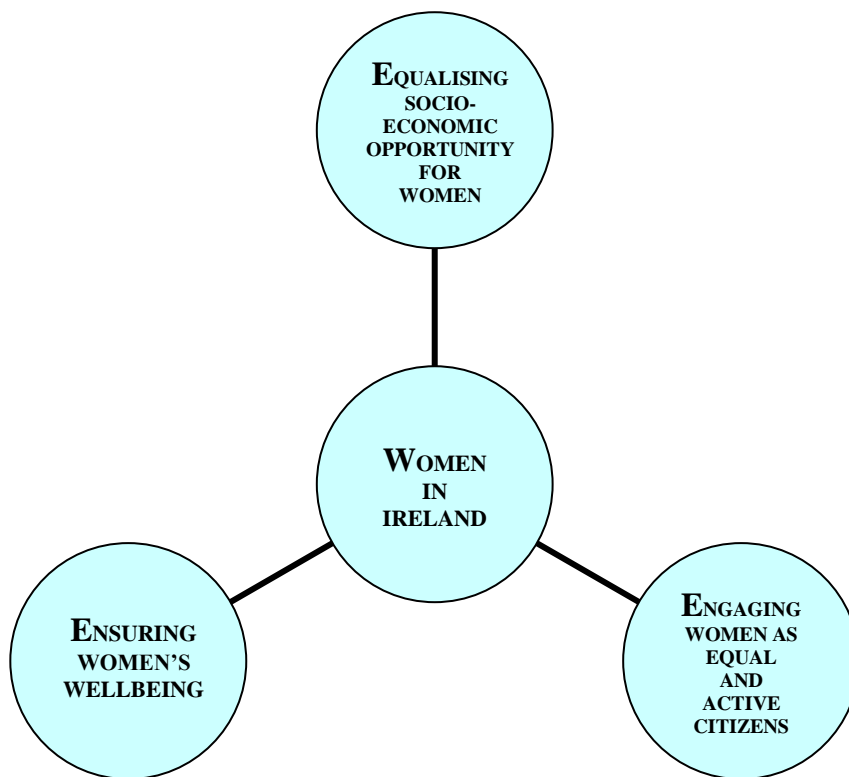


# Implementing the National Women's Strategy 2007 – 2016



## Progress Report as of 01/05/2015



AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY



NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY  
2007-2016



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The assistance of all concerned is very much appreciated.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The National Women's Strategy (NWS) as launched in April 2007 is the statement of the then Government's priorities for the period 2007-2016 in relation to the advancement of women in Irish society. The Strategy was prepared by the Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (D/JELR) under the direction of an Inter-Departmental Steering Committee and was intended to have a resonance with all women in Ireland. Its vision is

*An Ireland where all women enjoy equality with men and can achieve their full potential, while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life.*
2. The current Programme for Government 2011-2016 contains a number of specific commitments in relation to gender equality, most notably in fostering greater female participation in public life, including in politics and on State Boards. (A list of the elements of the Programme for Government which focus on gender equality is attached at Appendix I). These aims correspond with the three key themes of the Strategy, around which 20 key objectives and 212 planned actions are clustered. These key themes are:
  - Equalising socio-economic opportunity for women;
  - Ensuring the wellbeing of women; and
  - Engaging women as equal and active citizens.
3. A Mid-Term Review was completed by the Department of Justice and Equality in 2013 and the report of its findings and recommendations, as approved by the National Monitoring Committee and by Government, published in July 2014. The principal finding is that the National Women's Strategy continues to be of relevance at its mid-term and that Government Departments and Agencies should continue to deliver the actions which, collectively, will help to achieve the Strategy's vision.
4. Progress in implementing the Strategy is kept under review by a Monitoring Committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality. The Committee includes representatives of the key Government Departments, relevant State Agencies and the Social Partners, including the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI). The Monitoring Committee met in formal session in January and in May 2015 to consider progress from 2013 to date.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE CURRENT PROGRESS REPORT**

5. This Progress Report<sup>1</sup> on the National Women's Strategy was prepared by the Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice and Equality in collaboration with the Government Departments and State Agencies which together deliver the broad range of actions encompassed in the Strategy. The Report gives an overview of progress made in implementing the actions contained in the Strategy between January 2014 and 31 March 2015.
6. The present chapter updates some of the key indicators and includes a short overview of the key issues which arose in 2014 in relation to gender equality and the advancement of women.
7. Chapters 2, 3 and 4, respectively, look at progress by objective under each of the three key themes identified in the Strategy: equalising socio-economic opportunity; ensuring women's wellbeing and engaging women as equal and active citizens. These chapters include material supplied by Government Departments and State Agencies, incorporate relevant national and international statistics, and include contextual comment prepared by the Gender Equality Division, D/Justice and Equality.
8. Chapter 5 summarises progress on practical issues in relation to the mainstreaming of gender equality as a key element for the achievement of de facto gender equality.
9. Finally, Chapter 6 outlines the main developments which took place during this period in an international context, including the work of the international organisations: the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). This chapter is intended to provide a summary of the developments in promoting gender equality at EU level and internationally that are noteworthy and that should be considered in informing policy. The key points are highlighted, with references included to sources of additional information.

## **OVERVIEW OF KEY INDICATORS**

10. Some 81 indicators were outlined in the National Women's Strategy against which it was envisaged progress could be made. These indicators range from measures of project outputs, the outcome of studies, reviews and consultations, and impacts at population level. The indicators which follow are a selection of those which describe the environment in which the Strategy is being implemented in 2015.

### ***Women in Ireland***

11. According to the most recent annual CSO Population and Migration Estimates, the number of women and girls in Ireland in April 2014 was an estimated 2.333 million. The overall population was estimated to have grown by 16,500 over the

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<sup>1</sup> Previous progress reports and the mid-term review of the Strategy are available on the Department of Justice and Equality website ([www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)).



previous 12 month period, to reach 4,609,600, with females accounting for 64% of the increase.

12. The CSO figures show the natural increase of the population, of 37,900, continued to be offset by net outward migration of 21,400, which is a decrease of 11,700 on the previous year's figure of 33,100. Almost half of the 81,900 people who emigrated in the year to April 2014 were Irish nationals (40,700 persons, of whom 44% were female). New analysis of emigration by economic status showed that the majority of those emigrating were either at work or a student in the period prior to departing, with fewer than 1 in 5 being unemployed. Half (50%) of females emigrating were educated to third level, as compared to 44% of males.

**TABLE 1  
FEMALE POPULATION (1971–2014)**

	<b>1971</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Number of women in population	1,482,488	2,319.3	2,329.9
Number of marriages	20,788	21,770	22,045
○ Rate per 1,000	7.1	4.7	4.8
○ Average age of woman on marriage	25.1	32.6	33.0
Number of civil partnerships (female unions)	-	130	150
Number of births	64,382	68,930	-
○ Birth rate per 1,000	21.9	15.0	-
○ Extra marital births	1,709	24,393	-
○ Extra marital births as % of total births	2.7	35.4	-
○ Total fertility rate	3.5	1.96	-

*Source : Central Statistics Office, various*

13. The yearly summary of vital statistics for 2014 is not yet available. The most recent figures published by the CSO<sup>2</sup>, for 2013, show that there were fewer births in 2013 compared to the previous year. The annual birth rate dropped by 0.8 to 15.0 per 1,000 of the population in 2013 and the fertility rate fell to 1.96 and is now lower than the level of 2.1 which is considered necessary for a population to replace itself without relying on migration to boost numbers. Almost a quarter of births were to non-Irish mothers. More than one third of births were outside of marriage, with over 10,000 infants born to single mothers.

#### ***Socio-economic opportunity for women***

14. The main indicators related to socio-economic opportunity are those which look at the consistent poverty rate for women and, as employment is associated with a route out of poverty, statistics related to the participation of women in

<sup>2</sup> CSO Vital Statistics, Fourth Quarter and Yearly Summary 2013, available at: [www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/vitalstats/2013/vstats\\_q42013.pdf](http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/vitalstats/2013/vstats_q42013.pdf)

employment. The impact of the recession is most clearly seen in the female unemployment rate, which has more than doubled since 2006, the reduction in the total number of women in work, and the rise in part-time working. These indicators are discussed further in Chapter 2.

**TABLE 2**  
**SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS (2006-2013)**

	<b>2006/7</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
	('000)	('000)	('000)
Number of women in population	2,118.7	2,315.8	2,319.3
% of women in consistent poverty *	7.5	7.6	8.5
Percentage of women aged over 15 in the labour force	54.4%	55.4%	56.4%
Percentage of married women in the labour force	54.1%	54.3%	54.01%
Female employment rate (15-64 years)	59.6	52.3	52.8
EU2020 Female employment rate (20-64 years) **	64.4	59.4	60.3
No. of women in employment	879.8	860.9	871.6
○ No. of women in full-time employment	606.7	553.0	561.6
○ No. of women in part-time employment	273.1	307.9	310.0
○ % of employed women working part-time	31%	36%	36%
Female unemployment rate (15-64 years)	3.8%	10.3%	9.8%
Gender Pay Gap (unadjusted) **	11%	14.4%	<i>not available</i>

Source : Central Statistics Office, various

\* EU-SILC figure for 2005, 2012 and 2013. Figures for 2014 not yet available.

\*\* Eurostat, various.

### ***Wellbeing***

15. In considering women's health, the main indicators relate to life expectancy at birth and at age 65 years, and to the two principal causes of death in women in Ireland – cancer and cardiovascular disease. In respect of promotion of healthy lifestyles and wellbeing, the level of participation by women in sport and physical activity is a key indicator. These and other relevant statistics are discussed further in Chapter 3.

**TABLE 3  
WELLBEING INDICATORS (2001-2013)**

<b>Female Life Expectancy</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2005-2007</b>	<b>2013</b>
At age 0 years	79.9 yrs	81.6 yrs	83.1 yrs
At age 65 years	18.5 yrs	19.8 yrs	20.8 yrs
<b>Female Mortality Rate</b>			
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>
Mortality rate from cancer (crude rate per 100,000 population)	181.4	175.98	176.18
Mortality rate from diseases of circulatory system (per 100,000 population)	272.9	227.6	199.1
<b>Female Physical Activity Rate</b>			
		<b>2007</b>	<b>2013</b>
Percentage of women actively participating in sport or physical activity	-	34%	30.2% - 66.2%

*Sources: CSO, Eurostat, Public Health Information System (PHIS), Irish Sports Monitor.*

***Women as equal and active citizens***

16. The main indicators for the active roles of women in public life focus on the involvement of women in decision-making, including participation as business leaders, in politics at national level, on State boards and as senior managers in the civil service. These indicators are discussed further in Chapter 4.

**TABLE 4A  
WOMEN NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS  
OF THE LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES (2003–2013)**

<b>Women as % of Non-Executive Directors</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>
Ireland	7%	6%	9%	11%
EU-28 Average	9%	10%	14%	18%

*Source: EU Commission<sup>3</sup>*

17. As shown in Table 4A, the proportion of business leaders at company board level who are women remains very low. EU Commission figures for the period 2003-2013 show that women make up only 11% of non-executive directors of

<sup>3</sup> Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/supervisory-board-board-directors/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/supervisory-board-board-directors/index_en.htm)

blue-chip private sector companies in Ireland (ISEC20 companies registered in Ireland), which is an increase of only 4% over a decade. The representation of women on State boards (shown in Table 4B) is significantly higher, at 36.2% in 2013, having continued to show steady if slow improvement.

**TABLE 4B**  
**WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES – PUBLIC SERVICE (2005–2013)**

Women as % of	2005	2009	2013	2014
Deputies in Dáil Éireann	13	13	16	16
Members on State Boards/Committees	34	33.95	36.2	-
<u>Civil Service</u>				
Secretary General	-	19	26	23
Deputy Secretary & Assistant Secretary	-	19	24	26
Principal Officer	-	26.8	34	36
Assistant Principal Officer	-	36.5	42	44

18. As shown in Table 4B, women continue to make gains in all middle and senior management grades in the Civil Service. In politics, however, at end 2014 the proportion of deputies of Dáil Éireann who are female remained at 16%. As discussed further in Chapter 4 this is 12 percentage points lower than the EU average. Across the EU on average, the proportion of senior ministers who are female tends to reflect the proportion of members of the lower house of parliament who are female. In Ireland, the proportion of senior ministers who are female is, at 27%, double the representation of females among Dáil deputies.

#### *EU Gender Equality Index*

19. The European Union Gender Equality Index, developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to assess each EU Member State's progress towards achieving gender equality, and first published in 2013. It marks progress in six core domains - work, money, knowledge, time, power and health. Two satellite domains, violence against women and intersecting inequalities, were introduced in the second edition of the Index, published in June 2015. The Member States are assigned scores of between 1, representing total inequality between men and women, and 100, representing full gender equality, under each of the domain components which are weighted to give the overall index.
20. Table 5 sets out the findings for Ireland for the year 2012 under the current edition of the Index, in respect of each of the lower-level indicators under these core domains, which are broadly reflective of the themes of the National Women's Strategy.

**TABLE 5**  
**European Gender Equality Index: Ireland (2012)**

<b>Indicators by Domain</b>		Unit	Women	Men
<b>Work</b>	Full-time equivalent employment (15+ population)	%	39.0	52.1
	Duration of working life	Years	30.1	37.9
	Employed people in education, human health and social sciences (aged 15-64 years)	%	35.3	8.9
	Ability to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters (15+ workers)*	%	40.7	42.3
	Working to tight deadlines (15+ workers)*	%	65.6	73.3
<b>Money</b>	Mean monthly earnings	PPS	2790	3424
	Mean equivalised net income (16+ population)	PPS	18923	19221
	Not at risk of poverty, > 60% median income (16+ population)	%	84.8	84.3
	S20/S80 income quintile share (16+ population)	%	21.7	21.3
<b>Knowledge</b>	Graduates of tertiary education (15-74 years)	%	36.0	30.1
	Tertiary students in the fields of education, health and welfare, humanities and arts (tertiary students)	%	52.2	26.8
	Participants in formal or non-formal education and training (15 – 74 population)	%	14.7	14.2
<b>Time</b>	Workers caring for and educating their children or grandchildren, every day, for one hour or more (15+workers)*	%	44.4	30.6
	Workers doing cooking or housework every day for one hour or more (15+ workers)*	%	71.1	38.0
	Workers doing sporting, cultural or leisure activities outside of their home at least every other day (15+ workers)*	%	19.6	24.5
	Workers involved in voluntary or charitable activities at least once a month(15+ workers)*	%	18.8	15.5
<b>Power</b>	Share of Ministers (18+ population)**	%	20	80
	Share of Members of Parliament (18 + population)**	%	19	81
	Share of Members of Regional Assemblies (18 + population)**	%	20	80
	Share of Members of Boards in largest quoted companies, supervisory board or board of directors ((18 + population)**	%	9	91

<b>Indicators by Domain</b>		Unit	Women	Men
	Share of Members of Central Bank (18+ population)**	%	17	83
<b>Health</b>	Self-perceived health good or very good (16+ population)	%	82.6	83
	Life expectancy in absolute value at birth	Year s	83.2	78.7
	Healthy life years in absolute value at birth	Year s	68.5	65.9
	Population without unmet needs for medical examination (16+ population)	%	95.8	96.2
	Population without unmet needs for dental examination (16+ population)	%	91.9	92.8
<b>Intersecting Inequalities</b>	Employment rate of people born in a foreign country (15-64 corresponding population)	%	53.9	64.2
	Employment rate of country nationals (15 – 64 corresponding population).	%	55.4	62.3
	Employment rate of people living in a household with one adult and one or more dependent children (15 – 64 corresponding population)	%	42.7	55.8

*Source: EIGE Gender Equality Index – Country Profiles 2005-2012*

21. The new index looks at the position in respect of three points in time – 2005, 2010 and 2012. Ireland is one of the EU Member States which is assessed as having made the greatest advances since 2005, with its score increasing by 5.7 points from 50.8 out of 100 in 2005 to 56.5 in 2012. The most significant improvements occurred in the domains of power, with progress made towards gender equality in decision-making, and of work, reflecting increased participation of women in the labour market. However, a considerable drop of 13.5 points in the domain of time, which assesses how women and men divide their time, indicates negative work-life balance issues predominantly affecting women.

**TABLE 6**  
**European Gender Equality Index: Ireland, EU28 and Sweden (2012)**

<b>Domain</b>		<b>Ireland (8<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<b>EU-28</b>	<b>Sweden (1<sup>st</sup>)</b>
<b>Gender Equality Index</b>		<b>56.5</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>74.2</b>
<b>Work</b>	-	<b>65.8</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>81.0</b>
	Participation	69.8	72.3	94.7
	Segregation and quality of work	61.9	53.0	69.3
<b>Money</b>	-	<b>79.0</b>	<b>67.8</b>	<b>80.6</b>
	Financial resources	75.8	58.0	70.6
	Economic situation	82.3	79.1	92.1
<b>Knowledge</b>	-	<b>54.3</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>67.6</b>
	Attainment and segregation	77.8	56.7	66.6
	Lifelong learning	37.8	42.5	68.6
<b>Time</b>	-	<b>52.0</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>61.9</b>
	Care	56.7	42.8	65.3
	Social	47.7	33.0	58.8
<b>Power</b>	-	<b>31.4</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>71.7</b>
	Political	38.7	49.8	93.5
	Economic situation	25.5	31.7	55.0
<b>Health</b>	-	<b>95.2</b>	<b>90.0</b>	<b>93.3</b>
	Status	95.7	86.4	96.9
	Access	94.8	93.8	90.0

*Source: EIGE Gender Equality Index – Country Profiles 2005-2012*

## **CHANGES IN THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

22. The Irish economy is emerging from the crisis and there are clear signs that economic recovery is underway. GDP growth in the first half of this year was well ahead of expectations at close to 6%. The increase in economic activity is broadly-based with both domestic sectors and exporting sectors performing strongly. Labour market recovery is clearly underway. Employment has increased in seven successive quarters to quarter two 2014 representing an increase of over 70,000 jobs since the low-point in mid-2012. In line with this, the standardised unemployment rate stood at 11.1% in September 2014, having fallen from a peak of 15.1% in early 2012. While this is still unacceptably high, it is certainly moving in the right direction. Domestic demand has stabilised and is showing encouraging signs of growth. Consumer spending is improving as

confidence returns, while firms are investing in plant and machinery once again.<sup>4</sup>

25. This report shows that progress continued to be made by Government Departments and State Agencies in the period from January 2014 to March 2015 under each of the themes and towards each of the objectives in the Strategy.

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<sup>4</sup> As set out in Ireland's Partnership Agreement for the European Structural & Investment Funds, 18/11/2014, "*Partnership Agreement Ireland 2014-2020*", available at <http://www.per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/Partnership-Agreement-Ireland-2014-2020.pdf>





**CHAPTER 2**  
**THEME ONE - EQUALISING SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR**  
**WOMEN**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Action taken under this theme aims to equalise socio-economic opportunity for women by addressing their employment status, putting measures in place to overcome poverty which is more prevalent among women and looking at issues such as caring services which support the economic engagement of women.

**Objective 1-A**  
**To increase the participation of women in the labour force**

**CONTEXT**

2. The female employment rate is one of the headline indicators for assessing the impact of the National Women’s Strategy and progress towards gender equality. This indicator is measured by reference to the age cohort 20-64 (relative to the current Europe 2020 Strategy target of 75% employment for men and women by 2020).

**TABLE 7**  
**MALE AND FEMALE EMPLOYMENT RATES – EUROPE 2020 TARGETS**

Year (Q4)	EMPLOYMENT RATES FOR MEN AND WOMEN AGED 20 – 64 YEARS		
	Male	Female	TOTAL
<b>2008</b>	80.4	64.1	72.3
<b>2009</b>	72.1	61.8	66.9
<b>2010</b>	69.1	60.2	64.6
<b>2011</b>	68.2	59.4	63.8
<b>2012</b>	68.1	59.4	63.7
<b>2013</b>	70.9	60.3	65.5
<b>2014</b>	73	61.2	67

*Source: Eurostat: Europe 2020 Indicators*

4. The baseline parameters for measuring employment as an economic target were revised in the Europe 2020 Strategy, which set a headline target of a 75% employment rate for women and men in the age group 20-64 by 2020<sup>5</sup>. However, as a result of the economic downturn, revised targets of 69-71% were set for Ireland. The employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 was 67.0% in 2014, up by more than 3 percentage points since 2012, showing a continuing improvement in the labour market after a fall from 74% in 2007 to 71% in 2008

<sup>5</sup> Under a derogation granted to Ireland, the appropriate target is to achieve an employment rate of 69 to 71% for both men and women.

and less than 64% in 2012. The employment rate for men in 2014 was 73.0%, up from 68.1% in 2012. The female employment rate has shown a more modest but still significant increase, from 59.4% in 2012 to 61.2% in 2014. The gender gap in employment rates had almost halved from 16 percentage points in 2008 to 9 percentage points in 2012, but has widened slightly since then as male employment began to recover relatively rapidly.

