

THE BAR REVIEW

Journal of The Bar of Ireland



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November 2021

100 YEARS

OF WOMEN AT THE BAR



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The sky's the limit

We commence the legal year by commemorating trailblazing women in the legal profession.

As we commence our new legal year, I would like to welcome all colleagues back, and I particularly would like to extend a special welcome to our 110 new colleagues who commenced their pupillage at the Bar in October. This edition of *The Bar Review* is a celebration of 100 years since the first female barristers were called to the Bar in November 1921. November 1, 1921, was a historic date when the first women were called to the Irish Bar, namely Frances Kyle of Belfast and Averil Deverell of Wicklow. Not only were the first women called to the Bar on this date, but it was also the first call to the Irish Bar in the new Irish Free State, the Government of Ireland Act 1920 having come into force on May 9, 1921, which created separate jurisdictions for Northern and Southern Ireland. The call of the first two women barristers made headlines at the time, not just in Irish newspapers, but also in the London *Times* and *The New York Times*.

Frances Kyle

Frances Kyle was born in Belfast in 1894, the daughter of a prominent Belfast businessman. She was both the first woman to be awarded the John Brooke Scholarship, having attained first place in the Bar examinations, and also the first woman called to the Irish Bar on that day. As there were now two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, she was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in Belfast the following day.

Francis only practised in Dublin for a short time but was elected a member of the Northern Ireland Circuit in 1922. She is reported in the *Dublin Evening Telegraph* in 1922 as having received eight briefs. She told a *Daily Mail* representative: "I'm not at all certain that the first women barristers will succeed in making a living at the Bar. Legal friends advised me to devote myself to conveyancing, which does not require attendance at the courts, but I felt that the first woman barrister should practise, if possible, to prepare the way for those who will follow". Some might say these were very prescient words, as we are still facing challenges regarding diversity at the Bar.

Averil Deverell

Averil Deverell was born in Greystones in 1893. During World War One she volunteered as a driver with the ambulance corps in France. She used such drive to read law at Trinity College Dublin and later at the King's Inns, where she was the second woman called to the Bar on that important day in 1921. She and Frances were two women alongside 18 male colleagues, one of whom was Averil's twin brother, Captain William Deverell. Averil was in fact the first woman to practise at The Bar of Ireland, where she became a campaigner for gender equality and worked tirelessly to promote the reality that women were, and are, equally competent to carry out the same work as men, for the same pay. She remained active in her career, practising for over 40

years. She passed away in 1979, the same year Ms Justice Mella Carroll became the first female Chair of the Bar Council.

Averil Deverell is mentioned in *The Irish Times* in 1931 as having a reputation among her colleagues for witty repartee, and later became known as 'Mother of the Bar', mentoring a number of women lawyers and continuing to advocate for gender equality in the profession.

The call to the Bar of those two brave and trailblazing women in 1921 heralded the progression of women into the Irish legal system. Averil's portrait hangs in pride of place in The Law Library.

Progression of women at the Bar

Over the course of the last 100 years, women have faced and overcome hurdles, taking their place as achievers and leaders of Irish society, and of the Irish justice and law enforcement structure.

Because of women such as Frances and Averil, we have seen women achieve high office, to include President, Chief Justice, Minister for Justice, Attorney General, Chief State Solicitor and Garda Commissioner.

It is no coincidence that the increasing presence of women within the legal profession from the 1970s onwards coincided with increasing liberalisation of laws in favour of women, such as the removal of the marriage bar, the availability of family planning services, a fairer taxation of married women's salaries, repeal of the 8th Amendment and the availability of legal aid in civil and family matters, changes that can be said to have been predicated upon the commencement of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act in 1919.

As Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland, I feel very privileged to have the honour of leading our profession in 2021, which is the Centenary celebration of women at the Bar.

"When there are no ceilings, the sky's the limit."
(Hilary Clinton)



Maura McNally SC
Senior Counsel, Barrister
– Member of the Inner Bar
Chair of the Council of
The Bar of Ireland



Paving the way

This edition pays tribute to women in law, and looks at the Bar's efforts to increase diversity and inclusion.

"Dress suitably in short skirts and sitting boots, leave your jewels and gold wands in the bank, and buy a revolver!"

Strong, fighting words from the formidable Constance Markievicz – suffragette, revolutionary and first woman elected to the Westminster parliament in 1918. Those years from 1916 to 1921 marked an era of fundamental change as the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 was enacted and Ireland took its first baby steps towards nationhood and self-determination. It was against this background that Frances Kyle and Averil Deverell became "lady barristers" in 1921 and forged their way in what was heretofore a man's world.

In this edition, we celebrate the achievements of all those strong women who climbed the ladder and reached down to pull others in their wake.

Our interview is with Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General to the Department of Justice. Sadly, she is one of only four women at this grade in the civil service at present, and she fairly points out that there have been fewer than a dozen at this level in the last hundred years. We are delighted to share her goals for the future and her views on equality and diversity. Here's hoping that there will be many dozens more women to achieve this high-ranking post over the next century.

Elsewhere, we canvas the views of women in leadership roles at the Council of The Bar of Ireland, and question their views on the ongoing issues

surrounding gender equality. We analyse the steps being taken to improve mentoring of less experienced colleagues and to promote equitable briefing. One of our authors examines the moves towards flexible and remote working, and questions whether new initiatives will advance the cause of gender equality.

While there is much still to do, this last 100 years has marked an extraordinary transformation. Women today can dream of things that our mothers and grandmothers could scarce imagine. We dedicate this edition to those mothers and grandmothers, many nameless and faceless, who never got the chances that we did, but who paved the way.



Eilis Brennan SC
Editor

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Donal Coyne, Director of Pensions, Mercer.

The Government wants to help you save for retirement, and will give you a tax refund on pension contributions made to your retirement scheme. So, depending on your rate of income tax (either 20% or 40%) every €1,000 you pay towards your retirement would mean the Government will give you back €200 or €400.

Making a once-off lump sum pension contribution offers an excellent opportunity to take full advantage of the tax relief on offer for the 2020 tax year and to maximise the amount of money saved in your pension at a minimum cost to you. You can make a

once-off lump sum payment to your pension scheme by October 31, 2021, to maximise the tax refund you are entitled to for the 2020 tax year. Those using the Revenue Online Service (ROS) have an extended deadline this year as returns do not have to be in until Wednesday, November 17, 2021.

There are limits on the amount of pension savings you can make free of income tax each year. Table 1 shows the maximum tax relief available from Revenue, which is determined by an age-related scale and subject to an overall earnings cap.

Table 1: Tax relief as a percentage of earnings according to age.

Age	Maximum tax relievable pension contribution (as a percentage of earnings*)
Up to age 29	15%
30 to 39	20%
40 to 49	25%
50 to 54	30%
55 to 59	35%
60 and over	40%

*Subject to an earnings cap of €115,000.

Normally around this time of year your dedicated Mercer Bar Pension Team would be preparing to visit law libraries around the country to process pension contribution payments and give you advice. However, as was the case last year, in respect of social distancing measures to limit the spread of Covid-19, we will once again be unable to make these visits this year.

In lieu of this, you will have recently received an explanatory form in the post outlining the steps required to make a lump sum contribution. The easiest way for you to make a payment is by electronic funds transfer (EFT). Alternatively, cheques can be returned along with this form, made payable to 'The Bar of Ireland Retirement Trust Scheme'. Once the Mercer Bar Pension Team receives payment of your lump sum contribution, it will be invested in the default investment fund unless you advise otherwise.

Remember, for those not filing via ROS, pension contribution payments by cheque or EFT need to be in by October 31, while pension payments made in respect of tax returns online via ROS can be made up until November 17.

Please note: The preferred method for payment is by EFT where possible. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, cheques cannot be accepted in person at our offices.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Mercer Bar Pension Team.

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An event series marking 100 years since the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 was enacted on 23 December 1919.

This collaborative programme recognises the Act's impact on society over the past 100 years and sets the scene for future generations.

2019 was the centenary year of the coming into force of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919, which enabled women to join the legal, accountancy and veterinary professions and take up senior roles within the civil service for the first time.

2021 marks the centenary of the call to the Bar of the first two women, Frances Kyle BL and Averil Deverell BL.

To learn more about this series,
visit kingsinns.ie/celebratingacentury

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41</sup>**

**WHERE THE
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AND LIVED**

Keara Donnelly BL



We regret to inform members of the passing of our colleague and friend Keara Donnelly BL, Mother of the Bar. Called to the Bar on November 11, 1957, Keara had a particular interest in administrative law, commercial/chancery, general common law, and judicial review. Having mainly practised in the Dublin and Eastern Circuits, she was also a member of the Bar of England & Wales.

Keara's funeral took place on Monday, October 4, 2021, in the Church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar, with burial afterwards at Deansgrange Cemetery. The Bar of Ireland would like to extend its deepest condolences to Keara's sister Dervilla, niece Frances, nephews Charles and John, grandnieces, grandnephews, relatives, and friends.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anaim dílis.

