

Justice Media Awards 2021

Award winners & citations



All entries were assessed against the objectives of the Justice Media Awards, namely published works or broadcasts which:

- Promote the highest standards in legal journalism,
- Foster greater public understanding of the law, the legal system or any specific legal issue,
- Inform and educate citizens as to the roles in society of the law, the courts, law enforcement agencies and the legal profession,
- Disclose practices or procedures needing reform so as to encourage the development and modernisation of Irish laws, courts and law enforcement agencies, and/or
- Assist the legal profession, the judiciary, and all others involved in the administration of justice in attaining the highest professional standards.

The award categories are:

1. Print/online journalism (daily)
2. Print/online journalism (Sunday)
3. Print/online journalism (local)
4. Broadcast journalism (radio/podcast – national)
5. Broadcast journalism (radio/podcast – local)
6. Broadcast journalism (TV/video)
7. Court reporting (print/online)
8. Court reporting (broadcast)
9. Human rights/social justice reporting
10. International justice reporting
11. Newcomer of the year
12. Best student journalism

OVERALL WINNER

WINNER:

Mark Horgan and Ciarán Cassidy (Second Captains production for BBC Sounds): *Where Is George Gibney?*

THE JUDGES SAID:

This exceptional podcast series takes an in-depth look at the extraordinary circumstances and child abuse accusations surrounding one of Ireland's most famous swimming coaches. It is a remarkable piece of journalism and an extraordinary listen.

CATEGORY 1: PRINT/ONLINE JOURNALISM (DAILY)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Jenny Friel (Irish Daily Mail): *Section 252 - why it needs to change by those it most affects*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- This piece was a close examination of Section 252 legislation, which banned identifying child murder victims.
- An incredibly powerful report and which included emotive personal testimonies.

Two merit certificates were awarded:

MICHAEL DOYLE (THE IRISH SUN): *IRISH PUBS VERSUS FBD INSURANCE*

- A series of articles covering a landmark case between four Irish pubs and FBD Insurance.
- To explain complex legal matters in a clear and digestible way is a difficult thing to achieve. This series did it in a way that was masterful. It was accessible, clear and succinct all at once.

ÓRLA RYAN (THEJOURNAL.IE): *SERIES OF ARTICLES AND PODCASTS ON MOTHER AND BABY HOMES AND RELATED LEGISLATION*

- A series of articles and podcasts relating to the Mother and Baby Homes and relevant legislation.
- This focused series was a phenomenal piece of work. The question and answer format commonly executed by this online publisher, clearly sets out and explains the issues at hand, making these reports extremely accessible.

CATEGORY 2: PRINT/ONLINE JOURNALISM (SUNDAY)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Sarah Taaffe-Maguire (Business Post): *Landmark verdicts: Female leaders on court cases that shaped the modern world*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A powerful, informative and uplifting piece on Ireland's legal history.
- The article is a compelling reminder that some of our fundamental rights - that we might take for granted - once had to be fought for.

One merit certificate was awarded:

AARON ROGAN (BUSINESS POST): FACEBOOK VERSUS THE DATA PROTECTION COMMISSIONER.

- A series of articles discussing a landmark case of GDPR between a social media giant and the Data Protection Commissioner.
- Drilling into the technical detail and legal content, this specific reporting was standout. This was an Irish focused issue which captured the media's attention last year.

CATEGORY 3: PRINT/ONLINE JOURNALISM (LOCAL)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Aidan O'Connor (Kerry's Eye): *Justice at Last*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- An exclusive report telling the story of a woman who was wrongly accused of murdering an infant in what has become known as the Kerry Babies case.
- An impactful piece, which told a harrowing story and included excellent insight from a local solicitor to discuss the prominent legal issues at play.

One merit certificate was awarded:

ANN MURPHY (THE ECHO): THE DRUGS QUESTIONS WHICH SHOULD BE ASKED BY THE CITIZENS ASSEMBLY

- A thought provoking series of reports examining the questions that should be asked by the Citizens Assembly.
- This experienced journalist has already started considering the questions that are not yet being asked at a national level.

