

# Looking to the future for unaccompanied minors in Ireland and Europe

4 December 2018 | Dublin



Photo credit: Irish Refugee Council (Oxfam welcome banner created by students)



# Background

The problems facing unaccompanied minors are a matter of continuing concern in Europe and globally. Unaccompanied minors made almost 100,000 international protection applications in the EU in 2015, falling to approximately 63,500 in 2016 and 32,000 in 2017. Unaccompanied minors may travel for a range of reasons including, to seek international protection, to join family members, and as victims of trafficking. The Calais Special Project and the Irish Refugee Protection Programme provide new avenues for such children to reach safety in Ireland. The capacity of Tusla - Child and Family Agency, has been expanded to cope with increased arrivals.

Drawing on the findings of a major new European Migration Network study this conference will provide an opportunity to discuss the longer-term prospects of unaccompanied minors in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe. The EMN Ireland / Economic and Social Research Institute study ***Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination in Ireland***, will also be launched.

The multi-disciplinary conference brings together experts from a range of organisations. Speakers will discuss promising practices and ongoing challenges related to the care and integration of minors, both those awarded protection status and those transitioning to adulthood without a decision. Pathways to status including the processing of protection applications will be considered, along with access to aftercare, family reunification, health and education.

## Recent EMN Publications on Unaccompanied Minors



***Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination in Ireland***



***Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination in the EU plus Norway: EMN Synthesis Report***



***Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination in the EU plus Norway: EMN Inform***



***What happens to unaccompanied children on arrival in Europe following status determination? EMN Flash 1/2018***

All EMN publications can be downloaded at [www.emn.ie/emn-publications](http://www.emn.ie/emn-publications).

# Agenda



- 09:00 **Arrival and registration**
- 09:30 **Welcome:** Alan Barrett, Economic and Social Research Institute
- 09:40 **Keynote:** Bryan McMahon, Former Chair, Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process
- Session 1: Unaccompanied minors in the international context**
- 10:00 **Chair: Michele Clarke, Department of Children and Youth Affairs**
- Approaches to unaccompanied minors following status determination: Ireland in an EU context**  
Samantha Arnold and Sarah Groarke, EMN Ireland / Economic and Social Research Institute
- Promising practices for working with separated children and youth to secure comprehensive solutions**  
Jyothi Kanics, Faculty of Law, University of Lucerne
- The best interests of the child and the protection system**  
Maria Hennessy, UNHCR Ireland - the UN Refugee Agency
- 11:00 **Questions and answers**
- 11:15 **Coffee break**
- Session 2: Care, aftercare and integration of unaccompanied minors**
- 11:30 **Chair: Shirley Martin, Co-Director, Early Years and Childhood Studies, University College Cork**
- Barbara Monaghan and Thomas Dunning, Tusla Social Work Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum
- Unaccompanied minors in Sweden**  
Marie Bengtsson, Swedish EMN National Contact Point, Swedish Migration Agency
- 'More than a new language' - addressing the education and training needs of unaccompanied minors in Ireland**  
Jessica Farnan, Youth and Education Service for Refugees and Migrants, CDETB
- 12:30 **Questions and answers**
- 12:45 **Lunch**
- Session 3: Pathways to status for unaccompanied minors**
- 13:45 **Chair: Hilka Becker, Chairperson, International Protection Appeals Tribunal**
- Pathways to status for unaccompanied minors**  
Brian Merriman, Policy Division, Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
- Securing the future: key issues for unaccompanied and separated children in the Irish immigration system**  
Catherine Cosgrave, Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Unaccompanied minors and international protection - Legal services provided by the Legal Aid Board**  
Evelyn Petoia, Legal Aid Board
- 14:30 **Questions and answers**
- 14:50 **Closing remarks:** Emma Quinn, EMN Ireland / Economic and Social Research Institute



# Speaker and Chairs

## **Alan Barrett**

### **Director, Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)**

Alan Barrett is the Director of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). Alan's main research areas are labour economics and population economics. He joined the ESRI in 1994. From 2001 to 2003, Alan was seconded to the Department of Finance where he worked on the long-term fiscal implications of population ageing. From 2011 to 2013, he was seconded to the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) at Trinity College Dublin where he worked as Project Director. He was a member of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council from 2011 to 2015. Alan is a Research Fellow with the Institute for Labour Economics (IZA) in Bonn, Germany, an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Actuaries in Ireland and a member (ex officio) of the Climate Change Advisory Council.