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Specialist Bar Associations update

July 15 saw the launch of a new and exciting Bar Association – Comhshaol, the Climate Bar Association. Chaired by Cliona Kimber SC, with welcome remarks from Maura McNally SC and Turlough O'Donnell SC, an interesting discussion followed on using law to defend water rights and fight water pollution. Speakers were: Rose Wall, CEO of Community Law & Mediation; Mark Thuillier, Associate in the Litigation Department's Environmental and Planning Team in A&L Goodbody LLP; Christina Leb, Senior Counsel at the Environment and International Law Department (LEGEN) of the World Bank; and, Christopher Hughes BL. On July 13, Niamh McGowan BL led an engaging workshop for Employment Bar Association (EBA) members on conducting a workplace investigation. On July 21, Des Ryan BL gave a comprehensive review of this year's significant employment law cases, which was followed by the EBA AGM. The elected officers remain the same: Chair Alex White SC; Secretary Katherine McVeigh BL; and, Treasurer Anne Conlon BL. The legal year concluded with the EBA Symposium, with presentations from Harriet Meagher BL (New code of practice on bullying), Maurice Osbourne BL (Injunctions), Céile Varley BL (Tripartite employment relationships in Irish law), and Daragh Troy BL (GDPR). The event was chaired by Anne Conlon BL. Denise Brett SC chaired the Immigration, Asylum and Citizenship Bar Association's (IACBA) last webinar of the legal year on July 22. Ms Justice Tara Burns gave an in-depth update on proposed new changes to the Asylum/JR List for October 2021. The webinar followed the Association's AGM, following which Denise Brett SC remains as Chair, Michael Conlon SC remains as Vice-Chair, Aoife McMahon stays on as Treasurer, and the new Secretary will be announced shortly.

The Planning, Environment and Local Government Bar Association (PELGBA) held a Housing Conference on July 9 with Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, speaking on the topic of planning reform, affordability and also the new Housing for All plan. David Rouse of The Housing Agency spoke about recent developments and practices in multi-unit developments and owners' management companies. Mema Byrne BL presented on the topic of 'Housing law updates'. The event was open to all to attend.


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Graveside restoration



As part of the centenary celebrations of the first women called to the Bar in 1921, The Bar of Ireland was keen to reinforce and assure the awareness of Averil Deverell BL, as one of the first practising female barristers in Ireland.

A gesture of The Bar was to repair and restore Ms Deverell's grave, which is situated in Redford (The Grove), in Greystones, Co. Wicklow. This will further enhance the visibility and memory of Ms Deverell, who demonstrated significant leadership, influence and contribution to the profession. On viewing the refurbishment, Maura McNally SC, Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland, said: "For such an important legacy, it's vital that Averil Deverell is not forgotten. Her advancement in 1921 to the Bar gave succour, strength and inspiration to generations after. Her contribution to the profession is a reminder that the work on diversity and equality in the profession is a constant body of work".



Maura McNally SC laying a wreath in memory of Averil Deverell BL.

Bar Human Rights Committee

On July 19, the Human Rights Committee hosted 'The prosecution of human trafficking offences: challenges and shared experiences'. This event was an open dialogue of shared experiences between barristers, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the anti-trafficking unit of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC). Speakers on the day included: Dr Nusha Yonkova, Head of Anti Trafficking Unit, IHREC; Gareth Henry, Lead Lawyer dealing with Human Trafficking, Office of the DPP; Eanna M. Mulloy SC; John D. Fitzgerald SC; Fiona Murphy SC; Séamus Clarke SC; and, Colin Smith BL.



THE BAR
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Expressions of interest – Editor of *The Bar Review*

The Bar Review is the professional journal for barristers who are members of the Law Library in Ireland. *The Bar Review* is published and distributed to members of the Law Library six times a year. It contains news, interviews and legal articles of relevance to the profession and to those with an interest in the law. The publication of *The Bar Review* is overseen by an Editor in conjunction with an Editorial Board, and with the support of our professional publishers, Think Media Ltd.

Arising from a decision of the current editor, Eilis Brennan SC, to step down from this role, expressions of interest are now invited from members of the Law Library who may be interested in taking on the role of Editor of *The Bar Review*. Suitable candidates will ideally have experience in reviewing and editing legal publications, and will have a good awareness of the current legal and political landscape.

Role description

The role of Editor of *The Bar Review* encompasses the following tasks:

1. Provide a point of contact for members interested in writing articles for and contributing to *The Bar Review*, including advising regarding style and content of suitable articles.
2. Overseeing and assisting with preparation of submissions for inclusion in *The Bar Review* to present to the Editorial Board.
3. Chairing the Editorial Board meetings, which are convened six times per year to determine the content for each edition of *The Bar Review*.
4. Overseeing the commissioning of articles for publication, including ensuring deadlines are met for same.
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6. Writing an editor's note for each of the six editions of *The Bar Review*.
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Should you have any informal enquiries in relation to the role of Editor of *The Bar Review*, please contact:

- Eilis Brennan SC at ebrennan@lawlibrary.ie; or
- Ciara Murphy at ciara.murphy@lawlibrary.ie.

Leading from the front



Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General at the Department of Justice, speaks about her experience as a female leader, and the Department's work on equality and diversity.



Ann-Marie Hardiman
Managing Editor, Think Media Ltd.

As Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Oonagh McPhillips leads a department that employs over 3,000 people. As they prepare for the easing of Covid-19 restrictions (our interview takes place in September, as the first return to work deadlines kick in), that scale is reflected in the fact that approximately 600 new staff have joined in the 18 months since the start of the pandemic. "That's a huge proportion of people who by and large have never stood in the office, have never met their colleagues face to face".

Of course, while many Department staff did completely shift to working from home, many others remained in their workplaces, such as some teams working in immigration, international protection, border management, financial services, and of course frontline agencies such as An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Irish Prison Service, Probation, Forensic Science Ireland, State Pathologists, and many others. Oonagh is extremely proud of all of the staff, and praises those whose job it has been to keep things running safely, from IT and health and safety, to facilities management. She singles out the Irish Prison Service in particular: "They can often be overlooked as a key frontline service but behind closed doors and high walls they've done amazing work. Their record of keeping people in their care safe during Covid is unique worldwide. Critical to that has been the partnership between staff and the men and women in prisons. Over 100 of them had trained over the last few years as Red Cross volunteers, and they acted as peer supports to get messages out around the system in a way that people in prisons trusted. That communication was critical to keeping people safe, and it's really important to recognise their contribution".

Transformation

Oonagh says that the Department's ability to deal with the pandemic has been helped in no small part by the ambitious restructuring project it underwent beforehand. The largest such project ever undertaken by a Government department, it was led by Oonagh's predecessor, Aidan O'Driscoll, and completed in September 2019: "In several key areas, it definitely gave us a resilience that we didn't have before. If you look at high-risk issues during the pandemic, we had more focus, depth and scope to innovate on key issues such as domestic abuse, where good work was done by the Department and the whole sector, very much in partnership with frontline NGOs, to support people at risk. Also in terms of communicating with all our agencies, we had new dedicated governance functions, which kept agencies connected with developments and rapidly changing circumstances, and it's widely recognised that they did that very effectively. We also worked closely with colleagues in Health to support them with drafting and project management experts at different stages of the pandemic".

The changes will be reviewed over time, but Oonagh wants to see how the new functional structure operates in "peace time" for a while: "The organisation has a very broad remit and that doesn't stand still – we will keep reviewing our design and skillset to make sure we can deliver for the public. Our feeling is that it is a robust structure, but we will do an in-depth review when that's timely".

As we move out of restrictions, there are obviously priorities for the Department in terms of areas of work and services that have suffered in these last months. Oonagh mentions the Department's immigration function, which is still largely paper based, and says that this has made her team more committed than ever to the next stage of their transformation, a new information management and technology (IMT) strategy. Parts of this digitisation process have already begun, such as the new website for the immigration service, and Oonagh says these innovations are being designed with the customer/user in mind. She acknowledges the benefits and the limitations of the technologies that have been essential during the pandemic: "The whole world has learned to appreciate what tech can do for us. It's quite good at

keeping connections. I'm not sure it's great for establishing connections and relationships in the first place". Retaining the positive innovations beyond the pandemic, where they have worked and improved services, is something she is keen to do, both in dealing with the public, and in essential services like the courts: "We've had more participation and input from some minority communities to public consultations during Covid and it struck us that it's probably a lot less intimidating – not to mention convenient – to join a Zoom conversation, perhaps, than it is to walk into the Department's atrium. We will try to hold on to that as much as possible, to make sure we hear from those voices that we perhaps didn't hear from as much in the past". In terms of the Courts Service, she says that for certain administrative procedures, holding on to the virtual experience will make sense: "It may not be suitable for all kinds of hearings, but for things like call overs, it seems to make sense rather than requiring people to travel for a very short, straightforward process. On the criminal side video links have worked well, not just for defendants in remand hearings but also to hear evidence from specialist witnesses such as forensic scientists and pathologists – it's a much more effective use of time".

Priorities

Other priorities can now move to the forefront, such as the Justice Plan 2021, which has over 200 actions to be implemented this year. Oonagh also says that delivering on the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland is a major focus: "We're halfway through a four-year reform programme. There's been some inevitable slippage because of Covid, so we're having a look at the full range of actions at present but we've made some really important progress. Minister McEntee published the general scheme of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill earlier in the year and that will undergo pre-legislative scrutiny in the Oireachtas shortly. That's a massive piece of legislation, which will underpin the reforms, so while it will doubtless evolve in the course of the legislative process, hopefully it will be enacted in the course of 2022". Tackling domestic, sexual and gender-based violence is a top priority for Oonagh: "It's something that people really rallied around as a sector during Covid, to try to keep people as safe as we possibly could, working closely in partnership with the NGOs. We'll have a new strategy coming out later this year, the third national strategy that will direct and monitor implementation of actions across the whole of Government. Strategies can be a bit boring ... yet another strategy ... but this is crucial and I know Minister McEntee looks at this as a real opportunity to save lives and is supporting it with necessary funding".

