



## Invitation to Tender for the Review of FLAC Services E: [recruitment@flac.ie](mailto:recruitment@flac.ie) | W: [www.flac.ie](http://www.flac.ie)

### Introduction - About FLAC

FLAC is inviting suitably qualified organisations and individuals to tender for the review of the information and advice it provides through the telephone information and referral line and its legal advice clinic and website.

FLAC is a human rights organisation which exists to promote equal access to justice. FLAC's vision is of a society wherever everyone can access fair and accountable mechanisms to vindicate their rights. It is vision is of a society wherever everyone can access fair and accountable mechanisms to vindicate their rights.

It provides a range of free legal information and advice services. These include;

- a **telephone information and referral line** which operates 5 days a week where members of the public are provided with legal information;
- a **network of free legal advice clinics** in 72 locations around the country, prior to the pandemic, where volunteers lawyers provide free legal advice. These clinics were mainly located in Citizen Information's Centres (CICs) around the country and are operated in partnership with Citizens Information Services (CISs);
- a **Legal Advice and Advocacy** clinic for the Roma community;
- a dedicated **Traveller Legal Service**;
- a recently established a pilot **LGBTI+ Legal Advice Clinic**;
- an **Independent Law Centre** which undertakes strategic casework in the public interest.

FLAC runs the **Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA)**. PILA runs a pro bono referral scheme which supports more than 150 NGOs working for social change getting legal assistance from private practitioners acting pro bono on issues such as governance and substantive issues that affect vulnerable groups.

FLAC also carries out **research and makes policy and law reform proposals** in areas of law that most impact on people experiencing poverty and disadvantage

FLAC is inviting suitably qualified organisations and individuals to tender for the review of the information and advice it provides through the telephone information and referral line and our free legal advice clinic and website.

### **Context**

Government guidelines forced the closure of the network of face to face clinics all around the country. FLAC moved quickly to establish phone advice clinics but restricted the queries to urgent and substantive issues. The closure of the clinics had put an enormous pressure on the telephone information and referral line where despite an increase in staff, resources and expertise, demand remains exceedingly high.

It was anticipated that these changes would be temporary but three years on, the network of face to face clinics remain closed. The queries to the telephone information line are often more complex and we have seen a particular increase in employment law queries and as there is no legal aid available in employment law there is nowhere to refer these queries.

### **Why is FLAC reviewing our information and advice services?**

FLAC propose to use the Service Review in the following ways:

1. To develop a blueprint for how best to provide legal information, advocacy and advice that will address the needs of those experiencing significant unmet legal need and/or who are vulnerable and hard to reach.
2. To assist us in managing the overwhelming need for legal advice in family law and employment law for example
3. To input into upcoming organisational strategic planning process.
4. To utilise learning to date, including the response to COVID

**Contents**

<b>Introduction - About FLAC</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Context</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Why is FLAC reviewing our information and advice services?</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>About the Services under review</b>	<b>4</b>	
Telephone Information and Referral Line		4
Free Legal Advice Clinics		4
Legal Information on Website		4
<b>Contextual issues</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Objectives of the Service Review</b>	<b>5</b>	
Limitations and Challenges for Service Review		6
<b>Scope of the Service Review</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>Review Methods</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Guiding Principles</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Management Arrangements</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Experience and Qualifications required of Reviewer/Team</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Specifics requirements for each stage</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>Key Dates</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>Tender Response Format</b>	<b>8</b>	
Allocated Budget:		8
Award Criteria		8
Information Note		9

## **About the Services under review**

The focus of the review is on

1. FLAC's Telephone Information and Referral Line
2. FLAC's Legal Advice Clinics (remote and in person)
3. Information provision to the public through FLAC's website

## **Telephone Information and Referral Line**

The Free Legal Advice Telephone and Information Referral Line provides basic legal information by telephone to callers, primarily in the areas of Family, Employment, Litigation, Consumer, Probate, Social Welfare, Criminal and Landlord and Tenant Law. It is a confidential service that is staffed by 5-7 staff members and volunteers daily and typically answers on average 240-300 calls per week. The queries now received are far more complex and detailed since the closure of face-to-face clinics, and in response to this changing profile of callers, FLAC has hired more qualified staff to include non-practicing solicitors and a barrister, to assist callers in the areas of demand.

