

Our weekly catch-up recommended podcasts, articles and webinars.

7th March 2025, Week: 10

A Note from Jacquie:

As we approach International Women's Day 2025, I have penned a piece on the role of women as Trailblazers in the Irish Financial Services.

The Pride of Being an Irish Woman in Financial Services: A Legacy of Trailblazers

Ireland has long been a land of resilience, innovation, and ambition, and nowhere is this more evident than in the contributions of Irish women to the financial services sector. From Oonah Keogh, who shattered global barriers as the world's first female stockbroker, to today's fintech leaders like Sinéad Fitzmaurice of TransferMate, Irish women have played a crucial role in shaping financial markets. However, despite this history, the question remains: Are women's careers still hindered by glass ceilings in financial services? And do we need to recapture the pioneering spirit of the past to ensure true equality?

Oonah Keogh: A Revolutionary in Finance

In 1925, a 22 years old, Oonah Keogh made history when she became the first female member of the Dublin Stock Exchange, making her the world's first female stockbroker. In an era when women's roles in business were largely restricted, Keogh's entry into the world of finance was groundbreaking. Her father, Joseph Keogh, was a successful trader, and despite her education and international exposure, her gender posed an enormous challenge in an industry dominated by men. Keogh's courage to push past societal norms paved the way for women in finance—not just in Ireland but globally. However, despite her achievements, she struggled with the limitations imposed by the male-dominated system, ultimately leaving the industry. This raises a crucial question: Almost a century later, has enough progress been made for women in financial services?

The Progress of Irish Women in Financial Services

Fast forward to today, and we see a vastly different landscape. Women like Sinéad Fitzmaurice, CEO of TransferMate, and Anne Boden, the Irish-born founder of Starling Bank, are leading some of the most innovative Fintech companies in the world. Their success signals that Irish women are not just participating in financial services—they are leading its transformation. However, despite this progress, the presence of a glass ceiling remains undeniable. Studies consistently show that women in financial services face challenges in reaching senior leadership roles. While entry-level positions are increasingly balanced between genders, the number of women in executive and boardroom roles is still significantly lower than that of men.

The Glass Ceiling: A Barrier Still in Place?

The glass ceiling in financial services is not just about gender biases—it is about systemic barriers that limit women’s progression. Issues such as unconscious bias in hiring and promotions, lack of mentorship, and the challenge of balancing career ambitions with societal expectations around caregiving all play a role.

Ireland has made strides in gender equality, but there is still work to be done. The financial sector must actively create pathways for women to move into leadership positions. This means investing in mentorship, ensuring equal pay, and fostering inclusive workplaces where women are present and have an equal voice in decision-making.

Should Ireland Look to Its Trailblazing Past?

In many ways, Ireland’s past tells a story of fearless female pioneers who entered industries long before the world was ready for them. Women like Oonah Keogh and Kathleen McNulty (one of the first programmers in history) were ahead of their time.

Rather than looking back nostalgically, we should take inspiration from these trailblazers to reignite the same spirit of ambition, resilience, and fearlessness. The modern financial services sector should not only support women but actively break down the barriers that still exist.

With initiatives like the 30% Club, which aims to increase female representation in senior roles, and growing female-led fintech companies, there is hope that Ireland will continue to be a global leader in gender equality in finance. However, this will not happen naturally—it requires persistent effort, policies that support women’s advancement, and an industry-wide commitment to change.

Conclusion

Being an Irish woman in financial services today is a point of immense pride. Our history is filled with trailblazers who changed the industry against all odds, and our present is defined by powerful female leaders reshaping global finance. Yet, the journey is far from complete. The glass ceiling may have cracks, but it has yet to be fully shattered.

Ireland does not need to return to the past—it needs to take the lessons of its pioneering women and apply them to the future. By fostering an environment where women in financial services are not just participants but leaders, we can ensure that the next generation of Irish women continues to redefine the industry, just as Oonah Keogh once did.

Have a great week!

Jacquie Ryan
Programme Manager PAT Fintech

Articles:

- [CBI: Climate Risk and Sustainable Finance Forum](#)
- [Fenergo: 2024 AML Fines Report](#)
- [CBI: Conduct Risk Assessment of Pre-Trade Controls](#)
- [EBA: Public hearing – Consultation paper on Draft rTS on calculation and aggregation of crypto exposure values](#)
- [ACCA: Audit and assurance – Audit Risk](#)
- [Mastercard Launches Tool to Help Firms Trace Money Laundering](#)
- [Europol: Tackling cybercrime: common challenges and legislative solutions identified by Europol and Eurojust](#)
- [Risk Audit: A Route Check, Not Just Compliance](#)
- [AI Revolutionising KYC](#)
- [Less is more: Report on the proposal to simplify EU Financial Rule-making](#)
- [Rant: The AI Problem: Why Big Finance Can't Have Nice Things \(Yet\)](#)
- [The readiness of the digital asset ecosystem](#)
- [The Latecomer's Guide to Crypto](#)
- [Treasury Department Announces Suspension of Enforcement of Corporate Transparency Act Against U.S. Citizens and Domestic Reporting Companies](#)
- [Managing AML and responsible gambling in a shifting landscape](#)
- [Business Standard Plan for Crypto \(Sample\)](#)
- [VARA Empowers: UAE's Global Surge](#)
- [Are people the real tech barrier?](#)
- [The 60 AI Tools You Must Not Miss](#)
- [AXA: Future Risks Report](#)
- [Institute of Internal Auditors Australia 'Managing Internal Audit Risk Function'](#)

Webinars/Events:

- [PAT FinTech 'The Gathering' 15th April \(In Person\)](#)
- [FCA Webinar on Consumer Vulnerability \(11th March\)](#)
- [Benchmarking KYC \(Fenergo, online 11th March\)](#)
- [The State of Financial Crime: Navigating Global risks, AI. And Key Regulatory Milestones in 2025](#)
- [European Digital Finance Association \(EDFA\) Stars of FinTech Series](#)

Podcasts/Online:

- [The Shadow of El Dorado podcast](#)

Careers Hub:

- [Thinking about contracting? Here's what you need to know before you start.](#)
- [AI tech Stack for your workplace](#)

Job Postings

- [Interactive Brokers: MLRO](#)
- [Aviva: Compliance Monitoring Manager](#)
- [Bullfinch Recruitment: Compliance Officer](#)
- [FRS: Senior KYC associate](#)