Reform of civil justice is also high on the agenda: "As a principal officer, I got to know the courts fairly well. The procedures are complex and not easy for court users to navigate. I believe the recommendations in [former High Court President] Peter Kelly's review can be a game changer. This is critical to the digitisation and

Raised by very supportive parents ("two proud Cavan people") in Drumcondra in Dublin, Oonagh went to school in Holy Faith Glasnevin and joined the civil service straight from school in 1985 at what was then the lowest entry-level grade – temporary clerical trainee: "I was earning so little that I had two other jobs at the same time, in a local shop and in Bewley's – possibly their worst waitress ever". She was soon made permanent, however, in the Department of the Environment before moving to Justice in 1989. She has spent much of her career there, apart from brief secondments to An Garda Síochána as a civilian manager and as a speechwriter in Áras an Uachtaráin. She was appointed to the role of Secretary General in September 2020. She loves the work, and the Department: "It's the most interesting place to work with brilliant colleagues. There has always been a strong *esprit de corps*, and people are supportive of each other, which I really value and don't take for granted. I honestly love being a civil servant, and it's given me tremendous opportunities".

Oonagh has completed studies in leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School, has a Master's in Communication from DCU, and is an Eisenhower Global Fellow.

modernisation agenda. You don't want to just automate the current practices – you want them to be as efficient as possible. Similarly, my colleague Oonagh Buckley is leading the Family Justice Oversight Group, which is focused on putting the needs of families at the centre of the system and, while there will be a new Family Law Bill, this is not just a question of law; we need to put in place structures and behaviours that support a radically different way of approaching this work".

Finally, maximising the impact of the restructured Department, and embedding a new culture, will be an ongoing project: "We also focus a lot on our values – open, collaborative, professional. That's important, particularly in terms of innovating to improve our customer service in the immigration and international protection areas. There are Government commitments that we have to shorten processing times for applicants, and that's absolutely critical".

The gender question

Asking women in senior positions about how being female has impacted on their career can seem inappropriate: if it's a question we wouldn't ask a male in the same position, then why ask? However, in this commemorative edition of *The Bar Review*, it seems apt to address the issue with one of only four female Secretaries General currently in post (see panel), especially someone who has spent her entire

Home comforts

Oonagh and her husband Fran have been together since secondary school, and still live in Drumcondra close to where they grew up. Now that restrictions are being lifted, they're enjoying having friends over for dinner, as they both like to cook. She enjoys gardening and photography, and has recently started cycling to work after a long time off the bike: "It's taken me a few months to get my confidence back. I love it now though; I'm still a bit wobbly, but I'm persevering".

Secretaries General

Oonagh is one of four female Secretaries General currently in post:

- Dr Orlaigh Quinn – Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment;
- Katherine Licken – Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media;
- Jacqui McCrum – Department of Defence; and,
- Oonagh McPhillips – Department of Justice.

Diversity at the Bar

The Minister for Justice has initiated research from the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA) on improving equality and diversity in the legal profession, and The Bar of Ireland has made a submission to the consultation process. Oonagh says that the work is ongoing: “The Department has been working with the LSRA to develop an implementation plan, and we’re also discussing it with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. We’re hoping to engage further with the higher education institutions, the legal bodies and Quality and Qualifications Ireland. Structural reform is only one part of the issue. The Minister has also asked the LSRA to report on economic and other barriers, and I can see in the Bar’s submission, the attempts to address that through things like the Denham Fellowships. That kind of reform needs to proceed hand in hand with education, because it is a real barrier for people in their first few years at the Bar. I know many people who haven’t persisted because they simply haven’t been able to make a living, and if you think of minorities trying to break through in the profession, that’s even more difficult”.



professional life in the civil service. Oonagh says she welcomes the question: “I think the four of us [Secretaries General] realise that we have a responsibility to be visible. There have been fewer than a dozen of us over the last hundred years and we can’t afford that for the next hundred! I’ve had the privilege of working with women in the Department down the years who were more than capable of being Secretary General in a different time, if they had had the opportunities”.

So how does she think things have changed?

“It’s been very gradual in my experience, but totally radical. If I look back to 1985, it is a completely different world, a different organisation, and in the wider world as well. Up to a few years ago, we certainly had jobs that had never been done by women, but we’ve very consciously broken those little individual ceilings and that’s important”.

On a day-to-day basis, she also says that behaviours have changed towards women, with attitudes about what is acceptable generally very different to what they were in the past. However, sometimes old attitudes die hard, and she speaks about what she has experienced, even as a woman in a senior role: “Things like off colour jokes can make people so uncomfortable. I’m fairly direct about what’s not acceptable but not everyone wants to do that, nor should they have to”.

She’s well aware that such incidents are often dismissed as minor and unimportant, something that shouldn’t even be worth mentioning, but they speak of embedded attitudes that have an “othering” effect over time. Oonagh refers to other groups too: “LGBT+ colleagues, people of colour, members of the Traveller community, and other minorities, still experience these micro-aggressions. We all have to be a bit more conscious of the effect of our behaviour”.

Making a difference

There is much debate about whether equality happens first from cultural change over time, or whether institutional change is needed to kickstart that cultural evolution. Oonagh believes strongly that both have a role to play. The Department

will publish its first equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy later this year: “It will be very practical in focusing on specific actions to deliver the outcomes we want to achieve as a department in terms of policy and accessibility for all our customers, pathways to support greater diversity in our workforce, and an organisational culture that seeks out and values contributions from minorities. I’m totally committed to this – as a public service we need to get serious about becoming representative of the public we serve in all their diversity, and with the support of my great colleagues I intend to achieve measurable diversity over the course of my term as Sec. Gen”.

The question of whether having more diversity at leadership level makes a difference to decision-making and policy seems to have been answered by this statement, and Oonagh certainly feels that it does: “We’re all products of our own experience, and whether that’s as a woman, or a person from a working class background, I bring that lived experience to the table. We all live out our biases, and I find raising our consciousness of them is a really helpful thing to do. But then, you need measures in place to counter them, whether that’s personally or organisationally”.

One way to address inequality is by example, and Oonagh mentions the great pride women in the Department feel in their Minister, Helen McEntee, who made history earlier this year as the first serving Cabinet minister to take maternity leave. It’s an indictment of the political system to say the least that unprecedented arrangements had to be made to make this possible, indeed that it was even a matter for discussion. Oonagh says it has been a real privilege to be able to support Minister McEntee, and Minister Heather Humphries, who has stepped in as Minister during the leave period. She also says it raises what she calls “one of the remaining glass ceilings” – women with children: “On our management board we’re nearly at 50:50 male and female, but until quite recently we didn’t have any mothers. I’m glad to say that we do now have a number of mothers of young children rising to the top of the organisation. If you look across the whole civil service at the women who’ve been SGs, very few have had children. It’s a hard thing to do, and it shouldn’t be so hard”.



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Trailblazer

Averil Deverell (1893-1979) was the first woman called to the Irish Bar, and led the way for future generations of women lawyers in Ireland.



**Vanessa Curley and Sarah Foley,
Assistant Librarians,
the Law Library**

On November 1, 1921, history was made at the Irish Bar. It was the first call of the newly fledged Irish Free State, the first to occur after partition and the division of the island of Ireland into two jurisdictions, and the first to see women called to The Bar of Ireland. One of those women was Averil Deverell, a remarkable personality who would go on to carve out a place at the Irish Bar for future generations of women lawyers.

Early life

Averil Katherine Statter Deverell and her twin brother, Captain William Deverell, were born in Greystones on January 2, 1893. The only daughter of William Deverell, a Clerk for the Crown and Peace of County Wicklow, and Ada Kate Statter Carr, the daughter of a wealthy London solicitor, she grew up in a family familiar with the ways of the legal world.

As a child Averil attended the 'French School' in Bray, where young Protestant ladies from all over Ireland were educated. While at school, she indulged a

love of theatre and acting, no doubt honing skills that would stand her in good stead in the courtroom. She began her undergraduate studies in Trinity College Dublin in 1911, the same year she was presented at court in Dublin Castle to King George V, and went on to receive an LLB in 1915. At this time there was a world war raging across Europe in which Ireland, as part of the United Kingdom, was a participant. Averil had been encouraged by her father to learn to drive as a teenager, and she decided to use this skill and apply to the Queen Alexandra First Aid Nurse Yeomanry for a position as ambulance driver on the Front. Initially, she had to pass a driving test in London, which she did, but because she was unable to "re-assemble a dismantled engine" they refused her entry. This stipulation was revoked six months later and Averil drove with the ambulance corps, serving in France from July to December 1918.

