

SDCL's Michael Sheil on "Today with Pat Kenny".

Michael Sheil, our Chairman and a Blackrock member was interviewed on the "Today with Pat Kenny" radio show on Thursday 11th March. This is a show with a listenership of 339,000. Michael debated the advantages of Collaborative Law versus the traditional methods of separating and divorcing with another leading family solicitor. His opponent conceded that Collaborative Law while not for everyone certainly has its merits and there were many positive comments received from the listening public for this new area of law.

SDCL Members receive further training.

Members attended a training course for two days recently which developed and honed their skills and tools for effective practice in the Collaborative Law method. There was particular focus on screening for suitability, the preparation for the collaborative process to ensure that it works as smoothly as possible, the importance of the relationship between the solicitors, listening and understanding the clients' concerns and their children's concerns and managing the emotional content of the meetings. The training was provided by Resolution (formerly known as the Solicitors Family Law Association), who are based in the U.K. Members attending the course came away with a renewed enthusiasm and belief in the Collaborative method.

Members attend talk on Children when Parents Separate.

Shauna O'Gorman a Foxrock member and Jason McGoey a Ranelagh member recently attended a talk given by Dr. John Sharry, child and family psychotherapist, international author and developer of the Parents Plus Programmes entitled "When Parents Separate: Helping your Children cope". The talk drew on research into children's experiences of separation and divorce and it outlined practical actions that parents can take to help children cope and succeed. Please see www.solutiontalk.ie for further details.

Children: Responsibility of both parents.

The Labour Party published a Members Bill on the 15th of March last which they say emphasises the rights of the child to the care and responsibility of both parents. This of course is something that Collaborative Law puts to the forefront in any separation or divorce situation. The Bill, they say, was introduced due to the fact that Article 41 of the Constitution has failed to recognise that many people today live in stable and loving relationships despite them not being families in the traditional sense.

Judge cites Increase in use of Collaborative method in the U.K.

The Times has reported that a U.K. Supreme Court Judge said that there had been an impressive take-up on the use of the collaborative approach to divorce. In a recent address to leading family lawyers in London last October, Lord Kerr of Tonaghmore went on to cite how "perhaps the most inspiring statistic of all is that of the settlement rate of collaborative law cases – a remarkable 85%".

If you have any queries on the contents of this update, or if there are other topics that you would like to see addressed in future additions, please contact any member of the South Dublin Collaborative Lawyers

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Richard Humphries, of Dun-Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, Minister Barry Andrews & Brendan Dillon

Minister Barry Andrews launched South Dublin Collaborative Lawyers on Tuesday 23rd February 2010 in The County Hall, Dun Laoghaire

On Tuesday, 23rd February, we hosted an information evening on an important development in the area of conflict resolution – the Collaborative approach.

Collaborative law is a process where the lawyers and the two parties of the relationship try to negotiate and work out, in the course of a series of meetings, a resolution to all of the issues between them.

It is a process that puts the children at the centre of the negotiations. It is designed to minimise the disruption and the affect a marital / relationship breakup can have on the children.

At the launch the Chairman of the Group Michael Sheil pointed to the origins of Collaborative Law in the United States and to the benefits of this area of practice. He referred to the commitment of the members of the group to promote this area of law and he looked forward to more practitioners getting involved in the practice of collaborative law.

Minister Andrews welcomed the launch of the group. As Minister with responsibility for children he recognised the detrimental impact the adversarial court system might have on the formative years on a child's life. He commented that the growth of non adversarial options of resolving family law disputes was to be welcomed.



Michael Sheil, Minister Barry Andrews & Shauna O'Gorman

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