



LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND FAMILY LAW CONFERENCE

BUILDING A WORLD CLASS FAMILY COURT SYSTEM

FRIDAY 14 JULY 2023 | 10AM – 1PM

Presidents' Hall,
Law Society of Ireland,
Blackhall Place, Dublin 7



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE LAW SOCIETY'S FAMILY LAW CONFERENCE

The Law Society of Ireland's Family Law Conference marks the first in a series of policy and law reform conferences on priority access to justice issues. The conference will consider the proposed legislation to reform Ireland's family law and justice system, the Family Courts Bill, including the development of specialist family courts, and learnings from international best practice.

The Law Society's unique research paper, discussed at the conference, outlines detailed family law reform priorities to ensure the implementation of this important legislation provides access to justice for families and children in Ireland.

3 General (in person) CPD points will be available to delegates.

ABOUT THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

The Law Society of Ireland has representative, regulatory, and educational functions in respect of the solicitors' profession. It delivers high-quality legal education and training, encourages and supports the highest professional standards, and places significant emphasis on civic engagement, supporting local community initiatives and driving diversity and inclusion within the profession.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



THE RT HON SIR ANDREW MCFARLANE, PRESIDENT OF THE FAMILY DIVISION OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Andrew was called to the Bar in 1977 and practiced in chambers in Birmingham until 1993 when he moved to specialist family law chambers in London. He was appointed as a QC in 1998. In 2005, he was appointed

to the High Court, Family Division and was for five years the Family Division Liaison Judge for the Midland Circuit. He was the legal member of the Government 'Family Justice Review' Panel. In July 2011, he was appointed to be a Lord Justice of Appeal sitting full time in the Court of Appeal. In July 2018, he succeeded Sir James Munby as President of the Family Division and Head of Family Justice. Together with the late David Hershman he is the co-author of a loose-leaf legal text book entitled "Children: Law and Practice".



HER HONOUR JUDGE RACHEL HUDSON, SENIOR CIRCUIT JUDGE

Rachel is a Senior Circuit Judge and has been the Designated Family Judge for Northumbria and North Durham (one of the largest and busiest Family Courts in England) since 2014. She is part of the judicial Cross Border group, which produced the protocol regulating

judicial communication between England and Scotland (now to include Northern Ireland) issues. She has been a member of the Public Law Working Group, established by the President of the Family Division to make recommendations to address the rise in public law cases and has chaired the subgroups reporting on the application process in care proceedings and access to information from adoption proceedings. In 2021, she hosted the UK Parliament's Justice Select Committee visit to the Family Court as part of its inquiry into court capacity.



MRS JUSTICE LUCY THEIS, JUDGE OF THE FAMILY DIVISION OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Lucy was called to the Bar in 1982. Following her appointment as a Recorder in 2000, she was approved to sit as a deputy High Court Judge and took Silk in 2003. She became a High Court Judge in 2010. Since then she has held leadership roles as Family Division Liaison Judge on the South Eastern

Circuit, Senior Family Division Liaison Judge and in February 2023 was appointed as Vice President of the Court of Protection. In addition, she is the lead judge for applications under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 and since 2018 she has been the Acting Chair on the Family Procedure Rules Committee and the Family Justice Council.



LORD JUSTICE PETER JACKSON, JUDGE OF THE COURT OF APPEAL OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Peter was called to the Bar in 1978. He joined chambers in London, and between 1979 and 2010 undertook a range of civil and criminal work, increasingly specialising in family law and in medical treatment cases. He became a QC in 2000 and a Bencher of Inner Temple in 2010. He

was appointed as a Recorder in 1997, and a Deputy High Court Judge in 2004. In 2010, he was appointed to the High Court (Family Division) and was the Family Division Liaison Judge for the Northern Circuit between 2011 and 2017. He became a Lord Justice of Appeal in October 2017.

PANELLIST BIOGRAPHIES



PETER DOYLE, CHAIRPERSON OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND'S FAMILY & CHILD LAW COMMITTEE

Peter Doyle is the Principal Solicitor of Doyle Fox & Associates, Chairperson of the Law Society of Ireland's Child & Family Law Committee and is a member of the Court Service Family Law Development Committee. He practices in all areas of law and legal advice with a particular emphasis

on Family Law and Litigation and is involved in many disciplines of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Peter gained experience with two legal firms in Dublin and worked for a period in the United States. He opened his practice, Doyle Fox & Associates, in Wicklow in 1999. He has many years' experience in the area of Family Law. He is a trained Mediator and Collaborative Lawyer and was a founding member of the Kildare & West Wicklow Collaborative Lawyers Group. He is a member of voluntary organisations and committees and was one of the first solicitors on the Family Law Legal Aid Private Practitioners Panel.