5. The European Semester process requires Member States to prepare and submit to the European Commission an annual National Reform Programme which includes the economic and other measures being undertaken to achieve the key objectives of Europe 2020. The Commission analyses these Programmes and makes Country Specific Recommendations. While Ireland was excluded from this process until the end of 2013 because of its economic programme status, it is worth noting that a majority of Member States has received recommendations in relation to facets of the economic engagement of women in recent years, including references to the availability of childcare services, the gender pay gap and tax disincentives to dual income family structures.
6. The mid-term review of the National Women's Strategy noted the need to increase female labour market engagement to achieve the Europe 2020 goals, and the European Commission's guidance to Member States concerning availability of childcare to support working mothers and the need to review tax disincentives to the labour market engagement of women of working age. It was recommended that work be undertaken to increase the availability of affordable childcare to support the labour market attachment of women, particularly those on low incomes. The mid-term review also noted the continued existence of a very significant pool of women without dependent children who are not active in the Irish labour market.
7. While the Department of Social Protection has taken steps to encourage the labour market activation of lone parents, the majority of whom are female, no significant measures have been undertaken to date to encourage the activation of women who have chosen to remain outside the labour market. Accordingly, it was recommended that work be undertaken to look at whether these women are being incentivised at present to remain outside the labour market and whether measures should be taken to encourage all women to become economically independent, particularly when they no longer have dependent children.
8. A major reorganisation of the infrastructure for employment services and further education and training commenced in 2011. Under the National Employment and Entitlements Service (NEES) and the Pathways to Work initiative, responsibility for employment services and programmes transferred from FÁS to the Department of Social Protection with effect from 1 January 2012. The programme of reform in the Further Education and Training sector has provided for the dissolution of FÁS, the establishment of the Further Education and Training Authority, SOLAS, and the establishment of 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs). Since 2014 the ETBs have been responsible for the frontline delivery of further education and training to enable a diverse range of people, including unemployed, jobseekers, and school leavers, enter or re-enter the labour market.

## ACTIONS

9. The following actions have been reported by Departments and Agencies:
  - 9.1 The Department of Social Protection reported the following progress in respect of activation measures:

The Pathways to Work Strategy sets out a comprehensive reform of the State's approach to helping unemployed jobseekers return to work. Since its inception in 2012, employment and entitlement services have been brought together in 'one-stop shop' Intreo centres; new schemes and employment supports have been introduced, while some existing schemes have been expanded; and there has been a transformation of jobseeker services through Intreo. A 'social contract' of rights and responsibilities between jobseekers and the State has been implemented. The Further Education and Training (FET) sector has been significantly re-organised and a new five year FET strategy adopted.

Pathways reforms adopted earlier continued to have an enhanced impact in 2014. Further policy measures adopted since mid-2014, and announced in the updated document Pathways to Work 2015 will enhance reforms already underway especially for the long-term unemployed and youth unemployed.

The Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD), which was announced in Budget 2015 allows customers who leave welfare for employment to retain the child proportion of their welfare payment, which equals €29.80 per week per child (up to a maximum of €119.20 for four children), for two years. The full child proportion of their welfare payment is payable for the first year with 50% entitlement for the second year. The BTWFD will be paid concurrently with Family Income Supplement (FIS) and will not impact on the FIS means test. Applications for the scheme have been accepted from 5 January 2015.

The key objective of activation policy and labour market initiatives is to offer assistance to those most in need of support in securing work and achieving financial self-sufficiency. This policy objective prioritises scarce resources to those in receipt of qualifying welfare payments. Accordingly, the employment services and schemes provided by the Department are focused in the first instance on this cohort of unemployed men and women. In addition, female and male jobseekers under 25 can avail of earlier and enhanced engagement in Intreo services, reserved places on existing schemes and specific youth-oriented variants of these schemes, under the Youth Guarantee.'.

- 9.2 The Department of Education and Skills reported progress on the following actions:

In May 2014 the Education and Training Authority, SOLAS, published a 5-year strategy for the Further Education and Training (FET) sector<sup>6</sup>, prepared in consultation with stakeholders.

Education and training to enable people to enter or advance in the labour market is primarily provided under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills. As Table 8 indicates, participation is gender balanced on most of the training interventions provided in 2014 by Education and Training Boards. The exceptions remain the apprenticeship schemes, which remains male-dominated (99.5% of completions in 2014) and specific skills courses. Traineeships are female dominated, comprising 70% of completions in 2014.

**TABLE 8**  
**TRAINING INTERVENTIONS PROVIDED BY ETBS**  
**AND, ON A TEMPORARY BASIS, MANAGED BY SOLAS<sup>7</sup>**  
**COMPLETION BY WOMEN - 2014**

<b>Programme Type</b>	<b>No. of Female Participants</b>	<b>Female Participants as % of total</b>
Apprenticeship	29	0.50%
Specific Skills Short	1,532	28.85%
Specific Skills Long	3,008	30.33%
Bridging / Foundation	923	35.06%
Return to Work	16	39.02%
Community Training Centres	1,463	40.27%
Specialist Training Providers	1,691	43.48%
Local Training Initiatives	2,334	45.35%
Traineeship	3,070	70.32%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>14,066</b>	

*Source: Department of Education and Skills.*

**Objective 1-B**  
**To decrease the gender pay gap**

**CONTEXT**

10. The gender pay gap is the average difference between men's and women's pay. While its causes are complex and interrelated, the gender pay gap reflects ongoing inequalities in the labour market which, in practice, mainly affect women. The measurement of the gender pay gap is subject to different interpretations, resulting in wide variations in statistics. In 2010, for the purpose of its annual *Report on Equality between Women and Men*, the European Commission changed how it calculated the gender pay gap, based on the

<sup>6</sup> The Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019 is available at: <http://solas.ie/press12052014.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Note: During 2014 SOLAS was temporarily responsible for the management of a number of former FAS training centres before the transfer to the ETB sector was completed in July 2014.

methodology of the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES). The figure now monitored in the EU is the ‘*unadjusted gender pay gap*’, which does not take into account all of the factors that impact on the gender pay gap, such as differences in education, labour market experience, hours worked or type of job and also excludes bonus payments, performance-related pay and seasonal payments.

13. According to the most recent figures published by the European Commission, which relate to 2012, the unadjusted gender pay gap across the EU was 16.4%. The figure for Ireland was 14.4% and, while better than the EU average, places Ireland 10th overall. Table 9 below is drawn from the European Commission’s ‘*Report on Progress on equality between women and men in 2013*’.
14. Issues affecting the gender pay gap are also complex and a wide number of factors are considered to impact upon it. These include segregation in the labour market, traditions and stereotypes, balancing work and family/private life and the undervaluing of women’s work. For example, the introduction of a minimum wage and the greater availability of childcare following implementation of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme and its successor National Childcare Investment Programme are likely to have impacted positively on the gender pay gap in Ireland. However, extensive statistical research based on gender disaggregated data is required before any valid conclusions may be reached in this regard.

**TABLE 9**  
**PERCENTAGE GENDER PAY GAP IN UNADJUSTED FORM (2008 & 2012)**

	2008		2012	
	%	Member State	%	Member State
Top 4	4.1	Slovenia	2.5	Slovenia
	4.9	Italy	6.1	Malta
	8.5	Romania	6.4	Poland
	9.2	Malta	6.7	Italy
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>
<i>EU Average</i>	<i>17.3%</i>		<i>16.4%</i>	
Bottom 4	22.8	Germany	22	Czech Republic
	25.1	Austria	22.4	Germany
	26.2	Czech Republic	23.4	Austria
	27.6	Estonia	30	Estonia

*Source: Structure of earnings survey, Eurostat, EU28 (including Croatia as of 2011)*

15. The mid-term review of the National Women’s Strategy noted that the complexity of the gender pay gap required ongoing consideration of a number of issues central to all aspects of the labour market engagement of women, including the level of the minimum wage - namely the availability of childcare to support women’s labour market engagement; the greater sharing of family responsibilities; the advancement of women into leadership roles and the encouragement of women to enter into a broad range of career options. It was recommended that work continued to ensure that all of these topics are kept in

focus to ensure that Ireland continues to have a comparatively low gender pay gap, and that Ireland undertake an initiative to publicise Equal Pay Day.

## **ACTIONS**

16. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation:
  - The National Minimum Wage remained at €8.65 per hour for an experienced adult worker during 2014. Monitoring of the National Minimum Wage rates continues to be an on-going imperative for NERA.
  - The Low Pay Commission was established on an interim basis on February 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015. Its principal function will be, on an annual basis, to examine and make recommendations to the Minister on the national minimum wage. The legislation to place the Commission on a statutory footing will be enacted in mid 2015 prior to the Commission presenting its first report to the Minister in mid July 2015.

<b>Objective 2</b>
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<b>To promote the advancement of women in the labour force</b>
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## **CONTEXT**

17. This objective has two points of focus – efforts to engage women in a broader range of economic (labour) sectors and efforts to enable women to rise to more senior positions in their work place. Both may require a breakdown of barriers and stereotypes.
18. In January 2012, responsibility for employment services and programmes transferred from FÁS to the Department of Social Protection under the National Employment and Entitlements Service (NEES) and the Pathways to Work initiative, which was launched in 2012.
19. The mid-term review of the National Women’s Strategy noted analysis suggesting that stereotyping still plays a large part in career choices, particularly those made by young women. This was surprising, given the strong focus on gender equality which has been mainstreamed in the Department of Education and Skills and in the schools. The review stressed the need for programmes to further raise awareness of these matters in the education field; to ensure that young girls are aware of the widest range of choices which should be open to them; and to raise understanding among employers and senior managers of the contribution which women can make to ensure balanced decision-making.

## **ACTIONS**

20. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Education and Skills:

### ***Apprenticeship opportunities for women***

Apprenticeship is the recognised means by which persons are trained to become craftspeople in Ireland. The main craft trades have been designed by SOLAS and come within the scope of the statutory apprenticeship system. The overwhelming majority of the trades are based in traditional male occupations associated with the Construction, Engineering and Motor sectors. SOLAS currently provides a bursary to encourage employers to recruit female apprentices. However, the uptake of female apprentice registrations remains low. In 2014, a total of 2,698 apprentices were registered, of which 13 were women.

In May 2013, the Minister for Education and Skills announced a wide-ranging independent review of apprenticeships in Ireland in order to identify reforms that would re-focus apprenticeship training as an alternative progression route to third-level education for school leavers. The review group was tasked with consulting widely with training providers, trade unions and employer representatives, to examine the future of apprenticeship training in Ireland with a greater focus on work-based learning and a closer alignment of the current needs of the Irish labour market.

The review group's report and recommendations to Government were published in January 2014. Weaknesses identified in the current system included a heavily gendered approach attracting few female participants, and over-reliance on a narrow group of trades, mainly in the construction sector, with the collapse of the sector making a large number of apprentices redundant. The review group's recommendations included the expansion of apprenticeships to new business and industrial sectors and the establishment of an Apprenticeship Council. The Apprenticeship Council was established in 2014 and has initiated a call for proposals in response to the recommendations outlined above. The closing date for receipt of proposals was March 31st 2015. The response to date from people interested in developing new apprenticeships has been very high. It is clear from initial engagement with proposers that many of these new proposals are likely to be in sectors where employment is spread more evenly on gender basis.

<b>Objective 3</b>
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<b>To support more women as entrepreneurs</b>
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## **CONTEXT**

21. This objective seeks to encourage more women to become entrepreneurs. Although the availability of childcare and of improved work/life balance options is central to the needs of entrepreneurs as well as to employees, some women



find that self-employment and entrepreneurship better enables them to link work and family life. However, statistics from the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) show that despite significant numbers of women participating in the LEOs “Start your Own Business” courses this high level of activity is not yet translating into business start ups.

22. The level of entrepreneurial activity by women in Ireland remained consistent at approximately 4% during 2012, according to the most recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report for Ireland, published in 2013. GEM research found that expectations of early stage female entrepreneurs for the growth of their businesses had increased in 2012 over the previous year, with the majority (59%) expecting to have export sales and those expecting to have at least 10 jobs within five years almost doubling, from 12% to 23%. It concluded this reflected the increased focus among policy makers and development agencies on encouraging women to become more ambitious for their new businesses. In contrast, the male entrepreneurship rate dropped significantly between 2011 and 2012, from 10.3% to 8.3%. The male and female entrepreneurial rates for Ireland are both reported in the GEM Global Report for 2014 as increasing, to 8.87% for the male rate and to 4.23% for the female rate.

**TABLE 10**  
**Entrepreneurship by Gender: Ireland (2012)**

Entrepreneurship Activity, as % of adult population		2011	2012	2014
Early stage entrepreneurs	Men	10.3%	8.3%	8.87%
	Women	4.2%	4.0%	4.23%
	Ratio of Men to Women	2.5 : 1	2.1 : 1	
Established Owner Managers	Men	10.9%	11.8%	-
	Women	5.0%	4.7%	-
	Ratio of Men to Women	2.2 : 1	2.5 : 1	-

*Source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) for Ireland 2012 and Global Report 2014.*

23. The mid-term review of the National Women’s Strategy concluded that the actions proposed in the Strategy remain relevant and should continue, noting that many of the issues arising in relation to educational choices and recognition of women’s leadership roles are also relevant in encouraging female entrepreneurship, especially in the high added value sectors.

## **ACTIONS**

24. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies:

24.1 The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation reported the following actions:

- The Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) were established on 15th April, 2014 following the dissolution of the 35 County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) and the transfer of their functions, assets & liabilities to Enterprise Ireland. The LEOs provide a range of supports to women in business. The desire to specifically support women, who are currently under-represented in the labour force and in business ownership, to enter self-employment and develop their businesses can therefore be regarded as possessing a strong degree of “fit” with the aims and objectives of LEOs at local and national level.
- Many of the LEOs operate Women in Business Networks that provide both training and networking opportunities.
- National Women’s Enterprise Day (NWED) was organised by the LEOs in 2014 with the aim to inspire, activate and assist women across Ireland in running their own business. NWED 2014 took place on October 22 & 23 in Galway with over 300 women attending this event. NWED 2014 was co-financed by the European Social Fund with support from the Department of Justice and Equality, through the Equality for Women initiative.

24.2 Enterprise Ireland reported that High-Performance Start-Up (HPSU) investments in female-led businesses had increased from 7% in 2011 to 23% in 2014. This includes HPSU and Competitive Start Fund (CSF) investments. 130 female clients participated in specific female development programmes in 2014.

24.3 The Department of Education and Skills reported the following actions:

- The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) continued to provide workshops on Enterprise Education in 2014.
- In 2014, approximately 16,000 students participated in the *Student Enterprise Awards* organised by the Local Enterprise Offices and an additional 200 companies participated in the *PDST Mini-Company TY Get Up and Go* competition (Transition Year only). The top three winners from the Student Enterprise Awards and PDST Get up and Go receive the Seán Lemass Award. This award acknowledges excellence in entrepreneurship and was presented by the Taoiseach, Mr Enda Kenny T.D. on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014. An equal number of females have participated and been successful in the named competitions. “Enterprise” is part of the Junior Certificate Business Studies, *Leaving Certificate* Business, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, (LCVP) Link Modules, the vocational *preparation and guidance aspects* of the Leaving Certificate Applied and an option within Transition Year. Department of Education and Skills statistics for 2014 show the gender breakdown in these subjects and programmes was as follows:
  - 48.7% of the 33,725 who participated in Junior Certificate Business studies were female.
  - 50.6% of the 16,514 who participated in Leaving Certificate Business were female.

- 53.7% of the 15,276 who participated in the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), which is predominantly oriented on employment opportunities, were female.
- 46.3% of the 2,964 who participated in the Leaving Certificate Applied programme were female.
- In addition to the Student Enterprise Awards and the PDST Get Up and Go, a number of events and competitions that Transition year students participate in are predominantly enterprise events e.g. BT Young Scientist, Gaisce President's Award, and Young Social Innovators. These competitions promote an enterprise attitude and develop enterprising skills, not only as they relate to industry and the economy but also and just as important, as they relate to society and their local community. Females represent approximately 50% of participants.
- The Department of Education and Skills is currently considering the area of enterprise in education and will seek to further work on this policy area in the second half of 2015. To inform this process, the Department is collecting data from schools for the first time on the extent of their engagement with enterprise. This data is being collated through the 2015 Lifeskills survey which issues to all primary and post primary schools.

#### **Objective 4**

**To seek to ensure that girls and women achieve their full potential in the education system**

#### **CONTEXT**

25. Subject choice, particularly at second level, is an important factor influencing future achievement both in education and in employment choices. For example, a certain mix of subjects may be required in order to access some third level courses. It is essential that girls are facilitated to participate in the full range of subject options to ensure that their career choices are not limited in later life. Gender mainstreaming in the education system is vital to ensure that a gender perspective informs all aspects of education. The education sector has been strongly focused on gender equality for many years, particularly through a strong focus on gender mainstreaming within the Department of Education and Skills and the broader education sector. However this has not hugely influenced subject choice, particularly in relation to course selection which would lead to greater involvement in sectors such as computing, architecture and engineering.
26. The mid-term review of the National Women's Strategy recommended that the Department of Education and Skills and the schools continue to encourage girls to diversify into atypical study fields - particularly important for the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects. It was suggested that creative approaches might be considered, such as corporate social responsibility initiatives in association with key employers in the sciences and IT sectors to encourage young people to study science.

## **ACTIONS**

27. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Education and Skills:

### ***Gender mainstreaming in educational settings***

- 27.1 Specific gender focused questions are contained in templates used in Whole School Evaluations at primary level, specifically in interviews with principals and with parents and in the evaluation of the quality of whole-school planning. In primary evaluations relating to Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education (PE) and History, indicators focused on gender equity are included.

Similarly, at post-primary level, indicators to evaluate gender mainstreaming and gender issues are included in templates utilised in whole-school and subject inspections. All post-primary inspectors received an input on eQuality Measures in September 2009 when this material was first made available to post-primary schools. eQuality Measures is a set of resources designed by the Department to assist schools to increase awareness of the issue of gender equality. These resources focus specifically on formulating a gender equality policy, recommending changes within curriculum provision and recommending changes in teaching methodologies and other school practices.

Issues of gender mainstreaming in school settings permeate the content of all relevant CPD programmes provided to inspectors and are integrated in this way. New anti-bullying procedures introduced in schools in 2013 include a focus on gender equality issues. The Department of Education and Skills will trial a new Politics and Society subject in Leaving Certificate from September 2016, extending potential study of gender mainstreaming and other related issues into senior cycle and for possible matriculation purposes. In addition, a new 100 hour short courses for junior cycle in Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE) has a significant human rights dimension which will support equality for women.

### ***Science, Engineering and Technology***

- 27.2 Teachers, parents, students and industry all have a role to play in attracting more girls into STEM type careers. One of the challenges for the education system is to increase the numbers of females taking certain STEM subjects at higher level in the Leaving Certificate. Increasing the uptake of higher level mathematics is particularly important and a range of initiatives have been introduced to encourage both males and females to take the higher level maths exam. This includes the introduction of a new maths curriculum, continuing professional development for maths teachers and the provision of bonus points for entry to higher education programmes. The results are encouraging – the overall percentage taking the higher level paper has risen from 15.8% in 2011 to 27% in 2014. In addition, the number of girls presenting for the exam has increased by 78% between 2011 and 2014.

Science Foundation Ireland's Smart Futures programme is a Government-industry initiative (under the aegis of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation) that promotes STEM careers to post-primary students. Smartfutures.ie highlights the range of opportunities open to students that study STEM subjects at second and third level and includes a particular focus on female career profiles.

### ***Second-chance education***

- 27.3 A key pillar of the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019 is 'active inclusion' and the FET sector is seeking to increase levels of active inclusion through the provision of high-quality, more accessible and flexible education, training and skill development interventions and supports suited to the individual.

Education and Training Boards (ETBs) offer a wide variety of daytime, evening, full-time and part-time further education courses for adults who wish to return to education. The programmes offered range from adult education courses aimed at developing hobbies or interests, right through to courses from which a Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) qualification can be gained. During 2014 a range of new PLC programmes were offered in areas such as media studies, art, craft and design, legal administration, early childhood care and education, journalism, furniture design and veterinary assistant. Examples of new courses provided under the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) in 2014 included breakfast chef, retail skills, healthcare support and office skills. The most recent data on further education provision indicates that of 74% of participants on community education programmes are female, 56% on adult literacy programmes, 54% on Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS courses) and 67% on courses offered under BTEI.

A significant level of vocational training opportunities are also offered by the ETBs and the most recent data indicates that of a total 50,000+ places available in 2014 in the ETB training centre network, which are primarily reserved for unemployed clients referred by DSP, in excess of 30% of places are taken up by females.

In 2013, which is the latest year for which data were available, 51% of all FETAC certificates were awarded to female learners. This is a slight decrease of two percentage points over the corresponding figure for 2012, which was 53%.

### ***Supporting progression of women into management posts in education***

- 27.4 Programmes available under the Leadership strand of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) continue to be offered and are open to all established, newly appointed and aspiring school leaders. There is no specific course provision for women but the overall attendance statistics indicate that approximately 66% of participants on these leadership programmes are female.

### ***Higher Education and Research***

- 27.5 In February 2015 the seven universities, fourteen institutes of technology and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland signed up to the Athena SWAN Charter committing them to advance women's careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) employment in academia. The Athena SWAN Charter is an academically led initiative that was launched in the UK in 2005 to address the loss of women from science, engineering and technology disciplines. The extension of the Athena SWAN Charter to Ireland represents the first time that the scheme is being run outside of the U.K.

The Irish Research Council's Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2020, which was published in December 2013, aims to ensure gender equality in the research arena by encouraging more equal representation in the research population and by ensuring that the results of research can be applied to both males and females.

28. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs:

#### ***Educational supports for young mothers***

Since 1st January 2014, the Child and Family Agency has operational responsibility for the School Completion Programme, including the allocation of funds to local projects. Eight Teen Parent Support Programmes (TPSPs) are supported under the School Completion Programme. TPSPs target pregnant or parenting second level students, who, without additional supports, are identified as being at risk of dropping out of school during pregnancy or at risk of not returning to school after the birth of their child. Targeted supports include a contribution towards tuition, childcare costs, transport, uniforms, books and exam fees. TPSPs support approximately 400 individuals each year, 20% of whom are young mothers who were already early school leavers when they became pregnant.

#### **Objective 5-A**

**To ensure that childcare services are optimised to meet the needs of parents and children alike**

#### **CONTEXT**

29. The need to develop childcare to support the labour market participation of women has been recognised in Ireland for the past fifteen years and had led to the implementation of the National Childcare Strategy and a significant increase in the availability of childcare services across Ireland. As illustrated in Table 11, the CSO Quarterly National Household Survey for 2011 found that the employment rates of couples and of lone parents showed significant variation depending on whether there are children in the household and on the age of the children. While the employment rates of men and of women with no children

were similar at approximately 85%, in households with children aged under 3 years, the employment rate of women was 20% lower than that of men.

**TABLE 11**  
**Employment rates of couples and of lone parents, aged 20-44 (2011)**

Family Status	Employment rate	
	Men	Women
No children	84.8	85.7
Youngest child aged 0-3 years	78.9	57.0
Youngest child aged 4-5 years	73.8	51.5
Youngest child aged 6 years or over	76.8	58.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>79.4</b>	<b>62.2</b>

*Source: CSO QNHS 2011*

30. Support towards the cost of children is met by the State through child benefit which is payable monthly to mothers (or guardians). Quality and curriculum standards are set out described in *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and *Aistear*, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.
31. The ongoing availability of high quality childcare is central to the continuing engagement of mothers in the labour market. In addition the European Union continues to emphasise the importance of greater sharing of family responsibilities between women and men as a key support for women's labour market participation and for their advancement into decision-making roles. The former requirement has given rise to Country Specific Recommendations to a number of Member States, including Ireland, as part of the Europe 2020 Semester process.
32. The mid-term review of the National Women's Strategy noted that the cost of quality childcare remained a challenge for parents, particularly, but not exclusively the less advantaged who may struggle to meet the balance of the cost where they can avail of the Community Childcare Scheme. The situation is aggravated where more than one child in a family requires care. This is an ongoing issue and will be central to the labour market activation of mothers, be they recipients of welfare benefits or currently outside of the labour market and the welfare system.

## **ACTIONS**

33. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs:

### *Quality childcare services*

- 33.1 Significant progress has been made in implementing the National Early Years Quality Agenda, This Agenda brings together a range of measures designed to

support providers in the challenge of continually improving the quality and standards of early years services. These measures include:

- Programmes of capital funding for early years services of €2.5 and €7 million in 2014 and 2015 respectively;
- The establishment of a €3 million Learner Fund which is supporting almost 2,500 early years professional to up skill;
- The establishment of Better Start: the National Early Years Quality Development Service;
- The provision of funding for all 31 City and County Childcare Committees, and seven voluntary childcare organisations, to support the valuable work of these bodies in supporting early years services around the country, including through training; and
- A strengthened regulatory regime.

### *Availability of childcare services*

33.2 Funding of €260 million is provided annually to support a number of early years and after-school (including out of school) care and education programmes. These programmes include the Community Childcare Support (CCS) programme, which is focused on supporting low income and disadvantaged families with 25,000 children benefiting under the Programme every year; the free pre-school year provided under the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme, with up to 68,000 children, or 95% of the eligible age cohort, expected to avail of the Programme in 2015; and a number of Programmes under the Training and Employment Childcare (TEC) Programme, including the Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) programme, the After-School Childcare (ASCC) programme and the Community Employment Childcare (CEC) programme, which was introduced in 2014. This latest Programme is targeted specifically at participants in the Community Employment (CE) schemes operated by the Department of Social Protection. These Programmes funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs support the provision of early years and after-school care and education for more than 100,000 children each year. An Inter-Departmental Group has been established to ensure all of the benefits of this and future investment are fully realised. This Group, which is tasked with developing a coherent whole-of-government approach to investment in early years and after-school care and education, will submit its final report to Government in June 2015.

### *Monitoring of impact - female participation in the labour market*

33.3 The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has maintained its annual funding of €260 million 2014 and 2015 to support families through the early years and after-school care and education programmes thereby giving greater choice to women wishing to avail of work opportunities.



## Objective 5-B

### To ensure that the care infrastructure supports women's socio-economic engagement

#### CONTEXT

34. The care of children, older family members as well as the care of other dependent persons has traditionally fallen to women in Ireland, as elsewhere in Europe. Accordingly, the EU has begun to emphasise the importance of a comprehensive caring infrastructure to support elder care and the care of other dependants to complement childcare. A number of EU Presidency initiatives have reviewed the importance of care sharing for elder care to ensure that these responsibilities do not fall to women only or impact upon the careers of women only.
35. Statistics from the Department of Social Protection, published in 2013, show that the primary beneficiaries of the range of income supports for carers in Ireland are largely women. Table 12 above shows the number of persons in different age groups in receipt of Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit and the Respite Care Grant in 2013. The number of very elderly people in a caring role is noteworthy as is the predominance of female carers.
36. A National Carer's Strategy, *'Recognised, Supported, Empowered'*, was published by the Minister for Health in July 2012. It is a cross-Departmental strategy setting the strategic direction for future policies, services and supports provided by Government Departments and Agencies for carers and includes guiding principles, goals and objectives addressing priority areas (income support, health, information, respite, housing, transport, training, employment, children and young people with caring responsibilities) and a Roadmap for Implementation containing actions to be achieved on a cost-neutral basis in the short to medium term.
37. The mid-term review of the National Women's Strategy noted, in relation to caring, the ongoing need to ensure that women are not expected to engage disproportionately in the provision of unpaid caring and recommended re-emphasising the need to share family responsibilities. It also recommended that the relevant Departments should fully address the reintegration of carers into the labour market when their period of full time caring responsibility has come to an end, and protecting the rights of migrant workers who may come to Ireland to work in the care sector.

**TABLE 12**  
**RECIPIENTS OF CARER'S ALLOWANCE, BENEFIT AND**  
**RESPITE CARE GRANT (2013)<sup>8</sup>**

Age	Carer's Allowance			Carer's Benefit			Respite Care Grant		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Under 20 years	14	24	38	0	0	0	13	27	40
20 to 24 years	132	441	573	1	4	5	130	531	661
25 to 29 years	242	1,513	1755	1	42	43	239	1,884	2123
30 to 34 years	437	3,137	3574	30	187	217	450	4,612	5062
35 to 39 years	822	4,627	5449	37	277	314	887	7,215	8102
40 to 44 years	1,343	6,337	7680	44	244	288	1,476	9,712	11188
45 to 49 years	1,745	6,259	8004	33	211	244	1,871	8,869	10740
50 to 54 years	1,794	5,328	7122	45	157	202	1,912	6,574	8486
55 to 59 years	1,662	4,536	6198	52	128	180	1,735	5,111	6846
60 to 64 years	1,431	4,073	5504	19	62	81	1,513	4,545	6058
65 years	236	782	1018	4	11	15	253	886	1139
66 to 69 years	969	2,783	3752	3	6	9	1,080	3,185	4265
70 to 74 years	885	2,346	3231	0	0	0	1,036	2,774	3810
75 to 79 years	622	1,450	2072	0	0	0	779	1,810	2589
80 to 84 years	296	617	913	0	0	0	421	806	1227
85 to 89 years	100	125	225	0	0	0	144	194	338
90 to 94 years	12	15	27	0	0	0	22	22	44
95 years and over	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,742</b>	<b>44,394</b>	<b>57136</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>1598</b>	<b>13,963</b>	<b>58,758</b>	<b>72721</b>

*Source: Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2013, Department of Social and Family Affairs*

*Note*

*(1) The number of recipients of Respite Care Grant reported are those who are not in receipt of any other Carer's payment (Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit and Domiciliary Care Allowance). There are approximately a further 65,000 Respite Care Grant recipients who qualify for payment automatically under the terms of the relevant scheme.*

<sup>8</sup> The number of Respite Care Grant recipients reported is the total number in payment and include those who are not in receipt of any other Carer's payment.

## ACTIONS

38. The following actions have been reported by the Departments of Social Protection and of Health:

- Budgets 2014 and 2015 fully maintained the rates for Carer's Allowance.
- The One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) scheme already provides for lone parents who are caring for children under 16 years of age, and who are in receipt of the domiciliary care allowance (DCA) and a half-rate carer's allowance payment in conjunction with their OFP. This entitlement is not affected by the ongoing changes to the OFP scheme. Social welfare legislation was amended in March 2015 to allow eligible lone parents who are in receipt of a half-rate CA payment to receive the OFP payment until their youngest child reaches the age of 16 years. This change now provides the same level of support to those caring for someone other than their own child.
- The first Annual Report on implementation of the National Carers' Strategy was published in November 2013 and the second in January 2015. Achievements to date include the development of a single assessment tool for older people containing a detailed Carers Needs Assessment; the imminent release of one million euro funding from Dormant accounts for training and information provision for family carers; and the hosting of an Annual Carers Forum by the Department of Social Protection and in particular the positive engagement around the structure of this forum to meet the needs of family carers. At the request of the Department of Health, the HSE has set up a multi-disciplinary working group to bring forward implementation of the health aspects of the Strategy.
- The Programme for Government contains a commitment that the Fair Deal system of financing nursing home care would be reviewed with a view to developing a secure and equitable system of financing for community and long-term care which supports older people to stay in their own homes. This work will be informed by the outcome of the Review of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme. This review, which commenced in 2012 and is now almost complete, is being carried out by the Department of Health in collaboration with the HSE, with analysis and recommendations provided by Deloitte & Touche Consultants on specific issues which required specialised expertise. A summary of the submissions received from stakeholders to inform the review is published on the Department of Health website. As well as considering how the Scheme has operated to date, the review is expected to identify some of the broader issues that will need to be considered and tested more fully into the future, including the future financing of the full range of supports for older people, how community and residential supports and services should be balanced, and whether new care approaches can contribute positively.

<b>Objective 6-A</b> <b>To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty</b>
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### CONTEXT

39. There is evidence to show that some women are more exposed to the risk of poverty than their male counterparts. This may be caused by one or more of a number of factors. By taking time out of the workforce to raise children, women can affect their long term income level and pension entitlement. Women are more likely to become lone parents, frequently experiencing a reduction in family income and ultimately pension entitlement.
40. In the Irish context, the three main indicators of poverty are:
- at-risk-of-poverty (below 60% of median disposable income, equivalised to take into account household size),
  - material deprivation (lack of two of the eleven defined basic necessities) and
  - consistent poverty (which is the overlap of the two previous indicators and is used to set national poverty targets).
41. The *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016* identifies a wide range of actions and interventions to achieve the overall objective of reducing consistent poverty. The plan prioritises twelve high level goals in relation to children, people of working age, older people, people with disabilities and communities. It identifies up to 150 actions across Departments and agencies with a remit in social policy, as part of a strategic approach to make a decisive impact on poverty over the period to 2016. In 2011 the Government initiated a review of the national poverty target by the Minister for Social Protection, with the aim of adopting appropriate and achievable poverty target to meet the commitments of the Programme for Government 2011-2016. Arising from this review, in 2012 the national poverty target was renamed the '*National Social Target For Poverty Reduction*' and set at reducing consistent poverty to 4% by 2016 (interim target) and to 2% or less by 2020. The baseline figure in 2010 was 6.2%. New sub-targets were defined for the reduction of child poverty and the reduction of poverty in jobless households. Progress towards these targets would be monitored by the addition of two further indicators of poverty measuring the population 'vulnerable to consistent poverty' (experiencing basic deprivation, and having an income of 60-70% of median), and the population in 'absolute poverty' (individuals falling below the 60% median at-risk-of-poverty threshold from 2010).
42. In January 2015, the Department of Social Protection published a social impact assessment of the main welfare and direct tax measures in Budget 2015. The assessment focuses on the main welfare and direct tax components of the Budget which have a direct impact on household incomes, and considers the budgetary impact on the key role of social transfers in reducing the at-risk-of-poverty rate.
43. The mid-term review of the National Women's Strategy recommended that Government policy should continue to promote labour market activation as a

route out of poverty for women and their families, noting that such policies also require the availability of adequate childcare support for working mothers, particularly those on low incomes.

## **ACTIONS**

44. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Social Protection:

### ***Social protection***

- 44.1 Budget 2015 announced the increase in the Living Alone Allowance (LAA), from €7.70 per week to €9.00 per week. The primary rates for all social welfare schemes, including widows, widowers, surviving civil partners, and qualified adults, were fully maintained.

### ***National Action Plan for Social Inclusion***

- 44.2 Since NAPinclusion was drawn up in 2007, the country has faced significant economic challenges. Similarly, the Government's response to combating poverty has evolved, so that certain NAPinclusion goals and actions need updating. Therefore, the Government has agreed to update NAPinclusion for the extended period 2015-2017, in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The National Social Target for Poverty Reduction is to reduce consistent poverty to 4 % by 2016 and to 2% or less by 2020 from the 2010 baseline rate of 6.3%. The latest data from SILC 2013 indicates that the consistent poverty rate in 2013 was 8.2 %. While not a statistically significant change on the 2012 figure (7.7%), the trend continues to disimprove. Looking at the gender breakdown, for women the consistent poverty rate increased from 7.6% to 8.5% between 2012 and 2013, while for men it increased from 7.8% to 8.0%. Further details of progress on social inclusion indicators are set out in Table 13 below.

The social impact assessment of the main welfare and tax measures for 2015, including the new water charges package, found that average household incomes will increase by 0.7 % (equivalent of €6 per week). The assessment finds that social transfers continue to perform strongly in reducing poverty.

As part of its regular monitoring and reporting responsibilities, the Department has commenced a review of implementation of NAPinclusion for the period 2013 and 2014. A progress report will be submitted to Government in due course.

**TABLE 13**  
**Social Inclusion Indicators (2005-2013)**

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012(*)</b>	<b>2013</b>
Consistent poverty (target 4.0% by 2016 & 2.0% by 2020)	7.0%	6.3%	6.9%	7.7%	8.2%
• Female	7.2%	6.8%	6.9%	7.6%	8.5%
• Lone parent households	26.9%	13.6%	16.4%	17.4%	23.0%
Vulnerable to consistent poverty	2.8%	3.9%	3.8%	4.1%	4.0%
Basic deprivation	14.8%	22.6%	24.5%	26.9%	30.5%
At-risk-of-poverty	18.5%	14.7%	16.0%	16.5%	15.2%
At-risk-of-poverty before/after social transfers	42.4%	62.4%	59.8%	57.7%	60.4%
Anchored at-risk-of- poverty	19.9%	14.7%	17.7%	24.1%	23.8%

*Source: The Department of Social Protection (2015), Social Inclusion Monitor 2013*

The Social Inclusion Forum (SIF) is also part of the Government structures to monitor and evaluate NAPinclusion. The event provides a forum for wider public consultation and discussion on social inclusion issues, in particular for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and the groups that work with them. The 2015 SIF event was held on 25<sup>th</sup> March with a theme of Social Policy Innovation for Social Inclusion and was attended by the Community and Voluntary Organisations, people experiencing poverty, the Tánaiste and Government officials.

**Objective 6-B**

**To reduce the numbers of female lone parents who experience poverty**

**CONTEXT**

45. The CSO Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) for 2010 noted that individuals (adults and children) living in lone parent households experienced the highest rate of deprivation in 2010 at 49.8%. The deprivation rate for the general population was 23%. Just over 27% of individuals living in lone parent households reported an inability to afford heating at some stage in the previous twelve months, an increase of nearly 9 percentage points on the 2009 figure of 18.4%.

46. Women, as unmarried and separated parents, still predominate as recipients of the Department of Social Protection family support payments, accounting for almost 98% of recipients of the One-Parent Family Payment in 2013 according to recent statistics illustrated in Table 14.

**TABLE 14**  
**Recipients of One-Parent Family Payment, by status of parent, age and sex (2013)**

Age Group	Divorced		Unmarried Parent, Separated Parent		Widowed or Surviving civil Partner		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Under 25 Years	0	11	22	9,762	0	80	22	9,853
25 to 29 Years	1	46	87	15,091	0	74	88	15,211
30 to 34 years	4	239	176	16,221	6	96	186	16,556
35 to 39 Years	5	532	270	13,340	6	127	281	13,999
40 to 44 Years	20	985	272	10,471	20	143	312	11,599
45 to 49 years	28	960	254	5,536	24	146	306	6,642
50 to 54 Years	16	472	132	1,861	18	98	166	2,431
55 to 59 Years	13	108	57	328	5	24	75	460
60 to 64 years	6	9	12	18	6	4	24	31
65 Years	0	0	2	0	1	1	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>3,362</b>	<b>1,284</b>	<b>72,628</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>1463</b>	<b>76,783</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>3,455</b>		<b>73,912</b>		<b>879</b>		<b>78,246</b>	

Source: Department of Social Protection, 'Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2015'.

47. In November 2010, the Department of Social Protection published 'A Policy and Value for Money Review of Child Income Support and Associated Spending Programmes', the conclusions of which are expected to play a role in informing future policy development particularly directed at securing more coherent, effective and efficient spending of public money on families with children.
48. In February 2012 the Government set out its policy statement on labour market activation in the 'Pathways to Work' strategy. It is primarily focused on those who have been out of work for a year or more and operates over the following five strands: more regular and on-going engagement with people who are unemployed; greater targeting of activation places and opportunities; incentivising the take-up of opportunities; incentivising employers to provide more jobs for people who are unemployed; and reforming institutions to deliver better services to people who are unemployed. The strategy complements the *Action Plan for Jobs* which is designed to accelerate the transition to a sustainable, jobs-rich economy, while *Pathways to Work* aims to ensure that as many as possible of newly created jobs go to people on the Live Register.

49. The mid-term review of the National Women's Strategy recommended that Government policy should continue to promote labour market activation as a route out of poverty for women and their families, noting that such policies also require the availability of adequate childcare support for working mothers, particularly those on low incomes.

## **ACTIONS**

50. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Social Protection:

### *Assisting children in families on low incomes*

- 50.1 In Budget 2015, the Government increased child benefit by €5 per month, from €130 to €135 per month. Child Benefit, as a universal payment, will help all families with children, but it has the additional benefit for unemployed families in that it is work neutral, as it is retained in full upon return to the workforce. In addition, it proportionately benefits low income families the most, and as such, is a progressive measure.

### *Supporting lone parents*

- 50.2 On foot of the Social Welfare and Pensions (No.2) Act, 2014, the OFP scheme income disregard is being maintained at €90 per week. This will benefit approximately 28,000 working OFP recipients in 2015. The further reductions to the income disregard that were scheduled to occur in January 2015 and in January 2016 will not be taking place.
- 50.3 The Department is actively engaging with lone parents who are affected by the ongoing reforms to the OFP. This means that lone parents who are on a jobseeker's payment can access the full range of employment, educational and training supports available to improve their skillset and move towards sustainable employment.
- 50.4 The final phase of the One Parent Family (OFP) scheme age change reforms will be taking place on 2 July 2015, when the maximum age limit of the youngest child at which an OFP recipient's payment ceases will be reduced to 7 years for all recipients. It is anticipated that approximately 30,200 OFP recipients will transition out of the OFP scheme on 2 July, 2015. These customers will be fully supported by the Department to transition to another income support payment – as appropriate. The majority of customers who lose entitlement to OFP will transition to a Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) payment. In recognition of the caring responsibilities of lone parents with young children, the Jobseekers Allowance transitional arrangement was introduced in 2013. This arrangement exempts lone parents who have a youngest child aged between 7 and 13 years inclusive, and who continue to parent alone, from certain JA scheme conditions, including the requirement to be available for, and genuinely seeking, full-time work. As such, no lone parent with a youngest child aged under 14 years will be forced to seek full time employment in order



to receive income support from the Department. Recipients of the JA transitional payment also have access to the Department's full range of Intreo services, and to related supports, and can move into education and/or employment, including into part-time employment (for example, during mornings, when their children are at school), and still receive payment, subject to a means test. The JA transitional arrangement thus allows these customers to balance their caring responsibilities and significantly reduces their requirement for child care. The exemptions from the full JA conditions remain in place until their youngest child reaches 14 years of age, at which point, should they continue to claim the JA payment, they will be subjected to the full JA scheme conditions.

- 50.5 Through the new Back to Work Family Dividend scheme, long-term unemployed jobseekers with children who leave welfare to return to work can retain the child-related portion of their social welfare payment on a tapered basis over two years. It will also apply to One Parent Family Payment recipients who similarly go back into the workforce. This includes those who move to self-employment. The scheme will be worth €1,550 per child in the first year of employment or self-employment and half that amount again in the second year.
- 50.6 The After School Child Care (ASCC) scheme, which was introduced in Budget 2013, is a joint initiative between the Department and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (D/CYA) to provide subsidised after-school child care places to low-income and unemployed persons who make the transition into employment. The purpose of the ASCC scheme is to help to offset some of the after-school child care costs that are associated with availing of an employment opportunity in a bid to encourage more individuals to take up employment. The scheme supports those who are unemployed as well as OFP recipients who lose their entitlement to the OFP payment. It applies to persons who take up a job, who increase their days of employment, or who take up a place on a Departmental employment programme. The ASCC scheme builds on the existing supports that are provided for, and implemented by, the D/CYA in the child care sector, through which child care is provided to some 40,000 children of low-income parents at reduced rates. There are currently up to 500 subsidised childcare places available on the ASCC scheme.
- 50.7 The Community Employment Childcare programme was introduced in Budget 2014 from funding re-allocated from the ASCC budget and provides 1,800 subsidised part-time and after-school child care places for children up to the age of 13 years, to CE participants, including to lone parents. There were 924 child care places taken up on the CEC programme at end of 2014.

