

THE WRIT

CENTENARY YEAR
SPECIAL EDITION

THE EZINE OF THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

ISSUE 239 Autumn 2022



THE
LAW SOCIETY
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

100
YEARS



PUBLISHERS

The Law Society of Northern Ireland
Law Society House
96 Victoria Street
BELFAST BT1 3GN
Tel: 028 9023 1614
E-mail: writ@lawsoc-ni.org
Website: www.lawsoc-ni.org

EDITORIAL TEAM

David A Lavery CB, Chief Executive
Alison Grundle
Peter O'Brien
Paul O'Connor

DESIGN

SHO Communications Consultants

DISCLAIMER

The Law Society of Northern Ireland and its agents accept no responsibility for the accuracy of contributed articles or statements appearing in this magazine and any view or opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Law Society's Council, save where otherwise indicated. No responsibility for loss or distress occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of the material in this publication can be accepted by the authors, contributors, editor or publisher. The editor reserves the right to make publishing decisions on any advertisement or editorial article submitted to this magazine and to refuse publication or to edit any advertisement or editorial material as seems appropriate to the editor. The Law Society of Northern Ireland and its agents do not endorse any goods or services advertised, nor any claims or representations made in any advertisement in this magazine. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the written permission of the copyholder and publisher, application for which should be made to the publisher.

© Law Society of Northern Ireland 2022

www.lawsoc-ni.org

Writ readers can access back issues of the magazine as far back as October / December 2000 at www.lawsoc-ni.org - follow Publications link

Contents

- 04 Member Services - the year in review
- 05 Centenary Book launch at Stormont
- 06 Centenary Council meeting
- 06 Presentation from the Law Society of Ireland
- 07 Centenary Council dinner
- 08 Law Society annual dinner
- 10 Granada Conference report
- 12 Legal Walk/Run is a runaway success
- 14 International Women's Day event
- 14 Presentation to Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI
- 15 Law Club opens
- 16 Library & Information Services
- 17 In Memoriam - Heather Semple
- 18 Policy & Engagement Department - the year in review
- 18 Justice Agenda highlights urgent priorities
- 19 Society publishes Diversity and Equality report
- 19 Publication of study into solicitor profession in Northern Ireland
- 20 Launch of climate change resolution
- 20 Legal Aid Budget
- 21 Commonwealth Mediation Conference report
- 22 Putting children at the heart of the justice system
- 23 New website offers help in resolving ongoing legal disputes
- 23 Conveyancing Conference 2022
- 24 A View from Ukraine
- 26 Centenary Conference an outstanding success
- 28 Professional Development Department - the year in review
- 29 Solicitor admissions ceremonies
- 36 Law Society launches new Mentoring Programme 2023
- 37 Professional Conduct Department - the year in review
- 38 Anti-Money Laundering Report
- 39 AML Aide-Mémoire
- 39 Clinical Negligence mini conference report
- 40 President's year in brief



THE
LAW SOCIETY
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

100

Foreword

As we reach the end of this important milestone of our Centenary it is only fitting to pause and to reflect on the year gone past and to celebrate our evolution as a voluntary association of legal professionals to the modern business organisation which we are today.

The story of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, as evidenced by this Writ magazine, is not static and new pages in our story are being written every day through our work and that of our members.

We continue to be as relevant today as we were 100 years ago supporting and growing our economy, representing our members, and ensuring that the most vulnerable and in need within our communities have access to justice.

I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Brigid Napier, President for her stewardship and the Society staff who have worked tirelessly in making our Centenary celebrations such an outstanding success.

Lastly thank you for your support of the Society throughout this important year.



David A. Lavery CB
Chief Executive



Member Services The Year in Review

Alison Grundle

Head of Member Services

Alison.Grundle@lawsoc-ni.org

2022 has been an exceptionally busy year for the Law Society's new Member Services Department. The team has been at the forefront of Centenary celebrations, organising the calendar of events celebrating this momentous year.

In a very busy calendar, a number of events stand out:

International Women's Day in March - the 'Women in the Law: Breaking Down the Barriers' event was attended by over 200 people in person and online.

A panel of distinguished women speakers including, the Lady Chief Justice, the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, the Justice Minister for Northern Ireland and the Law Society President, talked about their own career paths, opportunities and challenges.

A beautiful June evening saw the Society at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, for the launch of the Centenary Book. Hosted by Claire Sugden, MLA and former Justice Minister, the event was attended by members past and present, together with special guests from the wider justice family. We were particularly pleased to welcome the family of our dear friend and colleague, Heather Semple, who passed away unexpectedly in March 2022. Heather had been the driving force behind the Centenary Book, and it was privilege for all of us who knew her to recognise her at this important event.

If the Centenary Book looked back over the last 100 years of the Society, this autumn's Centenary Conference was all about looking forward, focusing on the issues and opportunities that will shape the profession into our next century. Without doubt one of

the most ambitious events the Society has undertaken, the Conference was a resounding success. Speakers such as Richard Susskind, Tara Shine, Mary Robinson, Fergal Keane, and a panel comprising Miriam O'Callaghan, Louis Walsh, Stephen Nolan and publisher Graham Ogilvy, hosted by Paul Tweed; grappled with issues from climate justice to new media law, the threat/opportunities associated with technology and mental health and wellbeing.

Following on from the success of the Meeting Space that was opened in September 2021, the space review of Law Society House continued with a full refurbishment of the 4th Floor, lecture theatre, meeting rooms and café area. The attractively repurposed café now styled 'The Law Club' is open to all members to use when they are working in Belfast's Legal Quarter. It offers a place to work, chat or relax with free tea and coffee and a variety of snacks, together with the day's newspapers.

Member Services has also been busy in the background developing a series of new initiatives to support solicitors and their firms. This has included the new 'Locum list' to support those seeking temporary or part-time solicitor roles and those firms seeking to fill roles quickly.

Working in partnership with Legal Island, we can now offer discounted eLearning training courses to solicitor members and practice support staff. These new courses have been

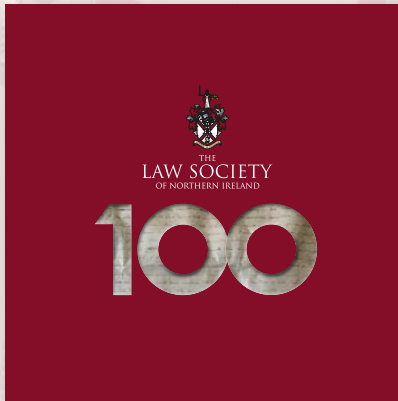
specially designed to enable members and their staff to access important training on a diverse range of areas such as Employee Wellbeing, Data Protection and Cyber Security in the Workplace, Workplace Bullying, Diversity & Inclusion and Workplace Health & Safety.

The Member Services team was delighted when Brigid Napier, as Centenary President, chose 'Members First' as the theme of her Presidential Year.

In February, the President visited all of the Local Solicitors' Associations. This outreach engagement initiative provided a much-needed platform to allow colleagues to come together to network, raise issues of importance, and to discuss how the Society can work more closely with our members.

Now that the Centenary year of events has come to a close, Member Services is looking forward to the next year of activities and initiatives aimed at delivering added value to every member.

The work the Society's Policy and Engagement Team has undertaken through the Inclusivity and Diversity Survey and the Hook Tangaza report into the state of the sector, is invaluable in setting the direction for the future. However, Member Services is about you, the members, and the team looks forward to working with you again in 2023.



CENTENARY PUBLICATION

The Great Hall at Parliament Buildings Stormont was the venue for the launch of a new book celebrating one hundred years of the Law Society of Northern Ireland.

The publication was officially launched at a ceremony attended by over 120 members of the legal profession and senior members of the judiciary to include the Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan.

Those present included Past Presidents of the Law Society, Members of Council, representatives from Local Associations and contributors to the book.

There was a particularly warm welcome for James W Russell Solicitor who was to celebrate his own centenary on 18 November 2022 and James Doran (94) who is the Society's oldest surviving Past President. Family members of Heather Semple, the Society's former Librarian and guiding Editor for the publication who had sadly passed away in March 2022, were also present.

During her speech to attendees, the Centenary President of the Society, Brigid Napier, said that one of the Society's priorities for the Centenary Year had been to publish a commemorative publication which would record the work of the Society and the contribution of its members to the fabric of legal, civil and commercial life in Northern Ireland over the last 100 years.

She also acknowledged the tremendous team effort which had gone into bringing the book to print. To recognise the significant contribution of Heather Semple to the publication, she was pleased to announce that the book had been dedicated to her.



Claire Sugden MLA opens the proceedings.



The Semple family.



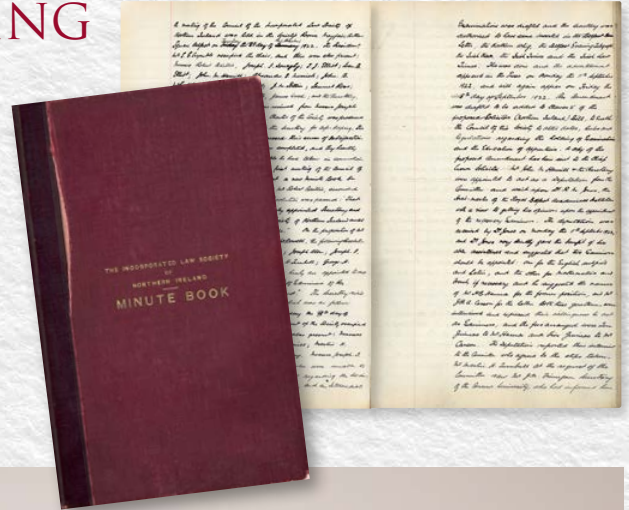
Judge Burgess, John Bailie, James W Russell, James Doran and David A. Lavery CB.

CENTENARY COUNCIL MEETING

On Monday 12 September the Society's Council met to mark the 100th Anniversary of the first Council meeting of what was then The Incorporated Law Society of Northern Ireland, in 1922.

Council members in attendance were presented with a facsimile of the Minutes of the inaugural meeting of Council on 12 September 1922.

The President reminded colleagues that as the Society entered its second Century it did so in good health, but we must be aware that the pace of change in our affairs in the years ahead is likely to be much more rapid than that in the first 100 years of our Society's existence.



