

LAW SOCIETY PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Centre of Excellence for
Professional Education and Lifelong Learning



Family & Child Law Conference 2019

Date	22 November 2019
Time	10.00am to 4.00pm
Venue	Law Society of Ireland
Fee	€186
Discounted* Fee	€160
CPD Hours	3 General 1 Regulatory Matters 1 Management & Professional Development Skills Total 5 Hours (by Group Study)
Event Code	19029

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this conference is to examine recent developments in core areas of family law and practice and childcare law practice. The objective is to provide practitioners with a concise and essential overview of the many recent developments and the implications for day-to-day client advice and practice and procedure. This conference has been designed by family and childcare law practitioners for their colleagues in the profession. Legal and child care practitioners and related professionals will find attendance at this conference essential to address new legislation and consequential practice changes. Regulation and management topics relevant to family and child law will also be discussed.

Topics and Issues to be covered

- Family & Child Law Update – pitfalls in practice, a judicial perspective
- Presidency of the District Court – highlights of the past seven years
- Case Law update – a practitioner’s perspective
- GDPR and the family law practitioner
- Working with families in distress
- Practice update
 - Divorce legislation update
 - Domestic Violence Act
 - Cohabitation law/Cohabitation Agreements
 - Child Law Update
 - Child Care (Guardian Ad Litem) Bill 2015
 - Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2019

Chairperson

Dr Geoffrey Shannon, Solicitor, Chair Adoption Authority of Ireland, Child Law Expert

Dr Geoffrey Shannon is a solicitor and is a leading authority in Child Law and Family Law. He is the current Chairman of the Adoption Authority of Ireland. He held the role of Special Rapporteur on Child Protection for the Irish government from 2006 to July 2019. Dr Shannon has recently been asked by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Council of Europe to assist as a child protection expert in drafting new guidelines on cybercrime for judges, prosecutors and law enforcement agencies. Dr Shannon is the recipient of several awards for his work in the area of national and international family law. These include the 2005 JCI Outstanding Person of the Year Award, the 2006 Canon Maurice Handy Award and the 2013 Irish Law Award. On 23 June 2017, Dr Shannon was presented with the Dublin Solicitors Bar Association Award for outstanding contribution to legal scholarship for his entire work to date.

Speakers

Judge Colin Daly, President of the District Court

His Honour Judge Colin Daly completed a LLM at Queens University, Belfast in 1995 and was enrolled as a solicitor in Ireland in 1997. From 2001-2012 he was the Managing Solicitor at Northside Community Law Centre (now Community Law & Mediation (CLM) Northside) where he worked in public interest and human rights law. He was appointed as a Judge of the [Irish] District Court in June, 2012 as a moveable judge and worked for over 2 years at the Children Court. He was assigned to District 22 Carlow/Kilkenny in 2015 and in July 2019 was appointed as President of the District Court.

Judge Rosemary Horgan, Adjunct Professor of Law

Judge Rosemary Horgan was formerly a partner at Ronan Daly Jermyn solicitors, where she practised for many years in all areas of family law. She lectured on family law issues and was a consultant to the Law Society of Ireland on family law. She was a member of the Law Society's Family Law and Civil Legal Aid Committee and Law Reform Committee. Judge Horgan was also a member of the Editorial Board of the *Irish Journal of Family Law* and co-authored *The Divorce Act in Practice; Family Law Practitioner* published by Round Hall Sweet & Maxwell. Judge Horgan served on the Legal Aid Board (including as Chairperson) from 1980 to 1998. She was appointed to the District Court in 2011 and appointed as President of the Court in 2012. Judge Horgan obtained a BCL, and later an LLB and LLM, from University College Cork.

Dr Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children

Dr Niall Muldoon is Ireland's second Ombudsman for Children. He was appointed to this position on February 17th 2015 by the Head of State, His Excellency, President Michael D. Higgins, following an open competition and interview process involving children and adults. As Ombudsman for Children, Dr. Muldoon is directly accountable to the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) deals with complaints by, or on behalf of, young people about public bodies such as the Health Service Executive, schools, voluntary hospitals and children's prisons. The OCO has also carried out key research into issues in St Patrick's Institution, a former prison for young offenders.

Gerard Durcan SC

Gerard is a Senior Counsel who practices in the area of family and child care law.

Cathal Ryan, Assistant Commissioner, Data Protection Commission

Cathal Ryan is an Assistant Commissioner with the DPC. He is a qualified lawyer with significant commercial, litigation and regulatory experience. Having begun his legal career with the Legal Aid Board, Cathal now heads up the Supervision and Engagement Unit within the DPC. This Unit supervises the activities of multinational technology companies which have nominated Ireland as their main establishment for the purposes of the GDPR. Prior to this, Cathal was a legal advisor to the Office of Government Procurement before heading to data protection where he established the consultation function of the DPC with particular emphasis on the health and public sectors. Cathal is a key member of the European Data Protection Board and was the lead rapporteur on the code of conduct

guidelines as per Articles 40 and 41 of the GDPR. He is also the data protection officer for the DPC.

