

**CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS
ALLIANCE**

Uniting Voices For Children



**THE BAR
OF IRELAND**

The Law Library

Position Overview: Children's Rights Alliance and The Bar of Ireland Catherine McGuinness Fellowship in Children's Rights and Child Law 2021





Children's Rights Alliance and The Bar of Ireland Catherine McGuinness Fellowship in Children's Rights and Child Law

1. Introduction

The Children's Rights Alliance unites over 100 members working together to make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child. We change the lives of all children in Ireland by making sure that their rights are respected and protected in our laws, policies and services.

In 2014, the Children's Rights Alliance was privileged to establish a prestigious one-year Fellowship Programme for newly qualified barristers. The fellowship is named in honour of Judge Catherine McGuinness, one of Ireland's greatest children's champions.

The Fellow works as part of the Children's Rights Alliance's Legal and Policy Team on law and policy reform for children's rights in Ireland. The programme benefits from the expertise and experience of the Fellows while providing them with the opportunity to be part of the Alliance team. The Fellows to date:

- Catriona Doherty BL – First Fellow 2015-2016
- Beatrice Vance BL – Second Fellow 2016-2017
- Aisling Mulligan BL – Third Fellow 2017-2018
- Lewis Mooney BL – Fourth Fellow 2018-2019
- Triona Jacob BL – Fifth Fellow 2019-2020
- Noeleen Healy BL – Sixth Fellow 2020-2021

Partnership with The Bar of Ireland and Family Lawyers Association of Ireland

In 2014, the Children's Rights Alliance was delighted to commence a funding partnership with The Bar of Ireland and the Family Lawyers Association of Ireland to create this exciting and important position in the Legal and Policy Team of the Children's Rights Alliance.

The merit of the Fellowship was again recognised by The Bar of Ireland, who in 2019, entered into a second three-year funding partnership with the Children's Rights Alliance to further endorse and support the next phase of the Fellowship.

From the outset, the Children's Rights Alliance has been lucky to have secured the vital endorsement of the Family Lawyers Association of Ireland. We believe that this support is especially fitting given Judge McGuinness' prestigious career as a family law practitioner.

Through these important partnerships, the Catherine McGuinness Fellowship has continued to pitch itself as a unique, highly-valued and prestigious Fellowship.

Front Cover Caption: From left to right – Prof. Geoffrey Shannon, Child Law Expert and Founding Member of the Children’s Rights Alliance, Lewis Mooney BL (fourth Catherine McGuinness Fellow), Triona Jacob BL, (fifth Catherine McGuinness Fellow) and Judge Catherine McGuinness.

2. The Role

This Fellowship is designed to create an exciting and important position in the Children’s Rights Alliance Legal and Policy Team. The Fellow is provided with a unique developmental opportunity, enhancing their reputation and future employability. Supervised and supported by the Children’s Rights Alliance, they also play an important role in the team contributing to initiatives that deliver legal, policy and social change for children.

Specific Areas of Work

The Fellow adds value to the work of the Children’s Rights Alliance by providing the dedicated attention and legal expertise of a qualified barrister. Areas of work include analysing legislation and relevant law and contributing to:

- The Annual *Report Card* series;
- Supporting the *Access to Justice* project, its information line and law clinic where the opportunity arises;
- Legal analysis of relevant legislative proposals that may impact on children and young people;
- *Know Your Rights* information guides and training;
- Reports to the UN and Council of Europe;
- Increase engagement and networking with the legal community;
- Advocating to Government in support of our positions.

3. Job Description

Job Title: Children’s Rights Alliance and The Bar of Ireland Catherine McGuinness Fellow in Children’s Rights and Child Law

Location: Children’s Rights Alliance, 7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7. Please note that due to current Covid-19 restrictions, Alliance staff including the new Fellow will be working remotely from home or at the Law Library for the time being.

Department: Legal and Policy Team

Description of the unit/department:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Legal and Policy Team is key to achieving the strategic objectives of the Children’s Rights Alliance. This involves monitoring, developing and advocating for the rights of children in Ireland’s laws, policies and services at national, European and international level.
--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team is responsible for producing a wide range of reports and submissions including the flagship publication, the annual <i>Report Card</i> series, as well as engaging in high-level advocacy, and providing support to members. • The team is led by the Head of Legal, Policy and Public Affairs and supported by the Legal and Policy Manager.
Reporting to:	Legal and Policy Manager
Contract Duration:	<p>The contract is to complete one day per week for one calendar year. The specific days to be worked will be agreed at the beginning of the contract. There is flexibility for change, by agreement, on a week-to-week basis to facilitate both parties.</p> <p>It is expected that the incoming Fellow will commence the fellowship in November 2021.</p>
Contract Type:	Contract for services
Remuneration:	The Fellow will be paid monthly on receipt of an invoice.
Location of Position:	The Fellow will be facilitated to work remotely from home or at the Law Library or at the Alliance's offices following a return to the office in line with public health guidance.
Key Duties:	<p>The work of the Fellow will focus on children's rights and child law and will undertake the following duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal analysis of relevant legislative proposals that may impact on children and recommending of areas to improve the rights of children. Track their progress through the Houses of the Oireachtas and analyse amendments made. Engage in advocacy activities. • Contribute to the Children's Rights Alliance international work in relation to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Council of Europe and advocate on the international jurisprudence that flows from these bodies. • Participate in our advocacy work in support of our positions. • Contribute to research on the Children's Rights Alliance <i>Report Card</i>, which monitors and grades Government performance in relation to children's rights. This is the Children's Rights Alliance flagship publication and is highly influential. • Provide legal information and support to members of the public and second tier advice givers through our <i>Access to Justice</i> Helpline and Clinics where the opportunity arises.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training as part of our <i>Know Your Rights</i> guide to provide basic information to children and young people on their legal rights and entitlements and support the review of the guide. • Prepare article for publication in the Bar Review. • Deliver a lecture/webinar for Law Library members.
Person Specification	
Qualification:	A newly-qualified barrister (preferably within four years).
Experience and Skills (desirable):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the legal structures, policy and law relating to children in Ireland • Understanding of international human rights law as it relates to children • Strong research capacity • Excellent communication skills, particularly writing and presentation and • Experience in producing materials for a varied audience.
Qualities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated interest in and commitment to children’s rights • Ability to work on one’s own initiative and operate as part of a team • Ability to be flexible and adaptable to a changing work environment and • Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
Post Fellowship	<p>The Fellow will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the opportunity to deliver legal, policy and social change for children in Ireland • Benefit from a unique developmental opportunity • Expand their networks • Enhance their reputation and future employability • Be noted as a champion for children’s rights.