

LAW SOCIETY PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Centre of Excellence for
Professional Education and Lifelong Learning



Human Rights Annual Conference – ‘Digitising Justice’

Date	17 November 2023
Time	10.00am to 3.00pm
Venue	Presidents’ Hall, Law Society of Ireland, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7
Fee	Complimentary
CPD Hours	3.5 general
Event Code	23027

Aim and objectives

This year’s Annual Human Rights Conference will focus on ‘Digitising Justice’ – looking at the impact of technology on access to justice. The Conference will discuss how modernising the justice system could improve access to justice, particularly for marginalised groups, while also drawing attention to any barriers that may arise due to increased reliance on technology within the Courts Service. The Conference will draw on experiences from other jurisdictions and hear from civil society organisations on how “digitising” the justice system may affect the people they work with.

This Conference is organised by the Law Society’s Human Rights and Equality Committee in partnership with Law Society Professional Training with the aim of bringing together legal practitioners, members of the judiciary, members of the public, as well as academics, policy makers, human rights and civil society organisations to explore issues around this year’s theme. The Conference hopes to provide a platform to stimulate and invigorate debate amongst key stakeholders in this area.

The Annual Human Rights Conference Series

This year marks the 21st anniversary of the Law Society’s Human Rights Committee Annual Conference series. The principal aim of the conference series is to promote awareness of human rights law and practice among both lawyers and the public, and also to encourage consideration of how human rights can be promoted and protected.

Chairperson

Gary Lee, Office of the General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court

The lecture will be chaired by Gary Lee. Gary Lee is a member of the Council of the Law Society of Ireland and Chair of its Human Rights and Equality Committee. He is a solicitor in the Office of the General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court. Prior to his present position, Gary was Managing Solicitor of Ballymun Community Law Centre. He has extensive experience in Disability Law and Mental Health Law. He has chaired Mental Health Tribunals for the past 16 years and is a former chairperson of the Disability Federation of Ireland. Gary has been appointed by Government to a number of bodies including the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group, the Value for Money Review of Disabilities Services Working Group and the Government Taskforce on Personalised Budgets.

Speakers

Frank Clarke SC, Former Chief Justice

Frank Clarke was the 12th Chief Justice of Ireland from July, 2017 until October 2021 having been a judge of the Supreme Court since 2012. He was born in Walkinstown, Dublin in October, 1951. He was educated at Drimnagh Castle CBS and University College Dublin where he was awarded a B.A. in Mathematics and Economics (1972). Having completed his legal studies at King's Inns he was called to the Bar in 1973 and to the Inner Bar in 1985. While at the Bar he served for many years on the Bar Council including a term of two years (1993-1995) as its Chair and has been a Bencher of the Honourable Society of the King's Inns since 1994.

Angela Denning, Chief Executive Officer, Courts Service

Angela Denning is the Chief Executive of the Courts Service where she leads an ambitious modernisation programme centred around digital delivery of services so as to improve access to justice. She is a qualified barrister with over 20 years operational experience in the Courts Service including a period where she was appointed as Deputy Master of the High Court. Prior to her appointment to her current role, Angela worked in the Reform Division of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform where she had responsibility for a range of policy areas supporting increased transparency and improved public trust in Government.

Judge Scott Schlegel, 24th Judicial District Court for the Parish of Jefferson, Division D, State of Louisiana

Judge Scott U. Schlegel, a pioneer in using technology in Louisiana state courts, "manages what may be one of the most advanced courts in the country for delivering justice online," according to a leading legal tech journalist. Judge Schlegel is the recipient of the National Center for State Courts' 26th Annual William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence, one of the highest judicial honors in the country, and was featured on the cover of the American Bar Association Journal after being named a 2021 Legal Rebel. As a District Court Judge, Judge Schlegel handles a variety of cases, including criminal, civil and domestic. Judge Schlegel also serves as a volunteer judge for two specialty courts he started in Jefferson Parish; Reentry Court and Swift & Certain Probation. Judge Schlegel works tirelessly to improve the justice system. He has written and spoken nationally about these critical improvements to the justice system on many occasions.