***Maintaining the value of child income support measures for those on social welfare***

- 50.8 In 2014, the Government set a child poverty target in the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, which is to remove 70,000 children (aged 0-17 years) out of consistent poverty by 2020, a reduction of at least two-thirds on the 2011 level.

50.9 The latest data show there were 138,000 children in consistent poverty in 2013, an increase of 23,000 children on 2012. The at-risk-of-poverty rate for children in 2013 was 17.9%. Social transfers (excluding pensions) reduced the rate from 44.8 %, thereby removing almost 27% of all children out of income poverty. This represents a poverty reduction effect from social transfers of 60%. Ireland is amongst the best performing countries in the EU, in this regard.

50.10 The policy goal for the adequacy of Child Income support payments under the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPS Inclusion)* is that the combination of child benefit and Qualified Child increases should represent between 33% and 35% of the adult social welfare rate. In 2015, the weekly value of child and family income supports will be equivalent to 33.8% of the minimum personal rate.

### **Objective 6-C**

**To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty by increasing pension cover**

## **CONTEXT**

51. Periods away from the labour market among women can increase their risk of poverty. This also can influence their pension entitlement in later years. Accordingly, the Pensions Authority is actively engaged in raising awareness of pensions to encourage people to consider their pension needs at an early age.
52. Data from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA), a nationally representative sample of the older Irish population<sup>9</sup>, provided the material for a study published in November 2012 which explored the incomes of retirees in Ireland and the distribution of supplementary pensions among them. The study, "*Supplementary Pensions and the Income of Ireland's Retirees*"<sup>10</sup> which was conducted by the Department of Economics, Trinity College Dublin and TILDA, analysed data on men who are now retired but who have worked for at least fifteen years and women who are now retired but who have worked for at least ten years. The main findings included the following:
- The average income of male retirees was 58% higher than that of female retirees, with the difference largely attributed to supplementary pensions. The group of individuals whose income is less than €50 per week are mainly women (76%).
  - Overall, 45% of all individuals in the sample received income from supplementary pensions. 46% of men and 33% of women had occupational pensions, whereas the coverage rate for private pensions was much lower for both men and women at 5% and 4% respectively.
  - In the case of both genders, factors such as education and having been a public sector worker were associated with having supplementary pensions.

<sup>9</sup> TILDA is a large-scale study of over 8,500 people aged 50 and over and living in Ireland. Participants were interviewed between late 2009 and early 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Available at <http://tilda.tcd.ie/assets/pdf/Pensions%20report.pdf>.

- Career continuity mattered for both genders but in slightly different ways. For men, longer tenure with the same employer was important in determining the access to a supplementary pension but for women the important factor was total work experience across all employers.
  - 86% of the men in the sample and 74% of women received a State welfare pension, with men having a higher coverage rate for the contributory State welfare pension, whereas a higher percentage of women received the means-tested non-contributory State welfare pension.
  - One out of ten men and one out of seven women reported receiving income from social welfare payments, other than pensions.
  - The report concluded that measures to promote pension coverage should target the segments of the labour force that include the self-employed, those working in small firms and those with non-continuous work patterns, and on increasing supplementary pension coverage among women in particular.
53. The mid-term review of the National Women’s Strategy recommended that ongoing programmes be implemented to encourage women to maintain or initiate personal pension plans to ensure that they are adequately provided for financially by the end of their working lives.

## **ACTIONS**

54. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Social Protection:

### ***Social insurance and pensions***

- 54.1 In 2014, a number of measures were introduced which impacted on pensioners. Firstly, the State Pension Transition, which was payable to retired people aged 65 with sufficient social insurance contributions, was abolished. In addition, the telephone allowance element of the Household Benefits package, worth €9.50 per month, was abolished, as was the Bereavement Grant.
- 54.2 Budget 2015 announced the increase in the Living Alone Allowance (LAA), from €7.70 per week to €9.00 per week. While persons over 65 years of age experience much lower rates of consistent poverty than the general population (1.9% compared to 8.2% in the most recent SILC publication), over 65s living alone reported an increase in deprivation in 2013.
- 54.3 The provisions of EU Directive 2010/41/EU relating to social insurance for self-employed spouses/civil partners were transposed into Irish law in July 2014. Spouses/civil partners who are not employees or business partners but who participate in the activities of their self-employed spouse/civil partner and perform the same or ancillary tasks may now gain access to social insurance as a self-employed worker and, in time, establish entitlement to maternity benefit, widow’s, widower’s or surviving civil partner’s contributory pension and State pension contributory in their own right. Full details of the extension of social insurance cover for self-employed spouses/civil partners are available on the

Department's website [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie). The Department also undertook advertising and awareness activities to publicise this.

### ***Universal Retirement Savings System***

54.4 In line with the Statement of Government Priorities 2014-2016, the Government decided to proceed with work to develop a roadmap and timeline for the introduction of a new, universal, supplementary workplace retirement saving scheme. This employment based scheme is intended to progressively achieve universal pension coverage, with particular focus on lower-paid workers. This work will be progressed by the establishment of a high level Universal Retirement Savings Group (URSG). The broad role of the group will be to consider the constituent factors involved in constructing an efficient and effective universal retirement savings system and to bring a recommendation to Government in the form of a roadmap and estimated timeline for introduction. The URSG will outline cost estimates and ensure that any such system is suited to the national environment. Proposals will contribute to the promotion of gender equality and bridging the gap between men and women in the provision of supplementary savings for retirement.

### ***The Pensions Council***

54.4 A Pensions Council was established to advise the Tánaiste and the Department on matters of pension policy and give consumers greater input into pension policy with a particular focus on policies to support the sustainability and adequacy of pension provision. The work of the Pensions Council will be advanced through research on pensions policy development, and will include the pension gender gap and the gender-proofing of the pensions reform programme.

### ***Increasing Workforce participation***

54.5 One of the key objectives of Budget 2015 was to assist unemployed families to return to work. The Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD), which was announced in Budget 2015 (see also Objective 6-B above) allows customers who leave welfare for employment to retain the child proportion of their welfare payment, which equals €29.80 per week per child (up to a maximum of €119.20 for four children), for two years. The full child proportion of their welfare payment is payable for the first year with 50% entitlement for the second year. The BTWFD will be paid concurrently with Family Income Supplement (FIS) and will not impact on the FIS means test. Applications for the scheme have been accepted from 5 January 2015.

54.6 Budget 2015 also provided for the expansion of JobsPlus to provide subsidies to employers to recruit and employ an additional 3,000 long-term unemployed jobseekers.

54.7 In addition, Child Benefit was increased by €5 per month, from €130 to €135 per month. This will help all families with children but also has the additional benefit for unemployed families in that it is work neutral as it is retained in full upon return to the workforce.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEME TWO - ENSURING THE WELLBEING OF WOMEN

#### INTRODUCTION

1. It will be recalled that the National Women's Strategy makes mention of the WHO definition of "health" as "*a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing*". Accordingly, this Theme links a number of very different objectives, relating to topics as diverse as work/life balance and sport while also including a number of issues which can impact negatively on the lives of women, such as domestic violence and trafficking.
2. As previously noted, issues such as the sharing of family responsibilities, violence against women and human trafficking have been the focus of significant bodies of work at the EU, Council of Europe and the United Nations in recent years. In relation to the latter two topics, new Conventions at the Council of Europe provide structures to enable its Member States to achieve optimal provisions.

#### Objective 7

#### To enhance the work/life balance for women

#### CONTEXT

3. This objective reflects the ongoing debate at EU level about the need to address inequalities which persist in the sharing of family and caring responsibilities between women and men. Unequal distribution of caring/domestic responsibilities has a detrimental effect on women's full economic independence and their engagement in the labour market. This in turn leads to a situation where highly educated women and girls may not be reaching their full potential, career-wise, resulting in persisting gender pay and pension gaps.
4. Across the EU, the employment rate for women who have children is much lower than for women without children in most Member States (with the exception of Slovenia and Portugal) while it is the opposite for men. The European Commission has analysed the employment rate of women and men aged 20-49 years without a child and in the presence of a child. Its findings suggest that, in Ireland, the employment rate of women with children is more than 10% lower than that of women without children, while the employment rate of men with children is more than 10% higher than that of men without children<sup>11</sup>. Similar impacts are shown in Table 11 above.
5. The mid-term review of the National Women's Strategy noted that, although Ireland offers the opportunity for flexible work arrangements which are open to men and to women, there is a significant need to increase the uptake of these

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<sup>11</sup> Graph: "Employment impact of parenthood" in the European Commission paper 'Female Labour Market Participation' (2012).

leaves by fathers. It was suggested that this could be achieved by legislative means, making the sharing of some leaves mandatory, as is happening to a growing extent in other jurisdictions. The need for employers to become aware of good practice in other jurisdictions where steps are taken to assist working mothers to re-integrate into the work force after a period of family leave, and for awareness raising campaigns to increase the numbers of men engaging in family friendly leave arrangements was also noted.

Due to the low take up of the Work/Life Balance Consultancy Scheme which operated under the National Framework Committee for Work/Life Balance Policies, and to budgetary constraints, this scheme was discontinued in 2010.

## **ACTIONS**

6. The following actions have been reported by the Departments of Social Protection and of Justice and Equality:

### ***Treatment of part-time and other atypical workers in the Social Welfare system***

As requested by the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection, the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare examined the issue of atypical workers and their access to the jobseeker schemes in the context of the Group's fourth report on working age payments. This report has been completed and is currently under consideration.

### ***Consolidation of family leaves legislation – proposal in respect of paternity leave***

It is intended that the Family Leaves Bill will be published later this year. It will provide for the consolidation into one piece of legislation the current provisions regarding maternity, adoptive, parental and carer's leave. This will also provide an opportunity to consider other issues such as the introduction of paternity leave. The introduction of two weeks paid paternity leave is under active consideration.

## **Objective 8-A**

**To improve the health status of women in Ireland through gender focused policies**

## **CONTEXT**

7. The Women's Health Council had actively fostered the development of health policy to maximise health for women in Ireland and to foster gender-focused health policies. Following the reorganisation of some of the State Agencies in 2009, the Council was subsumed into the former Department of Health and Children in October 2009.

8. The Health Service Executive (HSE) initiated a major project on Gender Mainstreaming in Health Service Policy and Provision which led to the HSE finalising and approving its Health Inequalities Framework in 2010. During 2011 and 2012, the HSE engaged actively with the National Women's Council of Ireland to mainstream gender in the health services. This partnership has led to publication of the HSE Gender Mainstreaming Steering Group's report, *'Equal but Different A framework for integrating gender equality in Health Service Executive Policy, Planning and Service Delivery'*, which was launched by Minister of State Kathleen Lynch T.D. in November 2012. Implementation of this report has driven much of the actions undertaken in 2013 relevant to Objective 8-A.
9. The mid-term review of the NWS recommended that the Department of Health should continue to maintain a focus on the health needs of women, building on the work undertaken by the Women's Health Council. It was recommended that the HSE should continue its work mainstreaming gender and should ensure that all its published materials are gender disaggregated to facilitate a detailed examination of the health of women in Ireland.

## **ACTIONS**

10. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive (HSE):

### ***Gender mainstreaming in health policy planning, structures and services***

The HSE reported the following action taken in partnership with the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) in the areas of policy development, resource development and organisational support.

- In policy development, four listening workshops were held around the country, in Galway, Letterkenny, Waterford and Mullingar, for the purpose of listening to women and men in terms of their health service access and experience and gathering their views on the forthcoming Maternity Services Charter and Strategy. This consultation, the report of which will be disseminated in mid-2015, will inform the HSE Health Inequalities Action Plan for 2016 and will aid in the shaping of the Maternity Services Charter and Strategy.
- A gender focus has been incorporated into a newly revised Health Inequalities Training (HIT) Programme. The need for a gender perspective to be incorporated in organisational policy and business planning is highlighted in a video produced to accompany the training, which features interviews with Mr. Tony O'Brien, Director General, HSE and Dr. Cate Hartigan, Assistant National Director, HSE Health Promotion and Improvement.
- Practical gender mainstreaming tools are now available to enable managers and staff to incorporate a gender lens in the service/business

planning process. Project management support is also being provided for a limited number of pilot projects. One such project agreed for Q2-Q3 2015 is the Longford Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers, funded by the HSE Health Promotion & Improvement Unit.

<b>Objective 8-B</b> <b>To improve the physical health status of women in Ireland</b>
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### **CONTEXT**

11. The National Women's Strategy identified heart disease and cancers, particularly lung cancer, breast and cervical cancer, as presenting significant risks to the health of women in Ireland. The NWS aims to address and lower these risks with a series of interventions including education and awareness raising about health and prevention strategies, fitness, good diet, taking part in fitness and sports programmes and mass sports events e.g. women's mini marathon.
12. The prevention and management of cardiovascular disease in both men and women is addressed in the Department of Health policy, *Changing Cardiovascular Health: National Cardiovascular Health Policy 2010–2019*. This policy places an increased emphasis on primary preventative measures. It details individual and population level measures to reduce heart disease incidence and mortality, and recommends the development and implementation of a multidisciplinary team approach to ensure effective management for patients with heart disease.
13. The mid-term review of the Strategy recommended that specific programmes be put in place to inform women who do not currently avail of the cancer screening services of the benefits to their health of participation. It was also recommended that the development of cardiovascular programmes should be subject to a gender analysis, in view of the gender differences in presentation, diagnosis and outcome identified in previous research, and should be accompanied by health information programmes on the impact of obesity and smoking on coronary health.

### **ACTIONS**

15. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies:

#### ***Ongoing Cancer Screening Programmes***

BreastCheck, the National Breast Screening Programme, is a population-based call re-call programme that offers women aged 50 to 64 a free mammogram every two years. Planning for the age extension of BreastCheck, the National Breast Screening Programme, to 65 – 69 year olds is underway and screening of



the extended cohort will commence in Quarter 4 of 2015. The additional eligible population is approximately 100,000 and, when fully implemented, 540,000 women aged 50 to 69 years will be included in the BreastCheck Programme.

CervicalCheck, the National Cervical Screening Programme provides free smear tests through primary care settings to all of the approximately 1.2 million women aged 25-60 years that are eligible for screening. From May 2015, smear test samples that show low grade changes will automatically be tested for certain types of HPV. The HPV test will help to decide if a woman can stay in routine screening, with a smear test every three or five years depending on her age, or if she should be referred to a colposcopy clinic for further examination. HPV testing will help to avoid unnecessary smear tests for some women while ensuring earlier diagnosis and treatment where necessary, for others.

BowelScreen, the National Bowel Screening Programme, commenced offering free bowel screening nationwide to men and women aged 60 to 69 years in late 2012. The programme is being implemented on a phased basis and will be expanded over time to the full 55-74 years target population. The programme is focusing on those aged 60-69 years in the initial phase because, from a population perspective, this cohort will benefit most from bowel screening.

In May 2015 a National Cancer Strategy Steering Group was established to advise the Department of Health on developing a 3rd National Cancer Strategy for 2016-2025. The Group brings together a range of experts in cancer control and will report later in 2015. A Cancer Patient Forum has also been established to inform the work of the Steering Group and facilitate a patient input to the development of the Strategy, and comprises representatives of the Irish Cancer Society, Purple House Cancer Support, Cancer Care West, EuropaDonna Ireland, Marie Keating Foundation, ARC Cancer Support, a screening participant, Donegal Action for Cancer Care, Cooperating for Cancer Care North West, Men's Cancer Alliance, CanTeen Ireland, Barretstown and Patient Focus. Development of the new Strategy will also be informed by the report of a peer review analysis of the 2nd national cancer strategy, 'A Strategy for Cancer Control in Ireland', published by the Department of Health in May 2015, which noted that impressive progress had been made in the provision of cancer services in Ireland in the period since 2006. In addition, the Minister launched a public consultation process on the development of the new Strategy.

### ***Prevention and Treatment of Heart Disease***

The Special Action Group on Obesity (SAGO), established in 2011, is concentrating on a range of measures such as calorie posting in restaurants, a choice of healthy foods and drinks in vending machines in post-primary schools; food labelling options; Treatment Algorithms for adults and children and opportunistic screening and monitoring for earlier detection of overweight and obesity in children. Recommendations to reduce consumption of high fat, salt and sugar foods and drinks from the Top Shelf of the Food Pyramid have been prepared and are being considered under the Healthy Ireland framework. The Department of Health has also worked with the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland with regard to the revised Children's Code and the marketing of food

and drink to children, with a view to restricting marketing of high fat, high salt and high sugar foods and drinks.

An EU-wide Joint Action to facilitate implementation of the EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity, agreed during the Irish Presidency of the EU in 2013, commenced in March 2015 and will run to early 2017. Ireland will lead on a Work Package which focuses on *'The cost of Childhood Obesity in Europe and forecasting the increase in the burden of disease arising from childhood obesity in the EU by 2020'*.

The Department of Health is preparing an Obesity Policy and Action Plan under the Healthy Ireland Framework. The plan, to be finalised during 2015, will run from 2015 to 2025. It will include issues such as marketing of food and healthy eating guidelines. A national consultation day was held in Farmleigh in April 2015 involving approximately 150 key stakeholders with representation from Government Departments, County Councils, Industry, university departments and the education sector. Further consultation days are planned for children and healthcare professionals. It is intended to develop an action plan not only for the health system but also to propose options for other sectors which play a key role in preventing overweight and obesity.

### **Objective 8-C**

#### **To improve the reproductive and sexual health status of women in Ireland**

#### **CONTEXT**

16. Since its establishment in 2001, the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme (formerly the Crisis Pregnancy Agency) has worked closely with Government Departments and Agencies to reduce the incidence of crisis pregnancy, including abortion, among women living in Ireland.
17. The Crisis Pregnancy Programme has developed a monitoring system to examine the number of women giving Irish addresses at abortion clinics in other jurisdictions, including the UK and elsewhere in Europe. The *Irish Contraception and Crisis Pregnancy Study* (2010), published in 2012, found that 94% of all women living in Ireland who have experienced an abortion had travelled to the UK for the procedure. Since 2001 there has been a 45% reduction in the number of women travelling from Ireland to the UK for abortion services, from 6,673 in 2001 to 3,679 in 2013. This equates to a decrease in the abortion rate over this period from 7.5 to 3.8 per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years.

Also significant is the 55% reduction in the number of births to teenage mothers over the 12 years since the Crisis Pregnancy Programme was established, from 3,087 in 2011 to 1,381 in 2013. The birth rate among teenage girls (15-19 year old) in 2013 was 10.4 per 1000, down from 20 per 1000 in 2001.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme Annual Report 2013, available at: [www.crisispregnancy.ie](http://www.crisispregnancy.ie)

18. The mid-term review of the NWS recommended that this successful programme of work on sexual and reproductive health should continue.

## **ACTIONS**

19. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies:

### ***Crisis pregnancy information, counselling and services***

- 19.1 Over €3.05 million in funding was allocated to the area of crisis pregnancy and post-termination counselling and medical checkups in 2014 by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme.

- This funding provided for the delivery of free, non-judgemental crisis pregnancy counselling through 15 service providers operating out of over 50 locations throughout Ireland.
- To ensure a high standard in service delivery, part of this funding was channelled specifically to improve standards through training and supervision and for the ongoing delivery of the Crisis Pregnancy Counselling Skills Certificate Course with the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUI, Maynooth). Over 130 Counsellors/Social Workers and specifically trained volunteers working in State funded Crisis Pregnancy Counselling Services had completed this course to year end 2014. The course has been externally evaluated and well rated by past participants.
- In 2014 the fourth in a series of Masterclasses for health professionals (including those funded by the HSE CPP) who encounter those experiencing or who have experienced a crisis pregnancy in the course of their work, was developed and delivered by NUI, Maynooth in order to assist them in providing support to such clients. These programmes were developed in consultation with the HSE CPP and other key stakeholders including those funded by the HSE CPP to provide crisis pregnancy counselling. Since this series commenced in 2011, over 250 places have been taken up on these Masterclasses by health care and related professionals. The Masterclasses are subject to evaluation mechanisms.
- In 2014 further funding was provided to the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) to run 5 workshops for GP trainers to upskill them in Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) and to ensure up to date information on LARC is provided to trainee GPs. These workshops are continuing into 2015.
- The ‘Positive Options’ campaign developed by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme promotes the availability of these free, non judgemental counselling services and has been ongoing since 2003. The campaign includes a service that allows women to receive a list of crisis pregnancy

counselling services for free by texting the word 'list' to 50444. In 2014 approximately 20,000 Positive Options leaflets and 43,000 Positive Options wallet cards were distributed directly to women mainly through GP Surgeries, the Women's Mini Marathon goodie bags and Studentcents.ie fresher week goodie bags. In 2015, there have been approx 15,000 requests for information from the Positive Options service (SMS service and website) with approximately 53,000 visits to the [www.positiveoptions.ie](http://www.positiveoptions.ie) website.

- The Abortion Aftercare campaign, developed by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, aims to raise awareness of the availability of free State-funded post-abortion medical check-up and counselling services. In 2012, services were advertised through online media directing approximately 8,000 visits to [www.abortionaftercare.ie](http://www.abortionaftercare.ie). Approximately 2,500 Abortion Aftercare leaflets were distributed primarily to GP's nationwide through a hand delivery service.