Presentation from the Law Society of Ireland

We were delighted to be joined at the Centenary Council Meeting by the President of the Law Society of Ireland, Michelle Ní Longáin.

She presented our Society with a beautiful gift marking our Centenary. The gift is a bronze sculpture by John Behan RHA entitled Lough Garra Oar Boat.

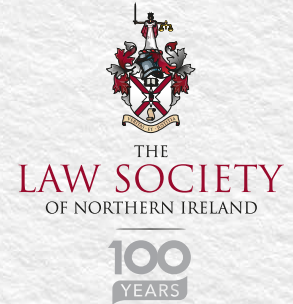
It is inspired by the ancient Irish brougher boat originally unearthed in Limavady and which is now on display in the National Museum of Ireland.



CENTENARY COUNCIL DINNER

Members of the legal profession and judiciary were amongst distinguished guests invited to the annual Law Society Council Dinner which took place at Belfast City Hall on Thursday 22 September 2022.

Those attending the event had the opportunity to hear from the President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Brigid Napier and from the Lady Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Dame Siobhan Keegan who addressed the 200 plus audience on the issues and challenges facing the legal profession in Northern Ireland.



ANNUAL DINNER 2022



The Culloden Estate and Spa was the venue for the Society's Annual Dinner held on 2 December 2022.

A well-established part of the Society's social calendar the Annual Dinner provides the opportunity for the Society's new President to address members for the first time and to officially welcome the Society's new solicitors to the profession.

Presiding over the evening, was new Senior Vice-President, Brigid Napier who introduced and welcomed **Naomi Long MLA**, and former Justice Minister as the evening's keynote speaker.

The former Minister began her remarks by joking about imposter syndrome – 'you invited the Justice Minister but got me' before reflecting on her time as Minister and her pride in delivering key legislation over her two-and-a-half years in office, including: the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Act, to Committal Reform, to the Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims Act.

She spoke of the work undertaken to reduce delays within the justice system and made clear her frustration that, when the pandemic struck and those delays inevitably grew again, the subsequent monies that should have been invested in the justice system, were diverted into health.

'This demonstrates some critical issues impacting on the justice system: firstly, that no one thinks the justice system should be well-funded until they need to use it.'

The former Minister spoke passionately about the need to challenge both societal and political attitudes to justice describing how the nature of politics here further compounds that problem.

'I couldn't convince my Executive colleagues that legal aid – a demand-led, essential public service – should be fully funded.'

She described how the Legal Aid system relied on monies freed up by quarterly monitoring rounds (those funds that are committed by Departments but unspent during the quarter) to plug financial gaps and how, when the Executive failed to set a budget and those monies were not available, the extent to which justice is underfunded was exposed.

Looking forward the former Minister said

'I continue to make the case that the only way we will avoid the justice system facing a future comparable to that of the health system, is to invest now. It will avoid causing harm to our citizens and our legal profession and it will be cheaper in the long-term than trying to fix a service that is utterly broken.'

In her concluding remarks she congratulated the Society on its Centenary highlighting the contribution the legal sector has made to the economy in Northern Ireland and the role that solicitors continue to play for the benefit of all within our community.

'I have seen up close that our entire system could not function without solicitors. Your work is varied, vast, and often involves dealing directly with some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Solicitors are part of our community and I think it's right

to celebrate 100 years of a vibrant solicitor profession here in Northern Ireland.'

In his key-note address to attendees and in response the **Society's new President, Brian Archer**, thanked Naomi Long for her support for the profession, particularly in relation to the Legal Aid budget.

The President highlighted that one of her final acts as Minister was to issue a Direction authorising additional funding to the Legal Services Agency to allow Bills to be paid in the current Financial Year.

In thanking the former Minister, the President described how Legal Aid budget issues affected not only solicitors in practice, but those seeking to access justice, particularly the most vulnerable in society.

Reflecting on his time at Queen's University, where he studied Roman Law under Professor John Stannard, he quoted Cicero that 'rights which are not accessible, are no rights at all.'

Commenting further, the President attacked the system in which people who are reliant on state benefits may not qualify for Legal Aid. He implored the former Minister to fight to remedy this situation in which access to justice is denied, when the Executive is restored.



From left: Darren Toombs, Junior Vice-President, Brian Archer, President, Naomi Long MLA and Brigid Napier, Senior Vice-President.

The President also took the opportunity to thank the Presidential team including the outgoing SVP Rowan White, previous President Brigid Napier and incoming JVP, Darren Toombs.

He also thanked the staff of the Law Society, giving special mention to David Lavery. 'You are proving to be a formidable leader under whom the Society will be better placed to meet the challenges ahead. I thank you for all that you do.'

Turning to his personal guests the President thanked them for the influence they each had on his personal and professional career. He paid particular tribute to his father, a life-long trade unionist and civil rights campaigner, whom he credited with sparking his initial interest, and subsequent life-long passion, for social justice and equality.

The President also introduced his charity of the Year – **Include Youth**, a local organization that promotes the rights and best interests of disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.

Speaking of his Presidential year ahead the President underscored his commitment to ensuring 'Access to the Profession', commenting:

'I am particularly passionate that those who have the ability but not the means to gain entry should be able to do so. Our profession and society as a whole will be better off when we better reflect the communities we serve.'

On the same theme the President announced the launch of a new Law Society Bursary, a legacy Centenary project that will provide financial support to enable access to those sections of the community under-represented within the profession.

In conclusion, the new President urged the newly admitted solicitors to become involved in 'their Law Society' and to use their participation as a way to develop skills and experience to take back into their daily practice.

The final speaker of the evening was Robert Bellingham, who spoke on behalf of the newly admitted solicitors.

In a humorous and often self-deprecating speech Robert talked about his own journey into the law and some of his early experiences.

He pointed out that whilst there were obvious differences between the intake of 1922 and that of 2022 he noted that what each holds in common is the ability to navigate challenges. Looking forward he spoke of the issues ahead: from access to the profession, to data ethics and trust, climate change, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, to name a few.

Commenting he said

'It falls on the participation from members of the legal profession to engage in both the challenges and opportunities that these areas hold. I am in no doubt that the intake of 2022 has the resilience and determination to be an asset to the Society in navigating these issues faced by the profession.'



Naomi Long MLA.



Brian Archer, President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland.



Robert Bellingham, who spoke on behalf of the newly admitted solicitors, pictured with Steven Millar.





GRANADA

CONFERENCE 2022



In this article Joe Rice reports on his trip to the 2022 Annual Conference in Granada.

Our President Brigid Napier led over one hundred and thirty intrepid delegates and guests to the Law Society Conference in Granada, Spain on 7 April 2022.

This was our first pandemic era Conference and be assured that this was no muted or mundane affair.

Our Conference returned with full-scale red carpet treatment for all those fortunate enough to be involved.

The sun shone brightly from Dublin Airport onwards and what a special event it turned out to be.

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of WillisTowersWatson, the ABL Group, GmCG Chartered Accountants, Advanced Legal, MCS Group, DUAL Asset Underwriting, Leaf, SGS UK, Arthur Cox (Belfast), Titanic Hotel Belfast and the Derry City Hotel, the delegates were treated to a magical cocktail of social, legal and cultural delights.

Our guests included Michelle Ní Longáin, President of the Law Society of Ireland and Ken Dalling, President of the Law Society of

Scotland and also the Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan.

The Business Sessions under the flag of "Shaping Our Future Together" provided a stimulating mix of seminars and contributions and were not so demanding that we were unable to participate in that quintessential Conference experience ... reigniting old friendships and forming new ones.

We stayed in the opulent Alhambra Palace Hotel and right from our Welcome Dinner on the first evening, a note of friendship and cordiality was struck.

The first Dinner together, in the magnificent surroundings of the Huerto de Sello on the outskirts of Granada was a generous banquet promoting the very best of local produce accompanied by a generous supply of wine as promised by Ross Licence of LIBRA Events.

It was the place to be at sunset.

Our Business Session on our first morning commenced with a warm welcome from the Conference Chair, Rory McShane, followed by a presentation by our Chief Executive David Lavery on the history of the Law Society of Northern Ireland incorporating Past, Present and Future with detailed content from 1830 to 2022.

Many were surprised to learn that there are currently only sixteen firms of solicitors in Fermanagh and forty eight firms in County Armagh.

Future challenges that the Society faces were flagged up including increasing its profile and membership, climate justice and regulation, and that of the c. 6,000 solicitors registered on the Roll in NI, almost half do not actually hold Practising Certificates.

Rowan White, who as President Napier's predecessor had laid the firm foundations for our Granada Conference then presented a panel discussion on Cyber Crime, with insightful contributions from Dr Joanne Cracknell (WillisTowersWatson), Alan Boal (ABL), Megan Boyd (Kennedys) and the Society's Head of Member Services, Alison Grundle.

Gabriel Greene, a GmCG Director provided a useful road map for those of us in practice, both young and not so young with a seminar on "Succession Planning: Growth by Acquisition" which was well received.

John Baxter of Law Society (NI) Financial Advice Ltd continued in that positive vein and gave a "Top of the Pops: Top Ten" presentation, highlighting the ten most common sins that can be committed while "improving your wealth" with plenty of tips on how to achieve absolution provided to those present.

For many the Final Seminar of the morning was the icing on the cake when Darren Toombs entered into a discussion with William Nugent, Ellen Forrester and Shannon Gawley from the NIYSA. That discussion

yielded many fascinating insights into the experience of our younger colleagues who will shape the future of our profession.

In the afternoon, thanks to the organisation skills of Sean Smyth – who was unable to attend - I joined friends in a stroll into the Albayzin area of the city and benefiting from the knowledge of a local tour guide (and an ice cream or two!!) we soaked up the local sights, sounds and sunshine.

The Albayzin, rising above the river Darro, has retained a distinctly Moorish and Islamic feeling, with narrow streets, and whitewashed houses rather like Whitehead on a Spring afternoon.

It's often the majestic opulence of the Alhambra or the craggy peaks of the Sierra Nevada that lure visitors to the southern Spanish city of Granada but it takes just minutes in one of the local bars to discover another of the city's charms - the free tapas.

