



## ***Chair and Speaker Biographies***

### **Alison Reid, Principal Solicitor, Clan Childlaw**

Alison was enrolled as a solicitor in 1996. She worked in civil litigation in private practice for four years before being employed as a Reporter to the Children's Hearings. Having recognised the need for a specialist, outreach, legal representation service for children and young people in Scotland, Alison co-founded Clan Childlaw in 2008 and continues to be employed as its Chief Executive and Principal Solicitor. She is a court reporter and curator ad litem in relation to contact and residence disputes in the sheriff court and a curator ad litem and reporting officer in relation to adoption and permanence proceedings. Until recently, she was also a safeguarder in the children's hearings system, a member of the Law Society of Scotland's Access to Justice Committee and a member of the City of Edinburgh Council's Child Protection Committee.

### **Michael Gowan MSYP**

Michael is a trustee, and convener of the culture and media committee, at the Scottish Youth Parliament. His work with the SYP has involved working with the Scottish Parliament on various policies, such as the anti-bullying and mental health policy updates, representing young people to ensure their views are considered, and advocating a rights based approach. In addition to this, Michael sits on the boards of the Dumfries and Galloway Third Sector Interface and Summerhill Community Association, representing young people at local and regional levels.

### **Jennifer Twite, Head of Strategic Litigation (Youth Justice), Just for Kids Law**

Jennifer has been a practising barrister since 2006 and is a Youth Justice specialist. She is extremely experienced in representing children and young people in the Crown Court and the Youth Court, with a particular expertise in complex cases involving defendants who require an intermediary or are unfit to plead. She has been working with Just for Kids since 2010. She now heads the strategic litigation team at Just for Kids Law, where she runs the test cases taken by the charity in the area of Youth Justice. In the past year Just for Kids have intervened in the case of Joge in the Supreme Court, and a case about pre charge anonymity (JKL v DOJ) in Northern Ireland. Additionally Just for Kids have launched a #nochildincells campaign about the overnight detention of children in police cells, and taken a number of challenges against local authorities for the failure to provide alternative accommodation for children.

### **Fiona Jones, Policy & Advocacy Consultant, Clan Childlaw**

Fiona is a non-practising member of the Faculty of Advocates, with many years of experience working to advance the realisation of Children's Rights in Scotland. She is a co-founder of Clan Childlaw, where she provides legal advice on all aspects of child law, contributes to policy development and delivers training. Fiona is a member of the Family Law Committee of the

Scottish Civil Justice Council and chairs the board of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights). She has, until recently, been a Safeguarder in the Children's Hearings System and a Child Welfare Reporter at Edinburgh Sheriff Court. Fiona is on the board of her local Citizens Advice Bureau, where she has previous experience working as a volunteer adviser. She has also been an additional needs assistant to a child with autism, in a pre-school nursery.

### **Juliet Harris, Director, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)**

Juliet leads Together in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland. This includes working with Together's membership of over 300 children's organisations and professionals to produce an annual State of Children's Rights report, liaising with government and parliamentarians to further children's rights in policy and practice and reporting on progress to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Juliet's previous experience includes six years tackling the destitution and poverty of refugees and asylum seekers, alongside a number of roles with charities working in the field of health and homelessness. Juliet has an LLM in International Human Rights Law.

### **Morag Ross QC**

Morag was called to the bar in 2003 and took silk in 2016. She is a graduate of the Universities of Oxford and Edinburgh. Her practice is predominantly in public law, including human rights and civil liberties. She has experience in a wide range of public law work and is instructed by both petitioners and respondents. She regularly represents and provides advice to public authorities in judicial review and statutory appeal proceedings. She also has a substantial practice in EU law and has significant experience in public procurement and State aid. She is instructed for the petitioners in the litigation challenging legislation relating to minimum unit pricing for alcohol and, in that capacity, has appeared in the Court of Justice of the European Union. Morag has a particular interest in freedom of information and has represented the Scottish Information Commissioner in a number of cases, including in the Supreme Court. Morag was recently instructed as leading counsel in a case in the Supreme Court involving a human rights challenge to legislation. From 2008 to 2016, she served as Standing Junior Counsel to the Scottish Government and was instructed in a range of complex and high profile cases, including litigation involving assisted suicide and human rights. In addition to her public law practice, Morag has experience of the Commercial Court and is regularly instructed on behalf of major commercial interests in contractual and other disputes.

### ***Event organiser: Janet Cormack, Strategic Litigation Group Coordinator, Clan Childlaw***

As Coordinator of the Strategic Litigation Group (SLG), Janet supports Clan Childlaw's work on realising children's rights through legal processes. Formed in 2012, the SLG is made up of a mix of professionals working in children's rights, including policy leads from the voluntary sector and solicitors and advocates who practice in the field of human rights and/or child law. It is a forum for connecting organisations and individuals interested in using law and human rights tools to tackle discrimination and disadvantage experienced by children and young people. If you would like to get involved or learn more about our work, please contact [janet.cormack@clanchildlaw.org](mailto:janet.cormack@clanchildlaw.org).