

lambeth

Protests over women's project

A WOMEN'S centre in Brixton has been given fourteen days to leave the building they have occupied for 33 years, writes Simon Makin...

The Lambeth Women's Project (LWP) houses eleven women's groups, offering services ranging from creative workshops to counselling, advocacy and sexual health.

They were sole occupants of the building on Stockwell Road until management was handed over to Stockwell Primary School in 2010, who then gave LWP a five-year lease.

But on June 1 the school told them they had two weeks to vacate, it is claimed. Youth worker Ego Ahaive, 38, got the eviction letter a week after attending the Queen's Jubilee Gala because of her work at LWP.

A council spokesperson said: "LWP has been able to rent space from Stockwell Primary School over recent years. However, there have been a number of issues the school and the project have been trying to resolve and this matter is now being dealt with by the school's governing body."

Ms Ahaive said there had been an administrative mistake over funds which had now been fully resolved. Executive headteacher of Stockwell



Protesters banging pots and pans in Windrush Square

Primary Janet Mulholland said the situation was not so clear cut. She responded: "We have been trying to engage the LWP for over a year to resolve shared use and funding issues, but to no avail. We are further dismayed that they should have the time and energy to mount a campaign but not to respond to our many emails, letters and phone calls to

meet with us to resolve the issues."

Aurora Dawn, a song-writer and vocalist with Alabama3, who volunteers with the Triangle adventure playground, which runs projects in partnership with LWP, said: "It's a much-needed service. There's no other service in Lambeth that provide it.

"Lambeth have an obligation to have

this service there, so they should be doing everything to help the women's project to survive."

The LWP has been volunteer-run since 1997 when Lambeth Council withdrew funding in widespread cuts. Ms Ahaive said her salary for the young women's service the council commissions from them was "pretty much" the only council support the

centre received.

An online petition was set up in 2007 to demonstrate the strength of public for the project, which currently has 810 signatures, over 150 of which have appeared since June 1.

Supporters have been gathering in Windrush Square nightly at 7pm to bang pots in protest and plan to continue until the eviction on June 15.