Later, some delegates enjoyed a private tour of the Alhambra Palace itself and in the evening a party of us including Noreen Sweeney, Seamus Leonard, Anne Marie Baggot, Michelle and Hugh Edgar and Eileen and John McGettrick retired to a local restaurant and this led to fond reminiscences from our previous conferences to Prague, Berlin, Barcelona, Paris and Istanbul.

Well fortified by fine fare and local liqueurs on the house and the joyful sounds of a proper gathering, we headed back to the Hotel and the staff were blessed with the jingle of Ulster accents from Fermanagh, Newry and even Derry until the wee small hours.

New friendships blossomed and conference veterans such as Arleen Elliott, Ken Duncan, Eileen Ewing, John Guerin, Donald and Patricia Eakin assured newcomers like Cormac and Deirdre Keenan, Andrew Mairs, Leonora Rice, Paul Moylan and Louise McLaughlin that the best was still to come.

The Business Session on Saturday morning commenced with a seminar from Adam Keith of Dual Asset on "Technology and Innovation in Title Insurance" which was informative and gripped the attention of our conveyancing and probate experts.

Siobhan Keegan, the Lady Chief Justice, provided her own analysis of "The Future is Digital" dealing with the shape and pace of legal changes and our new hybrid model of working with Covid.

Emphasising that our Court system needs to be creative and innovative, but must always include flexibility and improved communications, our Lady Chief Justice addressed the importance of protecting the integrity of our Court system and noted that we should consider increased use of hubs, and the sharing of resources.

Afterwards, Maria Glover, succeeded in demystifying some of the concerns raised by our digital future, highlighting that we should use technology to enhance the services we deliver to our clients and that practitioners should not feel threatened by the use of digitalisation.

Sighs of relief and satisfaction were quite audible, on that warm sunny Spanish morning.

Alison Grundle, the LSNI Head of Member Services, recalled humorously the Martini project "any place, anytime, anywhere" comparing the far reaching effects of our new Covid world to the Industrial Revolution and its long term effects on our future working and societal practices.

She informed us that the LSNI Website was currently being updated and advised that any new cyber safe technology under consideration had to provide value for money for as many practitioners as possible.

Our penultimate seminar involved an enjoyable discussion between our President

Brigid Napier, with Michelle Ní Longáin, President of the Law Society of Ireland and Ken Dalling, President of the Law Society of Scotland as we move "Towards an Inclusive Profession".

The final Business Session, conducted by David Lavery, dealt with "Regulation: To Regulate or to be Regulated – That is the Question" made for compelling listening and Rory McShane brought the formal Business Conference to a close.

On that Saturday afternoon many delegates visited the views available from the top of Albayzin, some indulged in a spot of retail therapy, while others continued to enjoy the magnificent walks in easy reach of our Conference, while the really ambitious tried to retrace the footsteps of Federico Garcia Lorca, a former law student, remembered as one of Spanish Literature's giants.

That evening, our Farewell Dinner held in the Alhambra Palace Hotel, was prefaced by a Drinks Reception, leading to a rousing chorus of "Happy Birthday" for Rowan White followed by music and dancing to celebrate a wonderful visit to a very memorable region of Spain.

Sadly, we departed for Malaga airport on the Sunday morning and the blue skies of Spain soon gave way to the grey skies of Leinster and Dublin.

This was a remarkable Conference despite taking place at the end of a pandemic.

Its success depended upon significant organisational skills and planning and all attendees will be forever indebted to Rory McShane, Rowan White and Brigid Napier for their work and determination.

A special thanks is due to Ross Licence of LIBRA Events, and to our Chief Executive David Lavery and to his team, Alison Grundle, Paul O'Connor and Fiona Dowds for making it all happen.



Presidential and CEO Team with representatives from the principal sponsors WTW / ABL.

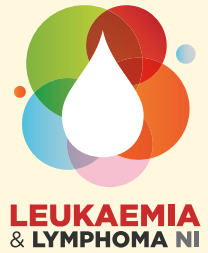


Presidential and CEO Team with representatives from GMCG.



Presidential and CEO Team with representatives from DUAL Asset.

Charity event proves to be runaway success!



Over two hundred members of the legal profession in Northern Ireland joined colleagues for the return of the Legal Walk / Run through Belfast City Centre in aid of Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI (LLNI).

This was the first time the Legal Walk / Run had taken place following a delay caused by the pandemic.

Despite heavy rain, participants from all parts of the legal profession including solicitors, barristers, Judiciary, and support staff, set off from outside the High Court in Belfast for their 5k walk/run to the Titanic Centre and back again.

The Legal Walk / Run was organised by Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI (LLNI) the only charity in Northern Ireland dedicated to blood cancer research and all funds raised stay in Northern Ireland to support clinicians, scientists and students researching these diseases.

Commenting the President of the Law Society, Brigid Napier, said:

"I am delighted that in our Centenary Year that so many members of the legal profession took part in the return of Legal Walk / Run in support of the Society's chosen charity of the year Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI (LLNI).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated, offered support, ran, or walked despite the bad weather and for making this event such a resounding success."

Richard Buchanan, Chair of Leukaemia and Lymphoma NI said;

"As a local charity, we are so grateful for the Law Society's support in this, their Centenary year. Fundraising is challenging at present, but the money raised from the Legal Walk/Run will make a huge difference in helping us to keep the research going.

Thank you to all who took part, from LLNI and from the scientists - Research is improving quality of life and helping more people survive blood cancer than ever before."





Inspirational event marks International Women's Day

In March, over 200 members of the legal profession and invited guests were in attendance for a unique event to mark International Women's Day.

The 'Women in the Law: Breaking Down the Barriers' event held at Law Society House in Belfast included a distinguished panel of speakers including:

- The Lady Chief Justice, The Right Honourable, Dame Siobhan Keegan, DBE
- The Attorney General for Northern Ireland, Dame Brenda King, DCB
- The Justice Minister for Northern Ireland, Naomi Long MLA and
- The President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Brigid Napier.

Hosted by the Law Society of Northern Ireland, the exclusive hybrid event was chaired by journalist Sarah Travers and included interviews with each of the four panellists.



From left: Sarah Travers with The Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan DBE, The Justice Minister Naomi Long MLA, Dame Brenda King DCB and Brigid Napier, President.

Those attending the hour-long event had the opportunity to hear from the panellists on their personal and professional journeys to leadership in their profession and to ask questions during a question-and-answer session which included some inspirational responses.

Commenting during the QA session The Lady Chief Justice, The Right Honourable, Dame Siobhan Keegan said:

"Hopefully seeing people like myself in positions like this will inspire young men and women to come forward and become lawyers."



£18,000 raised for Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI

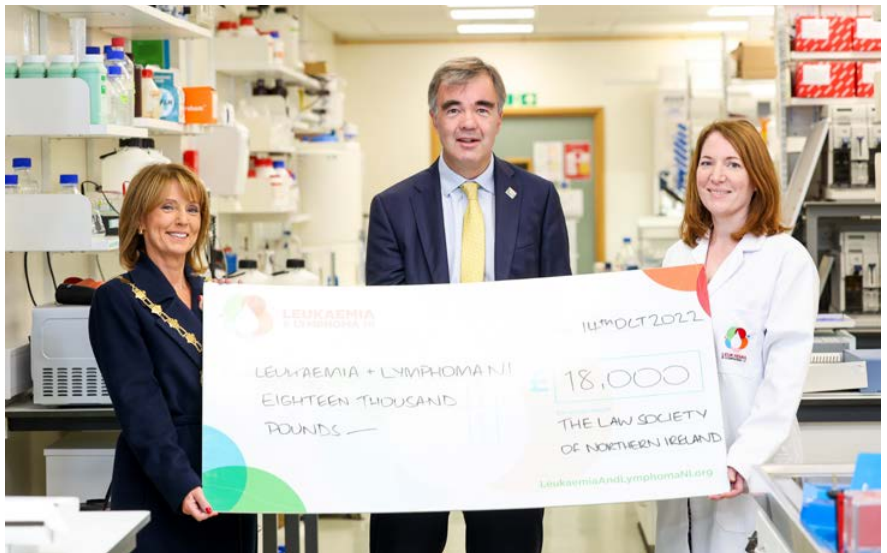
The Law Society of Northern Ireland has helped raise £18,000 for Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI - the only charity in Northern Ireland dedicated to blood cancer research.

The money was raised through a series of events held throughout the year involving members of the legal profession.

The President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Brigid Napier made the presentation of the cheque to Richard Buchanan, Chairman of Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI at the Patrick G Johnston Centre for Cancer Research on Friday 14 October 2022.

Speaking afterwards the President said:

"On behalf of the Law Society I am delighted to be handing over this cheque for £18,000 which I know will help support Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI who work tirelessly to improve outcomes and quality of life for blood cancer patients".



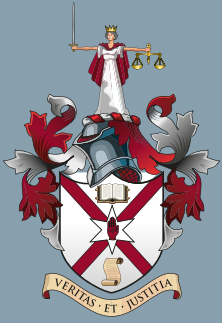
From left: Brigid Napier, President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Richard Buchanan, Chairman of Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI and Dr Lisa Crawford.

Richard Buchanan, Chairman of Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI commented:

"Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI is grateful to the Law Society of Northern Ireland for helping to raise awareness of the work which we provide and for the money raised which will contribute to our ongoing laboratory research, education and clinical support".



**LEUKAEMIA
& LYMPHOMA NI**



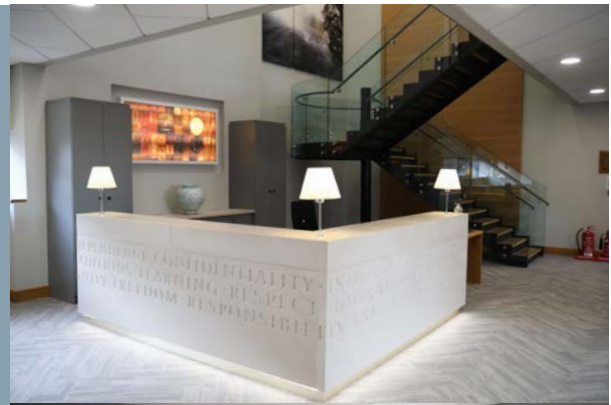
THE LAW CLUB

The Law Club at Law Society House in Belfast is now open!