SARA PHELAN SC, CHAIR OF THE BAR OF IRELAND

Sara Phelan is a Senior Counsel with a broad breadth of practice areas, primarily in the Superior Courts. Sara is an elected member of the Bar Council of Ireland (since 2019) and was elected Chair of the General Council of the Bar of Ireland on the 6th July 2022. Sara commenced her term of office as Chair on the 12th September 2022.

Sara was called to the Bar in 1996, having previously qualified (TCD, 1988) and practised as a pharmacist for a number of years. She took silk (became a Senior Counsel and Member of the Inner Bar) in 2013 and became a Bencher of the Honorable Society of King's Inns in March 2023. In 2019, Sara was admitted to the Bar of England & Wales and is a member of Middle Temple. Sara was also admitted to the Bar of Northern Ireland in March 2023. As Junior Counsel, Sara practised primarily on the South Eastern Circuit and, since taking silk in 2013, has a broad legal practice, including personal injury/medical negligence law, crime, child/family law and judicial review/non-jury, with further interests in chancery, probate and mental health matters. Sara is also a qualified Mediator (CEDR) and Arbitrator (FCI Arb).



CAOILFHIONN GALLAGHER KC FRSA IRELAND'S SPECIAL RAPPOREUR ON CHILD PROTECTION

Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC is a barrister, human rights lawyer and Ireland's Special Rapporteur on Child Protection. She has acted in many landmark cases in the UK, before the European Court of Human Rights and international tribunals, and given expert evidence on human rights

issues to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, UNESCO, and Parliamentary inquiries in the Council of Europe, UK and Australia.

Much of Caoilfhionn's work concerns children's rights and she has acted in cases which have defined the law in this area, including on: rights of children in police custody; State obligations to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse; State duties to homeless children and children in need; the rights of children to be heard and their interests considered when their parents face imprisonment or extradition; and the misuse of restraint against children with learning disabilities. She also acted for women and girls from Northern Ireland, and NGOs supporting them, in landmark (successful) legal challenges to the previous near-total ban on abortion in Northern Ireland. She has advised the UN on children's rights issues for child soldiers kidnapped by Boko Haram.

Caoilfhionn is an international expert in media freedom and accountability for crimes against journalists. Her caseload includes leading the international legal teams for the family of assassinated journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, assassinated in Malta; pro-democracy activist and publisher Jimmy Lai, imprisoned in Hong Kong; and (jointly with Amal Clooney) Maria Ressa, the Nobel Peace Prize winning journalist in the Philippines. Alongside her practice as a barrister and her role as Special Rapporteur, Caoilfhionn is an Adjunct Full Professor at University College Dublin, sits part-time as a Coroner in England and Wales, and has recently been recommended by the Irish Government for appointment as a Commissioner of the Irish Equality and Human Rights Commission. In 2017 she was appointed a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts for her "outstanding commitment to enabling the Human Rights Act's protections" for devising and founding a mass advertising campaign, 'Act for the Act,' to tell positive human rights stories. Caoilfhionn is a graduate of UCD, the King's Inns and Cambridge University.

LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND FAMILY LAW CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

TIME	EVENT
09:15-10:00	Registration
10:00-10:05	Welcome and introduction
10:05-10:20	Welcome address: Rossa Fanning SC, Attorney General of Ireland
10:20-10:30	The Hon Ms Justice Patricia Ryan, President of the Circuit Court of Ireland
Plenary session one	
	Chairperson, His Honour Judge Geoffrey Shannon, Circuit Court of Ireland
10:30-11:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS: The Rt Hon Sir Andrew McFarlane, President of the Family Division of England and Wales: <i>Developing a Family Law Jurisdiction, the Experience in England and Wales</i>
11:00-11:20	Mrs Justice Lucy Theis, Judge of the Family Division of England and Wales: <i>The Role of Experts in Family Law</i>
11:20-11:30	Tea and coffee break
Plenary session two	
	Chairperson, His Honour Judge Geoffrey Shannon, Circuit Court of Ireland
11:30-11:50	Her Honour Judge Rachel Hudson, Senior Circuit Judge: <i>Jurisdiction and Allocation of cases</i>
11:50-12:10	Lord Justice Peter Jackson, Judge of the Court of Appeal of England and Wales: <i>Hearing the Voice of the Child</i>
Panel discussion and Q&A	
	Chairperson, His Honour Judge Geoffrey Shannon, Circuit Court of Ireland
12:10-12:40	PANEL DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILY COURT REFORM IN IRELAND Peter Doyle, Chairperson of the Law Society's Family & Child Law Committee Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC FRSA, Ireland's Special Rapporteur on Child Protection Sara Phelan SC, Chair of the Bar of Ireland
12:40-12:50	Questions and answers
12:50-13:00	Closing statements