CATEGORY 4: BROADCAST JOURNALISM (RADIO/PODCAST – NATIONAL)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Mark Horgan and Ciarán Cassidy (Second Captains production for BBC Sounds): *Where Is George Gibney?*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- This exceptional podcast series takes an in-depth look at the extraordinary circumstances and child abuse accusations surrounding one of Ireland's most famous swimming coaches.
- A remarkable piece of journalism and an extraordinary listen.

Two merit certificates were awarded:

RÓISÍN INGLE, KATHY SHERIDAN, JENNIFER RYAN AND SUZANNE BRENNAN (THE IRISH TIMES WOMEN'S PODCAST): SEALING THE RECORDS: MAEVE O'ROURKE & MARY HARNEY

- An illuminating piece which highlighted the issue of Mother and Baby Home records being sealed and the complex legal situation that resulted.
- This piece made the law accessible and explained difficult pieces of legislation and related issues in a coherent and sensitive way.

**CHRISTINE BOHAN, AOIFE BARRY, NICKY RYAN AND SINÉAD O'CARROLL
(THEJOURNAL.IE): WHY HAS THE IRISH MEDIA BEEN BARRED FROM REPORTING THE
NAMES OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN MURDERED?**

- An excellent podcast piece that examines a Court of Appeal judgement and the law around Section 252.
- A well-produced and powerful report, which explains clearly what happened in the Court of Appeal judgement, breaking down tricky legal arguments to be understood by a lay audience.

CATEGORY 5: BROADCAST JOURNALISM (RADIO/PODCAST – LOCAL)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Niall Delaney (North West Today on Ocean FM): We are family - same sex couple's birth cert fight

THE JUDGES SAID:

- An excellent examination of the barriers faced by same-sex couples and the fight to have both parents officially recognised in the eyes of the State.
- An outstanding piece of reporting which told a human story and highlighted that while families are more diverse now, not all families have the same rights.

Two merit certificates were awarded:

**FRAN CURRY, DOC MARTIN AND ALISON HYLAND (TIPP TODAY ON TIPP FM): LEGAL
ISSUES ON TIPP TODAY - FIGHT TO STAY ALIVE**

- A report into an emotive and moving case surrounding the misinterpretation of cervical screening slides and the settlement case that arose from it.
- Using a local solicitor involved in this case, this team provided a unique insight into a complex legal procedure.

**FIONA CORCORAN, MAIREAD TWOHIG AND PEARSE MCCARTHY (96 FM AND C103):
MAGAZINE ROAD RESIDENTS SECURE LEGAL VICTORY**

- A series of reports that followed the story of turbulent student parties and the landmark court case which followed.
- With discussions from legal experts, the reporting examined landlord licenses and responsibilities, which are of great interest to the public.

**SINÉAD HUBBLE, ELLEN BUTLER, ROBERT FAHY, EOIN O DONOGHUE AND WILL
FAULKNER (MIDLANDS TODAY ON MIDLANDS 103): UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF
QUANTUM**

- An in-depth discussion on how personal injury awards are calculated, the book of quantum and the new personal injury guidelines.
- An excellent explainer of how the legal system works when dealing with a personal injury claim with expert contributions from a local solicitor.

CATEGORY 6: BROADCAST JOURNALISM (TV/VIDEO)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Máire Kearney, Mick Peelo and Sheila Ahern (RTÉ One Factual): *Redress: Breaking the Silence*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A special report examining the State's response to questions of justice and accountability for survivors of historical abuse.
- This excellent piece illuminated the on-going struggles and fight faced by survivors of historical abuse.

Three merit certificates were awarded:

BARRY CUMMINS AND SALLYANNE GODSON (RTÉ 1 PRIME TIME): *GUARDIAN OF THE PEACE*

- A special report covering the longest ever murder trial in the history of the State - that of Detective Garda Adrian Donohoe.
- This detailed report highlighted how the courts system could continue to operate throughout Covid restrictions and work alongside police in other jurisdictions.

