

Louise O'Donnell appointed as new Labour Court Chairman

Ms Louise O'Donnell, who has been a Deputy Chairman of the Labour Court since 2017, becomes the second woman to lead the Labour Court, since it was formed in 1946.

Following an open competition managed by the Public Appointments Service (PAS), Ms O'Donnell was selected as the new Chairman of the Labour Court, following the retirement of Kevin Foley last month.

Ms O'Donnell has served as a Deputy Chairman of the Court since 2017, and was a Worker Member of the Court since 2015. Before joining the Court, Ms O'Donnell held a senior position in the IMPACT (now Forsa) trade union.

DETE Minister Peter Burke congratulated Ms O'Donnell on her appointment as Chair of the Labour Court, saying that he looks forward "to supporting her and the Labour Court in their valuable work, especially during these challenging times."

"We have seen time and again the huge impact the Labour Court has had in resolving disputes in this country. We recognise the economic importance of their role in maintaining industrial peace for workers and employers alike, as well as being the appellant court for employment rights cases", he added.

DETE Minister of State, Alan Dillon - who has responsibility for employment - said:

"Congratulations to Ms O'Donnell on her appointment. I know my officials and I will continue to support the great work the Labour Court does for employers and workers. As the Labour Court enters its 80th year this is a key development, providing the necessary leadership for the Court into the future."

Ms O'Donnell is also a qualified barrister as well as being a vastly experienced senior IR practitioner. She becomes the 11th Chairman of the Labour Court, and is the second woman to take the top position (Evelyn Owens was Court Chairman from 1994-1998).

Given Ms O'Donnell's appointment to lead the Labour Court, her position as Deputy Chairman will now have to be filled, via an open competition (run by PAS).