

Human Rights Seminar Series: What is the right to live in the community?

Dr Oliver Lewis

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Friday, 29th March 2019, 12:30 – 13:30

Room 723, 7/F., Cheng Yu Tung Tower

Centennial Campus, The University of Hong Kong

Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities sets out a right never articulated in international law before: the right to independent living and being included in the community. This lecture will examine what the right means, drawing from and critiquing the general comment published by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2017. Pertinent questions include the following. What do the terms independence and community mean in the context of disability law, and what are their antitheses? What does the right to choose one's residence mean when choices are constrained by available options? What do Article 19 compliant community services look like? What are civil society organisations pushing for around the world? The presentation will draw from a paper being written with Professor Genevra Richardson, to be published in the International Journal of Law and Psychiatry.



Oliver Lewis is barrister at Doughty Street Chambers, London, practising public law with a focus on disability rights, including litigation in the Court of Protection, the Coroners Court and mental health tribunals and international human rights law. He has a part-time appointment as Professor of Law and Social Justice at the University of Leeds, where he is a member of the Centre for Disability Studies and teaches on the undergraduate and postgraduate disability law classes and a module entitled 'Global human rights advocacy'. Before returning to legal practice in the UK in 2017 he was Executive Director of Validity (formerly the Mental Disability Advocacy Centre MDAC), an international NGO that uses law to advance rights of people with mental health issues or intellectual disabilities worldwide. In this role he oversaw strategic litigation at the European Court of Human Rights and advocacy before UN treaty bodies. His PhD from Leiden University in the Netherlands, was on legal capacity and international human rights law. Oliver has published widely on the intersection of disability, mental health and human rights, including the 2007 book "Mental disability and the European Convention on Human Rights" with Peter Bartlett and Oliver Thorold. His email address is o.lewis@doughtystreet.co.uk and he tweets from @DrOliverLewis.

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