Entry into the legal profession

On December 23, 1919, the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act became law. It did not lead to the full emancipation of women within society; there were still restrictions on women entering the civil service, on their voting entitlements, and on the types of juries they could serve on. It was, however, an important step towards providing a public space for women to engage in professions they were previously excluded from. Prior to the passing of the Act, women had made attempts to enter the legal profession, applying to the Law Society of Ireland and the Honorable Society of King's Inns, but were repeatedly excluded, although no law formally forbade their inclusion. This

was all to change, and in January 1920 Averil entered the King's Inns to study for the Bar.

On November 1, 1921, Averil, along with Frances Kyle, was one of the first women called to the Irish Bar. The call of the first two women barristers made headlines at the time, not just in Irish newspapers, where they were referred to as the "Irish Portias", but also in the *London Times* and *The New York Times*. Both women were called alongside 18 men, one of whom was Averil's twin brother, Captain William Deverell. Though Averil was the second woman called to the Bar, she was the first to enter the Law Library in Dublin and was mentioned in the *Irish Law Times* of January 14, 1922, where it was commented: "An interesting figure amongst the members of the Bar was Miss A. Deverell, who has joined the Law Library. She wears the regulation wig and gown". Averil remained the sole female member of the Library until June 1923, when Mary Dillon-Leetch joined her, but though greatly outnumbered this did not stop her from trying to become an active member of the Bar.

Career at the Bar

After her call Averil went on to become one of the few women in mid-20th century Ireland to make a career for herself at The Bar of Ireland. By 1922 she was recorded as the first woman appointed as a law reporter in Ireland. In January 1929 the minute books of the Bar Council record that she was appointed, along with five of her male colleagues, to the committee of the Bar Luncheon Room. This is followed by a further mention in June of that year that she was to be paid for a digest that she had prepared for the Library on cases decided since 1918 in Northern Ireland, and which was to be kept at the Librarian's table. She is also mentioned in *The Irish Times* in 1945 as laying the poppy wreath at the World War 1 memorial on behalf of the Bar, and in 1954 she is listed as an attendee at the Michaelmas Mass celebrating the new legal year. These references demonstrate that throughout her career Averil was very much visibly involved in life at the Bar.

Becoming a fixed feature of the Law Library while building her career, a cursory search of the *Irish Reports* shows that she built up a sufficient legal practice, a feat in and of itself as many women struggled and failed to make a career at the Irish Bar. In 1928 we see her acting for the appellant in the Supreme Court alongside two King's Counsel in the case of *Murray and ors v*

Minister for Finance, with further cases reported in the 1938, 1944, 1945, 1948 and 1951 *Irish Reports*. The *Irish Times* sees her listed as counsel in numerous cases throughout the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s. The Bar Council minute books of December 1940 record that a letter was read from Miss Deverell requesting the provision of a first aid outfit for the Four Courts, which she was subsequently asked to procure, and in 1950 and 1951 she further petitioned on behalf of the women barristers for replacement carpet in the ladies dressing room and the provision of an electric ring for cooking in their sitting room, which were duly authorised. In July 1959 she was proposed by Thomas Doyle as a member of the Bar Council, and by November 1959 she was co-opted onto the Bar Council, where she remained until December 1961. Throughout her career she continuously advocated for gender equality in the legal profession, later becoming known as the 'Mother of the Bar' and mentoring a number of women lawyers. She remained committed in her career, which spanned 40 years, appearing in many cases and giving numerous written opinions on tangled legal subjects, and retired in 1969 aged 76. In October 1970 it was decided by the Bar Council to make Averil an honorary life member in recognition of her jubilee anniversary, which was to occur in 1971.

Conclusion

It is interesting to note that on Averil's retirement in 1969, 48 years after the first women were called to the Bar, just 5% of practising barristers, and 5.8% of practising solicitors, were women. Thanks to the trailblazing efforts of women like Averil, 50 years later, in 2019, 38% of practising barristers and 51% of practising solicitors were women.

Averil remained in Greystones throughout her life. When not practising at the Bar she bred Cairn Terriers and was an active member of Greystones Golf Club. She died in 1979, the same year Mella Carroll became the first Chairwoman of the Bar Council.

Averil's call to the Bar in 1921 marked the progression of women into the Irish legal system and the Averil Deverell room was opened in her honour by The Bar of Ireland in 2018 to commemorate her tireless work for equality in the profession. Her portrait hangs in pride of place in the Law Library in the Four Courts.

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Mentoring at the Bar



Sara Phelan SC
Chair of the Law & Women
Mentoring Committee

"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."
Steven Spielberg

The Bar of Ireland Law & Women Mentoring Programme owes its existence to an approach in 2015 by solicitor Maura Butler, then Chair of the Irish Women Lawyers Association (IWLA), to David Barniville SC (as he then was) in his capacity as Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland. The Council progressed the initiative under the expert guidance of Mary Rose Gearty SC (as she then was), with the IWLA, and a joint Bar/solicitor pilot mentoring programme was commenced in January 2016, with the Law Society also taking part. The *raison d'être* of the Programme was an acknowledgement of the phenomenon of women leaving both branches of the legal profession, or not progressing to positions of leadership or seniority such as senior counsel or partner, and that this could not be explained by family/personal commitments alone. It was clear that women in both professions were not receiving sufficient work or opportunities, and that this reflected the global, cultural problem of gender bias. Hence, positive action was required and the mentoring programme was born. Following a hugely successful pilot programme and two further years of Bar/solicitor participants, the Programme has been run within the Bar as a stand-alone programme since 2019¹ under the auspices of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and, more recently, the Equality and Resilience Committee.

How it works

Over the years, the Programme has been streamlined so that it now runs in parallel with the legal year (from October to July), with the application process opening in the previous June and mandatory training provided in September. Mentee applications are invited from female members of the Law Library at all stages in their careers and a barrister can be a mentee more than once, subject to availability of places. Mentors are both male and female, and range from those who are senior juniors, to silks, to members of the judiciary.

Both prospective mentees and mentors are asked to complete expression of interest forms, the contents of which then assist the Committee in shortlisting successful mentee applicants (in the event of oversubscription) and in pairing prospective mentees with mentors. This pairing takes place in July of each year, but the pairings are not finalised or notified to either mentee or mentor until the training programme has

been completed. At the commencement of the mentoring relationship in October, each mentee/mentor pair is asked to enter into a mentoring agreement (which is confidential to the mentee/mentor pair), to bring structure to the relationship and to assist in defining for them what it is that the mentee hopes to achieve from the relationship and how the mentor might assist the mentee in that regard. The committee does not oversee or supervise the relationship in any way, but is always available to provide assistance to mentees and/or mentors if required.

Training is a vital part of the Programme so that both mentees and mentors understand what mentoring is and, more importantly, what mentoring is not. For example, mentoring does not and should not stray into the domains of counselling or therapy. The training programme is reviewed and developed year on year, bearing in mind feedback from the previous years' participants. Each mentor is encouraged to listen actively and generatively to their mentee, and to share their knowledge and experience to assist the mentee in finding her own solutions and in developing professionally with the support of a senior colleague. Mentors are asked to give approximately 10 hours of their time, over the 10 months of the relationship, to their mentee, with the mentee taking the lead on organising meetings either online or in person.

Wider benefits

Accepting that the mentoring relationship is one to one, the experience to date is that considerable support is also available from the wider mentee/mentor group and thus, the committee organises two workshops during the year to which both mentees and mentors are invited.² In addition to the particular focus of the workshops (and this may vary from year to year), the workshops provide a confidential space within which mentees and mentors can exchange experiences and learning, and they are also a networking opportunity for barristers who may not otherwise come across each other in the normal course of practice.

As another way to meet up online and facilitate communication, a virtual tearooms was organised for mentees in 2020/21 (on the first Thursday of the month) and it is hoped to continue this for 2021/22.

The Programme comes to a close in July of each year with a 'wrap-up' event, and the participants are also asked to take part in a survey, the results of which are reviewed by the Committee and used to shape the Programme for the following year.

To date (including 2021/22), the Programme has had 126 pairings and is going from strength to strength, with an overwhelmingly positive response to the end-of-programme survey. Many participants stay in touch, not just with their mentoring partner, but with those who were part of their training/year group. By creating a body of mentoring programme alumni, there has been a huge social and professional benefit, horizontally as well as vertically, among both mentees and mentors, and also within the Bar, thereby ensuring that the goals of the original initiative will continue to be achieved, to include retention of

female members at the Bar, a greater progression of female members to the Inner Bar and a more equal representation of female members in all areas of practice.

Feedback

The feedback from the 2020/21 mentees included that:

- mentees took part in the Programme, for example, to seek guidance in terms of goals and focus, to move from career stalemate, to re-evaluate their career, and to identify ways to develop into certain areas;
- the Programme met expectations, for example, in providing support from a professional perspective, and making the mentees focus on specific issues and what they had already achieved in their careers;
- mentees would recommend the Programme to others, and commented that it was a terrific programme – mentors were very positive in their attitude to the mentees; receiving guidance and advice from a senior member of the Bar was invaluable and gave the mentees an opportunity to really look at their careers and identify ways to develop and improve them; and,
- the Programme supports improving gender equality within the profession by, for example, providing support to move forwards, and encouraging women to be more visible and engaged at the Bar, since too often women do their work quietly and without recognition.

