

## Legal Aid change 'will hit the most vulnerable'

Hackney's community lawyers have sent a petition of 500 signatures and a strongly worded letter to Secretary of State for Justice Kenneth Clarke objecting to proposed changes to legal aid.

Hackney Community Law Centre (HCLC), in Lower Clapton Road, is calling for the Legal Aid, Sentencing and the Punishment of Offenders Bill, which could see advice on welfare benefits, housing and divorce no longer available through government funding, thrown out of parliament.

HCLC chairman Ian Rathbone said: "The most vulnerable people will suffer if these proposals are allowed to go through.

"We urge everyone to help us fight back and get these proposals scrapped.

"Announced under cover of their U-turn on sentencing reforms, these cuts will have a devastating effect – denying more than 600,000 people access to legal services and decimating funding for the not for profit legal sector."

He urged Hackney residents to ask their MPs to fight the proposals.

Hackney Gazette

30 June 2011