Situated on the fourth floor, it offers a new modern, contemporary, and inviting location to have a coffee and a catch up with friends, a place to reflect or work.

With a stylish design, spacious seating areas, IT supported consultation rooms and open to all members from 9am - 5pm (Monday to Friday) the new Law Club offers a unique membership experience.

Please visit The Law Club and see for yourself what's on offer.



Library & Information Services

What can we do for you?

The Library is professionally staffed and provides access to local, national and international legal information electronically and in hard copy. It offers a reference and information service to all solicitors on the Society's Roll. It has access to a comprehensive collection of legal databases including Westlaw UK, Justis and LexisNexis, textbooks, journals, law reports, precedents, encyclopaedic works and legislation covering the jurisdictions of Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and GB.

Mission statement – “to anticipate and satisfy the information requirements of existing and potential users through the provision of equal and unlimited access to a relevant, professional and focused library service”.

Library services

Reference and research

You can visit the Library in person to consult the collection from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. Alternatively you can contact us by phone or email and staff will access the collection on your behalf to retrieve the information you require. If the Library does not hold a case, article, or other piece of legislation you require we can try to obtain it from a range of external resources. Information can be disseminated electronically wherever possible.

KnowAll Database

The Library maintains and provides access for Members to its database KnowAll. KnowAll contains Northern Ireland High Court and Court of Appeal judgments since 2000, Northern Ireland primary and secondary legislation, practice directions and details of the Library's collection of books and journals. Information on KnowAll is available both in full text and abstracted formats and is searchable across a range of fields. All information can be downloaded free of charge.

Current awareness

I on the Law is sent to all solicitors electronically every two months. This provides abstracts of NI High Court cases (with a link to the full text of the case) and also a list of recent NI legislation and practice directions. Caselaw and details of new books are also included in *The Writ*.

We can also provide tailored current awareness whereby a monthly precis of developments in caselaw/legislation is provided to solicitors in their particular speciality.

Expert witnesses

The Library subscribes to the UK Register of Expert Witnesses. This database includes experts from England, Wales, Scotland and a small number from Northern Ireland. The Library also maintains a database of interpreters and translators.

IT

The Library has a range of PCs with access to a printer for use by the profession. The Library is also Wi-Fi enabled and users can access the internet using their own laptops or notebooks.

Compact Research Course

As part of the Society's CPD Programme, the Library runs a Compact Research Course for solicitors. This is a hands-on course where numbers are small. We concentrate on the following topics - How Law Is Made in NI, Googling for Law and Commercial Online Resources.

Publications

Textbooks

The Library has published a small number of NI textbooks in the last few years which are available to purchase. We also have a collection of NI textbooks formerly published by SLS for sale. Please contact a member of staff who will be happy to provide a list.

We also have annual book sales if you want to purchase an older edition of a key practitioner textbook from our Library collection at a discounted price.

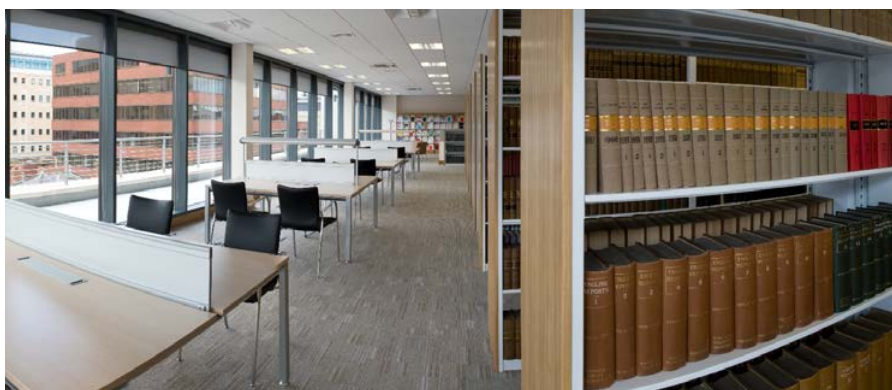


Journals

The Library publishes 4 journals which are available electronically on our website and are also sent to all solicitors via *I on the Law* upon publication-

- Folio
- Journal of Elder Law & Capacity
- Child & Family Law Update
- The Writ

If you are interested in writing an article for any of the journals please get in touch.



Contact Details

Derval McFetridge –
derval.mcfetridge@lawsoc-ni.org

Elizabeth Dowling –
elizabeth.dowling@lawsoc-ni.org



THE
LAW SOCIETY
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

100
YEARS



IN MEMORIAM

HEATHER SEMPLE

As we mark our Centenary, we pause to remember our colleague Heather Semple who passed away in March 2022.

Heather personified all that is good about our Society.

As the Society's Librarian, and more recently as Head of the Library and Information Service, she gave over 32 years devoted service to the Solicitor profession in Northern Ireland.

Her passion for her work was evident to everyone who encountered her, whether solicitors, trainees, Judges, and staff. She was a friend to everyone and was, in many ways, the best of us.

Whilst we mourn her loss we celebrate her life, her achievements and contribution to the Law Society of Northern Ireland.





Policy & Engagement Department The Year in Review

Jamie Warnock
Head of Policy & Engagement Department
Jamie.Warnock@lawsoc-ni.org

It has been a productive year for the Policy & Engagement Department as the team has sought to amplify the voice of the profession on critical issues and, in the Society's Centenary year we have been working hard to lay solid foundations for the next hundred years. This article covers a few of the year's highlights.

Political Engagement

The Department's principal function is to represent the solicitor profession to external stakeholders and in particular to political representatives and government officials. This role was never more important than at the beginning of the year when the Executive consulted on a draft Budget. It was quickly apparent that the Budget proposed for the Department of Justice had the potential to cause significant damage to the Justice system and to the network of solicitors across Northern Ireland which provides access to justice to the public. The Policy & Engagement Team were at the forefront of challenging the Budget and, led by the Chief Executive and Junior Vice President we engaged Ministers, the Justice Committee and a range of political representatives to ensure the profession's voice was heard. This was supplemented by a detailed written response sent to the Finance and Justice Ministers.

In the end, the Executive could not agree the Budget before the end of the mandate and NI Assembly elections in May. In advance of the elections, the Policy & Engagement Department led the Society's engagement with the local political parties as we looked to ensure the next Programme for Government took account of the issues facing our members and the Justice system. These issues were captured in the Justice Agenda 2022 which called for, among other things, a sustainable legal aid budget, modernisation of our courts and the establishment of a statutory Civil Justice Council for Northern Ireland. The ten strategic priorities from the Justice Agenda are set out in here:



Protecting the Legal Aid Budget

A ring-fenced legal aid budget of not less than £82m to protect our most vulnerable citizens



Sustainable Public Funded Legal Services

Launch an independent review of legal aid



Closing the Access to Justice Gap

Protect those on low incomes by increasing civil legal aid eligibility thresholds



Addressing the Legacy of the Past

All parties should work towards a solution which upholds the Rule of Law and complies with international obligations



Recovering Court Business

Urgent investment is needed to modernise and transform our Courts



Supporting Economic Recovery

Establish a statutory Civil Justice Council for Northern Ireland



Protecting the Public

Establish the Legal Services Oversight Commissioner



Digital transformation

Deliver sustained investment to digitise our justice system



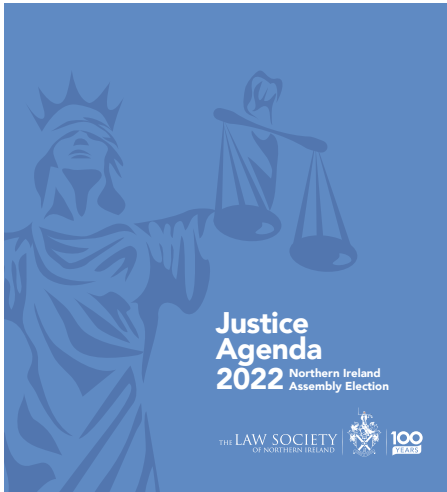
Modernising Civil Justice

The Department of Justice should bring forward a new Civil Justice Modernisation Strategy



Promoting Mediation

Prioritise mediation to deliver better outcomes for all parties



Alongside publication of the document, in the lead up to the election the Society hosted representatives for a panel session focused on Justice which allowed members to hear from and question the politicians on the important issues facing solicitors and their clients today. Commenting at the launch of the Justice Agenda, President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Brigid Napier said:

“I am pleased to launch the Justice Agenda to outline the priorities for rebuilding our justice system which, like so many areas of life, is still recovering from the pandemic. As society faces an unprecedented cost of living crisis, it is more important than ever that those in power protect our most vulnerable by ensuring they have Access to Justice.”

Of course, following the May elections, the local political parties were unable to reach agreement to re-form an Executive, with Ministers remaining in a caretaker capacity until 28 October. However even in these challenging circumstances, the Society has continued to engage with Departmental officials in the absence of Ministers. The Justice Agenda and the work to challenge the draft Budget has been well received and paved the way for other successes including engagement on the Legal Aid Budget – more details of which are included on page 20.

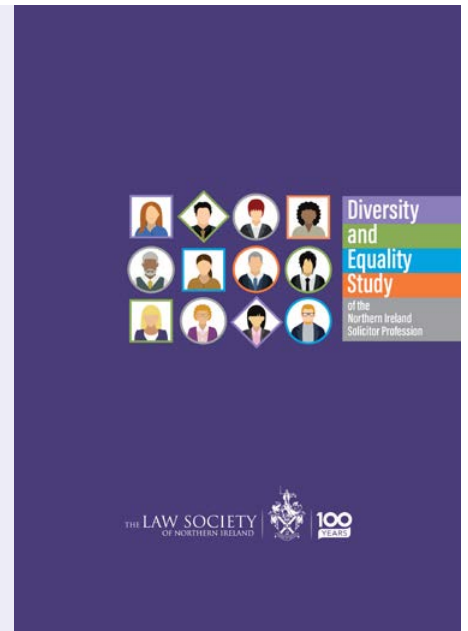
Diversity and Equality

In the autumn of 2021, led by our Human Rights and Equality Group and supported by the Policy & Engagement Department, the Society conducted its first ever Diversity and Equality survey.

