

2021: Nazir Afzal - 'Blind Spots'

This event is now fully booked.

When: Saturday 4th September 2021, 14:00-17:00

Where: Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley St, Manchester M2 3JL

Entrance fee: NSS members £5 | Non-members £15

Includes drinks reception.

BOOK YOUR TICKET

Bradlaugh Lecture 2021 | Blind Spots - an exploration of how turning a blind eye has led to criminality and harmful practices to continue with impunity, with Nazir Afzal

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In 2001, Nazir Afzal OBE became the youngest person, and first Muslim, to be appointed as assistant Chief Crown Prosecutor. Throughout his career with the Crown Prosecution Service, Afzal has succeeded in bringing justice to victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation and violence against women - and has spoken out against cultural influences underpinning some of these cases.

Some of his highest profile cases have included the prosecution of the relatives responsible for the 'honour killing' of Samaira Nazir in 2005, and initiating prosecutions in the case of the Rochdale sex trafficking gang, overturning an earlier decision by the CPS. He has also supported schools that have taught about same-sex relationships despite protests from religious hardliners, and is now the chairman of the Catholic Church's new safeguarding body.

For our 2021 Bradlaugh Lecture, Afzal will talk about his life and career, including his work upholding the rights of women and girls by combatting forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honour-based violence and abuse. He will explore how, and why, a reluctance to acknowledge harmful practices in some communities leads to injustice and a breakdown in social cohesion. And he will also address the question of how we promote tolerance, pluralism and understanding in an increasingly diverse society.

About the Bradlaugh Lecture

The Bradlaugh Lecture was launched on the day of the 151st anniversary of the NSS's foundation, in recognition of our founder Charles Bradlaugh. The lecture provides a space for a distinguished speaker to explore a secularist topic in depth.

The lecture will take place at the Manchester Art Gallery, which displays a portrait of Bradlaugh by Walter Sickert. Sickert's piece – donated by the NSS's Manchester branch in 1911 – is an iconic image of Bradlaugh standing at the bar of the House of Commons, [forbidden](#) on account of his

atheism from taking up the seat to which he had been elected multiple times.

[Read more about the Bradlaugh Lecture](#)