Mentees also said that the Programme experiences supported them in making informed choices about career plans and helped them to be less stressed, to be gentler with themselves, to realise that learning is a lifelong activity, to learn how to handle issues and to normalise them, to take big career decisions due to mentor encouragement, to make space to think about the direction of their careers, and to take more control. They felt that the Programme gave them support or greater confidence in managing work relationships and influencing skills by, for example, providing positive feedback and ideas, being clear on their goals, being up front with solicitors on practice areas, and facilitating networking in an informal setting. Mentees said that the Programme increased their self-confidence, resourcefulness and/or sense of capability, and they felt that they left the Programme as more assured barristers, judging themselves less harshly, enjoying their practice more, being far less stressed, focusing on work/life balance, appreciating that opportunities don't happen by chance, and gaining greater ownership over their career and its direction.

Mentees felt that the Programme gave them greater support in creating and maintaining a better work/life balance by, for example, focusing more on what pays rather than the heavy work that doesn't pay.

The feedback from the 2020/21 mentors included that:

- the programme met expectations;
- the experience assisted mentees in, for example, identifying new opportunities and encouragement to broaden areas of work, identifying best use of time, becoming more proactive, gaining confidence, being supported, understanding that difficulties and doubts are universal, improving mindset and understanding (i.e., how long it takes to 'succeed'), managing expectations, overcoming challenges, viewing work and methods of working from different perspectives; and, providing an excellent safe space for female colleagues to articulate concerns/objectives in relation to their careers;
- mentors would recommend the Programme to others in that, for example, everyone needs support and advice – experience cannot be learned from a book but from conversation about specific challenges;
- mentors would become involved again because of, for example, the satisfaction gained in getting to know colleagues, giving support, and assisting in their development;
- the relationship also helped mentors to process and reflect on their own career experiences to date – some mentors had benefited over the years from guidance from more senior colleagues and strongly believed it was important to give back in their career to younger colleagues; and,
- mentors commented upon the importance of listening with an open mind and not assuming they know what the mentee is going to say, learning to listen more than talk, slowing down, and listening to allow mentees to reach their own solutions.

Further information on the programme³ is also available on podcast at <https://soundcloud.com/user-878781524/lawwomenmentoring> and by way of recorded webinar on June 10, 2021, which is available on the Bar of Ireland CPD Hub.

Leaving the final comment to Maya Angelou: *"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel"*.

References

1. Current committee members – Sara Phelan SC, Conor Dignam SC, Helen McCarthy BL, Frank Crean BL, Grainne Larkin BL and Hannah Carney (external consultant), with secretariat provided by Lindsay Bond, and with huge thanks and appreciation to previous committee members Judge Mary Rose Gearty, Judge Úna Ní Raifeartaigh and Helen Stanton (external consultant), with secretariat provided down through the years by Samantha de Paor, Laura Martin, Aedamair Gallagher and Melissa Ndakengerwa.
2. McCarthy H. Women at the Bar. The Bar Review 2020; 25 (4): 95.
3. Hannah Carney and Sara Phelan SC interviewed by Cormac Ó Cúláin and Emer Woodfull BL, respectively.

Working towards equality



Aoife McNickle BL

“Legal friends advised me to devote myself to conveyancing, which does not require attendance at the courts, but I felt that the first woman barrister should practise, if possible, to prepare the way for those who will follow.”

Frances Kyle, 1893-1959

I was advised by my teacher in secondary school to get the law out my head and aim to become a teacher or a nurse. Not because I had the necessary attributes and skills required for those vocations, but because the concept that I would aim to become a barrister was so alien to him. I often wonder how many people have been discouraged from a career at the Bar for similar reasons. If ever there was a moment for which I was grateful for being stubborn, that was it. Has much changed in the last 18 years?

If we accept the premise – as evidenced by the increased yet unequal participation of women lawyers – that a diverse and representative profession leads to better outcomes and experience of the legal system, what other groups or sections of society are facing barriers of entry, access and progression? And how, like Frances Kyle, can we prepare the way for them to follow?

The story of women participating in the law is one that charts as much the social and political contours of the fledgling State, as the role of economics. Access to the profession, and by extension to education, was a challenge in 1921, shared not only by women but also by men of backgrounds then atypical of the legal world.

In 2021, as we emerge from another tumultuous period, we are asked to reflect on what else needs to change to further embed equality across all sectors of society, including political and economic decision-making. Organisations like The Bar of Ireland are making efforts to formalise and professionalise the approach to issues of equality and diversity. This is primarily done through: a) ensuring that our values as practitioners and Council support these goals; and, b) putting in place the structures to give effect to these values. The Equality & Resilience Committee of the Bar is charged with designing and implementing a number of actions in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion that reflect the precise issues highlighted in the journeys of Frances Kyle and Averil Deverell – Ireland’s first women to be called to the Bar. Three fundamental actions are underway by the Committee, which we hope will do justice to the legacy of those who broke new ground in the last 100 years.

Equality Action Plan

The Equality Action Plan sets out a series of recommended actions to further develop existing equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives at the Bar, as well as steps to invest in and implement additional supports and resources. The plan aims to ensure that those from backgrounds that are traditionally not well represented at the Bar, consider a career at the Bar. In short, the plan aims to improve ease of access to the legal profession and recruit a more diverse membership base.

In order to develop a plan that comprehensively addressed the challenges faced by these groups, a wide variety of groups were consulted during the Plan’s development. In addition to the current membership of the Law Library, external experts consulted included AslAm, Ahead, the National Disability Authority, the Dyslexia Association of Ireland, the Immigrant Council of Ireland, the National Women’s Council, the Irish Traveller Movement, and the Irish Network Against Racism.

The recommended actions fall within the following categories:

- Objective 1: To enhance public awareness of a positive equality, diversity and inclusion culture at the Bar
- Objective 2: To introduce and embed diversity awareness training at the Bar
- Objective 3: To enhance access to the profession through a barrister-at-law degree course
- Objective 4: To enhance access to the profession through devilling
- Objective 5: To support fair and equitable practice development and career progression opportunities
- Objective 6: To enhance the accessibility of member services at the Bar

Currently the Plan is being considered by a number of committees of the Council, as those Committees will play a role in its implementation. I look forward to publishing it more widely in the coming weeks.

Dignity at Work Protocol

How we are treated and how we treat others impacts on our professional practice. It also impacts on our profession, in terms of retention, morale, culture, and creating space for security and growth. The Bar’s Dignity at work Protocol, issued in November 2020, sets out to create a work environment and culture of respect and support at The Bar of Ireland. Along with training for members, a number of ‘contact persons’ are also available to receive complaints of behaviour so that a resolution can be found.

The Protocol was born as a result of the Balance at the Bar member survey, and aims to ensure that all barristers feel supported in the course of their work without fear of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment. The Protocol provides a framework for those who do experience such behaviours, as well as

guidance on how other members can assist in creating a safe workplace for all. The Protocol and the training will continue to be reviewed and promoted.

Equitable briefing

The Bar of Ireland is also in the process of developing an equitable briefing policy that seeks to attain more equitable distribution of briefs among counsel, and to address the under-representation of women in certain areas of practice. The increased inclusion of women is a crucial tenet of equality, diversity and inclusion in legal services, and sets the foundation for a more equitable and welcoming workplace.

Findings from a survey in 2016 of the Law Library's women membership reported wide gender bias, among solicitors and clients, in the selection of counsel. Significant strides have been made by law firms and briefing entities in respect of diversity and inclusion; however, it remains unclear to what extent that impacts on briefing policies.

That women make up only 18% the Inner Bar also points to the reality that part of the solution lies within the organisation and the corps of members. Improved information sharing and awareness of the senior counsel application process is one immediate area we are focusing on, along with initiatives so that prospective candidates can raise any concerns or queries they have about the decision to take silk.

Equality objectives at The Bar of Ireland

1. To promote and to generate awareness and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion at the Bar through the development of an Equality Action Plan, which seeks to alleviate the challenges faced by underrepresented, disadvantaged and minority groups in pursuing a career at the Bar. Areas of focus to include gender, socio-economic disadvantage, ethnic minorities, disability, and the LGBT+ community.
2. To progress the development and implementation of an equitable briefing policy.
3. To develop initiatives that support parents at the Bar.
4. To promote women members of the Law Library, and to celebrate women in law through initiatives such as the Annual International Women's Day Dinner.
5. To engage with the Law & Women Mentoring Committee on the Law & Women Mentorship Programme, as appropriate.
6. To engage with the Education & Training Committee on The Denham Fellowship, as appropriate.
7. To engage and establish links with external networks supporting and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the legal sector including the OUTLaw Network, the 30% Club, The Bar of Ireland Lean In Circle and others, as may be appropriate.
8. To review and continue the implementation of the Dignity at Work Protocol and associated training.

Mental health and resilience

No construct of words can fully articulate the toll that Covid-19 has had on us, as a group or as individuals. For a profession whose personal identity is enmeshed with our professional identity, the inability to practise had a double impact on our mental health. Ironically, it is through the gift of technology arising from Covid that we have managed to reach so many on the theme of mental health, resilience and wellness, and this is a format we are keen to capitalise on. A number of webinars (and hopefully in-person events) are in design for this legal year, with all existing webinars available on the CPD platform. The Consult a Colleague service – peer-delivered support – is a service that the Committee is keen to ensure is delivering for members, and it is under active consideration.

