# 7 Incredible Lawyers to Be Inspired By

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It's so easy to get caught up in all of the typical day-to-day tasks that come with being a lawyer. There are court hearings, client meetings, legal document drafting...the list goes on. As a result, it can be tough to see the wood from the trees and actually step back and celebrate your accomplishments. Here at Clio, we are all about helping law firms become exceptional, so we wanted to shout out 7 inspiring lawyers in the UK, Ireland, and the U.S.

All work in a variety of roles in the legal profession, with some doing pro bono work and others providing free legal advice. While their backgrounds and approaches are different, their legal work and legal careers are inspirational and have had massive effects on many people's lives.

Something they all have in common? Using the law to evoke positive change in the world.

## Bryan Stevenson

Bryan Stevenson has dedicated his long legal career as a civil rights lawyer to help people in poverty, as well as those who are incarcerated or dealing with racial discrimination. He is responsible for challenging inequality in the USA through his non-profit organisation, Equal Justice Initiative.

The EJI was founded in 1989 off the back of a decision by the US Congress to remove all funding for death-row legal defence. Since then, the initiative has been successful in having 140 wrongfully condemned individuals exonerated from death row in America.

Bryan is a high-profile and powerful public speaker, with his first Ted Talk "We Need to Talk About an Injustice" earning the longest standing ovation in the conference's history. If you haven't already watched the talk, we recommend you do so immediately.

Or, to read more about Bryan's background and what inspires him, check out his bestselling book *Just Mercy*.

## Aoife Kelly-Desmond

Aoife Kelly-Desmond heads up the Mercy Law Resource Centre as managing solicitor. The organisation provides free legal advice to people who are facing homelessness in Ireland, along with representation and policy work. The centre's Befriending Programme matches volunteer 'befrienders' with individuals who are seeking emotional support while navigating housing issues.

Aoife is also the Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of Plan International Ireland, a charity that strives to advance children's rights and equality for girls in over 75 countries around the world.

## Lorna Hackett

As one of the founders of barrister-run law firm, Hackett and Dabbs, Lorna Hackett has been making waves in the legal field for nearly 20 years. In recent times, however, Lorna has been heavily involved in the People's Covid Inquiry, a series of nine sessions dedicated to getting answers about the UK government's response to Covid-19 along with the pandemic's effect on the NHS. Lorna acted as Counsel to the Inquiry, hearing testimony from both individuals and organisations—allowing bereaved families in particular, to be heard.

The report findings from the People's Covid Inquiry were stark, citing gross negligence in the government's delayed response to the pandemic. However, the goal of the inquiry still remains: "learn lessons; save lives." We predict that Lorna's work will continue to have an impact for years to come.

## Helena Kennedy QC

Helena Kennedy QC is one of Britain's most renowned human rights lawyers. With a varied CV that includes acting in cases such as the Brighton Bombing, the Guilford Four, and the bombing of the Israeli embassy, Helena is also a member of the House of Lords.

Kennedy's work for the LGBT+ community can't go without mention. Government research showed that a shocking 7% of LGBT+ individuals have experienced some form of conversion practice and Helen's legal work aims to combat that. In October 2021, The Cooper Report was launched, commissioned by the Ozanne Foundation and written by the Ban Conversion Therapy Legal Forum, chaired by Helena herself. The report called for action on any practice (including religion) that seeks to 'cure' or change sexual orientation or gender identity.

## Gareth Noble

As one of Ireland's top litigators in the area of children with disabilities, Gareth Noble is a force to be reckoned with. A partner at human rights firm, KOD Lyons, Gareth acts on behalf of children and their court-appointed guardians in childcare proceedings in Ireland. He has led challenges on everything from speech and language therapy delays, school exemptions for children with learning disabilities and special needs, and the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable and high-risk children.

Gareth is also an active member of the Irish Penal Reform Trust as well as the Irish Council for Civil Liberties.

## Sally Penni MBE

Sally Penni is an award-winning barrister, broadcaster, board member and diversity leader to name just a few of the many hats that she wears. Sally's podcast Talking Law boasts over 100,000 listeners, and it's easy to see why. She regularly speaks to leading figures in the UK about the current state of the legal system as well as their own professional peaks and troughs, making it a truly relatable listen for anyone in the law profession.

Sally is also the author of many books. Her most recent title, *A Practical Guide to Dealing with Vulnerable Witnesses in Criminal Courts and Beyond*, is designed to help legal professionals better get to grips with the treatment of vulnerable adults, especially when it comes to achieving the best evidence rule.

## Robert McTernaghan

Robert McTernaghan is the European Young Bar Association's human rights representative to the Council of Europe. He was recently part of a task force that coordinated the Association's response to the Ukraine crisis. This included publishing a list of over 150 lawyers from 18 countries who are able to give advice to Ukrainian citizens regarding migration law, human rights, and refugee law in the countries that they represent. Robert also appeared on the list, representing the UK and Ireland.

A practising barrister, Robert is also the co-founder and Secretary of the Sports Law Bar Association of Ireland, a part-time lecturer in the University of Ulster, and a legal arbitrator for the GAA.

## Bonus legal practitioner: Sarah Rogers

Legal aid practitioners are facing more challenges more than ever before, with growing demand for services, greater pressures, and a need to keep clients front of mind while ensuring they can stay profitable.

One busy immigration and asylum law firm offering legal aid, the Immigration Advice Centre, turned to Clio to help them stay on top of their legal aid work and reduce administrative time.

Download this case study to read about the challenges and opportunities founder and director of the Immigration Advice Centre Sarah Rogers sees in legal aid—and how Clio helps them meet their clients' needs.

## About Clio

Clio is the global leader in legal AI, powering legal work across the profession, from law firms of every size to corporate legal teams, government agencies, and courts. Its Intelligent Legal Work Platform unites the business and practice of law, connecting the people, information, and processes behind legal work. Clio's AI brings the context together with legal sources drawn from Clio Library, a growing collection of more than one billion legal documents. Over 400,000 legal professionals in more than 130 countries rely on Clio to run their legal world. Learn more at www.clio.com.