

Chief Justice's Working Group

# Civil Legal Aid Review

An opportunity to develop a model system in Ireland

24th - 25th February 2023 | #AccesstoJustice2023

This conference will consider the international experience and map the gap between the current system and a model system in Ireland

[Register](#)



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Legal Aid Board  
An Bord Um Chúnamh Dílthiúil

Friday 24th February 2023

## Introductory Session

09.15-09.30



### **Welcome from the MC**

Dearbhail McDonald, journalist, author, broadcaster

09.30-09.45



### **Opening remarks**

Mr Justice Donal O'Donnell, Chief Justice

09.45- 10.05



Simon Harris, T.D., Minister for Justice

10.05-10.30



### **The civil legal aid review - purpose, key issues and progress**

Mr Justice Frank Clarke, Chair of the Civil Legal Aid Review & former Chief Justice

## The Current System of Civil Legal Aid in Ireland

10.30-11.30

### **Overview**

Moderator: Muriel Walls, solicitor & former Chair of the Legal Aid Board

### **Speakers:**

- John McDaid, CEO, Legal Aid Board
- Keith Walsh SC, Solicitor
- Deirdre O'Donohue, BL
- Doncha O'Sullivan, Deputy Secretary General, Department of Justice



## Friday 24th February 2023

11.30-11.45 Break

### The International Experience

11.45-13.00 **Overview**

Moderator: David Fennelly, BL, Chairperson of FLAC

11.45-12.10 Professor Pascoe Pleasance, Professor of Empirical Legal Studies, UCL

12.10-12.35 Sue James, CEO, Legal Action Group, England and Wales

12.35-13.00 Professor Dame Hazel Genn, Professor of Socio-Legal Studies, UCL

13.00-14.00 Break

### Panel Discussion 1: Mapping the Gap Between the Current System and a Model System in Ireland

14.00-16.00 **Alternative models of legal assistance**

Moderator: Gary Lee, Office of the General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court, Courts Service, former Managing Solicitor, Ballymun Law Centre

**Panellists:**

- Farzana Choudhury, Community Law and Human Rights Advocate, Australia
- Mark Benton, K.C., former CEO of Legal Aid BC, Canada
- Sinead Lucey, Managing Solicitor, FLAC
- Aoife Kelly-Desmond, Managing Solicitor, Mercy Law Centre
- Catherine Cosgrave, Managing Solicitor, Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Rose Wall, CEO, Community Law and Mediation

16.00 **Close of day one**

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## Saturday 25th February 2023

09.00-09.15



### **Welcome from the MC**

Dearbhail McDonald, journalist, author, broadcaster

09.15-09.30



### **Opening remarks**

Professor Luke Clements, Chair in Law and Social Justice, University of Leeds

## Panel Discussion 2: View from the Judiciary and Statutory Bodies

### **Overview**

09.30-11.00

Moderator: His Honour Judge Colin Daly, Circuit Court judge and former President of the District Court

### **Panellists:**

- Susan Fay, Judge of the District Court
- His Honour Judge Paul Kelly, President of the District Court
- Sharon Dillon-Lyons, BL
- Sinead Gibney, Chief Commissioner, Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission

11.00-11.20

Break

## Panel Discussion 3: Vision for the Future

11.20-13.00

### **Overview**

Moderator: Philip O'Leary, Consultant Solicitor & former Chair of the Legal Aid Board

### **Panellists:**

- Nuala Jackson SC, Chair, Legal Aid Board
- Eilis Barry, Chief Executive, FLAC
- Maura Derivan, President of the Law Society of Ireland
- Professor Gerry Whyte, Professor of Law at Trinity College Dublin
- Sara Phelan SC, Chair of the Bar of Ireland
- Fiona Coyne, Chief Executive, Citizens Information Board

13.10-13.30



### **Closing remarks**

Mr Justice John MacMenamin, former judge of the Supreme Court