19.2 The HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme (CPP) has a range of information resources on fertility, contraception and sexual health matters for women throughout their life-course.

- Targeting adolescent women, B4udecide.ie is an education initiative that aims to encourage young people (aged 14 to 16) to make healthy, responsible decisions about relationships and sexual health. The education initiative comprises a website and resource materials for teachers and youth workers. In 2014, there were over 100,000 visits to the [b4udecide.ie](http://b4udecide.ie) website. Almost 1,000 lesson plan packs for post primary teachers and for youth workers were disseminated to teachers via the DES Professional Development support service training and to youth work via the NYCI. In 2014 the CPP attended a number of events to showcase the [b4udecide.ie](http://b4udecide.ie) education initiative, including the Young Social Innovators and teacher and youth worker related conferences. Promotional materials that direct young people to the [b4udecide.ie](http://b4udecide.ie) website were also disseminated to health professionals/teachers and youth workers through [healthpromotion.ie](http://healthpromotion.ie).
- The 'Think Contraception' Campaign is aimed at women and men in early adulthood (primarily those aged 18-24, with women and men aged 25-30 as a secondary target group) and contains information on fertility, contraception and sexual health. A new phase of the Think Contraception campaign was launched in December 2013 and was rolled out in 2014, using TV sponsorships, on-the-street promotion, poster and digital advertising and social media connections to promote its key message, that when it comes to risk of STIs or unplanned pregnancy – Johnny's got you covered. The new phase of the campaign addresses preventing against contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The website [thinkcontraception.ie](http://thinkcontraception.ie) received over 156,000 visits in 2014. Distribution of approximately 136,000 'Think Contraception Protection Packs' (which includes a sexual health leaflet and a condom) took place at popular festivals and concerts and in pubs and clubs around

the country and through other targeted outreach. The campaign's Facebook page has approximately 46,000 followers and 68,000 Think Contraception leaflets with information on all different types of contraception available were disseminated.

- Aimed at women aged 35-55, the 'Contraception 35-55' campaign was redeveloped in 2013-2014 and is now titled 'Contraception 35+'. The leaflet provides information on contraception, fertility and sexual health information aimed at women aged over 35. 44,000 leaflets were disseminated through healthpromotion.ie primarily to pharmacists, GP surgeries and hospitals.

19.3 The HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme continues to strategically invest in research to implement evidence informed approaches to communications and information campaigns, policy and service provision. In 2014, the Programme in partnership with Child & Family Agency (Tusla) continued to provide guidance and oversight to the research team working on the Sexual Health and Sexuality Education Needs Assessment of Young People in Care in Ireland (SENYPIC) programme of research. The research was commissioned in response to young people in care have a higher risk of early sexual initiation, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and socio-economic disadvantage compared to young people in the general population. Publication is planned for 2nd quarter of 2015. The research will be widely disseminated on publication and a set of actions to support the sexual healthcare and relationships and sexuality needs of young people in care will be implemented.

#### ***Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in schools***

19.4 The HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme has maintained a positive and productive relationship with the Department of Education and Skills regarding RSE implementation for a number of years. On this basis, a number of Relationships and Sexuality Education resources have been developed for delivery in post primary schools. SPHE is a mandatory programme at primary level and at junior cycle at post primary level. In senior cycle, all schools are required to provide an RSE programme, and are encouraged to deliver SPHE. As a result of participating in the SPHE/RSE programme, students at post-primary level will have achieved a number of outcomes, including having a clear understanding of the male and female reproductive systems and of the development stages from conception to birth. The resources include the B4udecide.ie education initiative, targeting 14 to 16 year olds and the TRUST pack, developed in 2008 as a relationships and sexuality education (RSE) resource for senior cycle students. This pack continued to be rolled out nationwide in 2014, made available to SPHE teachers through TRUST training. The pack contains a DVD and lessons on human reproduction and fertility, contraceptive methods, unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and transmission.

The Health and Wellbeing team in PDST is a cross-sectoral team, representing officials from the Department of Education and Skills and HSE that supports professional development for teachers of SPHE at both primary and post

primary level. At primary level from January 2014 to the end of February 2015 6,486 teachers engaged with SPHE related support through seminars, workshops and in school support. Specifically, 1,245 teachers attended workshops that focused on the delivery of RSE. At post primary level 4,743 teachers engaged with SPHE related support through seminars, workshops and in school support. Specifically 377 attended seminar training that focused on teachers' delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education at Junior and Senior cycle.

### ***National Sexual Health Strategy***

- 19.5 The Department of Health reports that the forthcoming National Sexual Health Strategy will, for the first time, apply a nationally co-ordinated approach to addressing sexual health and wellbeing and to reducing negative health outcomes, including in the specific area of HIV. It will acknowledge the importance of developing healthy attitudes to sexuality throughout childhood and adolescence and builds on that foundation for positive sexual health and wellbeing into adulthood and older age with a view to ensuring everyone in Ireland experiences positive sexual health and wellbeing, and has access to high quality sexual health information, education and services across the life course.

#### **Objective 8-D**

#### **To improve the mental health status of women in Ireland**

#### **CONTEXT**

20. Following the publication in 2006 of “*A Vision for Change*” by the Mental Health Commission, an independent Monitoring Group was established to review progress on its implementation. The structure of the Strategy addresses the needs of both women and men collectively with some short reference to gender specific issues such as perinatal mental health. The reports of the independent Monitoring Group to date have not made mention of gender specific initiatives.
21. Figures from the most recent census of Irish psychiatric units and hospitals, conducted in March 2013 by the Health Research Board, show that the gender breakdown of patients has remained consistent over the last 50 years, with males typically accounting for over half of all patients in each census year. The male rate for schizophrenia and intellectual disability was almost twice that of the female rate, with rates of 21.0 per 100,000 for males for schizophrenia and 11.8 for females, and rates of 4.9 for males for intellectual disability and 2.2 for females. Females had a higher rate of hospitalisation for depressive disorders, at 10.1 compared with 7.2 per 100,000 for males. Fifteen% of patients on census night were involuntary, with male patients accounting for 71% of their number. The child and adolescent patients numbered 64, of whom 70% were girls.

**TABLE 15**  
**Mental health in-patient survey (2013)**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of psychiatric in-patients	1,325	1,076	2,401
Rate of admission per 100,000 of population	58.3	46.5	52.3

*Source: Health Research Board, 'Irish Psychiatric Units and Hospitals Census 2013'*

22. The mid-term review of the Strategy recommended that, in relation to the planning and delivery of mental health services, a greater analysis of the differing needs of men and of women should be incorporated into future work. It was also recommended that additional and visible programmes to support perinatal depression be undertaken to support sufferers and to raise awareness of the condition.

### **ACTIONS**

23. The following actions, none of which are specifically targeted at women and girls, have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies:

#### ***The Department of Education and Skills***

- 23.1 As part of the reform of the junior cycle, the Minister for Education and Skills, in accepting the Travers proposal as a basis of agreement towards the implementation of the junior cycle, has agreed that all junior cycle students will undertake learning in a new area entitled 'Wellbeing'. This area of learning will incorporate SPHE, Physical Education, and Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE).
- 23.2 A new short course in SPHE, developed by the NCCA, is now available for schools to implement as part of their Framework for Junior Cycle. The short course may be offered for assessment purposes if schools so wish to report on their achievement. The course has 4 strands, one of which focuses on 'My mental health'.
- 23.3 To support implementation of the wellbeing guidelines for post primary schools published in 2013, guidelines for review or development of student support teams in such schools were published in 2014.

In January 2015, the Department of Education and Skills, in conjunction with the Department of Health, published '*Well-being in Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention*'. The Guidelines, which mirror the guidelines for post primary schools, provide practical guidance on how primary schools can promote mental health and well-being. Schools are encouraged to engage with the 'Health Promoting Schools'

process which involves a focus at whole-school level on all the aspects of healthy living including mental health promotion. They support the “Healthy Ireland” Initiative of the Department of Health.

The Guidelines are structured on the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) continuum of support process and are divided into three main sections:

- School Support for All provides a whole-school approach to mental health and suicide prevention.
- School Support for Some specifically focuses on the early identification of a small number of young people or groups who are at risk of developing unhealthy patterns of behaviour or who are already showing early signs of mental health difficulties.
- School Support for A Few outlines how schools can support young people with more complex or enduring needs relating to their mental and emotional well-being.

23.4 The Action Plan on Bullying, which was published in January 2013, sets out the Department of Education and Skills’ approach to preventing and tackling bullying in schools. The actions focus on support for schools, teachers’ professional development, research and awareness-raising. Since Spring 2014, all Boards of Management have been required to develop and formally adopt an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of Anti-Bullying Procedures that issued to schools in September 2013.

### ***The Department of Health***

23.5 The framework for development of the national mental health system is provided by the report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy, *A Vision for Change*, launched in January 2006. The Department of Health commenced preliminary work in 2015 on the development of a successor policy to *A Vision for Change*.

23.6 Additional funding of €35 million provided for mental health in Budget 2015 will be directed towards the continued prioritised development and reconfiguration of Community Mental Health teams for both adults and children and to permit urgent specialist needs to be addressed, including psychiatric intensive care, forensic mental health, mental health intellectual disability care, and psychiatric liaison services, in line with *A Vision for Change*.

23.7 The development of nursing and midwifery policy and development of the national maternity strategy will further address the primary care needs of women with mental health issues in the perinatal period.



<b>Objective 8-E</b> <b>To promote healthy lifestyles for the women of Ireland</b>
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## **CONTEXT**

24. This objective links a healthy lifestyle with the achievement of optimal health.
25. The mid-term review of the Strategy noted the need to continue awareness raising programmes for women on health issues, particularly in relation to weight, which is a contributory factor to health outcomes.

## **ACTIONS**

26. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Health:

### ***Combating alcohol abuse***

- 26.1 The General Scheme of the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill 2015 was published by the Minister for Health in February 2015. Under pre-legislative scrutiny procedures, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children held hearings on the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill in March to April 2015. The Bill forms part of a package of measures to deal with alcohol misuse, approved by Government in 2013 on foot of the recommendations in the National Substance Misuse Strategy. They include provision for minimum unit pricing for alcohol products, the regulation of advertising and marketing of alcohol, structural separation of alcohol from other products in mixed trading outlets, health labelling of alcohol products, and regulation of sports sponsorship.

### ***Smoking cessation supports***

- 26.2 Over the last number of years there has been a gradual decline in both women and men smoking. However, 2014 recorded a 12% annual drop in the percentage of women who smoke, down from 20.2% in December 2013 to 17.6% in December 2014. This compared to a 5.5% drop in the percentage of men smoking, down from 22.9% to 21.6% in the same period. Later in 2015 detailed epidemiological information will be available from both the Healthy Ireland Survey and the Health Behaviour in School Children Survey to accurately assess the gender, age and social circumstances of all smokers in Ireland, so as to help plan and manage services.
- 26.3 The QUIT smoking cessation service in the HSE is gender neutral. However, there is recognition of a special need to support women who are smokers when they are pregnant. In 2014, the HSE commissioned an on-line training module on smoking cessation relating to smoking in pregnancy. While the HSE's QUIT mass media campaign is gender neutral in design and execution, it specifically targets women and men in the 25-39 year age group, from the less well-off sections of society.

**Objective 9**  
**To increase the number of women participating in Sport and Physical Activity in Ireland**

**CONTEXT**

27. This objective envisages a holistic approach to women's health by encouraging more involvement in sport and in mass participation events in order to improve women's overall well being.
28. The mid-term review of the Strategy recommended that the Irish Sports Council should ensure that material on its "Women in Sport Programme" should be available in the public domain as well as on social media sites to ensure that it reaches the widest possible number of women.

**ACTIONS**

29. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies:

*National Plan for Physical Activity*

- 29.1 The Department of Health and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and a number of other key stakeholders, are currently developing a National Physical Activity Plan to encourage greater levels of physical activity by everyone living in Ireland. This is the first time that concerted action will be taken by a range of different stakeholders to get more people in Ireland active. It is expected that the Plan will be launched later in the year.

*Adult participation in sport*

- 29.2 A strong increase in participation by women has narrowed the gender gap<sup>13</sup> for adult participation in sport from 15.7% in 2007 to 9.3% by 2013. The 2013 Irish Sports Monitor (ISM) reports that almost 43% of women are taking part in regular sport i.e. at least once a week. This is equivalent to over ¾ million adult women participating in sport on a weekly basis. This is the highest recorded participation rate for women since the ISM was introduced in 2007. The ISM findings<sup>14</sup> indicate that female participation in sport has increased across all age groups, but declines with age – with the highest participation rate at 66.2% among 16-19 year old girls and the lowest at 30.2% among women aged 65 years and over.

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<sup>13</sup> Here the gender gap is calculated as the difference between the proportion of men and women participating in sport at least once a week from the relevant Irish Sports Monitor survey.

<sup>14</sup> The latest Irish Sports Monitor report for 2013 is available at [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie) Research for next ISM report is underway and publication is anticipated in 2016.

According to the latest ISM results almost 1 in 3 women met the National Physical Activity Guidelines through sport while just one in eight women were sedentary. These figures represent a healthy improvement on earlier results and show that there is now a strong secular trend towards adult women becoming more active through sport and physical activity.

The research report “Do mass sports participation events have a role in making populations more active?” was published in 2010. The recommendations of this report have been implemented through events such as the Irish Sports Council’s An Post Cycle Series. This series in 2014 attracted 16,861 participants, a 40% increase on the 2013 participation. Female participation in the 2014 series reached 4,904 (29%) the same level as achieved in 2013.

Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) have successfully supported mass participation events such as the Tipperary Women’s Mini Marathon, which encouraged 1,000 participants to register in 2014. The West of Ireland Women’s Mini Marathon, organised by Mayo Sports Partnership, is the largest women’s only participation event in the West of Ireland and attracted over 3,000 participants in 2014.

In 2014 €0.58 million was invested in 26 National Governing Bodies (NGBs) (compared to 23 NGBs in 2013) to support ‘Women in Sport’ (WIS) initiatives such as Fit for Life, which has been the most successful WIS programme to date. Having allocated further funding of €256,500 in 2013 the same amount was allocated in 2014 to the IRFU and FAI to support special initiatives to attract and retain women's involvement in sport in programmes such as Soccer Sisters, Late Night Leagues, Street leagues, ‘Give it a Try’ and Social Inclusion Programmes.

### ***Promoting opportunities for women in sports***

- 29.3 During 2014 as part of the “Women in Sport” coaching projects to bring women to advanced coaching levels 15 or 22% of the 68 recipients of tutor certification from Coaching Ireland were female. Furthermore 5,126 or 30% of 17,369 people who received coaching qualifications in 2014 were female.

The 'Belong' Women in Sport campaign was launched at the Irish Times Sportswoman of the Year Awards in December 2014 to raise awareness of the women in sport programme and encourage more women to participate in sport. This initiative showcases the physical and psychological benefits of sports while also focusing on the great social side. The message was that whether you’re an elite athlete or a beginner, you can take part and sport will enhance every aspect of your life.

Also in 2014, the Irish Sports Council continued support for the Irish Times Sports Woman of the Year Awards which provides a national media platform to promote female participation in sport in the media. In addition, the Irish Sports Council also supported the National Volunteer in Sport awards which encouraged a strong gender balance across recipients.

To further develop awareness of the “Women in Sport” brand as part of the ISC online strategy the ‘Women in Sport’ programme is one of the primary navigation links on Irish Sports Council website index page. Information on the programme is also circulated via the full range of the Council’s social media platforms, including Facebook and other free platforms such as Blogs, Twitter etc. The use of social media platforms allows the NGBs, Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) and individuals to post and share information to reach a wider community.

### **Objective 10**

#### **To ensure the health and safety of pregnant and breast feeding women at work**

#### **CONTEXT**

30. While occupational safety and health law, including regulations made under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, applies equally to men and women in the workplace, there are specific provisions in occupational safety and health legislation providing protection to pregnant women at work. Where risks to women exist, an employer is required to undertake a risk assessment and to take account of this in the organisation’s safety statement. In addition, discrimination against women on the ground of pregnancy is prohibited under equality legislation.
31. Part 6, Chapter 2 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, relate specifically to the protection of the health and safety of pregnant, post-natal and breast feeding employees. The Regulations, made under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, came into operation 1 November 2007 and are available for download at [www.djei.ie](http://www.djei.ie) In addition , the Health and Safety Authority (HAS) has produced a *Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 2 Part 6 ‘Protection of Pregnant, Post Natal and Breast feeding Employees’* as well as *Frequently Asked Questions on Pregnancy at Work*, both of which are available on [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).
32. The mid-term review of the Strategy recommended that work should continue to raise the profile of the issues of health and safety for pregnant and breast-feeding women.

#### **ACTIONS**

33. The following actions are reported by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation:
  - In the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Part 6, Chapter 2 relates specifically to the protection of the health and safety of pregnant, post-natal and breast feeding employees. The Regulations are made under the Safety, Health and

Welfare at Work Act 2005 and came into operation 1 November 2007 and are available to download on [www.djei.ie](http://www.djei.ie).

- The Health and Safety Authority has also produced a Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 2 Part 6 ‘Protection of Pregnant, Post Natal and Breast feeding Employees’ as well as a Frequently Asked Questions section on Pregnancy at Work, both of which are available to download/view on [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).
- The Health and Safety Authority continues to create awareness around this issue through its guidance and in dealing with queries from both employers and employees through its Workplace Contact Unit (WCU). On occasion complaints have been received from employees regarding the failure of employers to carry out risk assessments required under the legislation or regarding health and safety leave where risks to the worker or developing child cannot be avoided.

### **Objective 11**

#### **To protect women from bullying and harassment in the workplace**

#### **CONTEXT**

34. Much has been written in recent years about the problem of workplace bullying which can be perpetrated against workers of both sexes, but where women are more frequently the victims.
35. Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour that undermines a person’s right to dignity at work and can affect the health and safety of employees in the workplace. Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 employers’ duty of care to all employees includes preventing any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health and welfare of employees at risk. Employees also are required not to engage in improper behaviour which would endanger the health, safety and welfare of any employees. To assist employers and employees in this regard, in May 2007 the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) published a ‘*Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work*’.
36. Within the meaning of equality legislation, harassment and sexual harassment is unwanted conduct related to a discriminatory ground (such as gender or family status) which “has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person” and it is prohibited under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011. Under this legislation, all employers are obliged to prevent harassment in the workplace. The statutory ‘*Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work*’ was first published by the Equality Authority in 2002 and updated in 2012 and aims to give practical guidance to

employers and employees on how to prevent sexual harassment and harassment at work and how to put procedures in place to deal with it.

37. The mid-term review of the NWS recommended that work should continue to address the issues of bullying and harassment.

## **ACTIONS**

38. The following actions have been taken by IHREC, NERA and the Health & Safety Authority (HSA):
  - Procedures to address the issue of bullying are addressed in relevant HSA workplace inspections on an ongoing basis. All HSA actions with regard to Bullying and harassment are gender neutral and apply to both men and women equally.

**Objective 12**  
**To combat violence against women through improved services for victims together with effective prevention and prosecution**

## **CONTEXT**

39. The establishment of a National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (Cosc), was announced by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform at the launch of the National Women's Strategy in April 2007.
40. The *National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014*, published following Government approval in March 2010, sets out a framework for sustainable intervention to prevent and effectively respond to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence in the State. Cosc undertook a mid-term review of this strategy in 2012, following which the targets attached to the activities under this strategy were recalibrated.
41. The mid-term review of the National Women's Strategy recommended that the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014 continue to be delivered and monitored in order to improve the systems of prevention and response to violence against women in Ireland. It noted that international covenants including the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) specifically ask State Parties to address violence against women. There are deficits in relation to the gender disaggregation of data which make it difficult to determine the incidence of violence against women as measured by interventions through the Garda and Courts services at present. This deficit must also impact on service provision and policy making. It was therefore recommended that these statistics be gathered and published on a

gender disaggregated basis forthwith in line with Action 19 of the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, which aims to improve data on domestic and sexual violence.

## **ACTIONS**

42. The following actions have been reported by Cosc on behalf of the sector and on its own behalf:

### ***Legislation***

- 42.1 The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) is a detailed document with a broad scope across a number of policy areas with administrative, policy and legislative implications. The Minister for Justice and Equality intends to seek Government approval to sign the Convention in the coming months. The Department has engaged with other Government Departments and agencies to ascertain what actions will be necessary to implement the Convention. This process is almost complete. It is intended to include the issues that need to be addressed by Government Departments and agencies in order to meet all of the requirements of the Convention in the next National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence which is currently being prepared and is expected to be published in mid-2015.

Work is underway on the preparation of a new Domestic Violence Bill, which is expected to be published in 2015. This will consolidate current legislation and introduce new reforms to assist Ireland to ratify the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

### ***Domestic Violence (DV) Perpetrator & sex offender programmes***

- 42.2 Several meetings of the Perpetrator Programmes Committee took place during the year. The committee advises Cosc on the development and implementation of policy and practice in relation to domestic violence perpetrator intervention programmes in accordance with the actions contained in the national strategy. The work of the Committee in 2014 focused on risk management for referrals and on further improving accountability and planning through improved data gathering and reporting.

