

Connect, Challenge, Change

***Working in partnership towards Ending Violence Against Women & Girls in
Newry, Mourne & Down
Stakeholder Conference, 25 March 2025***

Speaker Bios



Councillor Pete Byrne is Chairperson of Newry, Mourne & Down District Council. Councillor Byrne was appointed as First Citizen of the District on 3 June 2024 and is an SDLP Councillor for the Slieve Gullion District Electoral Area (DEA).



Claire Archbold is Director- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls at The Executive Office. Claire is a senior civil servant and barrister whose 20 year civil service career has included both government legal work and policy-making roles. She leads the cross-Executive Strategic Framework on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls and was previously Deputy Head of the Departmental Solicitor's Office (the devolved government's in-house lawyers). A former legal academic, she is an Honorary Professor of Practice in Public Law at Queen's University. As a qualified family mediator, and past Chair of Relate (NI), she has a particular interest in policy and service delivery to protect vulnerable family members and build healthy relationships.



Eileen Murphy, Chief Executive of Women's Aid Armagh Down, is at the forefront of the Women's Aid support services to women, children and young people experiencing domestic / sexual violence and abuse. Eileen has spent the past twenty-three years developing the growth and extension of Women's Aid support services throughout the Southern & South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust areas which incorporates Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon District Council and the Newry Mourne and Down District Council areas. Eileen has developed business strategies to increase the size and scope of Women's Aid Armagh Down and the geographical area of service delivery for the organisation.



Rita Geraghty is from Drogheda, Co-Louth and is a survivor – having been coerced, controlled and the victim of long-term physical and mental abuse at the hands of her husband for over 26 years. She has agreed to share her story at the conference in the hope that it will give others hope and encourage women to speak out and move forward. Rita has many years experience working with women and local community groups and in 2024 was the recipient of a Louth Mayoral Award for her exemplary leadership of DAWN, (Drogheda Area Women's Network) and her unwavering advocacy against Domestic Violence.



Louise Crowley is a Professor in the School of Law, UCC. Her research focuses on the regulation of inter-personal relationships and intimate partner abuse. Louise is the Director of the LLM (Children's Rights and Family Law). At UCC, Louise has developed the award-winning campus-wide Bystander Intervention initiative which seeks to educate and empower staff and students to challenge the normalisation of sexual abuse and to recognise their role as active bystanders to effect change and bring about a new normal of safety and respect. This training is now offered on campuses across Ireland. In 2023/24 Louise delivered workshops on Sexual Ethics and Respectful Relationships to 3,000 personnel in the Irish Defence Forces.