SHAUNA KEOGH (VIRGIN MEDIA TELEVISION): *THE GUARDS: INSIDE THE K - MENTAL HEALTH*

- A special report examining the mental health of the Garda of the K, Ireland's busiest policing district.
- This report examined how working in serious crime can impact mental health, and the series brought humanity to An Garda Síochána.

PADDY HAYES & AISLING NÍ FHLAITHEARTA (TG4): *FINNÉ - SINÉAD O'LEARY*

- This Irish language documentary recalls a vicious unprovoked assault, and the legal battle that followed to prevent the attacker being released.
- This exceptional report amplifies the voice of the victim and focuses on the ongoing impact of the crime.

CATEGORY 7: COURT REPORTING – PRINT/ONLINE

CATEGORY WINNER:

Francesca Comyn (The Currency): *Human stories wrapped up in the meaning of words: The full story of FBD's battle with Ireland's publicans*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A lengthy, yet informed and balanced account of the test case against FBD Insurance by publicans denied Covid-19 related business interruption cover.
- This seasoned journalist's reporting provided an in-depth, balanced discussion and detailed legal arguments set out in the prolific High Court case.

Three merit certificates were awarded:

MARY CAROLAN (THE IRISH TIMES): *PETER KELLY PROFILE: FEARLESS LEGAL FORCE*

FOR HALF A CENTURY

- A special report detailing the enormous contribution Mr Justice Peter Kelly made to the Irish justice system throughout his 50 year legal career.
- A thoroughly enjoyable read with interesting analysis.

NICOLA DONNELLY (IRISH DAILY STAR): VICTIMS OF CRIME CALL FOR REFORM ON DISTRICT COURT APPEALS SYSTEM

- A series of court reports and interviews that vocalised calls from victims of crimes.
- An eye-opening and educational report on the need to reform the District Court appeals system.

SHANE PHELAN (IRISH INDEPENDENT): ECONOMIC THREAT POSED BY COVID-19 PUTS INSOLVENCY SYSTEM BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- A report detailing two High Court cases which focused on significant problems in the personal insolvency system.
- A quality report from this experienced journalist which highlights the economic threats posed by Covid-19 and concerns expressed by the judiciary.

CATEGORY 8: COURT REPORTING (BROADCAST)

CATEGORY WINNER:

Frank Greaney (Newstalk): *A beacon of hope: Survivor speaks out after John McClean is jailed*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- An interview that guided listeners through the harrowing details of a school abuse case.
- The journalist's ability to clearly outline complicated evidence, where one could easily trip up, is masterful.

One merit certificate was awarded:

NICOLE GERNON (VIRGIN MEDIA NEWS): RESENTENCING OF TEENAGER FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER IN DUN LAOGHAIRE

- Reports from the Court of Appeal highlighting the difficulty of sentencing child offenders and the challenges faced when families seek help for their child's mental illness.
- An excellent example of court reporting from this expert reporter which highlighted merits of the legal system, including the benefits of review periods.

CATEGORY 9: HUMAN RIGHTS/SOCIAL JUSTICE REPORTING

CATEGORY WINNER:

Elaine Loughlin, Aoife Moore, Neil Michael and Eoin English (Irish Examiner): *Mother and Baby Homes Commission Report coverage in the Irish Examiner*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- This was an iconic front page story listing names of those who died at Bessborough Mother and Baby Home.
- Demonstrating extraordinary commitment to remember those that died at the Mother and

Baby Homes and providing first-hand accounts of survivors, this powerful piece will be remembered for years to come.

Four merit certificates were awarded:

CONOR GALLAGHER (IRISH TIMES): 'GEORGE NKENCHO SHOOTING: RACIAL TENSIONS IN DUBLIN'S SUBURBS'

- Focusing on community relations, this skilled journalist provided much needed additional context in the wake of the shooting of George Nkencho.
- This piece delivered a considered background piece that examined garda community relations.

AOIFE MOORE, DANIEL MCCONNELL AND PAUL HOSFORD (IRISH EXAMINER): DIRECT PROVISION - A BILLION EURO INDUSTRY

- These journalists demonstrated the importance of investigative journalism.
- A timely story which exposed how much the big players were really earning at the cost of the taxpayer for a system that is widely criticised.