Cindy Carroll BL, Deputy Chairperson of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal

A graduate of Law from University College Cork, Cindy was called to the Bar of Ireland in 1995. Following a pupillage year in Dublin, she practised as a barrister in Cork, and lectured in Cork Institute of Technology and University College Cork. In 2001, she was appointed as Advisory Counsel at the Office of the Attorney General and worked there advising primarily on asylum and immigration law. She returned to practise as a barrister in Dublin in early 2004, and was briefed as counsel on behalf of the State in the areas of Asylum and Immigration law from 2004 until March 2018. She was involved in many of the leading cases in this rapidly developing area of law. During this time, she also lectured in the Dublin Institute of Technology, and both lectured and tutored in the Law Society of Ireland on European Union Law and Human Rights Law. In March 2018, Cindy was appointed as Deputy Chairperson of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal, where she is a member of the senior management team, Head of Training and a decision maker in all five of the Tribunal's jurisdictions. In May 2019, she made the first preliminary reference from the Tribunal to the Court of Justice of the European Union in relation to the Reception Conditions Directive (Recast), which judgment was delivered on 14 January 2021. Cindy has been a Judicial Trainer with the European Union Agency for Asylum since 2021 and has delivered several training workshops for EUAA. She has also been an invited Keynote Speaker at various conferences as well as chairing the Law Society's TRALIM Conference on a number of occasions. Cindy was re-appointed as Deputy Chairperson in March 2023, and was appointed as Interim Chairperson of the Tribunal in July and August 2023. Cindy has successfully completed an MA in Leadership and Strategy and is currently studying for a Doctorate in Governance.

Siobhan Long, Manager, National Assisted Technology Training Service, Enable Ireland
Siobhán has worked in the field of Assistive Technology since 1991. Siobhan's current role involves management of Enable Ireland's National Assistive Technology Training and SeatTech Services. Having initially worked as a speech and language therapist, she

progressed to working with a multidisciplinary A.T. team, and pursued many opportunities to bridge the gap between technology advancements and their availability to end users. In 2016, Siobhan began a partnership with the Disability Federation of Ireland, resulting in the publication of [Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities and Older People: A Discussion Paper](#). Since then she has been working intensively on an advocacy and lobbying programme, to promote the adoption of the recommendations contained in the Discussion Paper. Chief among these are the establishment of a national AT Passport, to address the significant gaps in service provision as AT users transition through life. Her ultimate goal is to secure the development of a national Assistive Technology Ecosystem in Ireland. Siobhán also manages Enable Ireland's National Virtual Service, an innovative online service for and with adult service owners, established as an emergency response to the pandemic. This service has proven to be immensely impactful in empowering adults with disabilities to play a key role in designing and delivering services in line with their own goals and aspirations.

Aoife Kelly Desmond, Managing Solicitor, Mercy Law Resource Centre

Aoife Kelly-Desmond is Managing Solicitor at Mercy Law Resource Centre, a registered charity and independent law centre providing free legal advice and representation to people at risk of homelessness. Previously, Aoife was a solicitor in A&L Goodbody and Matheson where she advised commercial entities and public bodies on investigations, regulatory matters and complex litigation and disputes. Aoife is Chairperson of Plan International Ireland, an international charity that aims to advance children's rights and promote equality for girls. She is also a member of the Social Workers Registration Board representing the interests of the general public.

Sarah Benson, Chief Executive Officer, Women's Aid

Sarah Benson is the current Chief Executive Officer of Women's Aid, Ireland. Women's Aid are a national, organisation working to prevent and address the impact of domestic violence and abuse. They do this by advocating, influencing, training, and campaigning for effective responses to reduce the scale and impacts of domestic abuse on women and children in Ireland, and by providing high quality, specialised, integrated, support services. For nine years prior to this role, Sarah was the Chief Executive Officer with Ruhama, an Irish NGO working nationally with women and people affected by prostitution including victims of sex trafficking. In addition Sarah has previous experience as Manager of the National Domestic Violence Helpline and extensive work in the community and voluntary sector both in Ireland and abroad, working particularly with marginalized ethnic minority women and youth. Sarah was the Irish Expert on Violence Against Women for the European Women's Lobby Observatory from 2010-2016 & and, between 2014 and 2019, the Chairperson of CAP International - a coalition of 30+ frontline services across the globe in 24 countries - working directly with women and people in prostitution/victims of sex trafficking. Sarah is a former Vice Chairperson of the Board of the National Women's Council of Ireland, and is a current member of the Board of The Wheel. Throughout her career Sarah's passion for human rights, social justice and equality - in particular for women and girls - remains a constant feature.

IMPORTANT

- This is an in-person event and, unless otherwise stated, will not be available online or as a recording.
- In order to reduce waste and to support the work of the Law Society Environmental and Sustainability in Practice Taskforce, materials will not be printed. Instead, they will be emailed before the event.
- Solicitors are required to complete 20 hours CPD this year of which 5 hours must be undertaken in person. Please see <https://www.lawsociety.ie/Solicitors/rules-legislation/CPD-Scheme/2023-cycle>
- For full programme details download the [Brochure](#)
- View our [Privacy Statement](#)
- If you have technical or other queries, contact the Law Society Professional Training team on lspt@lawsociety.ie

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