

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Will Legal Aid Cuts Prevent Migrants and Refugees from Accessing Justice?

Tuesday 8th February from 10-12:00 at MRCF, 2 Thorpe Close, W10 5XL

The Government is asking for your opinion on its plans to cut funding for free legal advice and representation that many of us receive. Their current proposals will further reduce access to free legal advice to vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees. Some organisations have already raised their voice with a long list of concerns about the **fairness** of the proposed cuts and access to justice but more is needed.

We at the Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum and Migrants' Rights Network will be responding to the government's consultation and we are encouraging all migrant and refugee organisations to do the same by sharing your experiences.

We are asking you to take part and have your say. Come to our meeting on February 8th to:

- Share your experiences in accessing free legal advice and representation. What would have happened if your members did not have free legal advice when you claimed asylum, needed representation in dealings with benefits, education or housing?
- Think through and get advice on how to respond to government consultation
- Begin emergency planning on what we need to do to help those who will be excluded from free legal advice now and in the future
- Develop strategies to ensure migrants and refugees can influence campaigning and the debate about legal aid

Our guest speakers are:

Barbara Cohen

Discrimination law consultant, currently advising the Equality & Human Rights Commission, and former Head of Legal Policy at the Commission for Racial Equality

Steve Symonds

Legal Officer at the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA)

Representative from Justice for All Campaign

The result of the debate at MRCF will be fed into a briefing to be distributed later to all key stakeholders and the Government in order to ensure that our voices are heard and considered when these important decisions are made. MRCF, MRN and ILPA will also help all participants to submit their own responses to government consultation (deadline at 12:00 on 14th February 2011).

If you need further information please check following websites:

ILPA - <http://www.ilpa.org.uk/>
Justice For All - <http://www.justice-for-all.org.uk/>
MoJ consultation website -
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/legal-aid-reform-151110.htm>

Places are limited so please book early via events@mrcf.org.uk or call 020 8964 4815. Lunch will be provided and travel expenses can be refunded. If you have members who need help with interpreting please let us know so we can make arrangements.

**Nearest tube station is Ladbroke Grove on Hammersmith and City line and buses 7, 23, 52 and 70 also stop on Ladbroke*

