



## Avril McCarthy Derrycourt Cleaning Specialists

### GOING FOR GROWTH PROFILE

#### NAME:

Avril McCarthy

#### BUSINESS

Derrycourt Cleaning Specialists

#### POSITION

General Manager

#### WHAT WE DO

We are a professional cleaning company providing contract cleaning and facilities management services

#### CONTACT US

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Avril McCarthy had just finished her third-level studies in business when she took a summer job at the family business – Derrycourt Cleaning Specialists. The company had been established eight years previously in 1992 by her parents, Ann and Martin O’Hanlon.

*“When I was in school I was always used as the spare cleaner if someone was sick so I had no intention of joining the family business. Initially, I was just supposed to be there for a few months but my business skills proved to be of great use and I am still here 20 years later,”* says Avril, who is now General Manager and a shareholder in the company.

Avril — who is also chair of the Irish Contract Cleaning Association — oversees the day-to-day running of the business, which is headquartered in Dublin with a base in Cork. It employs 1,700 people across the county including 90 support staff; the remainder are cleaning staff based across the country.

The company specialises in a range of sectors from hospital and healthcare facilities and pharma cleanrooms to crime scenes and food processing and manufacturing plants.

Some of its clients include An Garda Síochána, the HSE, FBD Insurance and the country’s two children’s hospitals in Temple Street and Crumlin. In March 2020, the company were in London to accept the Golden Service Award for Best Cleaning Healthcare Premises for its work at Children’s Health Ireland at Crumlin.

Just weeks later, as the Covid-19 pandemic impacted Ireland, much of its staff were on the front line.

*“Because we were already trained to a very high level in infection control, we were best placed to deal with the situation that was unfolding. We were able to cope with the new Covid landscape overnight and upskill our staff from other sectors where needed,”* says Avril.

However, the company also operates in sectors which closed down at various stages during lockdown including: schools, colleges, education centres, hotels, museums and entertainment venues as well as general offices.

*“There was an increase in demand in some sectors but a total shutdown in others. I hope that when this pandemic has passed that companies and organisations will keep up the level of cleaning as it does improve our nation’s health but during the last economic recession, we did see people cut cleaning in half so we have to be prepared for that,”* says Avril whose plan for Derrycourt is to continue to grow the business in order to bring it to the next level

Avril was on the 12th cycle of Going for Growth and Monica Flood was her Lead Entrepreneur. *“It was a very surreal experience through Covid-19 but it was fantastic to have excellent support from such a great mentor and group. It was amazing to be able to pick up the phone to all these business women who were going through similar situations; their resilience was inspiring. We all had good and bad days and we were able to pick each other up.”*