Prior to the closure of the face-to-face clinics, the Free Legal Advice Telephone and Information Referral Line, could refer most callers with detailed legal queries, to the face-to-face clinics, but now seek to provide the required information to callers by telephone, and arrange legal advice telephone clinics to those who require them the most.

## **Free Legal Advice Clinics**

Free Legal Advice Clinics are confidential service provided by volunteer lawyers who offer first stop assistance, basic legal information and advice. Each consultation is about 15-20 minutes long.

Prior to COVID FLAC provided 95 clinics in 72 locations, in partnership with eight Citizens Information Service, Community Based organisations and Legal Firms.

Following the closure of clinics in March 2020, FLAC offers Phone Advice Clinics in conjunction with the seven Citizen Information Services. We currently offer approximately 25 clinics per week.

## **Legal Information on Website**

FLAC issues publications and guides on legal topics with the aim of informing people about their rights and advancing access to justice, e.g. our series of legal information leaflets on issues like wills, divorce, maintenance and enduring power of attorney. These can be downloaded from our website at [www.flac.ie/publications](http://www.flac.ie/publications).

FLAC produced a series of fact sheets on Covid19 related legal issues arising in family law, employment law, social welfare and debt during the pandemic.

These documents are for information purposes only and should not be considered as legal advice.

## Contextual issues

The review takes place within the context of the following internal and external events, and FLAC's mission to promote equal access to justice and our vision is of a society where everyone can vindicate their rights to access justice.

While FLAC provides a range of services to the public, it does this both to address unmet legal need and to highlight the gaps in services.

The Services Review will **facilitate the evolving conversation informing the strategic planning** in relation to future service delivery.

The review will consider whether the services **contribute to FLAC's understanding of the unmet legal need, and document and demonstrate gaps therein in order to complement our campaigns, advocacy and strategic litigation work.** This is with a view to informing the strategy in relation to future service delivery.

**Ongoing closure of the network of FLAC's Free Legal Advice Clinics.** The availability of FLAC clinics around the country is at approximately a third of what it was pre-COVID. This has put pressure on the Telephone Information and Referral Line staff and particularly on access to the Telephone Information Line.

**Increase in employment law queries** and cases. There is no legal aid for employment claims to the Workplace Relations Commission and therefore nowhere to send callers.

The Department of Justice established the **Civil Legal Aid Review Committee in June 2022.** The Committee has been given a year to complete its work. FLAC is a member of the Committee along with other members drawn from those who work with marginalised groups, legal practitioners, academics, Department officials and representatives from the Legal Aid Board.

## Objectives of the Service Review

The overall objectives for FLAC in undertaking the review of services is to identify:

1. **The extent of need for services** - Using available internal data including our Data Collection Programme, Service User Survey and perspectives from representative organisations, the extent to which vulnerable and hard to reach people receive FLAC services and the barriers they encounter;
2. **The extent and type of service provided through the Telephone Information and Referral Line** - Whether this should be changed, for example to move from the provision of information, to more detailed legal advice in particular areas;
3. **How FLAC provide services** and whether services should include outreach and/or targeted services for vulnerable groups and individuals;
4. **The quality of the service:** for those who access it;

5. **Family Law and Employment Law:** how best to address the overwhelming need for legal information and advice in the areas of family law and employment law;
6. **The website:** how to make better use this resource, as this may be the first port of call for many people looking for information about their legal issue;
7. **How the services contribute to FLAC mission and purpose** and how we as an organisation **understand, document and demonstrate the unmet legal need in order** to complement our campaigns/advocacy and strategic litigation work; and
8. **Key learnings** from FLAC's response during COVID-19 by pivoting to remote service provision.

## Limitations and Challenges for Service Review

FLAC recognises:

- Demonstrating the extent unmet legal need requires a separate piece of research. Therefore, it is not part of this services review to identify and demonstrate unmet legal need in Ireland. Understanding unmet legal will be limited to information available through FLAC's Data Collection Programme and qualitative feedback through the Service User feedback survey.
- That the core purpose of the services we offer is to demonstrate need and not necessarily to meet it. While there is substantial data available about the services there is a lack of explicit measures (e.g. objectives, performance indicators, targets or outcomes, costing/we can do this with this amount of money) for FLAC services. This may pose a challenge, as the review cannot measure against them.

## Scope of the Service Review

The services which are the subject of the review are grouped together because they are interlinked (more so now), public facing and self-referral and will cover FLACs legal information and advice services.