PATRICK O'CONNELL AND KEN FOY (SUNDAY WORLD): GEORGE NKENCHO HAD NO PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS

- A report which investigated false claims that emerged following the death of George Nkencho.
- This piece fact-checked statements, corrected them and stopped the spread of misinformation. It was an exceptional piece of journalism.

SARAH TAAFFE-MAGUIRE (BUSINESS POST): FINDING A WAY OUT: THE 'DOUBLE CLOSET' OF BEING HOMELESS AND LGBTQI+

- A report that addressed the policy and personal reasons why homelessness impacts LGBTQI+ people to a greater extent than others.
- Covering a topic that is often overlooked and hasn't been widely reported before, this journalist brought the issue to the attention of some of our judges for the first time.

CATEGORY 10: INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE REPORTING

CATEGORY WINNER:

Killian Woods and Barry J Whyte (Business Post): *Firefighting in the witness box: Kingspan's push back against allegations at the Grenfell Tower Inquiry*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A series of reports that looked into the involvement of an Irish building materials company in the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy.
- Detailing how corporate communicators left their ethics at the door, this superb report highlighted what it means to fight big corporations and the real consequences of this event.

SALLYANNE GODSON AND BARRY CUMMINS (RTÉ 1 PRIME TIME): THE IRISH PEOPLE SMUGGLERS

- A report detailing the discovery of young Vietnamese migrants in a container in Essex in 2019.
- Reporting on a story that shocked everyone to their core, these journalists captured the

harrowing details that led dozens of young migrants to a tragic end.

SALLY HAYDEN (IRISH TIMES): *KONY'S CHILDREN: THE FORMER CHILD SOLDIERS OF UGANDA*

- An examination of the International Criminal Court's case against a former child soldier turned Resistance Army Commander.
- This journalist devoted extensive time and effort to produce this detailed and comprehensive report.

CATEGORY 11: NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

CATEGORY WINNER:

Maxine Bramley (Live 95)

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A journalist, who is a newcomer to these awards in its truest terms. This reporter has produced a timely and powerful piece, incorporating important legal content from local solicitors and had moved the judges with impactful statements from the victims.

One merit certificate was awarded:

ROSANNA COONEY (BUSINESS POST)

- A journalist that has shown great talent and expertise in her ability to adapt her writing style, tackle diverse topics and demonstrate the serious issues she can cover, from Mother and Baby Homes to interview pieces about the Irish legal market and everything in between.

CATEGORY 12: Best Student Journalism

CATEGORY WINNER:

Louise Kennedy (The College Tribune): *Explaining the law surrounding sexual assault and consent*

THE JUDGES SAID:

- A report that focuses on setting out the state of affairs and advice on consent, image-based sexual abuse and the proposed legislation to come.
- This report covers an incredibly important and relevant topic, particularly for students.

Three merit certificates were awarded:

ELISHA CAREY (UNIVERSITY EXPRESS): *TACKLING IMAGE-BASED SEXUAL CRIME: REFUSE TO STAY QUIET*

- An explanation of the statutory definition of consent, the Irish position on rape and the legislation on sexual assault.
- The piece felt akin to a piece that would be found in a local paper, where real and important issues are covered.

CONOR COURTNEY (GCN): *HISTORY INFORMS THAT THE TRUMP TRANS HEALTHCARE RULING WILL HAVE FATAL CONSEQUENCES*

- An analysis of the recent updates to Trans' rights and discrimination interpretations under the Trump administration.
- A standout piece in this category and one of the few entries whereby the student's work

was published on a larger publishing platform.

ORLA MURNAGHAN (THE EAGLE: TRINITY COLLEGE LAW GAZETTE): *EU v BIG TECH*

- An examination of the ongoing conflict between the European Union and Big Tech companies.
 - A difficult topic to discuss but the journalist set it out very well and provided an in-depth look at the state of law and exceptional analysis.
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