There was a very strong response to the survey with over 1,200 responses - over a third of the target audience - received. The results of the survey showed the changing nature of the profession – for instance, it is now majority female, a trend that is accelerating, with many more female trainees passing through the Institute than men every year. However, we can also see much work still to be done to improve the retention rates of female solicitors and their representation in leadership positions and we also need to ensure the profession is an open and viable career choice for under-represented groups.

The findings of the survey and a dedicated Diversity & Equality Action Plan were then launched by the President at the Centenary Conference. The Action Plan sets out to tackle some of the core issues around gender equality and address barriers to under-represented groups accessing the profession. The report is available to download via the link below:

<https://www.lawsoc-ni.org/society-publishes-diversity-and-equality-report>

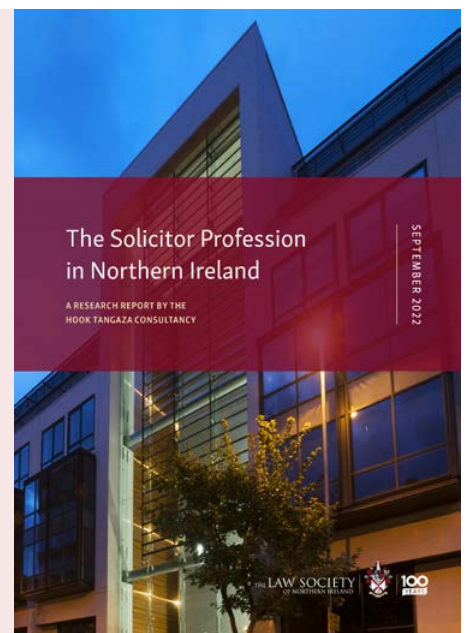


Solicitor Profession Research

A key objective of the Department has been to expand and strengthen our evidence base to assist in representing members with government and other external stakeholders. Early in 2022 we began work with Hook Tangaza, a specialist legal sector consultancy on a focused study into the profession. The work has shone a light on the impressive contribution the solicitor profession makes to Northern Ireland, both as an economic engine - creating £460m in economic value every year and supporting over 6,000 jobs - and as part of the fabric of our society, serving communities across Northern Ireland. It also highlighted challenges, in particular the difficulties keeping excellent local talent in private practice and the risk of shrinking legal aid provision to the network of local solicitor firms.

Over the coming months we will be developing our response to these challenges alongside our colleagues in the Society and the wider membership. Key findings from the research are captured in the summary report launched at the Centenary Conference and available to download via this link:

<https://www.lawsoc-ni.org/study-into-solicitor-profession-in-northern-ireland-published>



New Working Groups

Earlier this year, under the auspices of the Future of the Profession Committee, the Department established two new special interest groups to begin to tackle two vital issues facing the profession – rapid technological changes and the impact of Climate Change. The Law Tech Group and the Climate Justice Group began work in March this year and have been making swift progress.

The **Law Tech Group** has engaged key stakeholders including the Courts and Tribunal Service and has contributed to the new E-Discovery Practice Direction. The Group will

be bringing forward new resources in the new year for the benefit of the membership alongside a dedicated Law Tech CPD Programme.

Meanwhile, the **Climate Justice Group** developed and, following the approval of the Law Society Council, published the Climate Change Resolution, outlining the role that the Society and our members can play in addressing the climate crisis. The Resolution has two strands – firstly setting out the Society’s commitments in relation to climate change and secondly, encouraging solicitors to make changes to address climate change

and act in a climate-conscious manner.

The Resolution is available here:

https://www.lawsoc-ni.org/DatabaseDocs/new_2432832__climate_resolution.pdf

None of this good progress would have been possible without the expertise of our Policy and Practice Committees and all of our Working Groups which drive the work of the Department. Thanks and recognition goes to all of those Society members who gave up their time to contribute to these Committees and Groups and the members of staff who provided such strong support to them over the year.



SOCIETY REPRESENTATIONS SUCCEED IN SECURING INCREASED ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR LEGAL AID

Peter O'Brien
Deputy Chief Executive

Adequacy of funding for legal aid expenditure has been a key issue for the Society over the last year. Against a background where funding of circa £95 million is most likely required, the Department of Justice (DoJ) began the financial year in April 2022 by allocating only £75 million for legal aid expenditure.

Throughout the year the Society and the Bar Council have been engaging with the Ministers and officials in the Departments of Justice and Finance to emphasise the vulnerability of legal aid suppliers resulting from the lack of adequate funding for the legal aid system in Northern Ireland. In doing so we presented compelling evidence of the extent to which public funded legal services here are reliant on a supplier base of small solicitor firms and independent self-employed barristers.

We highlighted that the lack of sufficient funding has caused unacceptable delays in payments for legal aid work which was completed many months ago and has compounded the existing business continuity risks associated with soaring inflationary cost pressures. These payment delays have impacted adversely on cashflow and represent an existential threat to the sustainability of legal aid practices. The delays in payments to practitioners in this

jurisdiction stand in stark contrast to the arrangements that apply across the rest of the UK.

Effective lobbying in May 2022 resulted in a modest increase in budget allocation to £80 million in June 2022 but we continued to press the case for more. The evidence we presented on the harm being caused to access to justice in Northern Ireland convinced the Executive Ministers that additional funding for legal aid was an imperative.

On 22 September 2022, the Justice Minister informed us that she had directed the Department’s Permanent Secretary to maintain legal aid payments within a 12 week payment target up to a total expenditure for this year of £95m (the same as last year’s outturn). This Direction was given against the background of the Finance Minister’s Statement of 11 October where he confirmed that he would support

additional funding for the DoJ in light of the ongoing pressure on the Legal Aid Budget.

Given the Budgetary Review which the Secretary of State undertook in November 2022, we were concerned that this could lead to him imposing a reduced budget on all Northern Ireland Departments. We therefore wrote to him to impress the vital importance of his honouring the commitment to provide legal aid funding of not less than £95 million in the current financial year if irreparable harm to legal aid suppliers and their clients was to be avoided.

It has since been confirmed that there will be a modest increase in the DoJ’s budget which will result in the Legal Aid Budget being maintained at no less than £95 million for this Financial Year. The Legal Services Agency has also confirmed that it will make every effort to ensure that it expends the additional funding received before end March 2023.

Law Society welcomes Master of Rolls to CLA Mediation Conference



In April the Law Society of Northern Ireland was delighted to welcome Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of the Rolls, to Law Society house as a keynote speaker at the Commonwealth Mediation Conference 2022.

The Conference was organised by the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) in partnership with the Law Society Mediation Service (LSMS) and provided a platform to discuss the growing importance of mediation to resolve disputes.

The Lady Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Dame Siobhan Keegan DBE, opened the



two-day conference which was attended by members of the judiciary and lawyers from countries including Singapore, Malaysia, Trinidad and Tobago, the Bahamas, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and India.

Those attending had an opportunity to hear contributions from Mr Justice Knowles from the International Forum of Commercial Courts (SIFoCC) and George Lim, Chair Singapore International Mediation Centre and Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of the Rolls.

Commenting the President of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) and local Northern Ireland solicitor, Brian Speers said:



“This is the second time that Northern Ireland has hosted this prestigious conference and it is a reflection of the growing interest in mediation and lawyers as problem solvers that delegates from around the world have once again joined us”.

Speaking the President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Brigid Napier said:

“The Law Society is delighted to welcome colleagues from across the world to Belfast to lead discussion in this growing and developing area of law.”

Top Award for Commonwealth Mediation Event

The Law Society and Commonwealth Lawyers Association were delighted when the CLA Mediation Conference won the best ‘Business and Professional Services Event’ category at the Belfast Ambassador awards, held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast on Thursday 10 November 2022. The awards, which are organised by Visit Belfast, recognise the efforts of Belfast’s academic, legal, medical, and business leaders who helped secure major conference and event wins for the city during 2022.

Commenting on the award, the President of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, Brian Speers, said:

“I am delighted that the Commonwealth Mediation Conference has received this important award and I pay tribute to colleagues who worked tirelessly to ensure the conference was an outstanding success”.

Brian Speers, President of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association with the Award.



Putting children at the heart of the Justice System

Over 150 solicitors were in attendance for the return of the Children Order Conference which this year took place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast in May 2022.

The conference, which had been delayed because of the pandemic, provided a platform for legal practitioners specialising in family law to come together to discuss issues and developments in relation to children and the justice system.

This year's conference theme was *'The child at the centre of the process – Immigration and unaccompanied children'* and was very much reflective of a world in conflict.

Those attending had an opportunity to hear from a range of experts delivering presentations spanning legal, social services, psychological aspects and practice issues when acting for families involved with immigration and for unaccompanied children.

This event, which was organised by the Law Society's Children Order Panel Accreditation Board



From left: Naomi Long MLA and Fiona Donnelly, Chair of the Children Order Panel.

included addresses from the President of the Law Society, Brigid Napier and Justice Minister, Naomi Long MLA.

Commenting on the conference, Fiona Donnelly, Chair of the Children Order Panel said:

"After a lengthy delay I am delighted to welcome colleagues to this important event which provides a necessary platform to share knowledge and to discuss the needs of children in the Justice System in Northern Ireland".

THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NORTHERN IRELAND



How are you, really?



Life in the law can be tough.
Call our confidential helpline.
We're here to listen.

0800 279 6888

LawCare

Supporting the Legal Community

www.lawcare.org.uk

New website offers help in resolving ongoing legal disputes

The importance of mediation in settling legal disputes has been highlighted with the launch of a new website.

www.mediatorsni.co.uk has been launched by the Law Society Mediation Service (LSMS) as a 'one stop shop' for those involved in legal disputes which showcases the benefits of mediation as well as the contact details of over twenty local solicitor mediators specifically trained to work with disputing parties.

LSMS have launched the new website in response to the growing evidence which suggests that mediation is an effective, cheaper, and less stressful means of resolving legal disputes than going to court.

Whether it's a family, divorce, commercial or conveyancing dispute the new website will provide litigants and the public with options for consideration to help them resolve their ongoing and often protracted disputes.



From left - Gareth Jones, LSMS Mediator, Dame Siobhan Keegan, Lady Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Brian Speers, Chair of LSMS and Rosalind Dunlop, LSMS Mediator.