Conclusion

A century ago, when the pioneering first women crossed the thresholds of the courts as professional participants in the legal world, the nation and the world were going through a period of immense upheaval. Not unlike today. The world of work, the complexities and nuances of our psychologies and how they relate to our work, the nature of risk and competition, are all added considerations that the world of 1921 had little awareness of. It is now a task of The Bar, and of all of us, to face into the future, and build a profession that is open to all.

Membership of the Equality & Resilience Committee

Chair

Aoife McNickle BL

Council Members:

Seamus Clarke SC
Conor Dignam SC
Murray Johnson SC
Sara Phelan SC
Aoife Farrelly BL
Mo Flahive BL
Dara Hayes BL
Lewis Mooney BL

Co-optees

Miriam Reilly SC
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Mairéad Deevy BL
Helen McCarthy BL
Helen Claire O'Hanlon BL
Caoimhe Ruigrok BL
Alison Walker BL

Gender still an issue at the Bar

The female members of Council give their views on gender balance and diversity at the Bar.

For the first time in its history, the Council of The Bar of Ireland currently has an equal number of male and female members. For this special commemorative issue, we asked the 12 female members of Council about their experiences as women in the profession. Their responses highlight how the Bar is a fantastic career for women, but that barriers still exist, and our Council members have experienced those barriers personally. They also spoke about why a more diverse Council is good for leadership and policy development at the Bar, and for the profession as a whole.

We asked the female members of Council these two questions:

1. What has been your experience of the profession as a female barrister?
2. The Bar Council plays an important role in leadership of the profession. The composition of the current Council is 50% male, 50% female. Do you think a gender-balanced Council makes a difference to the decisions and policies adopted on behalf of all members of the Law Library? If so, can you elaborate?

"I have found that gender at the Bar is still more of an issue than it should be given that women have been practising at the Bar for 100 years. I really enjoy the job – gender should not be an issue."

Being a female barrister

Council members were overwhelmingly positive about their profession, and were proud to be members of the Law Library and to represent their clients. However, they identified a number of issues, which they felt were particular to the experience of women at the Bar.

Several spoke of the tendency to "pigeonhole" female members in certain areas of law, in particular family law. Others spoke of areas of law where it is more difficult for female barristers to get regular and paying work. Some accepted this and have gone on to have successful careers in family law (while admitting it might not have been their first choice), but others have struggled to overcome the assumptions and build careers in other areas of law. Some said that female barristers are often assumed to be diligent and detail oriented, and therefore better suited to "tricky, messy" cases. This compliment to female barristers can be a double-edged sword, however, as these cases can be difficult, time consuming, and significantly less well remunerated than more straightforward briefs. One member spoke of a sense that she had to "get through" a period in her career of working on these difficult cases before being

offered more straightforward work, but had a sense that male colleagues are not "tested" in this way.

Several members said that briefing policies, however unconscious, had a significant role to play, and spoke of their hope that the Bar's proposed Equitable Briefing Policy would have a positive impact. They sounded a note of caution too, that this policy needs to extend beyond the larger solicitors' firms to encompass smaller firms and sole traders. One member spoke of some solicitors taking the view that female barristers are working merely "as a hobby" and of being asked "What does your husband do?"

A lack of networking opportunities for female barristers was also mentioned, with some Council members speaking of the difficulty of building networks outside working hours while caring for young children, and others speaking of the "old school tie" networks that still exist among the male members of the profession. Others, however, spoke of the Bar as having a structure that suits working mothers, as it enables more flexible working that fits around childcare. Both the tendency to get more complex, but less well-paid briefs, and the lack of networking opportunities, were cited by members as barriers to women taking silk. The numbers of female senior counsel remain low, at just 18%, while women currently make up 36% of total Law Library membership. Members spoke of the fact that taking silk can sometimes lead to a period of uncertainty in terms of income, especially if the barrister is moving away from family law or similar practice, and said the fact that a female barrister may have been earning less than male counterparts prior to taking silk may make them reluctant to make the leap.

The female members of Council also spoke about cultural issues that impact on life at the Bar, such as demeaning comments about women from male colleagues, or inappropriate behaviour. They praised the Bar's Dignity at Work Protocol, but sounded a note of caution that more work needed to be done to help women, and other minorities, to feel comfortable invoking the Protocol, or reporting abuse or unacceptable behaviour.

"You have to put more effort in to achieve what your male colleagues achieve. At times, you have to try to think 'like a man'. It takes time to figure out what the best approach for you personally might be to succeed as a barrister."

Many members of Council spoke of the support and mentorship they have experienced from male and female colleagues throughout their careers, particularly in the early years, and emphasised how vitally important it is to

have a supportive master, and different “champions” throughout their careers. They also spoke of the need to see diversity and inclusion extend beyond the issue of gender to encompass people of colour, people with disabilities, and those from backgrounds not traditionally associated with the law.

“If you have junior counsel who are concerned about that income uncertainty because of the areas of work they're in, and they're not generating the same income as perhaps their male counterparts, I think that is a huge element of concern, a causative factor as to why females don't take silk as often as males.”

Leadership at the Bar

The female members of Council were unanimous in their view that a gender-balanced Council is a positive development. They felt that the governing body of any profession should reflect the composition of its

membership. They also spoke of the work of the various Bar committees, where they felt that the equal sharing of responsibilities, and the input of female members, is central to the success of the committees' agendas. They praised the current Chair, Maura McNally SC, for her dedication to ensuring that the female Bar is properly represented.

They spoke of a “sea change” in attitudes in recent years, among male members of the profession as well, many of whom have championed female participation, and policies to increase equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at the Bar. They spoke of the influence of the profession-wide Balance at the Bar survey in 2019, which paved the way for many of these initiatives.

Members spoke of the importance of a gender-balanced Council for role modelling within the profession – ensuring that younger members see a gender-balanced governing body. They also felt that certain developments, such as changes to the rules around maternity leave, and an increased focus on mental health, as well as initiatives around EDI, would not have come about without a strong female presence at governing level.

Several members spoke about “a different framework of thought processes” in a more balanced Council, with balance bringing different approaches to problems and solutions as a result of more diverse discussions.

Of course, it was acknowledged that there is more work to be done, and that diversity must extend beyond Council and committees to the different stages of the profession, and the different areas of law, and must encompass more than gender.



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Dr Suad bint Mohammed al Lamkiya

Dr Suad bint Mohammed al Lamkiya was the first woman of colour to be called to The Bar of Ireland. She was called to the Bar in Michaelmas Term 1963 on October 29, after completing her legal studies in Trinity College Dublin in 1959 and training at The Honorable Society of King's Inns.

Dr Suad bint Mohammed al Lamkiya is described as a legal luminary in her birthplace of Oman and globally. During her life and career, she accumulated numerous firsts in the legal field across the world. She was the first law graduate in Oman and is considered to be the first legal adviser in the Sultanate. She was the first Omani woman to hold the position of legal adviser at the Ministry of Legal Affairs. Dr al Lamkiya was also the first female public prosecutor to study law outside the Sultanate and was the world's second Arab female judge. As well as these remarkable achievements, she was also a lecturer in law.



On an international level Dr al Lamkiya represented Oman in various legal agreements including the Free Trade Agreement negotiations with the United States. She was also involved in humanitarian efforts and has been described as a personification of humility, whose underlying message in all her lessons was to remain humble and kind, and to never judge a person or situation without studying it from all angles.

Dr al Lamkiya delivered an inspirational speech at the Omani Women's Day celebrations in 2020, saying: "My advice to women lawyers is to have confidence in whatever they do. They should continue to expand their knowledge because knowledge is what can give them confidence".

Dr Suad bint Mohammed al Lamkiya passed away in May 2021 leaving behind an enormous legacy for the legal field within Oman and across the world. Many Omanis view her as a national treasure.

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Flexible working: panacea for gender equality?

Will new policies and codes of practice in relation to remote working and the right to disconnect advance employment equality?



Claire Bruton BL

March 2021 saw the publication of the Workplace Relations Commission's (WRC) Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Right to Disconnect (the Code of Practice) and the Government's National Remote Working Strategy (NRWS). It is not yet clear, however, how these documents will impact on employment opportunities for women, particularly mothers. It is also possible that increased flexibility, and the new policies will, in fact, give rise to equality issues.

The National Remote Working Strategy

The NRWS provides an indicative roadmap and welcome guidance for employers and employees. The benefits of remote working are self evident, and include employee retention, promoting regional development, increased labour market participation, improvement in work-life balance and family well-being, cost efficiencies for businesses, and reduced commuting, pollution and carbon emissions. The flexibility associated with remote working, along with the change in mindset brought about by the increase in remote working, may also assist those with caring responsibilities in the home to participate in the workforce. The objective of the NRWS is to "ensure remote work is a permanent feature in the Irish workplace" post pandemic.¹ This objective is advanced both following an increase in expressions of interest in remote working, and as:

"remote work also has the potential to improve labour market participation amongst cohorts with lower participation rates, such as people with disabilities, older workers, and people with caring responsibilities. [...]"

