteers discuss the information they have collected.

Volunteers at the clinic respect complete confidentiality of those who attend drop-in sessions. Notes will be kept at the session on the type of query and information

given, and this information is kept for training purposes. No identifying information (name, address, etc.) is ever recorded. Anonymised cases based on real queries with no identifying information may be placed on the clinic's website to help other people with similar queries.

If the client requires any follow up information or sharing of resources this will be agreed during the session along with the method of communication (for example email, another appointment, post etc.).

Feedback

After the clinic session clients will be asked to fill in a short feedback form. The form is to help us assess the student's performance and improve the clinic overall. Clients do not have to complete this if they do not wish. All information will be treated confidentiality and anonymised.

Data Protection

All personnel at the Disability Legal Information Clinic respect complete confidentiality of those who attend clinic sessions. Notes will be made at the session on the type of query and information given. These notes may be kept for training purposes. **No identifying information (name, address, etc.) will be attached to these notes.** Clinic sessions will not be video or audio recorded. This is in line with the University of Galway's commitment to managing personal data correctly and is underpinned by the University's Data Protection Policy. The University adheres to the principles of the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 (as may be amended) and the European General Data Protection Regulation in its processing of Personal Data and Special Categories of Personal Data. Anonymised cases based on real queries with no identifying information may be placed on the clinic's website in the future to help other people with similar queries or used as training aids for volunteers.

Accessibility

The Disability Legal Information Clinic is committed to ensuring its service is accessible. The clinic endeavours to ensure all methods of communication and documents are as accessible as possible. However, the clinic welcomes accessibility request or feedback on how to improve the service. If you have additional accessibility requirements (e.g. will require a sign language interpreter) please contact the clinic by email at dlic@universityofgalway.ie (for screen readers d l i c at university of galway dot ie)