

Annual Impact Report 2020 Launch

22 June 2021, 11am–12.20pm



Women's Aid

Programme

11.00am	Welcome and opening remarks by Ailbhe Smyth
11.05am	Sarah Benson, CEO, Women's Aid
11.20am	Minister Hildegard Naughton, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Justice with special responsibility for Civil and Criminal Justice
11.30am	Dr Adrienne Barnett, Senior Lecturer in Law at Brunel University London and expert on family law
11.45am	Mary-Louise Lynch, Mary-Louise Lynch, Founder, Survivors Informing Services and Institutions (SiSi)
12 noon	Dr Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children
12.10pm	Q&A
12.20pm	Closing Remarks

Sarah Benson

Sarah Benson is the Chief Executive Officer of Women's Aid, Ireland: a leading national domestic violence support and advocacy organisation. Women's Aid supports thousands of women every year by offering a free, holistic services through its national helpline, outreach and training services. Women's Aid is also a lobbying and campaigning organization which aims to raise awareness and change public attitudes & policies in relation to Domestic violence and abuse. For nine years prior to this role, Sarah was the Chief Executive Officer with Ruhama, an Irish NGO working nationally with women affected by prostitution including victims of sex trafficking.



In addition Sarah has previous experience as Manager of the National Domestic Violence Helpline and extensive work in the community and voluntary sector both in Ireland and abroad, working particularly with marginalized ethnic minority women and youth. Throughout her career Sarah's passion for human rights, social justice and equality - in particular for women and girls - remains a constant feature.

Speakers

Ailbhe Smyth

Ailbhe Smyth is a long-time campaigner on feminist, LGBT and other social issues. Most recently, she played a leading role in the marriage equality referendum campaign in 2015, and was Co-Director of the Together for Yes campaign to repeal the 8th Amendment. She was the founding head of Women's Studies at UCD where she lectured for many years. She is the current chairperson of Women's Aid.



Dr Adrienne Barnett

Dr Adrienne Barnett is a Senior Lecturer in Law at Brunel University London and Director of Undergraduate Programmes for Brunel Law School. Prior to commencing in full time academia at Brunel Law School in January 2014, Adrienne practised as a barrister in London for over 30 years, for 25 of which she specialised in Family Law. Her specialist area of research is domestic abuse in private family law cases on which she has published and presented widely in England and Wales and internationally for over 20 years. More recently she has been researching parental alienation in England and Wales. She was commissioned to prepare the literature review for the Ministry of Justice's 2019 inquiry into risks of harm in family court proceedings, published in June 2020, and is supporting the UK government's implementation plan.



Annual Impact Report 2020 Launch

22 June 2021, 11am–12.20pm



Women's Aid

Mary-Louise Lynch, Survivors Informing Services and Institutions (SiSi)

Mary-Louise Lynch is the founder of SiSi. Survivors eliminating intimate abuse together. She tries hard not to be a militant feminist after surviving years of abuse while navigating systems in Ireland. She once worked in a family retail business and tried many paths through education and temporary employment while living with the devastation of ongoing coercive control. Not to be defeated and after realising there was no one coming to save her, she set about learning how abusers so easily manipulate the state and procedures, putting the spotlight on victims. She wondered why people kept telling her that it's just the way things are. When she was young and felt invincible she also wondered why her role models told her that she can't fight the system? Now, Mary-Louise wants to help build a better system instead. Her academic background includes Philosophy and History, Transformative Leadership and currently an MA in Women's Studies.



Hildegarde Naughton TD

Hildegarde Naughton TD is Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and Minister of State at the Department of Justice with special responsibility for Civil and Criminal Justice.



Hildegarde was elected to represent the Galway West constituency in the 2020 general election. She has served on a number of Oireachtas committees including the Future of Healthcare, and Budgetary Scrutiny. She was appointed as the chair of the Communications, Climate Action and Environment committee in 2016.

Dr Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children

Dr Niall Muldoon is Ireland's Ombudsman for Children. He was appointed as Ombudsman by President Michael D Higgins on 17 February 2015. His background is as a clinical psychologist and he has worked in the area of child protection for almost 20 years. Before becoming Ombudsman for Children in 2015, he worked at the OCO as Director of Investigations, and before that he was the national clinical director of The CARI Foundation, a charity that provides therapy and support for children affected by sexual abuse. As Ombudsman for Children, Niall wants to see an Ireland where all children and young people are actively heard and respected so that they experience safe, fulfilling and happy everyday lives.