Widespread remote working has the potential to attract people with a disability to the workforce whilst creating a better environment for career progression. [...] For those with caring responsibilities, remote working can have a positive benefit on parents, allowing them to work schedules that accommodate both their personal and professional demands. In particular, remote working can make it easier for women with families to stay in or re-join the workforce".²

The NRWS notes the gender imbalance in the burden of unpaid care work:

"A major factor contributing to the underrepresentation of women in the workplace is the difficulty of balancing paid work and unpaid care work, of which women disproportionately bear the burden. According to OECD statistics, women in Ireland average almost five hours of unpaid work per day. By comparison men in Ireland average just over two hours of unpaid work per day. Remote work can facilitate access to the workplace for people who would otherwise struggle to manage caring responsibilities with a lengthy commute time or physically working outside the home. Encouraging uptake of remote work by both men and women can also support policies which seek to ensure a greater balance in caring responsibilities".³

The NRWS continues:

"One concern expressed amongst remote workers is that their career could suffer as a result of reduced office visibility. However, by law, those working remotely must be afforded the same opportunities as their on-site counterparts. For instance, employees working remotely must have equal access to career development, training and promotion opportunities as those working on site".⁴

Of particular interest will be the proposed right to request remote working, which is to be legislated for in Quarter 3 of 2021. There is no further detail set out in the Strategy in terms of the proposed obligations on employers to consider and grant such requests, and the text of the legislation will be eagerly awaited. There is currently no legislative framework dealing with the right to request remote working arrangements, and it is hoped that the proposed legislation will provide employers with clarity as to their obligations. It is likely that the right to request remote working will be similar to the right to request flexible working arrangements when returning from parental leave, where the employer must consider the request and provide a response within a defined period, but there is no obligation to grant the request. These actions will be completed over the course of 2021. An Implementation Group will be formed to monitor the progress of the actions with meetings being held every four months.

It is clear that remote working will remain a feature of many workplaces in the longer term when Covid-19 restrictions are removed, and if organisations can continue to operate using remote working practices as part of their business model, it is likely to be of significant benefit to them as the landscape of the modern workplace continues to rapidly evolve.



The Code of Practice

The WRC's Code of Practice proceeds from the NRWS by providing "practical guidance and best practice to employers, employees, and their representatives to the right to disconnect".⁵ The Code defines the right to disconnect as both "the right of an employee to not routinely perform work outside of normal working hours" and as: "An employee's right to be able to disengage from work and refrain from engaging in work-related electronic communications, such as emails, telephone calls or other messages outside working hours".⁶ Importantly, the Code provides a best practice guide for how businesses adopt policies on the right to disconnect. There are three main employee rights enshrined within the Code:

- (i) the right not to routinely work outside normal working hours;
- (ii) the right to not be penalised for refusing to work outside of normal working hours; and,
- (iii) the duty to respect another person's right to disconnect.

While an employer's failure to follow the Code is not an offence, the Code is admissible in evidence in proceedings before the courts, the Labour Court or the WRC, and the Code expressly provides that employers should implement a Right to Disconnect Policy. The Code provides in its best practice guidance that:

"The [right to disconnect] policy should clearly state it is about supporting the employee's right to disconnect, not about restrictions and blockages to communication models, while recognising that occasionally legitimate reasons arise when it is necessary to contact staff outside of normal working hours. [...]

Certain businesses and roles within those businesses do not always operate on a standard hours basis but in a manner responsive to consumer needs where flexibility is in the employee's terms of employment. [...]

Policy in this regard should recognise that such flexibility may be beneficial also to employees and a policy should find the appropriate balance in terms of employer and employee outcomes" (emphasis added).⁷

The Code of Practice continues:

"The Policy should recognise that many employees choose and may request to work in a more flexible manner given their work-life balance needs, which results in employees proactively requesting to work outside normal working hours.

However, even in circumstances where an employee is working flexibly the right to be able to maintain clear boundaries between work and leisure should not be compromised" (emphasis added).⁸

Significantly, the foregoing recognises that a flexible work environment, including hours of work, is an unfortunate necessity for many working women, in particular those with caring responsibilities.

The disproportionate impact of remote working on women

Both the NRWA and the Code of Practice are attempts to alleviate pressures placed on workers when not working in the office. However, outstanding issues remain arising from disadvantages placed on remote workers that remain unresolved within a hybrid model where remote work exists alongside on-site

work. As the NRWA highlights, statistically, women are more likely to prefer a hybrid model of in-person and remote working to men.⁹ Given the higher proportion of women and disabled people in remote work, it follows there is a risk that, where remote workers are placed at an employment disadvantage to men, a claim of indirect discrimination can arise. This risk is borne out by the finding of the Office of National Statistics that employees who mainly worked from home were less than half as likely to be promoted, and 38% less likely to receive bonuses than all other employees, when controlling for other factors.¹⁰ Following the reasoning of the UK Supreme Court in *Essop v Home Office*, this would constitute indirect discrimination against disabled and female employees, even if the reason why these groups are disproportionately affected is not apparent.¹¹ It's generally accepted by employment tribunals (ETs) that a failure to allow flexible working does have an adverse impact on working mums. This argument often forms the basis of claims for indirect sex discrimination when a flexible working request is refused, with the claimant arguing that, for example, an employer's insistence that work be undertaken full-time and/or in the office is a "provision, criterion or practice", which has a substantial adverse impact on women. Now, this is not to say that employers are completely hamstrung if a flexible working request is made by a female employee and the employer cannot comply. But, even if a flexible working request is refused and indirect sex discrimination is found to have taken place, it is possible that the employer might be able to objectively justify it. This brings us back to the importance of dealing with requests in a timely fashion, and with a good paper trail recording the objective business reasons for refusing a request. However, there should be cogent and compelling reasons for refusing such a request, in particular given that hybrid and flexible working arrangements worked – through necessity – during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

Therefore, there is a risk for those who are more likely to work from home for disadvantage in the workplace to be suffered and potential indirect discrimination to arise. It is going to be critical for employers to review their entire working arrangements for both employees coming into the office and those who continue to work from home (whether for some or all of their working hours). Employers need to make sure that differences in treatment do not creep in where, for example, an employee works from home, is less visible, but should not be disadvantaged by their chosen working arrangements.

It is also the case that requests for flexible working should be treated identically to avoid any discrimination claims. A clear, written policy should be in place and applied in practice.

Remote workers therefore are both doing more work, and getting less career advancement, than on-site employees. Compounding this, people who completed any work from home did six hours of unpaid overtime on average per week in 2020, compared with 3.6 hours for those that never work from home.¹⁰

Unpaid work at home is stratified significantly by sex. It follows that remote working is both placing a significantly greater burden on women than men, and obstructing their career development compared to those groups who do not work remotely. This can be seen starkly in the fact that the presence of male partners also working from home during the pandemic did not lead to a sharing of housework. Indeed, a majority of Irish women – over 80% – noted that their already disproportionate housework burden only increased during the

lockdowns.¹² This has left women less able to devote as much time to their professional work as their male colleagues, who are less encumbered by unpaid domestic labour. As Niamh Egleston and Alan Eustace warn:

“The danger is that by increasing flexibility for women – which ought to improve their standing in the workplace – working remotely could become an expectation for women, that could be relied on in place of proper accommodation and policy in the areas of childcare and maternity leave, both significant barriers to advancement for women at work. Remote working offers an ‘easy out’. For the Government, the creation of a flexible working arrangement for women prevents them from having to meaningfully engage with the lack of childcare infrastructure in Ireland: the need to provide this becomes less pressing when women are able to work from home and provide their own childcare. For employers who might otherwise have provided childcare, they may now simply expect female employees to exercise their right to work from home, where before they might have had to provide some other flexible arrangement (or on-site childcare). Women themselves may feel under pressure not to take adequate parental leave because they can work remotely, with detrimental effects on children’s welfare and mothers’ health, as well as their professional development. Finally, as noted, male partners are reluctant to take time off work for caring responsibilities, even where allowed to. This is potentially replicated with the right to work from home, where

female partners will be expected to disproportionately work remotely in order to maintain their childcare obligations”.¹³

They continue:

“Carefully managed, remote working can bring benefits to workers, including women and those with disabilities – but if implemented badly, a statutory right to work from home may end up furthering exclusion and disadvantage of vulnerable groups”.¹⁴

In *Dobson v East Cumbria NHS*,¹⁵ the claimant was a community nurse working fixed days per week to fit in with her childcare obligations for her three children (two of whom were disabled). As part of an overall review, the Trust changed working hours to be more flexible, including some weekend working, which the claimant could not manage. She claimed unfair dismissal and indirect sex discrimination. The ET dismissed both of these. With regard to the latter, it used as a pool for comparison only her particular team; all the other women and the one man could fit in with the new rotas. Moreover, it held that she had not adduced evidence of group disadvantage through the changes.

The employment appeals tribunal (EAT) allowed her appeal. The ET should have applied a comparison of all community nurses, given that the changes had been



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applied to all of them. On the question of group disadvantage, although there was no positive evidence before the ET, it should have exercised its power to take judicial notice of the fact that childcare obligations are still in general likely to bear more heavily on women. It also cites several previous authorities validating such notice in childcare cases, and at [46] and [47], sums up as follows:

“Two points emerge from these authorities:

- a. First, the fact that women bear the greater burden of childcare responsibilities than men and that this can limit their ability to work certain hours is a matter in respect of which judicial notice has been taken without further inquiry on several occasions. We refer to this fact as ‘the childcare disparity’;
- b. Whilst the childcare disparity is not a matter directed by statute to be taken into account, it is one that has been noticed by Courts at all levels for many years. As such, it falls into the category of matters that, according to Phipson, a tribunal must take into account if relevant.