Commenting on the launch of the new website, Mr Brian Speers, Chair of Law Society Mediation Service (LSMS) said:

"Mediation in many cases is effective quick and involves less cost than a court hearing and is increasingly encouraged by the courts. We are therefore delighted to launch <https://mediatorsni.co.uk/> which provides access to information and a directory of professionally trained solicitor mediators who can help parties in the resolution of their dispute".

The Society was delighted to showcase the new website to Dame Siobhan Keegan, Lady Chief Justice of Northern Ireland.

Over 500 solicitors attend Annual Conveyancing Conference 2022

Over 500 local solicitors from across Northern Ireland attended the Law Society's Annual Conveyancing Conference which this year took place online and in person at the Assembly Building Conference Centre in Belfast.

Now in its ninth year, the Conference has become a regular feature of the legal calendar providing a platform to discuss current conveyancing developments and issues relevant to the profession and its clients.

The focus of this year's conference, which was sponsored by DUAL Asset, included an examination of the evolving conveyancing process and recent changes and its impact on solicitors providing legal services to clients buying, selling, and completing in the property market.

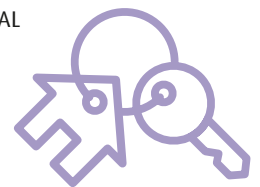
Those attending had an opportunity to hear from several keynote speakers from the Judiciary, legal profession, and property market industry on developments from their perspectives.

Commenting on the conference, Philip Armstrong, Conveyancing Conference Chair said:

"We are very grateful to our keynote speakers, our exhibitors and our principal sponsor DUAL Asset for their contribution to making the 2022 Conveyancing conference such a success".

Kirstin Nee Head of Scotland and Northern Ireland at DUAL Asset said:

"We are delighted to have sponsored the Law Society's Annual Conveyancing Conference and to have the opportunity to engage with local conveyancing solicitors as well as flagship our underwriting services".



From left: Mary Lou Press, Alexander Reid & Frazer Chartered Surveyors & Estate Agents; Samuel Dickey MRICS BSc (hons), Partner, Simon Brien Residential; The Honourable Madam Justice McBride; Philip Armstrong, Chair of the Law Society Conveyancing and Property Committee; Kirstin Nee, Head of Scotland and Northern Ireland, Dual Asset.

A view from Ukraine

As the war in Ukraine continues unabated the Writ magazine took the opportunity to speak with Maryna Opanasenko, a lawyer from Ukraine on her experiences of fleeing the war and her new life in Northern Ireland.



How long have you been a lawyer?

I graduated from the National Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv, Ukraine in 2007 and have been practising as a lawyer in Ukraine since then.

Who did you work for in Ukraine?

In Ukraine, I worked in private practice for GP Advisors law and consulting company.

It was a small sized legal and accountancy practice which had about six members of staff.

What has happened to your practice and colleagues since the outbreak of war?

Unfortunately, our practice has been forced to close and some colleagues have moved to safer locations with their families. But they are still trying to do some part of the work remotely.

What areas of law did you practise in as a lawyer in Ukraine?

Over the years I practised in areas of law including conveyancing, IP legal advice, employment law, copyright and trademarks, licensing litigation law and service agreements for business and non-business clients.

Did you find being a lawyer in Ukraine challenging, difficult or did you like your job?

I loved being a lawyer because it was sometimes challenging and difficult. I have always believed that you learn all the time particularly when you participate in interesting cases. They can be challenging especially when you must find solutions to help businesses and people in certain situations or difficulties.

What do you miss most about being a lawyer in Ukraine?

I miss the whole atmosphere of being in my office. After working there for more than ten years my colleagues are like my family and I miss them terribly.

You have fled the conflict with your two children that must have been difficult?

Yes, it was difficult as I had to leave my husband Alex behind in Kyiv.

It was not easy for me being on my own with my two children, Taras (12) and Bohdon (6).

We travelled for 7 days, during that time we slept in five different places and had to deal with very difficult conditions and situations including being stuck in a traffic jam in the Carpathian Mountains for 16 hours and then stuck for 12 hours on the border with Slovakia.

But compared to the struggles of the people in Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities, towns, and villages we were lucky.

How did you end up in Portadown, Northern Ireland?

My mother, who is from Ukraine, has lived in Northern Ireland for 14 years with my stepdad and I have been here before on holidays.

We initially arrived in Slovakia and flew from there to Dublin before driving to Richhill to be with my mother.

You are now working in Walker McDonald Solicitors in Portadown can you tell us about your new role?

I currently work on the reception desk speaking with clients and this has helped me understand the differences in the way my old practice worked compared to my new job.

I also help the Ukrainian refugees who have just arrived in Northern Ireland often with their migration issues and questions.

How do you find the change in roles and countries?

It is different and similar at the same time. Of course, my role has changed but I am incredibly grateful to be working in a law firm. It is also a good experience for me as a lawyer to find out how things work in other law firms in different countries.

Unfortunately, the legal system in Ukraine and the UK differs quite a lot and I cannot work here as a solicitor but at least I am continuing to be part of the legal profession.

I love the people in Northern Ireland who have been so warm, welcoming, and generous to me and my boys.

How can Law Society members help Ukrainian Lawyers?

From my point of view Law Society members can help my colleagues and friends to get temporary jobs in law firms especially if they can speak English. I am sure there would be many who would be keen to understand the route to becoming a lawyer here in Northern Ireland.

What are your hopes for the future?

I want to return home soon to be with my husband, friends, family, and colleagues.

I am grateful to my new friends in Northern Ireland, but they understand my desire is to go home when it's safer.

The Meeting Space

At Law Society House

A space
_ to gather
_ to think
_ to discuss
_ to mediate

If you need a venue for business gatherings, a place where you can bring clients, or a space for mediation, the Meeting Space is the perfect location.

Our spaces are high spec, high-tech, ultra-flexible and in the very heart of Belfast.

www.themeetingspace.ni.co.uk

T: 028 9622 7437

E: meetingspace@lawsoc-ni.org

Centenary Conference Outstanding Success

The Society's Centenary Conference took place on Friday 23 September at the Hilton Hotel in Belfast and was the centre piece event of the Society's celebrations to recognise its founding in September 1922.

While many of the Centenary events were about celebrating the profession's contributions to Northern Ireland over the past one hundred years, the Conference was firmly about looking forward, bringing together 350 members to explore the theme of "Shaping our Future Together".

Opening the Conference, the Law Society President, Brigid Napier lauded the progress made by the profession over the last century and called on the profession to cement its future success by embracing diversity, opening access, and tackling inequality, taking this

opportunity to launch the Society's first Diversity & Equality Action Plan.

Other highlights from the Conference:

- The Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan, spoke across a diverse range of topics, including the need to modernise and embrace technology
- Professor Richard Susskind led a lively session considering the future of the profession, what the key drivers of change are likely to be and how rapid changes in technology will disrupt and redefine what it means to be a lawyer
- Following on from a special address from former Irish President and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Climate Justice activist Mary Robinson, the profession heard from Dr Tara Shine on how Climate Change is affecting everyone, including the legal profession and what solicitors can do to help build a fair and sustainable future for all
- Eminent journalist and author Fergal Keane spoke of the importance of mental health and wellbeing, offering an invaluable insight into his own experiences as a war correspondent

- The day closed with a fascinating look at media law and the rise of social media, led by local solicitor Paul Tweed, hearing from a panel including RTE's Miriam O'Callaghan, Stephen Nolan from the BBC, Irish music producer Louis Walsh and publisher Graham Ogilvy.

The Conference would not have been possible without the generous financial support of sponsors who included:

- WTW (Joint Principal Sponsor)
- ABL Group (Joint Principal Sponsor)
- GmCG Chartered Accountants
- Advanced Legal
- Danske Bank
- Xperience Group
- Kingsbridge Healthcare
- Clarendon Executive
- Law Society Financial Advice

The Society is grateful to those who attended, contributed and supported the conference in making it such an outstanding success.

*From left:
Tara Shine, Co-CEO Change by Degrees, Prof Richard Susskind, Brigid Napier, President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Fergal Keane, journalist, and author, David A Lavery, CB, Chief Executive, Law Society of Northern Ireland.*







Professional Development Department The Year in Review

Darren Patterson

Head of Professional Development

Darren.Patterson@lawsoc-ni.org

The Professional Development Department is responsible for the education and training, both pre and post-qualification, of solicitors. It is also responsible for the process of admission to the Roll of Solicitors (in conjunction with the Registrar). The Department supports the work of the Society's Education Committee.

Key activities throughout 2022 focused on both entry to the profession and Continuing Professional Development.

The Department has responsibility for all matters relating to the registration of students of the Society to undertake a two-year programme of vocational training. This year saw a notable increase in the number of registrations in comparison with previous years with a total of 155 trainee solicitors commencing their traineeship in September 2022.

The team also coordinated the Law Society Module which forms part of

the IPLS course. This includes the examinable elements of Solicitors' Accounts and Professional Conduct as well as units covering Client Complaints and Solicitors' Regulatory Obligations. In total, 111 trainees completed and passed the Law Society module in 2022.

The Professional Development team continued its work on all areas relating to the in-career, lifelong learning of members. This included monitoring compliance with the CPD Scheme and providing advice, guidance and support for solicitors on the CPD requirements. In 2022, the CPD team

has overseen the continued growth and development of the Society's CPD provision in terms of the delivery methods, scope and number of courses. It continues to ensure the Society's CPD offering remains relevant and fulfils members' learning and development requirements.

While the relaxation of COVID restrictions has seen a return to some in-person CPD, a strong focus on digital delivery has remained. Feedback from members regarding online CPD continues to be positive and online delivery remains an important element of the Society's CPD proposition.





THE
LAW SOCIETY
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

100
YEARS

ADMISSIONS CEREMONIES



Newly qualified solicitors welcomed at May admissions reception

Law Society House in Belfast was the venue for a unique admissions and networking reception to the solicitor profession in Northern Ireland.

Over fifty solicitors joined the President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Brigid Napier and the Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan for the reception which was held in place of the 2020 Admission Ceremony which did not take place due to the pandemic.

In her address, the President of the Society, Brigid Napier took the occasion to offer some advice and guidance to those attending and to underscore the importance of the solicitor profession in Northern Ireland.