Dr Nicola O’Sullivan, Partner, Caidreamh Family & Practitioner Assessment & Therapeutic Services

Dr Nicola O’Sullivan holds a diploma and degree in Social Science in Youth & Community Work from University College Cork, and a Masters in Child Protection and Welfare from Trinity College Trinity College Dublin. Dr O’Sullivan holds a Doctorate in Social Care and Emotional Wellbeing from the Tavistock and Portman Trust, London. She has worked with children and families in the residential care system and community for eighteen years. Dr O’Sullivan established and managed two child protection family support services and managed a large residential unit and social care team, specialising in parent-infant mental health and early childhood development. Dr O’Sullivan lectures on the topic of parent-infant mental health, psychodynamic theory and reflective practice and neglect in childhood on the Post Graduate Diploma in Child Protection and Welfare at Trinity College Dublin. In 2018 Dr O’Sullivan began teaching on the Certificate in Mental Health in the Community in University College Cork. She is also an external examiner of the social care degree programme at the Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown. Dr O’Sullivan provides consultation in complex child care cases and training to teams supporting children and families. She offers individual and group supervision to professionals across many disciplines working with children and their parents.

Joan O’Mahony, O’Mahony Solicitors, Dublin

Joan O’ Mahony solicitor qualified in 1971 and is a sole practitioner since 1981. She practices in Deansgrange Co Dublin and is a member of the Family Law Committee of the Law Society. She also sits on the Monitoring Committee of the National Strategy for Domestic and Gender based violence.

Keith Walsh, Keith Walsh Solicitors, Dublin

Keith specialises in litigation & family law work and has published a number of articles on divorce and separation and reform of the family law courts in the Law Society Gazette and the Parchment. He has taught on the Advanced Course run by the Law Society in the area of family law and is a former chairman of the DSBA’s Family Law & Minors Committee. He is Chairperson of the Law Society’s Family Law Committee and he is a member of the Law Society Skillnet Steering Group. He started his career in the legal aid board, worked for a number of firms in Dublin and is principal of Keith Walsh solicitors, a three solicitor firm for the past 12 years. Keith is also Chairperson of the LSRA costs sub-group.

Gareth Noble, Partner, KOD Lyons, Solicitors, Dublin

Gareth is recognised as one of Ireland’s leading litigators in the area of children with disabilities. He has successfully represented many families in challenging the law in respect of Domiciliary Care Allowances, Carer’s Allowance and services for children in education and early assessment of their needs and service provision. Gareth also acts in Education Law cases for children and families in respect of school bullying, school admissions, disciplinary issues and other educational law entitlements. He has also provided advice to educational institutions on policy formation and implementation. He deals with a demanding caseload involving care proceedings in the District Court and High Court together with a broad criminal practice in the Children’s Criminal Courts. Gareth is a leading lawyer in child protection cases and acts on behalf of children and their court appointed Guardians ad litem in childcare proceedings throughout Ireland. He is a board member with EPIC (Empowering People in Care). Gareth, LLB graduated from Trinity College in 2002. Gareth joined Kelleher O’Doherty as a legal executive in 1999 before commencing his traineeship in the firm. Gareth qualified as a solicitor in 2006 and became a partner in the firm in 2008. Gareth had early experience in defamation and media law and has acted in a huge number of high profile cases relating to privacy and reputation management. Gareth has wide experience in Judicial Review and illegal detention cases and has led a number of strategic litigation cases. He is a member of the Irish Penal Reform Trust and Irish Council for Civil Liberties and has lectured widely in Youth Justice and Constitutional law, Child Law and Human Rights law.

Helen Coughlan, Partner, Patrick J Farrell & Co. Solicitors, Dublin

Helen Coughlan qualified as a Solicitor in 2004. She studied law in University College Cork and obtained a first class honours BCL degree in 1999. She trained with Matheson Ormsby Prentice, Solicitors, in Dublin. Her specialties include family law, medical negligence, employment law, and personal injury litigation. Helen is an experienced family lawyer and is a qualified family mediator. She is a trained collaborative law practitioner and is a founder member of the Kildare West Wicklow Collaborative Solicitors Group. She represents clients in the District, Circuit and High Court in relation to guardianship, access, maintenance, judicial separation and divorce. Helen is a member of the Family and Child Law Committee of the Law Society. She is a Chairperson of Mental Health Tribunals for the Mental Health Commission. She lives in Newbridge and is involved in various local voluntary bodies.

Sinéad Kearney, Partner, Byrne Wallace, Solicitors, Dublin

Sinéad Kearney, Partner and Head of Health Services Sinéad is a Partner and Head of the Health Services Team at ByrneWallace. With over 30 years' experience in Health and Regulatory Law and Public Sector Administrative and Child Care Law, she has played a pivotal role in the development of the law in these areas through her expertise and successful liaison with government bodies, other legal firms, and the key stakeholders such as the Judiciary, the Courts Services, the Gardaí and non-governmental organisations. Her specialist areas are in Child Care Law, Adoption Law, Children's Mental Health, conduct of inquiries and Constitutional Rights. Her passion and commitment to her clients ensures that they receive all round support. Sinéad relies on her excellent skill set and works closely with her committed team of Solicitors to consistently deliver high quality legal advice. Her key clients include the Child and Family Agency and various major hospitals. Sinéad is Ireland's leading child care lawyer, and she heads a team that is top ranked and wins awards consistently within the healthcare sector. Sinéad is a former chair and currently a member of the Law Society Family and Child Law Committee. She was also appointed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to sit on two Panels - the Expert Reference Panel with regard to the Child Care amendment Bill 2019, and the Review Panel to review and examine necessary reform of the Child Care Act 1991.

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