### ***Awareness-raising***

- 42.3 Cosc hosts a number of meetings each year of the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women's Public Awareness Sub-Committee which advises it on appropriate media and awareness raising strategies. The 'Guidance on Approaches to Promoting and Developing an Understanding of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence' was revised in 2014. It presents strategies for awareness raising among the general population, including victims and professionals and three specific population groups, namely, people with disabilities, members of the Traveller Community and members of migrant communities. Annual grant guidance manuals are developed which set out the

priorities for the year's national and local awareness raising campaigns which are grant-funded by Cosc.

Cosc's annual Communications Plan targets different groups within the community. In 2014, the group selected was those affected by substance misuse. Cosc also worked in partnership with the Department of Justice and Equality's Disability Equality section and the NDA to provide a stream of funding to raise awareness among people with disabilities.

A total of just under €300,000 was awarded in 2014 to 39 groups under the national and local awareness grant scheme relating to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence:

- Two campaigns targeting men as advocates against domestic and sexual violence received funding in 2014. These were the 'MAN Up' campaign run by SAFE Ireland, the organisation to which most Irish refuges and women's services are affiliated, and the 'White Ribbon' campaign, led by the Men's Development Network. The Taoiseach and Minister for Justice and Equality issued a joint statement on 25 November 2014 condemning all forms of domestic and sexual violence.
- Funding under the Cosc National awareness raising campaign was also provided to Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and Women's Aid for their 'Not Happily Ever After' campaign highlighting the crime of sexual violence in relationships.
- In 2014, the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) revised and launched its publication, "Domestic Violence – A Guide for General Practice" with funding from Cosc.
- The "Your Silence Feeds the Violence" public awareness campaign on domestic violence was continued in 2014 by the distribution of A4 posters to Government Departments and State agencies.

### **Objective 13**

#### **To address the issue of trafficking of women and children**

#### **CONTEXT**

43. Strong legislative, administrative and operational measures have been put in place to combat and prevent trafficking in human beings.

The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 provides for penalties of up to life imprisonment and, at the discretion of the court, a fine for persons who traffic or attempt to traffic other persons including for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It also makes it an offence to sell or offer for sale or to purchase or offer to purchase any person for any purpose. Penalties of up to life imprisonment and, at the discretion of the court, a fine apply in respect of these offences. Furthermore it is an offence for a person to solicit for prostitution a



person who s/he knows or has reasonable grounds for believing is a trafficked person. The penalty can be up to five years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine on conviction on indictment.

44. There is a dedicated Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) in the Department of Justice and Equality to ensure that the State's response to human trafficking is coordinated and comprehensive. AHTU, in partnership with Ruhama, an NGO, has been successful in obtaining EU funding for an all island project aimed at delivering activities that promote zero tolerance of human trafficking as a form of violence against women and girls. This project has three strands: one aimed at women at risk of sexual exploitation, another aimed at men and boys promoting zero tolerance of human trafficking as a form of violence against women and training and awareness-raising aimed at frontline professionals who may be in a position to identify and support victims of human trafficking.

In addition to this dedicated Unit there are 3 other dedicated Units in State Agencies dealing with the issue namely:

- the Human Trafficking Investigation and Co-ordination Unit in An Garda Síochána;
  - the Anti-Human Trafficking Team in the Health Service Executive;
  - and a specialised Human Trafficking legal team in the Legal Aid Board.
45. Since 2009, An Garda Síochána has identified trafficking in human beings as one of the priorities in its Annual Policing Plans, with a focus on its prevention and detection. Specific detailed training is provided to members of An Garda Síochána, with almost 4000 members of An Garda Síochána having received awareness training in human trafficking. Over 900 members have participated in the in-depth training course developed jointly by An Garda Síochána and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The training programme for all new recruits to An Garda Síochána includes a module dealing with human trafficking. A wide range of other training and awareness raising activities are ongoing and extensive consultation structures exist with up to 70 State Agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations and International Organisations.
46. The State provides a wide range of support services to victims of human trafficking including those persons who have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. These services include accommodation, medical care and planning, psychological assistance, material assistance, legal aid and advice, immigration and residence permissions, vocational training and education.

#### **ACTIONS**

47. The following actions have been reported by the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of the Department of Justice and Equality and by An Garda Síochána:

#### ***Legislative measures and guidelines***

##### **47.1 Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Bill 2014**

To this end, on 27 November 2014, the Minister for Justice and Equality published the General Scheme of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Bill 2014

which includes two new offences of purchasing, in the context of prostitution, sexual services. The first is a general offence of purchasing sexual services which carries a penalty of a fine of up to €500 for a first offence and fines of up to €1000 for a second or subsequent offence. The second is the more serious offence of purchasing a sexual service from a trafficked person and carries a potential penalty of up to 5 years imprisonment and/or a fine. In both cases, the person selling the sexual service will not be subject to an offence. Unlike the existing offences relating to prostitution such as soliciting, loitering or brothel keeping, the new offences will specifically target the demand for prostitution. The purpose of this new legislation is to reduce the demand for the services of victims of human trafficking who are being sexually exploited in prostitution. The proposals included in the Heads of Bill were developed following extensive consultation, initiated by the Department of Justice and Equality, dating back to 2012 and which includes a recommendation from the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality and Defence to introduce such an offence.

#### 47.2 Guidelines for diplomatic staff employing private domestic employees in Ireland

On 12 September 2014, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan, TD, announced the introduction of guidelines for members of diplomatic missions in Ireland who intend to employ private domestic workers<sup>15</sup>. As a guiding principle, members of the diplomatic staff of embassies or consulates in Ireland who wish to employ private domestic workers are expected to demonstrate respect for Irish laws and good employment practice. The guidelines clearly set out the expectations regarding payment, employment records, health insurance, and social security.

#### *Awareness-raising*

#### 47.3 The REACH project

In December 2013 the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) received funding approval from the European Commission under its Progress Call for Proposals on Violence Against Women for a 2-year project aiming to raise awareness of trafficking as a form of violence against women and girls and improve responses to this issue across the whole island of Ireland. The project has three strands:

- A conference to launch the project was held in March 2014, followed in February 2015 by launch of the first strand which aims to ensure all women and girls on the island of Ireland who find themselves in a difficult situation in the sex trade are aware of the support that is available to them and where they can seek help.
- The second strand, an awareness raising campaign to promote a message of zero tolerance of human trafficking as a form of violence against women and girls, among men and boys, will be rolled out in April 2015.

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<sup>15</sup> “Guidelines for Diplomatic Staff employing private domestic employees”, September 2014, available at [www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebstimedia/newspress/publications/FINAL-GUIDELINES-RELATING-TO-THE-EMPLOYMENT-OF-PRIVATE-DOMESTIC-EMPLOYEES-BY-ACCREDITED-MEMBERS-OF-THE-MISSION.pdf](http://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebstimedia/newspress/publications/FINAL-GUIDELINES-RELATING-TO-THE-EMPLOYMENT-OF-PRIVATE-DOMESTIC-EMPLOYEES-BY-ACCREDITED-MEMBERS-OF-THE-MISSION.pdf)

- The third strand involves developing innovative training and support to frontline actors, including the development of a ‘mobile app’.

In addition, ongoing awareness-raising efforts include the distribution of Blueblindfold merchandise and leaflets, posters which raise awareness of human trafficking. To mark EU Anti Trafficking Day in October 2014, the AHTU placed a banner on one of Dublin’s most iconic buildings - Liberty Hall. The AHTU and An Garda Síochána gave a number of presentations on human trafficking in third level institutions throughout the year.

### ***Training***

- 47.4 To mark EU Anti-Trafficking Day in 2014, a two-day seminar on the Management of Human Trafficking brought together senior management of An Garda Síochána, international experts, other state authorities and national non-governmental organisations to discuss best practice in combating this crime and protecting its victims. The conference was addressed by the Minister for Justice and Equality and the Garda Commissioner and attended by approximately 120 of the most senior Garda management in the country, as well as senior officers from the PSNI and a Romanian police representative. The conference emphasised the need to ensure that the full range of resources are targeted at human trafficking investigations with a focus on intelligence, international cooperation and ‘following the money’.

In July 2014, officials from AHTU and HTICU of An Garda Síochána delivered training on tackling trafficking in human beings to Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade officials and to Irish diplomats prior to them being posted to Irish embassies and consulates abroad. The training also addressed the expectations placed on diplomats by the Guidelines concerning employment of private domestic employees.

### ***Prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of human trafficking activities***

- 47.4 Any suspicion of human trafficking that is reported to An Garda Síochána is the subject of a comprehensive investigation. The Garda Commissioner has recently announced the establishment of a Child Protection and Human Exploitation Unit, within An Garda Síochána. This unit is to include Child Protection, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit (DVSAIU) and Human Trafficking. A Detective Chief Superintendent is to take charge of this new unit. For the past five years, the *Trafficking in Persons Report*, a report which is produced annually by the State Department of the United States of America, has placed Ireland in its Tier 1 (top range) category for efforts in addressing human trafficking. Countries assessed as meeting the minimum standard for the elimination of severe forms of trafficking as set out in the TVPA are classified as Tier 1.

### ***Support services for victims of human trafficking***

47.5 The Government's approach to the issue of Human Trafficking is set out in the National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking of Persons which set out 144 Actions to be undertaken to address this issue. A copy of the National Action Plan and a Review of the Plan are available on the dedicated Anti-Trafficking site [blueblindfold.gov.ie](http://blueblindfold.gov.ie). A Second National Action Plan is currently at an advanced stage of drafting and will be the subject of consultation with a broad range of organisations active in this field. This Plan will also be informed by the findings of international evaluations of Ireland's anti-trafficking measures.

The State provides a wide range of support services to victims of human trafficking, including accommodation, medical care and planning, psychological assistance, material assistance, legal aid and advice, vocational training and education. Individual Care Plans for persons who are potentially victims of human trafficking are developed by the HSE Anti-Human Trafficking Team and may include services for medical health, GP referral, counselling, psychological care, sexual health, material assistance, accommodation, training needs, education, etc.

Two NGOs, Ruhama and MRCI, are also directly funded by the AHTU to provide support services to victims of human trafficking. In 2014, funding of €172,000 was provided to Ruhama to assist victims of sexual exploitation and €4,000 to the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) to assist victims of labour exploitation. For 2015, the allocation for Ruhama is €225,000 and the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland is allocated €9,564.

Provision has also been made in the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2014-2015 for the funding of projects to assist victims or potential victims of human trafficking. Applications from NGOs for funding in respect of three projects are currently being finalised.

## CHAPTER 4

### THEME THREE - ENGAGING WOMEN AS EQUAL AND ACTIVE CITIZENS

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The advancement of women into decision making roles has been a key objective of European and multi-lateral social policy for many years. The Council of Europe recommends that the membership of national parliaments include representation of at least 40% of persons of each sex. Similar targets have been set by the European Union.

#### Objective 14

**To increase the number of women in decision-making positions in Ireland**

#### CONTEXT

2. The relative participation of men and of women as of end 2013 in the seven fields identified by the European Commission as key to the monitoring of the involvement of women in decision-making is set out in Table 19.

**TABLE 19**  
**Gender balance in Ireland by decision-making sector (2013\*)**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
1. Private sector management (senior leaders)	78.5%	21.5%
2. Public sector management (Secretary General)	74.0%	26.0%
3. State Boards	66.0%	34.0%
4. Corporate Boards	92.0%	8.0%
5. Politics (Dáil Éireann)	84.4%	15.6%
6. Judiciary	68.2%	31.8%
7. Diplomatic Services (senior)	92.0%	8.0%

\* Where possible, the figures given refer to the position at the end of December 2013.

3. Since 1992, successive Governments have committed to increase female representation on State Boards, with a view to achieving a minimum of 40% of representation by women. The Programme for Government 2011-2016 includes a commitment to take steps to ensure that all State Boards have at least 40% of each gender. While there has been some increase in female participation in recent years, progress towards this target has been slow. In April 2011, the Government decided future vacancies on State Boards would be advertised on the website of the relevant Government Department and that such advertisements would state that “in considering applications due regard will be given to Government policy on gender balance on State Boards”.

4. The involvement of women in decision making positions may also bring them into politics or into senior positions in professional life. A number of European countries now have significant female presence in national politics and at Ministerial level. Research in Scandinavian countries and in France has provided evidence that female participation in the boards of major publicly quoted companies can be directly correlated with the success of those companies, in terms of both stock market performance and profits.

**TABLE 17**  
**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL POLITICS - EU (2005-2014)**

% of women in single / lower House of National Parliament				% of women serving as Senior Ministers			
	2005	2009	2014		2005	2009	2014
<b>Top Three</b>				<b>Top Three</b>			
Sweden	49	47	44	Finland	47	60	59
Finland	38	40	42	Sweden	50	45	50
Spain			41	France			47
<b>EU 28 Average</b>	23	24	28	<b>EU 28 Average</b>	22	26	28
<b>IRELAND*</b>	<i>13</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>16</i>	<b>IRELAND</b>	<i>21</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>27</i>

Source: European Commission, Database on women and men in decision-making

\* These figures relate to the Dáil only. Women's representation in the Seanad is slightly higher.

5. Trends in the participation of women in national politics across the EU, taken from statistics gathered by the EU Commission, are illustrated by Table 17. In 2014, with a female participation rate in Dáil Éireann of 16%, Ireland is well below the EU average of 28%. With women representing 27% of senior ministers, Ireland is just below the EU average rate of 28%.
6. Measures taken by the Government to promote the engagement of women in politics include the enactment of the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012. In order to qualify for State political funding under this legislation, political parties must field a minimum of 30% women candidates and of 30% men candidates in the next general election, which in the normal course will take place no later than April 2016. Parties who do not comply face a cut of 50% in the State funding provided. The proportions will rise to 40% after a further seven years. The outcome of this initiative will be analysed in due course in the General Election Results Publications, in which statistics on candidates and members elected will be disaggregated by gender.
7. An overview of the current level of participation of women as leaders in business, drawn from the EU Commission's database on women and men in

decision-making, is given in Table 18 below. This shows that, with women making up only 6% of senior executives of large listed companies (down from 7.7% in 2013), Ireland is now ranked 25<sup>th</sup> out of 28 EU member states, whereas the average was 13% and in the top ranked States the figure is 21-23%. Only Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland, with women in 4% of senior executive posts, are ranked lower than Ireland. The representation of women at board-level on large listed companies presents a similar picture – in Ireland female representation remains unchanged from 2013, at 11%, while in this period the EU average has increased by 3 percentage points to 20%, and the highest-ranking states show female representation of 29-32%.

**TABLE 18**  
**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AS LEADERS IN BUSINESS – EU (Oct 2014)**

Share of women senior executives of large listed companies		Representation of women on the boards of large listed companies	
	%		%
<b>Top Three</b>		<b>Top Three</b>	
Romania	23	France	32
Sweden	23	Latvia	32
Slovenia	21	Finland	29
<b>EU – 28</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>EU – 28</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>IRELAND</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>IRELAND</b>	<b>11</b>

*Source: European Commission, Database on women and men in decision-making*

## **ACTIONS**

- Progress was reported by Government Departments and Agencies on action taken relating to the promotion of women in politics, at board level both in the private sector and in the public sector, and in the civil service, is as follows:

### ***Leadership 2013-2015 project***

- Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice and Equality, in partnership with Ibec and with the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC), successfully applied in late 2012 for funding of up to €196,000 under the EU PROGRESS programme (2007-2013) for a series of initiatives to support the achievement of gender balance in decision-making roles in Ireland. The project, entitled "Initiatives to support the achievement of gender balance in decision-making roles in Ireland", is targeted at women in senior and middle management positions in the private and public sectors and women who are suitably qualified to serve on State boards and on corporate boards. The

programme will run for a two year period from November 2013 to November 2015.

10. The PROGRESS programme includes the hosting of a number of conferences which aim contribute to awareness-raising on this issue and to sharing of research and information to showcase good practice both in the public and the private sector and giving an international perspective on the benefits of increasing women's representation in decision-making. The first such conference, 'Investing in Talent – Promoting Gender Balanced Leadership' was held in November 2014. Hosted jointly by the Department of Justice and Equality and Ibec, this conference aimed at promoting gender balanced leadership in both the public and private sectors. Over 200 participants from both the public and private sectors attended the conference to hear from a variety of national and international high profile speakers who are each committed to achieving gender balance in leadership roles. The report of the conference is available on the website [www.genderequality.ie](http://www.genderequality.ie). Further conferences are planned in 2015 on gender balance in leadership roles in the private sector and on the Women Manager's Network in the Civil Service.
11. In 2014 the Government approved new measures to strengthen the gender balance on State Boards. These measures included a requirement on each Government Department to put in place an implementation plan to reaffirm and achieve the target of at least 40% for representation of each gender on State Boards within its remit during the lifetime of the present Government, and to report on six-monthly basis on its progress in implementing these actions. On foot of a further Government Decision, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform issued overarching guidelines on appointments for approval by Government, including issues related to gender and diversity<sup>16</sup>. A list of the State Boards to which these guidelines apply, with details of each Board's membership, is now published by the Public Appointments Services on its existing [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie) website, with plans to expand this information over the coming months to include gender balance. Funding is also being provided under the Leadership project to establish a pilot Talent Bank of women suitably qualified to serve on State Boards, which is being developed with the support of the Public Appointments Service through its [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie) website.
12. The activities being undertaken include the development of a pilot cross-Departmental mentoring and leadership development programme for female Principal Officers in the Civil Service. The pilot will feature a nominated female PO from each of the 16 Government Departments and will include coaching, mentoring and leadership training. This programme, entitled W-LEAD (Women in the Lead – Leadership, Engagement, Advancement and Development), will be officially launched in May 2015.
13. Tables 19 and 20 illustrate the environment to which the W-LEAD programme applies. Significant progress has been made in addressing gaps between male and female participation at different grade levels in the civil service workforce. The proportion of women in middle and senior management grades in the civil

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<sup>16</sup> This publication, Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards, is available at [www.publicjobs.ie/publicjobs/publication/document/Guidelines\\_on\\_Appointments\\_to\\_State\\_Boards\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://www.publicjobs.ie/publicjobs/publication/document/Guidelines_on_Appointments_to_State_Boards_Jan2015.pdf)



service is a strong indication of the positive impact of initiatives implemented to date to achieve better gender balance. Increases in the representation of women in grades that are feeder groups for middle and senior management grades may also be an important indicator of further increases over time in the number of women in senior positions in the civil service.

**TABLE 19**  
**Proportion of civil servants who are female, according to grade (1997-2014)**

Grade	1997	2007	2014	Increases since 1997
Secretary General	5%	19%	23%	18%
Deputy & Assistant Secretary	10%	19%	26%	16%
Principal Officer	12%	26%	36%	24%
Assistant Principal	24%	33%	44%	20%
Administrative Officer	37%	40%	46%	9%
Higher Executive Officer	39%	46%	56%	17%
Executive Officer	54%	56%	59%	5%
Staff Officer	-	76%	76%	1% (since 2007) (No changes since 2007)
Clerical Officer	-	75%	75%	(No changes since 2007)

*Source: Dept of Public Expenditure & Reform*

**TABLE 20**  
**Gender breakdown of PO and AP posts in the Civil Service (2014)**

Post	Female	Male	Total	% Female	NWS Target
Principal Officer Fulltime Equivalent Posts	433.89	775.95	1,209.84	36%	27%
	445	780	1,225	36%	
Assistant Principal Fulltime Equivalent Posts	1,496.06	1,919.05	3,415.11	44%	33.3%
	1,579	1,926	3,505	45%	

*Source: Dept of Public Expenditure & Reform*

**Objective 15**  
**To increase the number of women involved in the arts in Ireland**

**CONTEXT**

14. This objective relates to the engagement of women in decision-making positions in the Arts, promotion of awareness of equality in the Arts and the involvement of women as audiences for the Arts.
15. In November 2013, the Arts Council published a new strategic statement for the period 2014-2017. Entitled "Developing the Arts", four key goals were identified, namely to support and develop the work of artists and arts organisations; to enable more people to experience the arts in more places; to develop the Arts Council's relationships with stakeholders and partners; and to enhance the expertise and effectiveness of the Arts Council. In this regard, the Arts Council indicated its intention to undertake a major review in 2014 to address how it would plan, partner, promote, and provide for the arts.

**ACTIONS**

23. In 2015, the Arts Council published the report of market research commissioned in 2014 on the interaction of the adult population with the arts<sup>17</sup>. Among its main findings were that overall attendance at arts-related events had increased by 9 percentage points over the previous year, with 65% of the adult population having attended at least one such event and the increase mainly driven by increased attendance amongst respondents from lower-income groups. Women were more likely than men (35% of women as compared to 23% of men) to report difficulties in attending events.
24. No current information is available on the active participation by women in the arts, by field and role, or of the distribution of grants awarded by the Arts Council by field, gender and amount.

**Objective 16**  
**To use media proactively to support gender equality and the advancement of women**

**CONTEXT**

25. The persistence of gender stereotypes is widely considered to have a detrimental effect on the achievement of de facto gender equality. As a societal issue, responsibility for overcoming stereotypes does not rest exclusively with any single Department or Agency but is an issue which should be highlighted regularly to prompt debate and awareness of the negative impact of stereotypes. This objective aims to address the role which the media can play in relation to

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<sup>17</sup> The 'Arts in Irish Life 2014' report is available at [www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/All/The-Arts-in-Irish-Life-2014](http://www.artscouncil.ie/Publications/All/The-Arts-in-Irish-Life-2014).

the advancement of the role of women through the portrayal of positive role models and the avoidance of excessive stereotypical roles.