That is not to say that the matter is set in stone: many societal norms and expectations change over time, and what may have been apt for judicial notice some years ago may not be so now. However, that does not apply to the childcare disparity. Whilst things might have progressed somewhat in that men do now bear a greater proportion of child caring responsibilities than they did decades ago, the position is still far from equal. The assumptions made and relied upon in the authorities above are still very much supported by the evidence presented to us of current disparities between men and women in relation to the burden of childcare”.

That the Code of Practice does not impose any binding obligations on employers opens the door for possible backsliding by employers. The impact of this is also felt unequally: if you are a parent or carer, for example, you might find it a lot harder to respond to emails out of hours or during working hours, or more stressful when that is the expectation. A recent review of research into barriers to

women’s progression in the workplace pointed to “organisational norms of overwork and boundless availability” as a key factor.¹⁶ Thus, without strong protections for the right to disconnect, the likelihood remains that employees will be contacted after hours, with particularly detrimental effects on those employees who are already disadvantaged, both in on-site and remote work.

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and Article 40.5 of the Constitution of Ireland protect “private and family life, home and communications”, and “the inviolability of the dwelling”, respectively. As noted by Des Ryan, “the clear thrust of these provisions is to enshrine into human rights law a protection for the sanctity of a person’s home to enable them to develop their identity, dignity and personhood outside the workplace and in a manner that is separate from their identity as an economic actor”.¹⁷ Perversely, encouraging remote working as benefiting disabled and female employees may in fact mask the barriers remote working places in the way of such employees from being treated equally to their colleagues working on site. While the option of remote working and a strengthened right to disconnect could be welcomed, seen within the reality of how unpaid work is disproportionately shouldered by women, and promotions and bonuses are granted disproportionately to on-site staff rather than remote workers, the issues within the Government’s approach become apparent. The following issues arise for consideration:

- a. Will claims of gender and disability increase by reason of the new flexible and agile workplace?
- b. Will claims of indirect discrimination rise?
- c. Is the right to disconnect disadvantageous to parents, who often work anti-social hours?
- d. Will indirect discrimination arise by reason of flexible working requests being denied?
- e. Will employers hire differently, i.e., employees who can work core hours?
- f. Will a more diverse workforce emerge?

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Ivan Daly BL: friend and colleague



Ivan Daly, friend and colleague to many, was born on May 1, 1967, to Marcus and Ethel Daly. He had three siblings: Marcus, Sharon and Karl. Ivan and Sharon were 'Irish twins' and, as a result, always had a very close bond. Ivan always spoke very fondly of his childhood and growing up in Killiney. Ivan's mum Ethel always came in for much praise from him for having to put up with all of them. She is undoubtedly a very great lady. He would talk and laugh about his childhood in a way that always made me feel it had been quite special. Ivan always referred to his dad in my hearing as 'Pops', and was profoundly sad when he died in July 2016, almost five years to the day before Ivan died. Ivan met his beautiful wife Susan in Connemara in 1997 and clearly fell head over heels in love. They had two wonderful children, Hugo and Naomi. The only time I ever witnessed Ivan being 'boastful' was when he spoke about his family. He adored them all and was, rightly, very proud of them.

First impressions

I met Ivan when I was just starting as a barrister. During my devilling year, my master brought me to a function that many senior members of the Bar were attending. I remember being particularly impressed by a guy who, although he seemed like a young member of the Bar, was chatting and laughing very comfortably with everyone present. That was the first time I witnessed Ivan in company. It was something to witness. He even managed to spare a few words for me. Ivan spoke to everyone. He had time for everyone. He was interested in people, whoever they were. In my youth, I was mad about cars, and I remember noticing Ivan leaving and getting into a very swish Audi TT. I was beyond impressed. My first impressions of Ivan before I really knew him were that he was funny, welcoming and very suave. When I actually got to know him, I saw that this was just the tip of the iceberg.

There for everyone

A few years later, I moved into an office in Church Street. By good fortune it was the next office down the corridor from Ivan and his close friends Andrew Walker and Hugh O'Keeffe. Ivan's office was like a railway station. It was very much a centre that people gravitated to. There was, literally, always someone either in it or standing at the front of it. Ivan had a mischievous sense of humour and enjoyed good practical jokes. Many friends would call into his

office before going home and frequently there could be up to six or seven people discussing the day's events, but more often than not just laughing off the day in the company of their pal Ivan. Ivan's office was equally besieged by people seeking advice. Colleagues who had a legal problem, or any problem really, would go to Ivan. He didn't always have the answer, but for sure you would always leave feeling much better than when you went in. That was guaranteed.

Law and life

Being a barrister was in Ivan's DNA. He expected very high standards from himself and his colleagues. Over the last 18 months, Ivan, unknown to most, spent a large portion of his energy trying to ensure that the Bar could function during the Covid-19 lockdown, for the benefit of all, not just barristers. He was passionate about this and fought for all of us.

I very seldom passed Ivan's office without popping in to say hi. Don't get me wrong – Ivan could be very vexing at times. We fell out, more than once. Normally the issue would have been about some case where we were against each other. Ivan cared a great deal about his clients.

If he felt they had not received a fair shake, or the barrister opposing him had done something he didn't approve of, he would tell them in no uncertain terms. Of the many qualities Ivan enjoyed, for me, the one that stood out most was his work ethic. Ivan had an enormous capacity for work. He was very passionate about what he did. Winning for Ivan was about his clients not losing. Ivan didn't worry about losing a case, he worried about his clients not winning their case.

On July 12, 2021, Ivan left Church Street for the last time. He was surrounded by his friends. Some walked with him; some stood by their office doors to say goodbye. The building was almost totally silent, apart from the muffled sound of real grief. A surge of energy and joy left the building that day with Ivan. It will never return, not in my lifetime. Ivan, enjoy your well-deserved rest with 'Pops'. One day we'll all be together again. In the meantime, know this, we loved you, we love you still.

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The situation of Afghan women judges

Following the return to power of the Taliban, the situation of women who are judges and lawyers in Afghanistan is extremely perilous.



Patricia Brazil BL
Averil Deverell Lecturer in Law at Trinity College Dublin

Between 1996 and 2001, women's rights under Taliban rule in Afghanistan were severely restricted in many areas. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, although concerns remained in many areas, there were improvements in the situation of women in Afghan society.

This was reflected in the election of hundreds of women in parliamentary and provincial elections, and a growing number of women being appointed to Government positions, with women accounting for 22% of the Afghan civil service by 2017. A number of women judges were also appointed; as of August 2021, there were 270 women serving as judges in Afghanistan.

Return of the Taliban

As the United States withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021, concerns were quickly expressed for the basic human rights of women and girls. The International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) drew particular attention to the situation of Afghan women judges, given the role they had played – and continued to play – in upholding the rule of law and human rights for all, even as the Taliban advanced and began assuming control of large parts of the country.

The IAWJ noted that due to the nature of their work and past rulings made in criminal, anti-corruption and family courts, many women judges and their families would be in particular danger from the Taliban, and urged governments to include Afghan women judges and their families in the special measures extended to interpreters, journalists and other personnel who provided essential service to foreign military forces in Afghanistan.

Current situation

However, those calls appear to have been largely unheeded. In September 2021, the BBC reported that there were more than 220 women judges currently in hiding in Afghanistan.

Soon after the Taliban resumed control of Kabul, thousands of convicted criminals were released from prison, leading to some women judges receiving death threats. Many of the Afghan women judges were the primary breadwinner for their families but have now had their salaries stopped and bank accounts frozen.

Efforts to assist Afghan women judges

On September 20, 2021, the International Association of Judges and the IAWJ issued a joint statement denouncing the ongoing threats to women judges in Afghanistan and urging the global community to work together to save the lives of the Afghan judges and their families.

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, led by Baroness Kennedy QC, has launched the “#EvacuateHer” campaign, calling on the UK Government to provide sanctuary to Afghan judges and lawyers at risk.

Some countries have announced measures to provide assistance; the Greek Government has agreed to temporarily host 26 women lawyers and judges, as well as their families, pending resettlement in other countries, although it has also said that such cases will be the exception. In Ireland, Minister Roderic O’Gorman TD has said that Ireland will provide 150 humanitarian visas under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme to refugees fleeing Afghanistan, with a focus on vulnerable groups and human rights defenders, although it is unclear if this includes women judges and their families.

The Government has also committed to introducing a special Afghan Admission Programme, with an allocation of 500 places, for family members of Afghan nationals living in Ireland to apply to bring their close family members to join them here.

Conclusion

As we celebrate the centenary of the first women to be called to The Bar of Ireland, and reflect on the many achievements of Irish women lawyers, events in Afghanistan are a salutary reminder that such progress is neither automatic nor inevitable.

There are grave concerns for the human rights of many at-risk groups in Afghanistan, but the situation facing women judges and their families is especially perilous. It is essential that their commitment to upholding the rule of law and defending human rights is recognised and vindicated through the adoption of co-ordinated, specific measures to ensure their safety without delay.

Irish justice community efforts

The Irish justice community is inviting all members of the legal community to assist as part of a collaborative, justice sector-wide effort to support the safe transition to and settlement in Ireland of female Afghan judges and their families. To help, go to:
<https://www.lawlibrary.ie/afghanassistance>.



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