



Olivia O’Kane BA BLgSci PG Dip

Partner, Head of Media & Entertainments



Areas of Law: Libel, Privacy, Contempt, Data Protection, Harassment, Journalist Police PACE interviews, Production Orders, Copyright, Advertising Law, Pre-Publication/Broadcast Advices, E-Commerce legislation, online law and Norwich Pharmacol Orders. Ofcom and PCC and Press Ombudsman regulatory advices and resolution.

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Professional Background

I am a Solicitor with 15 years professional experience. I am currently a Partner in Northern Ireland’s largest law firm, where I lead the Media and Entertainment Law team.

I provide GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, libel and privacy legal advice together with reputation management to all corporate clients and education authorities and colleges throughout Northern Ireland. I have provided legal training and attended as a keynote speaker at data protection law seminars. I have provided legal reports on data incidents to large companies and colleges and also provided legal advice, drafting and guidance to educational and religious authorities. I have conducted various internal investigations and provided legal opinions and reports that have been relied upon by governing bodies, authorities and corporate boards. I work under time critical and highly sensitive environments, and able to respond quickly and with expertise often at times when the client is most stressed.

I have successfully defended the media in all leading privacy, data protection, harassment, ECHR, copyright and libel actions and acted in various Court of Appeal and High Court cases establishing legal procedure and law in Northern Ireland. I have gained extensive Court of Appeal work includes privacy, data protection, libel, anonymity and super injunctions including many landmark judgments. For example: *McGaughey v SNL 2011 NICA 51*; *King –v- Sunday Newspapers Limited 2011 NIQB 1010*; *Fulton –v- Sunday Newspapers Limited 2014 NIQB 35*; *McAuley –v- Sunday Newspapers Limited 2015 NIQB 74*; *KL and NN –v- Sunday Newspapers Limited 2015 NIQB 88*; *JKL –v- Telegraph Media Group Ltd, Associated Newspapers Ltd, News Group Newspapers Ltd, Google Inc, Twitter International Company and Twitter Inc 2015*; *Stokes –v- Sunday Newspapers Limited 2016 NICA*; *MM v BC, RS and Facebook Ireland Limited [2017] NIQB 127*; *Blast 106 Limit’s Application 2015 NICA 16*; *R v Jackson & Olding and ors [2018] and many others.*

In 2012 I qualified as a Solicitor Advocate and I now regularly represent local media organisations as a Solicitor Advocate in challenging and applying to set aside anonymity orders, interim injunctions and reporting restrictions.



I have extensive experience of providing pre-publication and legal clearance advices to print and broadcast media including pre-radio broadcast advices to print and broadcast media including pre radio broadcast advices and the go to for the broadcaster such as ITV (UTV). I also provide in-house legal training to a range of media organisations across the UK and Ireland. I have also worked with independent production companies in regard to copyright and legal clearance.

I am Northern Ireland counsel for most media organisations. I represent the majority of media defence work in Northern Ireland, including for example on behalf of: *Facebook; Twitter; ITV (UTV); Bauer Group; Independent News & Media Plc; Associated Newspapers; CNN International; Bloomberg News; RTE; Irish Times; Irish News; Mirror Group; Palgrave and Springer Nature Limited; Fine Point Films; Amazon UK.*

I represent high profile journalists such as Ed Moloney and regularly work alongside investigative journalists. I manage a team of media lawyers as department head and as a Partner in Northern Ireland's largest law firm. Our advice is all matters relating to media and information law including data protection, advertising law and reputational issues.

In Chambers and Partners UK 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 I am ranked highly for my work in Defamation and Reputation law as well as in Media and Entertainments law;

- In **2014** described as a solicitor advocate who is quickly gaining a strong reputation for her work both in and outside court. Clients note that she is *"on the ball"* and *"well prepared for every case."* She is *"attentive, perceptive and quick to respond with practical advice"*.
- In **2015** described as a *"fantastic"* lawyer who continues to build an impressive reputation in the field, handling work for high-calibre media publishing clients. She *"clearly knows her stuff"* and is praised as being *"very comprehensive, sharp, on the ball and reassuring"*.
- In **2016** described as *"a dedicated media lawyer capable of tackling matters in all fields ranging from privacy and libel to social media and regulatory concerns"*. Sources described her as a very helpful practitioner.
- In **2017** commended for *"her prowess in the field of defamation and privacy law"*. Sources describe her as a *"terrific lawyer who provides terrific insightful advice,"* and is known to be *"tactically very astute"*.
- In **2018** described as an *"experienced practitioner, with expertise in defamation, data protection, privacy law and reporting restrictions"*. One client describes her as *'prompt in her responses and practical in her advice'* while another describes her as *'one of the most established practitioners in privacy and defamation'*. She is also ranked in Entertainments law and a source said *'She really immersed herself in the project to make sure it would happen'*, another *'she is very empathetic and effective'*.
- In **2019**, described as *"probably the most experienced media solicitor currently practising in Northern Ireland,"* says a source, explaining: *"She has an impressive client list and her experience of almost every type of claim or argument faced by publishers is invaluable."* She provides pre- and post-publication advice to broadcasters and publishers & advises on IP, pre-publication and media regulation. A client says: *"She is always contactable, she's a listener and she explains things in terms we as a media company will understand."*



Other Roles & Responsibilities

2015 – 2016: Chairman of Belfast Solicitors' Association 2016, Northern Ireland's largest solicitor association I chaired the Committee having sat on it for several years.

Member of: Law Society of Northern Ireland and the Law Society of Ireland

Honorary member of: the Society of Editors.

Committees: High Court Defamation Liaison Committee;

I also assisted Lord Justice Gillen in the Access to Justice Review Committee; I assisted Lord Justice Gillen with his recent Gillen Review into Serious Sexual Offences;

I am currently assisting Lord Justice O'Hara in relation to Media Access to enable reporting of the Family Courts.

Examples of Conference and Seminar Appearances

2018: Legal Guest Speaker for Women in Film & TV Conference at Belfast Media festival

2017: Guest Speaker, NewsBrands Ireland 'Open Justice' conference.

2016: Host, guest speaker, and organizer, 'The Changing Media Landscape', Stormont, Parliament Buildings Belfast (Northern Ireland's first media law conference, 100+ attendees)

2015: Guest Speaker, The Law Society of Ireland 13th Annual Human Rights Conference: "Human Rights and the Media: Balancing Public and Private interests.

2015: Vlogging and the Law Workshop, 'VlogIt' Conference

2014: Guest Speaker on Social Media and the Law, Agenda NI Social Media Conference.

2014: Guest Lecturer, MA Broadcast Literacy, Queen's University Belfast, Masters in Broadcast, School of English

2013: Guest Lecturer, Privacy, Press and New Technology, Queen's University Belfast, Law School

Education

2006: PGDip, Institute of Professional Legal Studies, Queen's University, Belfast.

2004: MLegSci, Queen's University Belfast – First Class Honours

2002: EU Politics & Law, BA (Joint Honours), University of Strathclyde, Glasgow – 2:1.

Other Qualifications

- 2015:** Copyright and the Information Society, Postgraduate CPD Short Course, Ulster University – Distinction
- 2014:** Media and Entertainment Law: Substance and Practice, Postgraduate Module, Ulster University – Distinction
- 2012:** Solicitor Advocate, Law Society of Northern Ireland/National Institute for Trial Advocacy
- 1997:** Gold Medal (Silver & Bronze), The Speaking of Verse and Prose, The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (also junior acting medallion); National Youth Theatre London 1997; Ulster Youth Theatre NI 1994-96