26. Much work has been done in the Department of Education and Skills to overcome stereotypes in the Irish education system.
27. The appropriate portrayal of various groups, including women, and the avoidance of discrimination against such groups in the broadcast media, in advertising and in marketing are matters addressed both by standards and codes of practice in these fields, as follows:
  - The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland addresses gender stereotyping and discriminatory treatment in its “Code of Programme Standards” and “General Advertising Code”;
  - The Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland (ASAI) is the independent self-regulatory body set up and financed by the advertising industry. Its guidance to the industry includes the “Manual of Advertising Self-Regulation with the Code of Standards for Advertising, Promotional and Direct Marketing in Ireland” (updated in 2007) which requires marketing communications to respect the principle of gender equality and to avoid sex stereotyping and any exploitation or demeaning of men and women. The ASAI also promotes a code of practice in relation to the marketing of health and beauty products and slimming products.

## **ACTIONS**

28. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources:

### ***Regulatory framework***

- 28.1 In 2014, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources requested that the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) and both public service broadcasters, RTÉ and TG4, include a statement on gender equality in their Annual Report and Accounts. The Department is examining the possibility of amending the Broadcasting Act 2009 to provide for a specific obligation on the BAI to promote gender equality in the Irish broadcasting sector.

### ***Active participation by women in media***

- 28.2 RTÉ has made firm commitments to increase the representation of women through more female presenters and contributors.
  - In May 2013, at the initiative of the outgoing Managing Director of RTÉ Radio, RTÉ promoted and hosted a free one-day training and networking day for female area experts willing to become more active in broadcast representation. The programme, ‘Bring on the Women’, was organised by RTÉ and conducted on-site in conjunction with Women on Air and

attended by a range of female professionals from the fields of economics, engineering, science, technology and the arts. The broadcaster proposes to hold a similar event again in 2015.

- At present, female presenters front three peak-time RTÉ Radio 1 shows on weekdays, with a further three peak-time shows on Saturday and Sunday. The majority of presenters on RnaG and Lyric FM are female.
- Since 2014, RTÉ has begun more systematic monitoring the balance of men and women on air in News and Current Affairs. It has reinforced with its programme teams the importance of looking for better gender balance and finding new women contributors, and is actively engaged with Women on Air. New programmes such as Morning Edition have established a strong track record of finding new women guests and for women's representation on air.
- In the past 18 months a number of women have been appointed to senior positions in News and Current Affairs. The positions involved include - Managing Editor TV News; Deputy Foreign News Editor; Deputy Editor Prime Time; Political Correspondent; Prime Time Political Correspondent; and Washington Correspondent.

28.3 TG4 reports success in promoting gender balance in its staff, with high female representation among its on screen talent, including a sports presenter, news anchor and political correspondent, and among its production talent and senior management. The broadcaster is also currently airing a number of programmes specifically about Irish women, including 'Mná na Mara'.

#### **Objective 17-A**

#### **To foster the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals through Irish Aid**

#### **CONTEXT**

29. The following updates relate to gender equality objectives in Ireland's overseas aid programme, implemented by Irish Aid and other sections within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including the Conflict Resolution Unit and the Human Rights Unit.
30. The State's policy for international development, "*One World, One Future: Ireland's Policy for International Development*", was published by the Government on 2 May 2013. The policy, which was prepared following a review of the White Paper on Irish Aid and of the policy-making process in this field, sets out the vision, goals and priorities for the Government's programme for overseas development. This policy states that '*in all our work we remain committed to ensuring that issues of gender... are at the centre of our planning, implementation and evaluation*'.

## ACTIONS

31. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade:

31.1 During the reporting period, gender equality remained a core component of Ireland's international development policy and continued to be mainstreamed across Irish Aid programmes and projects. Recognising this, the OECD DAC Peer Review of Ireland's development cooperation (December 2014) concluded that Ireland "is a strong leader internationally on gender equality and women's empowerment [and has] consistently played an important agenda-setting role".

31.2 In September 2014, Irish Aid launched its Framework for Action which will provide strategic direction to guide all Irish Aid policy and programming decisions until 2017. The Framework identifies key high level goals relating to gender equality and women's empowerment and will enable Irish Aid to further mainstream its gender equality commitments throughout its work.

31.3 In addition to significant efforts made to combat gender-based violence (GBV) in conflict affected situations (as detailed under objective 17-C) combating GBV has remained a central component of Ireland's development cooperation programming during the reporting period. In July 2014, for example, Irish Aid signed the "Girl Summit Charter" and committed to a range of activities to combat child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

During the reporting period, Irish Aid also continued to work with civil society organisations and national and local governments in Uganda, Mozambique, South Africa, Sierra Leone and Liberia supporting service delivery, building capacity and lobbying for the development and roll out of laws and policies to tackle gender-based violence.

In 2014, Irish Aid also renewed its financial support (€260,000) for the UN Women administered Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. This instrument supports NGOs, governments and UN country teams in their work to prevent violence against women and girls, to assist survivors and expand their access to key legal, psychosocial and health care services. The aim, in turn, is to strengthen the implementation of laws and policies on violence against women, and to address the linkages between violence and HIV and AIDS.

At the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2014, Ireland strongly advocated on issues related to GBV. This included the co-hosting of three side events related to GBV including events with Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence and the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP).

In 2014, Irish Aid also provided core funding (€190,000) to Raising Voices a Ugandan-based non-profit organisation that is internationally recognised as a pioneer in community based preventative approaches to Gender Based Violence (GBV).

31.4 Irish Aid is supporting education sector through its programmes in Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and the Palestine. During the reporting period, Irish Aid continued its support for the Global Partnership for Education and commenced support to the OECD project, PISA for Development. This initiative is designed to develop metrics that will assess learning outcomes for 15 year olds and is a powerful policy oriented tool which is expected to provide, by 2019, critical data and information regarding student performance and the socio-economic factors effecting same.

Irish Aid also supported the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in Uganda. The project, which was positively reviewed in 2014, seeks to improve the levels of access and equity in post-primary and also provides bursaries of which 65% of the beneficiaries are girls.

During the reporting period, Irish Aid continued to prioritise the reduction of women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS especially in sub Saharan Africa. This included:

- Continued support to the Global Fund against HIV and AIDS, TB & Malaria – €12.92M in 2014, for the UNAIDS Gender Transformative HIV Response (approx. €190,000) and continued support to UNAIDS– €2.95M in 2014.
- Continued investment (€1M) was made in research to develop microbicides through International Partnership on Microbicides (IPM). Similarly, there was continued support provided to the International Alliance for Vaccine against AIDS (IAVI).
- In Lesotho, €0.5 million was disbursed to the Ministry of Health in consultation with the Clinton HIV and AIDS Initiative.
- In South Africa, support (€1.875 million) was given to ensure GBV, HIV and AIDS, and TB services are more integrated at community level including improved data availability on the needs of people affected and infected with HIV including victims of GBV in selected districts.
- In Zambia, support (€2.0 million) was provided to increase access to social protection services for vulnerable households with a focus on female headed households and those affected by HIV.
- In Malawi €1.27 million was provided in support of the roll out of the national social cash transfer programme by UNICEF and the Ministry of Gender.
- In Uganda, support for the innovative and ambitious Expanding Social Protection Programme (ESPP) which is providing cash transfers to 95,000 vulnerable households.

### **Objective 17-B**

**To use multi-lateral aid and development policy to promote the role of women and gender equality in developing countries.**

#### **CONTEXT**

32. As with Objective 17-A, the gender equality objectives in Ireland's programme for overseas development are mainly implemented by Irish Aid and other Sections within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade including the Conflict Resolution Unit and the Human Rights Unit.

#### **ACTIONS**

33. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade:

During the reporting period, Ireland continued to actively engage in the negotiation of the Post - 2015 agenda, particularly in the context of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals and in preparatory work for the Finance for Development Conference in Addis Ababa in July. Ireland strongly advocated for an ambitious and robust standalone goal on gender equality along with a series of strong targets addressing gender equality concerns across all of the proposed goals in the OWGs Outcome Document of July 2014.

In October 2014, the Economic Partnership Agreement agreed between the EU and the East African Community. This agreement includes provisions for development cooperation to assist with implementation and specifically seeks to promote gender equity in fisheries and particularly developing capacity of women traders involved and intending to engage in fisheries

Partner Governments and locally based NGOs remain key partners in Irish Aid's work on gender equality. As such, capacity building of such partners, including through multilateral fora, is a core element of Irish programming during the reporting period. For example, in 2014 Ireland renewed its financial support for the UN's "Evidence and Data on Gender Equality" (EDGE) initiative, which aims to enhance the capacity of national governments and other stakeholders to generate and use statistics to improve gender responsive policies and actions backed by robust evidence.

During the reporting period, Irish Aid continued to actively engage in a range of international networks where it consistently advocated on issues of gender-equality. The key fora in this respect included, the EU Gender Experts Network, the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Network (GENDERNET) and the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF).

### **Objective 17–C**

**To enhance the capacity of Irish Aid and Development Partners to respond effectively to Gender Based Violence in conflict, post-conflict and developing environments.**

#### **CONTEXT**

34. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 in order to formally acknowledge the changing nature of conflict in which civilians are increasingly targeted and address the impact of war on women and the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict management, conflict resolution, and sustainable peace.
35. Gender based violence was discussed at length at the 2008 meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. France, in its capacity as President of the European Union in Semester 2/2008 also undertook a study on the EU indicators on “Women and Armed Conflict”, leading to “Agreed Conclusions” on the matter at the December 2009 ESPHCA Council. The Council of Europe also completed a recommendation to its Council of Ministers on this topic in mid 2010.
36. Working to combat gender-based violence is a priority of the Irish Aid programme.

#### **ACTIONS**

37. The following actions have been reported by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade:
  - 37.1 During the reporting period, Irish Aid continued to actively support the work of the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence, including through the provision of core financial support. In March 2014, Irish Aid co-hosted a side-event with the Consortium at the 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women which focused on School Related Gender-Based Violence. The Minister of State, Sean Sherlock also addressed the Consortium’s annual seminar in December 2014 which addressed the theme of “Moving Beyond Fear: Prioritising the Safety of Women and Girls in Societies”.
  - 37.2 The Final Review of the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 2011-2014 was published at the end of 2014, which provides detail on a range of actions taking relating to the commitments made under objective 17 C of the National Women’s Strategy. The Review indicated that Ireland has delivered a “high degree of success” in implementing these commitments, with over 90% of actions delivered and over 20% of actions exceeding projected indicators.

A Consultative Group to feed into the preparation of second National Action Plan was convened and independently chaired. It oversaw a public consultation with 38 submissions and organised a workshop with the participation of over 100 stakeholders. The second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and



Security, which has a particular focus on the empowerment of women and their participation in decision-making in conflict and post-conflict situations, was published in January 2015.<sup>18</sup>

37.3 During the reporting period, Irish Aid also remained centrally engaged in a number of high-level events relating to the [\*Call to Action on Protecting Girls and Women in Emergencies\*](#) (Call to Action) having been an original signatory when the initiative was launched in 2013. This included side events at the *Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict* summit hosted by the UK Government in London in June 2014 which the Minister of State for Development attended, and an event hosted by the US Secretary of State in New York in September 2014 at which Ireland's Ambassador to the UN participated and spoke on behalf of Ireland.

37.4 Funding provided during the reporting period included the following:

- In 2014, Irish Aid approved €2 million in funding to the International Rescue Committee for their gender and GBV programmes in humanitarian response under a two-year strategic partnership programme. In 2014, Irish Aid also provided €160,000 to Christian Aid Ireland to support the provision of Gender Based Violence services and assistance for female Syrian refugees and host communities in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdish Iraq. Ireland has also committed funding totalling €900,000 to programmes focused on protection of women and girls affected by the Syria crisis in neighbouring countries (Egypt and Lebanon).
- Under Irish Aid's 2014 Humanitarian Programme Plan (HPP) funding scheme, funding was also being provided to a number of humanitarian programmes in conflict contexts which are focused on protection. These include funding to Christian Aid for protection programming in the Democratic Republic of Congo which targets SGBV prevention focused particularly on influencing attitudes and behaviour of men and boys. Funding was also allocated to Oxfam Ireland for a gender and protection programme also in the DRC which supports the creation and training of gender sensitive community-led protection committees, mapping and dissemination of referral services and engagement and training of local authorities/protection actors and CSOs.
- €100,000 was provided the **Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD)** in 2014 earmarked for its "Women at the Table" initiative, which brings together women leaders active in African peace processes. The initiative aims to build an operational network of women to champion gender issues and develop operational responses to improve the participation of women in peacebuilding.

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<sup>18</sup> All documentation relating to Ireland's implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security and related resolutions available at: <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/peace-and-security/women-peace-and-security/>

- €100,000 was also provided to **International Alert** in 2014 in support of a number of initiatives related to implementation of UNSCR 1325 through improving the links between decision-makers and local civil society organisations. International Alert was also involved in planning a cross-learning visit by Azerbaijani and Armenian women's groups to Northern Ireland in 2014.
- Financial support (€50,000) was renewed for **the International Criminal Court's Trust Fund for Victims (TFV)** in 2014. The TFV seeks to mainstream gender throughout all programming processes, combining a victim-centred approach with an integrated, community-based approach.
- €60,000 was provided to Reaching Critical Will (RCW), which is a project of the **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)**. RCW actively represents WILPF in several networks, such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Abolition 2000, the International Network on Explosive Weapons, and the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots.
- €100,000 was provided to the **Office of the UN Secretary General Special Representative (SRSG) for the Great Lakes Region** in support of the Women's Platform's work on monitoring and advocacy on the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and implementation of plans of action under UNSCR 1325. The Women's Platform provides a mechanism for donors to make significant commitments to the peace process and enables the priorities of the women's groups in the Great Lakes to take centre stage.
- €50,000 was provided to the **Dialogue Advisory Group (DAG)** which works in support of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, most notably on women's participation in peace processes as mediators.
- €200,000 was provided to the Mediation Support Unit of the **UN Department of Political Affairs**, which works with the UN's regional divisions to plan and support mediation efforts in the field. It provides advisory, financial and logistical support to peace processes; works to strengthen the mediation capacity of regional and sub-regional organisations; and serves as a repository of mediation knowledge, policy and guidance, lessons learned and best practice.

**Objective 17–D**  
**To ensure the integration of gender perspectives into all parts of the United Nations System.**

**CONTEXT**

40. Ireland was at the forefront of the United Nations reform process on system wide coherence, including ways to improve coordination of the four UN gender entities in addressing women’s development issues. Support to the UN’s work on combating gender-based violence is detailed above as well as other support to UN agencies.

**ACTIONS**

41. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including Irish Aid:
- During the reporting period, Ireland has continued to support UN Women in its work as a key champion for women and girls in the global fora, as well as national and local levels, including €1.5 million in core financing.
  - In 2014, financial support (€240,000) was also provided for UN Women’s Global Programme on Women, Peace and Security. This programme aims to be global facility for knowledge, advocacy and technical support for inclusive conflict resolution and peace building, leading up to and following the 2015 high level review of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Positioning UN Women as a global knowledge leader in the area of Women, Peace and Security is one of the outputs of the programme and strengthen coherence and implementation capacity across the UN to advance women’s participation in all areas of peace and security,
  - Also in 2014, €100,000 was provided for a global study, commissioned by UN Women and led by Professor Radhika Coomaraswamy, former Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. The global study is intended to provide a comprehensive stock take of progress, review trends, fill knowledge and data gaps, critically examine persistent and emerging challenges and capture lessons learned and good practices across regions. It will build on the findings of the previous two high level studies on women, peace and security undertaken in 2002 and 2010.
  - In 2014, Irish Aid provided €1.865 million in unearmarked funding to OHCHR. Discrimination, including gender discrimination, is one of OHCHR’s Thematic Priorities and measures have been taken to ensure that gender has been integrated across the work of OHCHR.



## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY

#### Objective 18

#### To implement gender mainstreaming as the principal instrument for the achievement of gender equality in Ireland

#### CONTEXT

1. The Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice and Equality has an advisory role in relation to gender mainstreaming in implementation of the National Development Plan<sup>19</sup> and other national policy instruments. Work on the development of gender mainstreaming started in 2009 and continued to be a focus for 2013 and beyond.
2. In November 2014 the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission formally replaced the Equality Authority as the independent statutory body to work towards the elimination of discrimination and promotion of equality of opportunity in the areas to which equality legislation apply<sup>20</sup>, and is the designated national equality body for the purposes of EU anti-discrimination law.
3. As the Government's focus since 2009 has necessarily been on reducing the deficit and returning sustainability to the public finances, further consideration of the evidence for gender budgeting<sup>21</sup> has been deferred for the present. However, in seeking to minimise the negative impact on economic growth of the adjustments made, the Government has also been conscious of the need to spread the burden of those adjustments in as fair and equitable a manner as possible. The Programme for Government 2011-2016 includes a clear commitment by Government to require all public bodies to take due note of equality and human rights in carrying out their functions. This obligation was included in the General Scheme, published in June 2012, of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill 2014 which is currently before the Oireachtas.

#### ACTIONS

4. Of the 16 Government Departments, four<sup>22</sup> include explicit references to either the National Women's Strategy or to gender equality in their current Statements

<sup>19</sup> The *National Development Plan 2007-2013* was superseded in November 2011 by the Exchequer capital framework laid out in *"Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2012-2016: Medium Term Exchequer Framework"* which is the outcome of the Capital Expenditure Review conducted in parallel with a Comprehensive Review of Expenditure in 2011; Available at <http://www.per.gov.ie/comprehensive-review-of-expenditure/>

<sup>20</sup> Discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, civil status, family status, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and membership of the Traveller community is prohibited under the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000, which apply, respectively, to the field of employment and to the supply of and access to goods and services.

<sup>21</sup> A gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. (Council of Europe)

<sup>22</sup> The Departments of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Defence, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Justice and Equality.

of Strategy for the 2015-2017 period. This is a decrease on the 2011-2014 period, when six Departments included such references.

5. Gender Equality Division continued to monitor the mainstreaming of gender equality in projects undertaken with ESF and Exchequer co-funding, which is a horizontal principle under this programme.
6. Six workplace equality mainstreaming projects, which commenced in 2013 and concluded in 2014, were supported by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's Equality Mainstreaming Unit with co-funding from the ESF. The projects concerned were undertaken by See Change in partnership with employers' networks, BelongTo in partnership with ICTU, the Immigrant Council of Ireland in partnership with the Dublin Transport sector, Galway Traveller Movement in partnership with Galway Education and Training Board and the Department of Social Protection, the Irish Universities Association, and Cavan County Council in partnership with Cavan Community Forum.

### **Objective 19**

#### **To provide financial support to implement the National Women's Strategy**

#### **CONTEXT**

7. The work to implement the objectives contained in the National Women's Strategy falls within the remit of a large number of Government Departments and their Agencies. Accordingly the funding for the Strategy flows through the funding voted by the Exchequer for each relevant Government Department.
8. It is not currently possible to measure the proportion of annual Exchequer funding allocated specifically to women or to actions and initiatives directly linked to the National Women's Strategy, as gender budgeting is not undertaken in the State.

#### **ACTIONS**

9. The following actions have been reported by the Department of Justice and Equality:

##### ***Women Returning to the Workforce***

- 9.1 The economic empowerment of women is mentioned as a key priority in a number of European Commission policy documents on gender equality, including the Commission's Gender Equality Strategy and more importantly in the Europe 2020 Strategy. This is a ten year strategy of the European Commission, aimed at 'smart, sustainable, inclusive growth', with greater co-ordination of national and EU policy. The strategy identifies five headline targets to boost growth, including the area of employment. It envisages that the contribution of the cadre of well-educated women to the economy should be

maximised to increase output. As a result, Europe 2020 aims to increase labour market participation of women and men to 75% across the EU by the end of 2020. Ireland has agreed a somewhat lower target reflecting our current economic situation but the achievement of this lower target will require an increase in female labour market participation beyond the numbers currently unemployed.

- 9.2 The use of European Social Funds for a programme of large scale initiatives to train/retrain women in skills to enable them to participate in the labour market is recommended in order to advance this element of the Europe 2002 Strategy. The European Union co-funds common Member State and EU Cohesion Policy objectives. This funding is done in seven year programming periods. The allocations and delivery of activities for the 2007-2013 programme period have now ceased and the 2014-2020 programming period has commenced with ESF/Exchequer investment available in human capital development such as training, further and higher education, labour market activities and social inclusion and equality programmes. The Department of Justice and Equality has secured €5.5 million in ESF funds under the new programme (with Exchequer matching funds of €5.5 million) to promote equal opportunities and in particular to up skill and reintegrate women who have left the labour market or remain outside the labour market.

### **Objective 20**

#### **To ensure that the National Women's Strategy is fully implemented**

#### **CONTEXT**

10. This report covers progress made in the implementation of the Strategy from January 2014 to April 2015.
11. The availability of gender disaggregated data is needed to support the implementation of the National Women's Strategy. Since March 2004, the data strategies of Government Departments are prepared by reference to best practice guidelines<sup>23</sup> issued by the National Statistics Board (NSB). In its mid-term review of the *Strategy for Statistics 2009-2014* published in December 2012, the NSB reflected on the increasing demand for quality statistics. At international level there has been considerable discussion on the need for more data on well-being and sustainability indicators to complement traditional economic indicators, while at EU level a number of new household surveys are being activated by regulation, for example the Adult Education Survey and European Health Information Survey. These new sources along with greater access to survey microdata being provided by the CSO provide new opportunities for monitoring the impact of the National Women's Strategy.