## **Bryan McMahon**

### **Former Chair, Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process**

Dr Bryan McMahon is a retired Judge of the High Court and the author of textbooks on Irish law. Judge McMahon received his BCL and LLB degrees from University College of Dublin. He was subsequently awarded a Fellowship to undertake further postgraduate study at Harvard Law School. He returned to Ireland and joined the Department of Law at University College Cork. In 1987 Judge McMahon joined the law firm of Houlihan and McMahon, Ennis, Co. Clare, as a Senior Partner. While continuing to practise law he simultaneously held a part-time Chair of Law at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

In 1999 he was appointed a Judge of the Circuit Court. In 2007, he was promoted to the High Court in recognition of his status as a leading Irish jurist. A noted and oft cited jurist, he is deemed to be an authority on the bench in relation to tortious matters. He was appointed Adjunct Professor of the Faculty of Law at University College Cork in 2004. He retired from the bench in 2011 having served for 12 years, 4 of which were as a Judge of the High Court.

In late 2014, he was appointed Chair of the Working Group tasked with making recommendations for improvements to the protection process and direct provision, which published its final report in 2015.

## **Michele Clarke**

### **Chief Social Worker, Department of Children and Youth Affairs**

Michele Clarke has responsibility at Principal Officer level (Chief Social Worker) for monitoring and evaluating Tusla service provision of child protection and children in care services; supporting and advising on future service direction including social work advice and support; contributing to inter-department and inter-agency working and standards relating to services for vulnerable children.

# Speaker and Chairs



## **Samantha Arnold**

**Postdoctoral Research Fellow, EMN Ireland, ESRI**

Samantha Arnold is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with EMN Ireland and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Law at Trinity College Dublin. Samantha holds a PhD from the School of Law, Trinity College Dublin and an LLM in European Refugee Law awarded by University College Cork. Prior to joining EMN Ireland, Samantha was the Children's and Young Persons' Officer at the Irish Refugee Council.

## **Sarah Groarke**

**Research Assistant, EMN Ireland, ESRI**

Sarah Groarke works as a Research Assistant with EMN Ireland. Prior to joining the EMN Ireland, Sarah worked with the Delegations of Ireland and the EU to the UN in Geneva and the International Organization for Migration in Brussels. Sarah holds an E.MA in Human Rights and Democratisation from EIUC Venice and a BCL (International) from University College Cork.

## **Jyothi Kanics**

**Faculty of Law, University of Lucerne**

Since 1995 Jyothi Kanics has been active with non-governmental and international organisations including the Irish Refugee Council, UNICEF, OSCE ODIHR and Save the Children advocating for the rights of vulnerable migrants such as asylum seekers, separated children, trafficked persons, undocumented migrants and stateless persons. She is presently working part-time with UNHCR as a Global Policy Specialist for the Beyond Detention campaign. She is also currently a Doctoral Candidate at the Faculty of Law of the University of Lucerne within the National Centre of Competence in Research, NCCR - on the Move, supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Jyothi completed her undergraduate degrees in Russian & East European Studies and Russian Language & Literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has a Masters in International Human Rights Law from the University of Oxford and a Masters in International Relations from Yale University.

## **Maria Hennessy**

**Assistant Protection Officer, UNHCR Ireland**

Prior to joining UNHCR she was Legal Officer at the Irish Refugee Council and Senior Legal Officer at the European Council on Refugees & Exiles (ECRE). Maria was previously ECRE's contact point for the European Asylum Support Office's reference group on training and quality and she has conducted training for lawyers, public officials, university students and NGOs on a wide range of legal topics related to asylum. Previously Maria was a legal researcher within the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner and was a Senior Appeals Caseworker at the former Refugee Migrant Justice in the UK. Maria studied law and environmental science at National University of Galway, Ireland and Leiden University and holds a Masters in Law and Development from the University of London. She was previously an advisory panel member of RefLAW, a project of the University of Michigan Law School.



## Speaker and Chairs

### **Shirley Martin**

#### **Co-Director, Early Years and Childhood Studies, University College Cork**

Dr Shirley Martin is the Co-Director of the interdisciplinary Early Years and Childhood Studies programme in University College Cork and a lecturer in the School of Applied Social Studies in University College Cork since 2004. She has conducted a number of research projects in the area of child and youth participation and has developed a number of youth-led research projects. Her research work has contributed to the body of work informing the National Strategy for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision making 2015-2020 and she has worked closely with the Citizen Participation Unit of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs since 2011 on a range of projects including national consultations with children and young people to formulate specific government policies.

She is the Irish Primary Investigator for a newly funded four year Horizon2020 Project IMMERSE (Integration mapping of Refugee and Migrant Children in Schools in Europe) which will commence in December 2018.

### **Barbara Monaghan**

#### **Tusla Social Work Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum**

Barbara Monaghan is a Social Work Team Leader for Tusla Child and Family Agency's Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum in Ireland and currently manages the Aftercare service within the Team. A social worker for 18 years, she studied at Bradford University, UK. Barbara has over 14 years experience of working with separated children and young people in Ireland.