- Telephone Information and Referral Line
- Network of Free Legal Advice Clinics around the country (many based in the CICs): these were replaced with telephone clinics (for urgent cases) during COVID and are still operational
- Legal information available for the public through on our Website

The review is taking place in the context of the broader organisation and should take account of the services pre-covid along with the current services.

The review will not include:

- Legal Advice Clinic for the Roma Community
- Legal Advice Clinic for the Traveller Community
- Public Interest Cases
- FLAC Campaigns

- PILA

### Review Methods

FLAC anticipates that the review will use mixed methods:

Use the extensive information available from

- FLAC’s Data Collection Programme
- Service User Satisfaction Surveys
- Other documents such as the annual reports and internal reviews/documents

Include stakeholder’s involvement

- **Internal Stakeholders:** FLAC Council, Chief Executive, Managers/service leads, staff, volunteers
- **External Stakeholders:** Citizens Information Board, Citizens Information Services Regional Managers, CIS Clinic administrators/ Information Officers, Legal Aid Board, Funders, Service Users, Community Based Organisations

### Guiding Principles

We expect the reviewer to work within FLACs principles and ethos.

- Relationship focused/a co-operative way of working, working with integrity
- Service Users at centre this will mean engaging with service users

The Reviewer may also note their own working principles.

### Management Arrangements

FLAC anticipates that a small number of staff will oversee the review including

Responsibility	Person
Contact person for submission of tenders	Ingrid Colvin
Person responsible for oversight of review	Eilis Barry, Chief Executive
Contact/liaison person during the review	Ingrid Colvin

### Experience and Qualifications required of Reviewer/Team

The tender should outline the following;

- A detailed explanation of methodology/ the approach to the review
- Details of reviewer/review team who will be undertaking the review including; names of relevant experience, qualifications, CV and references from previous work of the reviewer/team and responsibility of different members
- A summary of potential benefits to FLAC in selecting you/organisation
- Information regarding experience with comparable clients
- Approach to liaison/communication with FLAC Team

- Experience of undertaking service reviews for NGOs
- Knowledge of legal landscape in Ireland is desirable

### Specifics requirements for each stage

FLAC anticipates that the review will take place in a number of stages:

1. **Interim documents** including consultations outcomes and analysis of different services will be required.
2. **Draft review document** for feedback from Chief Executive and FLAC Council
3. The **final review document and possible oral presentation** should:
  - be accessible in length and style
  - include a usable executive summary
  - be communication friendly and include usable outcomes
  - have clear recommendations, potentially some by particular service
  - include a breakdown of information by service, stakeholder group etc.
  - Show hard figures/evidence (from FLAC, other sources)

### Key Dates

09/02/2023	Advertisement of Tender
23/02/2023	Closing date for queries
06/03/2023	Closing date for submission of tenders
13/03/2023	Awarding of Tender
20/03-28/06/2023	Contract period

### Tender Response Format

FLAC is seeking responses to the Tender under the following headings:

1. **Methodology** for conducting the services review
2. **Schedule/timeline** for completions
3. **Details of reviewer/review team** who would be conducting the review
4. **Breakdown of fees** per day / number of days required

**Allocated Budget:** Up to and not exceeding the value of €18,000 including VAT

### Award Criteria

- Methodology 40%
- Schedule 15%
- Experience/skills of reviewer/review team 15%
- Cost 20%



Completed tenders should be submitted to [recruitment@flac.ie](mailto:recruitment@flac.ie) marked **FAO Ingrid Colvin - Tender for Services Review on or before close of business on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

- A valid Tax Clearance Certificate is to be supplied with the tender and is to be valid when invoice is being submitted for payment.
- Details of VAT registration are to be supplied with the Tender.

### **Information Note**

- Additional information may be sought at the assessment phase.
- Before final decision, a number of the most competitive tenders may be invited for further discussions on their proposals for the purpose of elaboration, clarification and/or aiding mutual understanding.
- Please note the review will be carried out during the period March 2023 – June 2023 and the schedule proposed will have to cater for these dates and will be marked accordingly.
- FLAC shall not be liable for any costs and/or expenses incurred in respect of the preparation or the submission of any tender documents or associated materials.
- FLAC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted and will not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender.

If you have any questions or require any additional information in relation to this Tender, please address them to Ingrid Colvin, [Ingrid.colvin@flac.ie](mailto:Ingrid.colvin@flac.ie) 086 057 7249