<sup>23</sup> "Best Practice Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of formal Data/Statistics Strategies in Government Departments", NSB (2004). Available at: [http://www.nsb.ie/media/nsbie/pdfdocs/Data\\_Strategy\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.nsb.ie/media/nsbie/pdfdocs/Data_Strategy_Guidelines.pdf)

## ACTIONS

12. The following actions have been reported by Government Departments and Agencies:

- The National Women’s Strategy Monitoring Committee, which is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Strategy, met in full session in January and May 2015.
- The mid-term review of the National Women’s Strategy 2007-2016 was considered by Government and published in July 2014. Noting that gender equality is regarded as an economic imperative by the European Union and the OECD, the review also concluded that it was essential to ensure that the work of the national equality machinery continued to focus on the economic benefits to be derived from the achievement of de facto gender equality in all fields. Despite the positive overall comment on the Strategy, analysis of progress under each of the objectives prompted some critical comment and the review made 43 specific recommendations for future action, which are incorporated in this report in the context of each Objective. In March 2014, Government agreed that Ministers should take account of the relevant recommendations in taking forward work within their Departments which promotes gender equality.
- The fourth progress report on the implementation of the Strategy, entitled “*Implementing the National Women’s Strategy 2007-2013: Progress 2011/2012*”, was submitted to Government in March 2014 and subsequently published on the website of the Department of Justice and Equality ([www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)).



## CHAPTER 6

### GENDER EQUALITY – THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The concept of gender equality has been addressed by the UN and by the Council of Europe since the 1940s, while it has been enshrined in EU legislation since its foundation.
2. This chapter is intended to be a comprehensive summary of the developments in promoting gender equality at EU level and internationally during 2013 that are noteworthy and that should be considered in informing policy. The key points are highlighted, with references included to sources of additional information.

#### ACTIVITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

##### *Council of Ministers of the EU and Presidency Work Programmes*

3. Presidency work programmes

The following Council Conclusions were adopted under the Greek, Italian and Latvian Presidencies:

- In June 2014, conclusions were adopted on "Women and the Economy: Economic Independence from the perspective of part time work and self-employment", which introduced 3 new indicators, and invited the Commission as part of the Europe 2020 framework to include a separate pillar for gender equality.
  - In December 2014, conclusions were adopted on "The review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by the Member States and the EU institutions", noting the report, "Beijing + 20: the 4th Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States" which presents the main trends, current progress, and major challenges in the field of gender equality in the EU, prepared by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in close cooperation with the Italian Presidency.
  - Under the Latvian Presidency, negotiations are ongoing on draft council conclusions on the gender gap in pensions with a view to adoption in June 2015.
4. In October 2014, Trio partners Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg launched the Fifth Trio Declaration on Equality between Women and Men, setting out the programme of work to foster gender equality under successive presidencies from July 2014 to December 2015. The events held to date included the following:
    - In October 2014, a high-level conference, "Gender Equality in Europe: Unfinished business? Taking stock 20 years after the Beijing Platform for

Action”, was organised within the framework of its EU Presidency by Italy in collaboration with the European Commission.

5. During the Greek, Italian and Latvian Presidencies, reading continued of the legislative proposal from the EU Commission for a new Directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures commenced over five meetings in the Social Questions Working Party of the Council<sup>24</sup>. Under this proposal, published by the EU Commission in late 2012, Member States would be required to take steps to ensure that, by 2020, at least 40% of all such directors of listed companies would represent each gender. The proposal received a mixed reaction from Member States with a number favouring a national approach to this issue.

### ***European Parliament***

6. Following elections to the European Parliament in May 2014, a new Parliament was convened. The current Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) Committee of the European Parliament to date issued 1 reports and 10 opinions<sup>25</sup> on a wide range of issues from fundamental rights, pension reform, free movement rights and healthcare, to economic and foreign policy.

- Report on progress on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2013.
- Opinion on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the activities and supervision of institutions for occupational retirement provision (recast).
- Opinion on investment for jobs and growth: promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Union.
- Opinion on the current political situation in Afghanistan.
- Opinion on the Ebola Crisis: the long-term lessons and how to strengthen health systems in developing countries to prevent future crises.
- Opinion on family businesses in Europe.
- Opinion Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2013 and the European Union’s policy on the matter.
- Opinion on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a European Platform to enhance cooperation in the prevention and deterrence of undeclared work.
- Opinion on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section III- Commission and executive agencies.
- Opinion on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Institute for Gender Equality for the financial year 2013.
- Opinion on the EU and the global development framework after 2015.

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<sup>24</sup> Commission proposal 2012/0299 (COD); available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/121114\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/121114_en.htm)

<sup>25</sup> The opinions and reports adopted by the European Parliament FEMM committee are available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/femm/home.html>

## *European Commission*

7. A new College of Commissioners was appointed in 2014 for a five-year term concluding on 31 October 2019. For the first time, gender equality features explicitly in the title of a European Commissioner, with the appointment of a Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality. Following a Forum on the future of gender equality in the EU which took place on 20-21 April 2015, the Commission is undertaking a public consultation concluding in July 2015 in the context of the preparation of the Commission's policy on equality between women and men after 2015.
8. The EU Commission continued, under the ESF 2007-2013 and the PROGRESS programmes, and the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020, to fund initiatives by the Member States to promote gender equality. Details of initiatives in Ireland are set out in Chapter 5. Under the existing Gender Equality Strategy which sets out its work program on gender equality to the end of 2015, the following initiatives by the European Commission are ongoing:
  - Under the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Commission closely monitors the national policies adopted to improve gender equality in the labour market and boost the social inclusion of women.
  - The Commission has continued to support the European Equal Pay Day which has been held each year since 2011 to increase awareness of the fact that a wage gap between women and men still exists and as a reminder of how much longer women need to work than men to earn the same.
  - In March 2015, the European Commission launched "the EU Prize for Women Innovators 2016", the third round of its initiative to give public recognition to outstanding women entrepreneurs who brought their innovative ideas to the market. The competition is open to applications from women who have founded or co-founded their company and who have at some point of their careers benefitted from the EU's research framework programmes, the EURATOM Framework Programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation framework programme (CIP) or actions relating to research and innovation under the European Structural and Investment Funds, or prior to 2014, the Structural Funds.
9. Research and information publications having a gender focus and issued by the European Commission in this period included the following:
  - *Special Eurobarometer Report No 428 on Gender Equality*: this looks at four themes - attitudes towards gender equality and stereotypes, understanding of gender inequality and how to tackle it effectively, and combating violence against women. (March 2015)
  - Report on the implementation of parental leave directive 2010/18 in 33 European countries (March 2015)
  - Annual report on equality between women and men 2014 (March 2015)
  - Understanding occupational gender segregation in European labour markets (January 2015)
  - Statistical data on Women entrepreneurs in Europe (November 2014)

- Report of the Seminar on exchange of good practice on the role of men in gender equality (November 2014)
- Report of the Seminar on exchange of good practice on female entrepreneurship (October 2014)
- '*Gender equality in the workforce: reconciling work, private and family life in Europe*', (May 2014)
- *Commission recommendation of 7 March 2014* on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency (March 2014)

### ***EU Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men***

10. The EU Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men<sup>26</sup> comprises representatives of EU countries, social partners at EU level and NGOs and was set up in 1981 to assist the Commission in formulating and implementing the European Union activities aimed at promoting equality between women and men, by delivering opinions to the Commission on issues of relevance to the promotion of gender equality in the EU. The Committee adopted 3 opinions in 2014, as follows:
- Opinion on gender equality in the EU in the 21st century: remaining challenges and priorities
  - Opinion on data collection on violence against women
  - Opinion on the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy

### ***EIGE work programme***

11. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the European Union agency which supports the EU and its Member States in their efforts to promote gender equality, to fight discrimination based on sex and to raise awareness about gender equality issues.
12. Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 of 20 December 2006 provides, inter alia, that the Council may appoint 18 of the members of the EIGE Management Board. In the order of the rotating Presidencies, 18 of the Member States each nominate one member and one alternate member for a period of three years. The composition of the Management Board changed in June 2013 on conclusion of the previous term, with Ireland included again as one of the nominating Member States, having been absent for the previous three years. The Irish board member, Pauline Moreau of Gender Equality Division, Department of Justice and Equality, was subsequently elected chair of the EIGE Management Board for the current 3 year term ending 31 May 2016.

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<sup>26</sup> Opinions of the EU Advisory Committee on equal opportunities for women and men are available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/advisory-committee/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/advisory-committee/index_en.htm)

13. EIGE released the following research and information publications:

- Research note to the Latvian Presidency: Gender Gap in Pensions in the EU
- Beijing + 20: The 4th Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States
- Gender equality and economic independence: part-time work and self-employment
- Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Gender Equality
- Preventing domestic violence - good practices
- A policy response to gender perceptions: discussion paper
- Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union
- Administrative data sources on gender-based violence against women in the EU
- Integrating the perspective of women and men into EU policies: the case of the Lithuanian Presidency

#### ***EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (EU FRA) Work Programme***

14. The FRA released the following publications<sup>27</sup> relevant to gender during the reporting period:

- 'Violence against women: an EU-wide survey'
- "Addressing forced marriage in the EU: legal provisions and promising practices"
- "Fundamental rights: key legal and policy developments in 2013. Highlights 2013"
- "Fundamental rights: challenges and achievements in 2013 - Annual report 2013"

## **ACTIVITY IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

### ***Overview***

15. In 2012 the Council of Europe agreed a new *Transversal Gender Equality Programme*, aimed at increasing the impact and visibility of its gender equality standards by ensuring these standards are mainstreamed into all Council of Europe policies. The Programme presupposes that all Council of Europe decision-making, advisory and monitoring bodies should support and actively contribute to implementation of gender equality. Three main areas of work were identified as priorities, namely the elimination of violence against women, combating gender stereotypes in media, and access of women to justice. Key roles in implementing the programme are assigned to the Gender Equality Commission, the network of national focal points in each member state, the gender equality rapporteurs within each steering committee and intergovernmental structure of the Council of Europe, the Committee of

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<sup>27</sup> Publications by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights; available at <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources>

Ministers Thematic Co-ordinator on Equality and Trafficking and the Inter Secretariat gender equality mainstreaming team.

16. The Gender Equality Commission<sup>28</sup> was established to help ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality into all Council of Europe policies and to bridge the gap between commitments made at international level and the reality of women in Europe. The Commission provides advice, guidance and support to other Council of Europe bodies and to the Member States.
17. The network of national focal points (NFCs) held its second meeting and conference, on combating gender stereotypes in and through education, in Helsinki in October 2014. On the agenda were proposals for the third round of monitoring the implementation of CM Recommendation Rec(2003)3, on the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, and agreement of a theme (equal access to justice for women) for the 3rd conference, to be held in 2015.
18. On 6 November 2013, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a *Strategy on Gender Equality*<sup>29</sup> for the period 2014-2017. Work and activities to implement the Strategy will build on five objectives: combating gender stereotypes and sexism, preventing and combating violence against women, guaranteeing equal access of women to justice, achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, and achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures of the Council of Europe. The Strategy builds on the Transversal Gender Equality Programme. The Committee of Ministers invited the Gender Equality Commission to closely follow the implementation of the Strategy and asked the Secretary General to report annually on progress achieved.

## ACTIVITY AT THE UN

### *UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> Sessions*

19. The 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place in New York in March, 2014. The priority theme was '*Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls*'. The outcome of the Commission's consideration of the priority theme takes the form of agreed conclusions, negotiated by all States.
20. The EU statement to the plenary session was delivered by the Greek Secretary General for Gender Equality. The EU had an active presence with side events on both trafficking and violence against women. France also co-hosted a side-event with the Council of Europe entitled "*Violence against Women: our concern, our response*". Ireland strongly advocated on issues related to GBV at CSW 58. This included the co-hosting of three side events related to GBV including events with Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence and the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in in Persons (CSTIP).

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<sup>28</sup> Details of the Gender Equality Commission and its work programme are available at [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/02\\_GenderEqualityProgramme/GEC/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/02_GenderEqualityProgramme/GEC/default_en.asp)

<sup>29</sup> Available at <http://www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/EQUALITY/>

21. The 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place in New York in March 2015. The priority focus was a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 20 years after its adoption (Beijing+20). In this review year of the Beijing Declaration, no agreed conclusions are drawn up, although States agree an opening Political Declaration.
22. Ireland's national statement was delivered by Minister of State for New Communities, Culture and Equality, Aodhán Ó Ríordáin TD, and set out the progress and gaps remaining in Ireland's implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Ireland co-hosted side events on women, peace and security (with UNDP and Karama), gender based violence (with the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence) and empowering women in decision-making (with the Inter Parliamentary Union).

### ***UN Women***

23. UN Women is the UN agency dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Building on work previously done by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the agency was established by the UN General Assembly in 2010 under the UN reform agenda to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. Ireland served as Vice-President of the Executive Board of UN Women in 2013 and in this role supported the finalisation and approval of UN Women's Strategic Plan and the strengthening of the organisation's capacity to engage in humanitarian action.

### ***ILO***

24. In its 1999 policy on gender equality<sup>30</sup>, the International Labour Organisation<sup>31</sup> (ILO) identified gender mainstreaming as the appropriate strategy to promote equality between women and men in its work. The ILO *Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010-2015* aims to put this strategy into operation, while facilitating effective and gender-responsive delivery of the Decent Work Agenda, in line with the 2009 International Labour Conference (ILC) resolution on *Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work*<sup>32</sup>. Phase II of the Action Plan concluded at end 2013.
25. Publications having a gender focus issued by the ILO in this period include the following:
  - Maternity Protection in SMEs: An international review, ILO (October 2014)
  - G20: Creating Safe and Healthy Workplaces for All (September 2014)

<sup>30</sup> *Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the International Labour Office*, ILO, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> The International Labour Organization (ILO) is responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards.

<sup>32</sup> *Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work*, ILC 98<sup>th</sup> Session, 2009.





## APPENDICES



## Appendix I

### Programme for Government Government for National Recovery 2011-2016

#### EXTRACTS WHICH HAVE A FOCUS ON GENDER EQUALITY OR ON WOMEN

##### *Constitutional Reform*

Amending the clause on women in the home and encourage greater participation of women in public life.

##### *Political Reform*

We recognise that there needs to be a substantial increase in the number of women in politics. We will ask the Constitutional Convention, which is examining electoral reform, to make recommendations as to how the number of women in politics can be increased.

Public funding for political parties will be tied to the level of participation by women as candidates achieved by those parties.

##### *Fairness – other health priorities*

We will introduce a cervical cancer vaccination catch-up programme for all girls in secondary school. We will also extend BreastCheck to 65-69 year old women.

We will develop a National Carers Strategy to support carers and to address issues of concern.

We will legislate to clarify the law surrounding assisted human reproduction including the law relating to parental relationships arising from assisted human reproduction.

We acknowledge the recent ruling of the European Court of Human Rights subsequent to the established ruling of the Irish Supreme Court on the X-case. We will establish an expert group to address this issue, drawing on appropriate medical and legal expertise with a view to making recommendations to Government on how this matter should be properly addressed.

##### *Education*

##### **Early Childhood Care and Education:**

We will maintain the free pre-school year in Early Childhood Care and Education to promote the best outcomes for children and families. We will improve the quality of the pre-school year by implementing standards and reviewing training options.

As resources allow, this Government will invest in a targeted early childhood education programme for disadvantaged children, building on existing targeted pre-school supports for families most in need of assistance such as the young Ballymun project.

**Improving Outcome:**

Maths and science teaching at second level will be reformed, including making science a compulsory Junior Cert subject by 2014. Professional development for maths and science teachers will be prioritised. A bonus points system for maths, which is linked to specific maths or science courses, will be introduced to encourage greater participation in courses where skills shortages currently exist.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools:**

This Government will end the treatment of ICT in education as a stand-alone issue, but will integrate it across education policy. This will begin with merging the National Centre for Technology in Education with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. A new plan to develop ICT in teaching, learning and assessment will be developed. This plan will incorporate the integration of ICT policy across other agencies, such as the Professional Development Services for Teachers, the State Examinations Commission, and Project Maths.

***Justice and Law Reform*****Criminal Law Reform:**

We will establish a DNA Database to assist the Gardaí in the investigation of serious crime, such as homicides and sexual offences.

We will enact legislation to prohibit the practice of Female Genital Mutilation for the protection of girls and women.

**Sentencing and Penal Reform:**

Violent and sexual offenders may only earn remission based on good behaviour, participation in education and training, and completion of addiction treatment programmes and, where appropriate, sex offender programmes.

**Law Reform, Courts and Judiciary:**

We will create an enforcement mechanism for District Court maintenance orders in family cases.

We will reform and modernise aspects of family law.

We will introduce consolidated and reformed domestic violence legislation to address all aspects of domestic violence, threatened violence and intimidation in a manner that provides protection to victims.

***Equality and Social Protection***

The Commission on Taxation and Social Welfare will examine and make recommendations on the interaction between taxation and the welfare system to ensure that work is worthwhile. In particular, it will examine family and child income supports, and a means by which self-employed people can be insured against unemployment and sickness.

**Eliminating poverty traps:**

- activating people on a reduced week who refuse extra day(s) employment.

- over time, One Parent Family Payment will be replaced with a parental allowance

### **Getting better value for money**

We will raise the issue of payment of Child Benefit in respect of non-resident children at EU level, and seek to have the entitlement modified to reflect the cost of living where a child is resident. We will examine all possible flexibility within European legislation to reduce the cost of this payment.

### **Equality:**

Equality is at the heart of what it means to be a citizen in our democracy. This Government believes that everyone has the right to be free from discrimination and that we all benefit from living in a more equal society

We are committed to ensuring that the rights of women and men to equality of treatment and to participate fully in society are upheld.

We will take steps to ensure that all State boards have at least 40% of each gender.

We will encourage schools to develop anti-bullying policies and in particular, strategies to combat homophobic bullying.

We will require all public bodies to take due note of equality and human rights in carrying out their functions.

### **Ireland in Europe**

We are fully committed to the EU2020 strategy and its creation of employment and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.



## Appendix II

### European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION acknowledges that equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the European Union and that gender equality policies are vital to economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness. Five years after the adoption of the first European Pact for Gender Equality, a new impetus is needed, particularly in order to reaffirm and support the close link between the Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 and "Europe 2020: the European Union's Strategy for jobs and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth". THE COUNCIL therefore reaffirms its commitment to fulfil EU ambitions on gender equality as mentioned in the Treaty and in particular to:

1. close the gender gaps in employment and social protection, including the gender pay gap, with a view to meeting the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, especially in three areas of great relevance to gender equality, namely employment, education and promoting social inclusion in particular through the reduction of poverty, thus contributing to the growth potential of the European labour force;
2. promote better work-life balance for women and men throughout the life-course, so as to enhance gender equality, increase women's participation in the labour market and contribute to meeting the demographic challenges; and
3. combat all forms of violence against women in order to ensure the full enjoyment by women of their human rights and to achieve gender equality, including with a view to inclusive growth.

THE COUNCIL urges action at Member State and, as appropriate, Union level in the following fields:

#### **Measures to close gender gaps and combat gender segregation in the labour market:**

- a) promote women's employment in all age brackets and close gender gaps in employment, including by combating all forms of discrimination;
- b) eliminate gender stereotypes and promote gender equality at all levels of education and training, as well as in working life, in order to reduce gender segregation in the labour market;
- c) ensure equal pay for equal work and work of equal value;
- d) promote women's empowerment in political and economic life and advance women's entrepreneurship;
- e) encourage the social partners and enterprises to develop and effectively implement initiatives in favour of gender equality and promote gender equality plans at the workplace; and

- f) promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels and in all fields, in order to make full use of all talents.

**Measures to promote better work-life balance for women and men:**

- a) improve the supply of adequate, affordable, high-quality childcare services for children under the mandatory school age with a view to achieving the objectives set at the European Council in Barcelona in March 2002, taking into account the demand for childcare services and in line with national patterns of childcare provision;
- b) improve the provision of care facilities for other dependants; and
- c) promote flexible working arrangements and various forms of leave for both women and men.

**Measures to tackle all forms of violence against women:**

- a) adopt, implement and monitor strategies at national and Union level with a view to eliminating violence against women;
- b) strengthen the prevention of violence against women and the protection of victims and potential victims, including women from all disadvantaged groups; and
- c) emphasise the role and responsibility of men and boys in the process of eradicating violence against women.

**Governance, implementation and monitoring:**

The relevant aspects of this Pact, and of the Commission's annual reports on "Equality between Women and Men", should be taken into account in the mechanisms of the Europe 2020 Strategy as appropriate.

THE COUNCIL reaffirms its commitment to reinforce governance through gender mainstreaming by integrating the gender perspective into all policy areas including external EU actions, also taking into account the critical role of men and boys in the promotion of gender equality, and by ensuring that gender equality effects are taken into account in impact assessments of new EU policies.

THE COUNCIL encourages the Member States and the Commission, in particular through Eurostat, to further develop existing statistics and indicators disaggregated by sex and to fully utilise the capacities of the European Institute for Gender Equality.

When developing and implementing their National Reform Programmes, the Member States are encouraged to apply a gender equality perspective and to promote gender equality policies, especially concerning the Employment Guidelines, and invited to make appropriate use of agreed gender equality indicators developed within the Joint



Assessment Framework and within the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action in all relevant policy areas and processes.

The Commission and the Council are also invited to incorporate a gender equality perspective into the Annual Growth Survey, the Country Opinions and the Country Specific Recommendations. The progress made on the implementation of the European Pact for Gender Equality should be discussed by ministers annually, at the Council level."

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