### **Thomas Dunning**

#### **Tusla Social Work Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum**

Thomas Dunning is the Principal Social Worker for Tusla Child and Family Agency's Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum in Ireland; a national service with clinical oversight and responsibility for the care and protection needs of unaccompanied minors and assessment of unexpected family reunification applications. A social worker for 24 years, he studied at Governor's State University in Illinois, USA. Thomas has worked in the area of child protection in Ireland since 2002 and with separated children specifically since 2006. He has represented Ireland on various expert working groups at EU level regarding the needs of separated children. Currently he is also serving as Interim Principal Social Worker for International Social Services Ireland.

### **Marie Bengtsson**

#### **Expert, Swedish Migration Agency / Swedish EMN NCP**

Marie Bengtsson is an expert at the Swedish Migration Agency and the National Coordinator of the Swedish National Contact Point to the European Migration Network (EMN).

Marie holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from University of Lund.

# Speaker and Chairs



## Jessica Farnan

### **Manager, Youth and Education Service for Refugees and Migrants**

Jessica Farnan is the manager of the Youth and Education Service for Refugees and Migrants (formerly Separated Children's Service) in the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb). Since its inception in 2001, Jessica has managed and developed the service, which aims to respond to the diverse and complex needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds; in particular unaccompanied minors. In collaboration with other agencies, Jessica has advocated for and consulted on the development of intercultural policies and practices across the education and youth sector.

Prior to working with CDETb, Jessica worked with the Irish Refugee Council and was Board member of Access Ireland - a cultural mediation and refugee integration project. She has a degree in social work from the 'Bundesakademie für Sozialarbeit' in Vienna, and an MA in Migration Studies from Sussex University.

## Hilkka Becker

### **Chairperson, International Protection Appeals Tribunal**

Hilkka Becker is the Chairperson of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal. She was appointed a Member of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal in 2013 and, before being appointed Chairperson of the Tribunal in April 2017, was Deputy Chairperson from December 2016.

Hilkka is a lawyer with over 20 years professional experience specialising in asylum, migration and human rights law. She registered to practice in Germany in 1998 and is a practising solicitor in Ireland since 2003. She has long acted in immigration, EU free movement, refugee and citizenship law before the superior courts in Ireland as well as before the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union. Hilkka was senior solicitor at Immigrant Council of Ireland Independent Law Centre for over ten years up to March 2015. She has since acted as a consultant for the Immigrant Council and also for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Azerbaijan. She is a former Regional Legal Advisor with IOM Vienna and provided consultancy services for IOM in several Western Balkan states.

## Brian Merriman

### **Principal Officer, Policy Division, Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS), Department of Justice and Equality**

Brian Merriman is Principal Officer in the Policy Division of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service dealing with matters such as Immigrations, Citizenship, Residency and matters relating to International Protection. Brian holds a Master's degree in Equality Studies from UCD, was previously an Acting CEO of the Equality Authority and its Head of Communications and Head of Legal Services. Previously he was assistant CEO of the Employment Equality Agency and Press/Information Officer in State Agencies and Government departments including the Government Information Service.



## Speaker and Chairs

### **Catherine Cosgrave** **Legal Services Manager, Immigrant Council of Ireland Independent Law Centre**

Catherine Cosgrave is a law graduate of University College Dublin, the University of Edinburgh and the Honourable Society of the Kings Inns. A specialised migration/human rights lawyer, Catherine is the author of several leading publications relating to family and child migration, trafficking and citizenship. In addition to legal practice, she has worked as a legal trainer/consultant and lecturer at the University of Limerick and the Dublin Institute of Technology.

In 2010, she was selected as a member of the British Council's Transatlantic Network, also known as TN2020. Formerly a member of the Advisory Boards of the NCCRI, PILA and European Network on Migrant Worker's Rights, Catherine is the EUDO Ireland Country Expert on Citizenship and sits on the Advisory Committee of the European Network on Statelessness. She served on the Board of Women's Aid (2006-2016) and is currently Chairperson of Canal Way Educate Together National School.

### **Evelyn Petoia** **Solicitor, Legal Aid Board**

Evelyn is a solicitor who has worked in the Legal Aid Board for over thirteen years. After qualification she worked in London as a solicitor for a number of years and then returned to Ireland and joined the Legal Aid Board. She works in the Board's Separated Children's Unit and has over ten years experience of acting for unaccompanied minors in connection with claims for status.

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**EMN Ireland**  
**Email [emn.ireland@esri.ie](mailto:emn.ireland@esri.ie)**  
**Tel +353 1 863 2000**  
**Web [www.emn.ie](http://www.emn.ie)**