In her remarks the Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan reflected on how hard it had been during the pandemic and stressed what a privilege it is to be lawyer and how the role brings with it responsibility.

The Lady Chief Justice also encouraged the new solicitors to be part of the modernisation of justice in Northern Ireland as the new generation of lawyers.

She concluded by congratulating the young solicitors and wished them well in their careers.

Also in attendance at the reception was the former Lord Chief Justice, Sir Declan Morgan and former President of the Society, Rowan White who presented several awards.

These included the Thomasena McKinney Prize which was awarded to Daniel McCracken who attained first place in the Trainee Solicitor programme at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies.

Reece Lockhart was presented with his award for first place in the Solicitors' Accounts Course and first place award was presented to Brendan Foy for his success in the Professional Conduct Course.



Rowan White, Senior Vice President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan, Brigid Napier, President and Sir Declan Morgan, former Lord Chief Justice.



Rowan White and Dame Siobhan Keegan with Daniel McCracken, winner of the Thomasena McKinney Prize.



Rowan White with Brendan Foy, winner of First Prize in the Professional Conduct Course.



Rowan White with Reece Lockhart, winner of First Prize in the Solicitors' Accounts Course.



Newly admitted solicitors welcomed to the legal profession at June Ceremony

Over 70 newly admitted solicitors joined Masters, family, and friends for a special event held at the Assembly Buildings in Belfast City Centre in June 2022.

They were attending the Law Society of Northern Ireland's 2022 Admission Ceremony, an important event in the legal calendar.

This was the first time that the ceremony had taken place 'in person' since the start of the Covid pandemic.

Its welcome return was reflected in the large numbers in attendance at Assembly Buildings.

As part of the ceremony the Registrar of Solicitors, David A. Lavery CB presented the newly admitted solicitors to the Lady Chief Justice for Northern Ireland, Dame Siobhan Keegan and the Society's President, Brigid Napier.

Following the admission of the newly admitted solicitors the Lady Chief Justice and the President took the opportunity to present several prizes including the Thomasena McKinney Prize, for the top Trainee Solicitor.

This was awarded to Christopher Coulter who also achieved first place in the Professional Conduct Prize Course at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies.

Sasha Conlon was awarded the Solicitors' Accounts Prize.

Commenting on the admission of new solicitors the President of the Law Society, Brigid Napier said:

"The Law Society of Northern Ireland has today welcomed the next generation of solicitors to the legal profession. I am confident that they will continue to provide the invaluable and often unseen support which solicitors provide to their clients and the community throughout Northern Ireland".



David A Lavery CB, Chief Executive, addresses the audience.



Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan.



The audience in the Assembly Buildings, Belfast.



Brigid Napier, President.



Rowan White, Senior Vice President.







Brian Archer, Junior Vice President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland (LSNI), David A. Lavery CB, Chief Executive LSNI, Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan, Brigid Napier, President, LSNI and Rowan White, Senior Vice President, LSNI.



Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan and Brigid Napier, President of the Law Society of Northern Ireland with Christopher Coulter, winner of the Thomasena McKinney Prize and the Professional Conduct Prize.



Sasha Conlon winner of First Prize in the Solicitors Accounts Course.



Law Society launches new 'Mentoring Programme' 2023

The new 'Law Club' at Law Society House in Belfast City Centre was the venue for the launch of the Law Society of Northern Ireland's Mentoring Programme 2023.

Launched in October, the new programme seeks to support members of the solicitor profession as they navigate through their careers with support and guidance from experienced colleagues.

The President of the Society, Brigid Napier provided an overview of the new Mentoring Programme to attendees as well as welcoming Madam Justice McBride who provided an endorsement of mentoring as a useful support for the legal profession.

Those attending also had the opportunity to hear from Darren Patterson, Head of Professional Development, Niamh Shiells from Advance Coaching and the personal reflections on mentoring from Shannon Gawley, Carson McDowell and Chris Kinney, Law Society Council member.



*Mentoring Committee 2023 with
Madam Justice McBride.*





Professional Conduct Department The Year in Review

Laura McCullough

Head of Professional Conduct Department

Laura.McCullough@lawsoc-ni.org

The Professional Conduct Department was established in September 2020 as part of an organisational review undertaken by the Society. Initially led by John Mackell, (who left the Society in October 2022 to pursue a career at the Bar of Northern Ireland), the new Head of Professional Conduct is Laura McCullough, who joined the Society in September 2022.

Laura qualified as a solicitor in England and Wales in 2009 and was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in Northern Ireland in March 2010. Having spent four years in private practice specialising in family law Laura then moved back to Northern Ireland and into the field of social care regulation for the following 12 years at the Northern Ireland Social Care Council. Leading within the areas of workforce development, regulatory reform, fitness to practise proceedings and investigations, Laura holds professional qualifications in Complaints Handling and Investigation and the Professional Certificate in International Regulatory Affairs. She trained as a mediator in 2019.

The Department manages the Society's work in a number of key regulatory fields; client complaints, professional conduct complaints and investigations, monitoring and inspections, anti-money laundering/risk assessment, compensation fund applications, referrals to the Solicitor's Disciplinary Tribunal and firm interventions under the Solicitors (NI) Order 1976. The Department also provide secretarial support to the Client Complaints Committee and Professional Conduct Committee as well as managing the Remuneration Panel process.

AML

The Department introduced standalone anti-money laundering inspections. These inspections provide a useful means of identifying existing and emerging AML risks for the legal profession. This information assisted the Department in updating our Legal Sector Risk Assessment, which is available for members to review on our website.

The Department developed an AML podcast setting out useful information for members to identify and manage risks in their own firms. The podcast is hosted on the Society's website.

The Department takes a lead role in the sharing of AML intelligence amongst the legal sector. The Head of Professional Conduct, over the last 12 months, chaired the Legal Sector Intelligence Sector Expert Working Group comprising recognised bodies working in the legal sector across the UK.

Online Complaints

Earlier in the year the Department introduced an online professional conduct complaints portal. The portal is hosted on the Society's website and provides members of the public or the profession with accessible information on how to make a professional conduct complaint.

Remuneration

The Department facilitates applications for Remuneration Certificates. The process requires a panel of 3 solicitors to consider the reasonableness of professional fees charged in a particular case.

Over the last year panels met and considered 7 applications relating to professional fees in excess of £13,508.00. Bills were reduced on 3 occasions with 4 bills upheld.

Monitoring and Inspections

The Department, in this reporting period, managed and reported on over two hundred Accounts, Home Charter, AML and Financial Services desk based and on-site inspections.

The Department also oversaw a desk-based review of every Firm's Statutory Accountant's report. All 475 reports are considered with follow up queries raised as required. The outcome of this work is reported to the Professional Conduct Committee.

Client Complaints

The Department introduced an online video in December 2021 to assist solicitors responding

to inhouse complaints as well as complaints raised with the Society. The video is located on the Members' Section of the Society's website.

The Department developed an updated in-house complaint template to assist members to manage complaints once received. The template is available to members on the website.

In addition to its own oversight role the Department itself has been subject to external independent regulatory inspection and audit in a number of areas:

- The Legal Services Oversight Commissioner Report on Client Complaints reported 'another 12 month period which has seen a continued positive trend in how complaints are registered and handled by the Society';
- The Office for Professional Body AML Supervision (OPBAS) who monitor the Society's anti- money laundering work provided positive feedback on the Society's approach to supervision and staff competency and training in their audit findings;
- The Insolvency Service Northern Ireland, who monitor our supervision work relating to Insolvency Practitioners, whilst noting that no significant issues were identified concluded in their audit findings that overall the 'Society has appropriate processes in place when carrying out our regulatory functions'.
- An ISO inspection and assessment of the Department's operational processes found no non- conformities and certification to the ISO 9001:2015 standard was successfully retained.



Anti-Money Laundering Report 2021/22

The Society recognises that the effective Anti-Money Laundering (AML) work undertaken by solicitor Firms in Northern Ireland is essential to ensure that the proceeds of crime are not introduced into the wider economy. The importance of this work has been highlighted this year through the war in Ukraine and the subsequent sanctions introduced on Russian business interests across the UK and beyond.

The Society holds responsibility as an AML supervisor for the profession here and has a duty to report information to the Office for Professional Body Anti-Money Laundering Supervision. The Society, however, takes a wider view on fulfilling this responsibility and seeks to educate and promote best AML practice, as well as playing an active role in assisting members to identify and manage risks related to Money Laundering.

The second annual Anti-Money Laundering Report was published on 1 November 2022 and covers the period April 2021-April 2022.

Key highlights from the report include:

- 70% of breaches identified by the Society concerned lack of evidence of both source of funds and client due diligence checks. A further 30% arose solely from lack of evidence of source of funds checks.
- In the reporting period, the Society had a particular focus on the area of sanctions, which came to the fore during the reporting period following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and subsequent sanctions put in place thereafter.
- The Society has continued outreach work across its Sector through education programmes and various communication channels. A well-attended series of AML seminars throughout the reporting period covered a range of topics.
- The Society was proud to hold the Chair's position of the Legal Sector Intelligence Sharing Expert Working Group for the UK during the reporting period. Engaging with other regulators and professional bodies has been an invaluable source of intelligence and best practice sharing.
- The Society reviewed and updated its Risk Categorisation and Risk Assessment Methodology procedures in March 2022, keeping its risk assessment methods up to date and in line with best practice.
- The Society updated and circulated its Sector Risk Assessment during

this reporting period. The Sector Risk Assessment provides clear and practical advice to Firms in the assessment, monitoring and management of AML risks.

The Society has introduced standalone AML inspections for firms where monitors focus on AML governance and practice within a firm. These are in addition to the supervisory activity around accounts and Home Charter compliance. During the reporting period the Society significantly increased its supervisory activity, with 34% of relevant firms receiving a desk-based review. We have also introduced a new policy whereby new firms, in the 12 months following establishment, will receive on-site inspections in relation to all aspects of their professional conduct – to cover compliance with Accounts, Home Charter and AML/CTF matters.

Where the Society finds non-compliance, it can take enforcement action which, depending on the seriousness of the breach, can range from informal advice or a reminder of AMT/CTF obligations, through to referring the solicitor or the firm to the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal. The SDT is the independent statutory tribunal that deals with complaints against solicitors in Northern Ireland and has powers to impose fines up to £3,000, suspend or place conditions on practising certificates or remove solicitors from the Roll.


