

Children Act 2001 at 20 – Speaker Biographies

Associate Professor Nessa Lynch, Faculty of Law, Te Herenga Waka- Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Nessa is a graduate of UCC (BCL, LL.M). She moved to New Zealand in 2005 for doctoral study and took up a lecturing position in Wellington in 2008. Her primary research interest is youth justice. She has published books, chapters and journal articles on issues in youth justice; particularly around principled approaches to children and youth who commit very serious offences such as murder. Her secondary research area is in biometrics and state surveillance, particularly DNA and facial recognition technology. She has a keen interest in how academic scholarship translates to evidence-based and principled policy and practice. She has spent time on secondment at the New Zealand Ministry of Justice and is a member of the Government's Data Ethics Advisory Group, and was recently a member of the Law Commission's Expert Advisory Group on the review of the DNA legislation. She has wide international networks in youth justice and has advised a range of international state bodies and non-governmental organisations.

Sylda Langford

Sylda Langford was the Director General of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs until her retirement in 2010. Prior to this, she was an Assistant Secretary General in the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform where she led a review to examine the scope for rationalising and restructuring the delivery of State services provided for under the Children Act 2001. She has worked in the Department of Social Welfare, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Eastern Health Board and the National Social Service Council. She has extensive experience in policy and legislative work across a broad range of government areas. She is a former member of the Board of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) and of the Board of Oberstown Children Detention Campus. She has a professional background in social policy and social work and is a graduate of University College Cork and the London School of Economics.

Dr Louise Forde

Louise joined Brunel Law School in September 2020. Her research interests lie primarily in the areas of youth justice and children's rights law. Between 2018-2020, Louise was a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Children's Rights and Family Law in the School of Law, UCC, where she also lectured on modules including Child Law, International Human Rights Law and Juvenile Justice. She was a visiting lecturer in Leiden Law School in 2019. She has been published in *Youth Justice: An International Journal*, and has authored reports for bodies such as Save the Children, the Irish Penal Reform Trust, and other governmental and non-governmental bodies. She recently contributed to the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of their Liberty. She was appointed to the editorial board of *Youth Justice: An International Journal* in 2019.

Colette Quinn, Chief Superintendent

Chief Superintendent Colette Quinn began her career in An Garda Síochána 1984. She ascended the ranks achieving promotion to the rank of Sergeant, Inspector, and Superintendent and in July 2017 was promoted to the rank of Chief Superintendent.

Colette is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin and holds Masters Degrees from the Dublin Institute of Technology, University of Ulster and the National University of Ireland. She is a graduate of The Honorable Society of King's Inns, Dublin and was called to the Bar in 2010.

Chief Superintendent Quinn was Director of the statutory Diversion Programme under the Children Act 2001 until 2017 and is now in charge of the Garda Youth Diversion Bureau. Colette's ambition is to further improve services to children who come in contact with the law, both, internally within An Garda Síochána and in partnership with other service providers both statutory and non-statutory. She has a keen interest in mentoring and restorative justice and holds a Master's Degree in Mediation & Conflict Intervention from the Kennedy Institute, NUI Maynooth.

Mr Justice John O'Connor

Judge John O'Connor was educated in University College Galway. University College Dublin. Trinity College Dublin, the Law Society of Ireland and the Nottingham Law School.

He was in practice as a solicitor for 30 years before being appointed a judge of the District Court in 2012. From 2013 until his appointment to the Circuit Court in February 2019 he was the principal judge in the Children Court Smithfield.

Judge O'Connor is the principal author of a Judicial Studies Bench Book on juvenile justice [2015 and updated in 2021].

His current academic work is a doctrinal study on The Sentencing of Sexual Offences in the Irish Youth Justice System

Vivian Geiran

Vivian is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work & Social Policy at Trinity College, Dublin and a member of the Judicial Council's Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee, the Council for Penological Co-operation of the Council of Europe, and the International Penal and Penitentiary Foundation. He is also Chair of the Irish Association of Social Workers, a board member of the Ana Liffey Drug Project, and was Director of the Irish Probation Service up to the end of 2019. Vivian is a registered social worker, and is co-author – with Dr. Shane McCarthy – of the book, *Probation and Parole in Ireland: Law and Practice*, which is due to be published later this year by Clarus Press.

Twitter: @VGeiran

Anne Conroy CEO Le Cheile Mentoring

Anne has been CEO with Le Cheile Mentoring since 2014. She has worked in youth/children's services/family support in the voluntary and community sector for over 30 years.

Previous roles include National Manager Barnardo's Training and Resource Service and Director of Kildare Youth Services.

Pat Bergin

Pat is Head of Service at the National Forensic Mental Health Service (HSE). Between 2013 and 2020, Pat was the first Director of Oberstown Children Detention Campus, during which time he used his skill, knowledge and experience to develop and integrate Ireland's national detention facility for children, expanding the service, modernising social care practices and bringing about enormous change as part of an evolving youth justice system. Pat has qualifications in Social Care and Management, (EMBA) from Waterford Institute of Technology, and has worked in residential care, social care and social care regulation for over 30 years.

Emily Logan

Emily Logan was Ireland's first Ombudsman for Children. She was then appointed first Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission before she took up her current role as Commissioner of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission, the Irish body for police complaints. She is Adjunct Professor at the School of Law, University College Cork and Adjunct Professor (Human Rights Practice) in the Irish Centre for Human Rights.

Fíona Ní Chinnéide

Fíona Ní Chinnéide is Executive Director of the Irish Penal Reform Trust, Ireland's leading NGO campaigning for the respect of human rights in prison and progressive reform of penal policy in Ireland. Fíona has led the organisation's external communications and campaigns across different roles since March 2009. Fíona has over 20 years' experience working in the area of advocacy in Ireland and Europe, with particular focus on human rights and anti-discrimination campaigns. Fíona's academic research interests have centred on media, public opinion and policy change. Fíona sits on the Board of Directors of Community Creations Ltd, which comprises SpunOut.ie and the 50808 mental health support service.

Don O'Leary

Don O' Leary is the Director of the Cork Life Centre, a voluntary organisation set up to offer an alternative learning environment to young people who find themselves outside the mainstream secondary education system. Don has led this community of learning since 2006. His background is in Youth & Community work and he has and continues to work with numerous youth and community groups. He is a passionate advocate for human rights and children's rights in particular. He is an activist with a commitment to system reform and services that meet the needs of all children and young people and to working towards a society where no one is left behind.