Looking forward, in the year ahead activities will focus on:

- establishing an AML Hub
- providing members with better online resources – for example, an online option to submit their AML/CTF Annual Return online and looking at better ways to provide and update members with information – for example through the use of podcasts
- including questions in the next AML/CTF Annual Return regarding conducting work in Russia, Ukraine and/or Belarus.
- continuing to provide guidance for Firms through the Society's CPD programme of webinars which focus on Risk and AML.
- continuing to provide AML/CTF staff training to the Society's regulatory team.
- monitoring and responding to developing trends and emerging areas of risk.

The report is available at <https://www.lawsoc-ni.org/202122-lsni-supervisors-annual-report-aml>


THE LAW SOCIETY OF NORTHERN IRELAND | 100 YEARS

AML AIDE-MÉMOIRE:
Knowing your client and understanding where their money comes from




wtw **ABL GROUP**
Insurance Brokers & Risk Advisors


AML AIDE-MÉMOIRE



IDENTIFY



VERIFY



DOCUMENT

In November 2022, the Society launched the AML/CTF Aide Memoire, which has been designed in conjunction with Willis Towers Watson & ABL Group, to support firms with their AML/CTF obligations in respect of Client Due Diligence checks. The new document underscores the Society's commitment to ensuring effective AML/CTF work is undertaken by solicitor firms in Northern Ireland.

The online version of the Aide Memoire is available for download
<https://www.lawsoc-ni.org/aide-memoire-1>

Law Society hosts Clinical Negligence Annual Conference



Sponsored by **ASM FORENSIC ACCOUNTANTS**

Over 130 solicitors from across Northern Ireland attended the Clinical Negligence End of Year Mini Conference 2022 which was held on 2 December 2022.

Now in its fourth year the conference, which is organised by the Management Board of the Clinical Negligence Practitioner's Group (CNPNG), provides a platform for clinical negligence practitioners to network and discuss topical issues of importance in this area of practice.

This year's hybrid conference was held in person at Law Society House and online and included presentations from distinguished speakers on key areas including:

- 'The chronic and acute abdomen' by Dr Michael Glynn;
- Consent - a legal update by Leigh Linton and Anna Haines-Smyth, Carson McDowell Solicitors;



From left: Stephen Burns from ASM Forensic Accountants, Nicola Niblock from ASM Forensic Accountants, Paddy Mullarkey, CNPG, Marysia Kelly, CNPG, Roger McMillan, CNPG.

- The Revised King's Bench Master's Guidance by Master Mark Harvey;
- Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery by Mr Lloyd McKie.



The conference included a Q&A session with speakers and a reception which was sponsored by ASM Forensic Accountants. Speaking after the conference, Paddy Mullarkey, CNPG Management Board Chair/ Board member said:

"This year's conference has been an outstanding success with more colleagues attending to discuss issues of importance affecting their practice and clients.

We are grateful to our key-note speakers for giving their time so freely and to ASM Forensic Accountants whose sponsorship supported the conference this year".

Stephen Burns from ASM Forensic Accountants said:

"ASM Forensic Accountants were delighted to sponsor this year's conference and look forward to continuing to support the Clinical Negligence Group and its members".

PRESIDENT'S YEAR IN BRIEF

APRIL

Opening of the new Carrickfergus & Larne Child Contact Centre

On 21 April the President opened the new Carrickfergus & Larne Child Contact Centre. The new facilities will provide a modern, safe environment for families to meet during Children Order Proceedings. The President thanked Donna Thompson of James J Macaulay Solicitors for her ongoing work and support for the establishment of the new centre.



QUB Women in Law Networking Event

On 30 March the President spoke at the Women in Law networking event at Queen's University at the invitation of Tamara Duncan and the QUB Women in Law Committee. She joined the Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan and Professor Joan Loughrey. The event provided an important platform to showcase the significant contribution of women to the legal profession in Northern Ireland.



MAY

IBA Mid-Year Leadership Meeting 2022

The President represented the Society at the IBA Mid-Year Leadership meeting which took place in Vilnius, Lithuania on 18 May - 21 May 2022. This was a meeting for IBA Officers and the senior leadership of representative legal bodies from across the world.



From left: IBA President, Sternford Moyo, Brigid Napier, President and Ignas Vegele, Lithuanian Bar Association Vilnius

JUNE

Four Jurisdictions Conference

On 21 June, the members of the Presidential team and the Chief Executive attended the Four Jurisdictions meeting hosted by the Law Society of Ireland at Blackhall Place in Dublin.

This biannual event is an opportunity to exchange ideas among the senior leadership teams of the Law Societies of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and England and Wales.



The 50th European Presidents' Conference

On 10 and 11 June 2022, the President attended the 50th European Presidents' Conference in Vienna.

The theme of the conference was **Laws of Power vs. The Rule of Law – How does the Rule of Law fit into the European security architecture?**

The Presidents of European Bars discussed the current challenges to the Rule of Law, in particular the war in Ukraine, and expressed solidarity and support to the President of the Ukrainian National Bar Association, Lidiya Izovitova.

During the conference the President signed a Declaration of European Lawyers in Support of the Rule of Law.



Seated from L to R: Ken Dalling (SVP Law Society of Scotland), Brigid Napier (President), Stephanie Boyce (President Law Society of England and Wales), Bernard Brady QC (Chair Bar Council of Northern Ireland), Mark Fenhalls, Chair of the Bar of England & Wales.

JULY

British Legal History Conference Dinner 2022

On 8 July the President attended the British Legal History Conference at QUB. The Conference dinner marked the penultimate day of what had been a fascinating conference organised by QUB in association with the Irish Legal History Society, and supported by The Law Society of Ireland, The Law Society of Northern Ireland, The Bar of Ireland and The Bar of Northern Ireland among others.



JULY

Lawyers participate in Belfast Pride Parade 2022

Solicitors from across Northern Ireland joined the Society's President for the Annual Belfast Pride Parade which took place in July 2022.

This was the first time that the Society has participated in the Parade which is a celebration of the LGBT+ community.

Commenting the President said:

"I was delighted that so many solicitors, their families and friends joined in supporting equality and diversity within the legal profession and our community. I would like to thank Lawyers in Pride for their support."



AUGUST

American Bar Association (ABA) Annual Meeting in Chicago

In August the President represented the Society at the Annual Meeting of the American Bar Association (ABA) which took place in Chicago from 3-9 August. The ABA Annual Meeting is the largest educational event of legal professionals. The meeting provided the opportunity to contribute to the debates while showcasing the solicitor profession in Northern Ireland.



*From left to right - Brigid Napier, President, Michelle Ní Longáin, President of Law Society of Ireland, and Stephanie Boyce, President of Law Society of England and Wales.
Source: Law Society of Ireland*

OCTOBER

Law Society of Ireland Gala 2022



From left to right - Brigid Napier, Larysa Gerasko, The Ambassador of Ukraine to Ireland, and Michelle Ní Longáin, the President of the Law Society of Ireland.

(Photograph courtesy of the Law Society of Ireland).

On 14 October the President attended the Law Society of Ireland's Gala Dinner at the invitation of Michelle Ní Longáin, the President of the Law Society of Ireland.

OCTOBER

LawCare Celebrates 25th Anniversary

On 19 October the President joined the Lady Chief Justice and colleagues to mark the 25th Anniversary of the legal mental health and wellbeing charity, LawCare.

LawCare continues to provide an invaluable support service to the legal profession in Northern Ireland.

Thank you to Niamh Warnock and Elizabeth Rimmer for their invitation to join in the celebrations.



The Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan cutting the celebratory cake.

OCTOBER

International Bar Association (IBA) Annual Conference



From left to right - Brigid Napier, Michelle Ní Longáin, President of Law Society of Ireland, and Lubna Shuja, President of Law Society of England and Wales. (Source: Law Society of Ireland)

At the end of October the President, Brigid Napier represented the Society at the International Bar Association (IBA) Annual Conference in Miami alongside the Chief Executive, David A. Lavery CB and John Guerin the Society's IBA representative.

The IBA Annual Conference is the leading international event for legal professionals worldwide.

Hollywood actor **RJ Mitte**, star of the hit TV show 'Breaking Bad', was attending the conference and gave a very impressive talk on the challenges of disability in the workplace and encouraged members of the Bar associations to embrace those with disability.



From left to right - John Guerin, RJ Mitte, Brigid Napier and David A. Lavery CB.

NOVEMBER

10th Sports Law Conference 2022



Malone Golf Club was the venue for the Sports Law Conference which took place on Friday 18 November.

Now in its tenth year the conference has gone from strength to strength with more members of the legal, sporting, and academic professions attending the conference.

Following a pause caused by the pandemic the conference was once again held in-person with over 150 attendees attending who had an opportunity to hear from key note speakers including Lady Mary Peters and The Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE DL.

The conference was organised in conjunction with the NI Sports Forum, the recognised

umbrella organisation for the voluntary sector of sport in Northern Ireland.

Commenting the President said:

“The Sport and Law Conference has become a firm fixture in the legal calendar providing a much-needed platform for sporting, medical and legal professionals to come together to discuss issues of importance and to work towards sharing best practice in sport and law.

We were delighted to provide our support for the Sports Law Conference 2022”.



Keith McGarry with Lady Mary Peters.



Speakers at the Sports Law Annual Conference.



NOVEMBER

Happy 100th Birthday James W Russell!

James Wilson Russell, solicitor, who was born on 18 November 1922 recently celebrated his 100th birthday.

Known to many as Jay, he qualified as a solicitor in 1944 with a First Class Honours Degree, serving his apprenticeship with TG Mackintosh of Newtownards. He then established his own firm there (J W Russell & Co), adding partners until 1981 when he became the firm's consultant.

He served as Coroner for North Down from the late 1960s until he took up the position of Assistant Director of the IPLS in 1978, becoming Director on the retirement of James Elliott. During his career, he was regularly instructed by colleagues as an expert witness where issues arose in conveyancing and probate cases.



Peter O'Brien, Deputy Chief Executive of the Law Society, joins the President in presenting James with his special birthday cake.



THE
LAW SOCIETY
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

100
YEARS