



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Comhionannais
Department of Justice
and Equality

National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020:

creating
a better society
for all



**PROGRESS
REPORT**

May 2017-July 2018

Foreword from the Chair of the Strategy Committee

I am pleased to present this report on the progress made in the first year of implementation of the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020.

The Strategy was launched in May 2017 by the then Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald TD and myself. The Strategy is now well on track to make a concrete contribution to our intended objective: changing attitudes and practices preventing women's and girls' full participation in education, in employment and in public life at all levels, and improving services for women and girls, with priority given to the needs of those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, the poorest outcomes.

This Report has been prepared by the Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice and Equality, with contributions from the membership of the Strategy Committee advising the Department on the implementation of the Strategy. Its preparation has provided an opportunity to review and assess the progress made in putting the Strategy's 139 actions into effect.

This first year of the Strategy's implementation has produced several important successes. A substantial body of legislation has been enacted – notably in respect of the referendum on the 8th Amendment to the Constitution, but also legal measures to enhance protections for victims of gender-based violence, and to extend maternity leave and benefit.

This period has seen a strong and systematic focus across Government on gender mainstreaming.

A gender dimension has been included in the National STEM Education Policy Statement and implementation plan, in the Action Plan for Jobless Households, the review of the amendments to the One Parent Family scheme of social welfare supports, the new National Drug Strategy, and the new National Sports Policy. In addition, equality reporting has been piloted for the first time in the 2018 budgetary cycle.

I cannot emphasise enough that promoting gender equality is a task for everyone – and for men as well as women. I am very encouraged therefore to welcome the engagement of senior business leaders, both male and female, in the business-led Better Balance for Better Business initiative, launched last July by the Taoiseach.

Finally, I would like to extend my warm thanks to my fellow Strategy Committee members for their active engagement with the Strategy and the generosity with which they have shared their expertise. Their commitment and drive has ensured significant progress has been made in implementing individual actions over its first twelve months, providing a firm foundation on which to make further advances in gender equality over the coming years.



David Stanton, T.D.

*Minister of State at the
Department of Justice and
Equality with special
responsibility for Equality,
Immigration and Integration*

Figure 1 : A selection of the policy documents, papers, reports and strategies produced under actions of the National Strategy for Women and Girls in 2017-2018.



1. The National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020

- 1.1 In line with the commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government to publish an updated National Women's Strategy, the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020 was launched at an event in Dublin Castle on 3 May 2017 by the then Tánaiste, Ms Frances Fitzgerald TD, and by the Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration, Mr David Stanton TD. The Strategy was informed by a consultation process which took place between November 2016 and January 2017 in which the public and stakeholders were invited to make submissions on the high level objectives and desired outcomes for the Strategy and the priorities for action over the next four years.
- 1.2 The Government recognises gender equality as both an objective and a driver of sustainable development. Gender equality is key to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encompassed in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which place the fight against poverty and sustainable development on the same agenda for the first time. Up to a quarter of the indicators included in the SDG framework implicitly or explicitly address gender equality. In this context SDG 5, which aims to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", has been referred to as a pivotal goal to which progress on all other goals must be linked.
- 1.3 The National Strategy for Women and Girls provides the policy framework on which the Government's agenda and priorities in relation to the advancement of equality for women over the period to 2020 are set out. It represents a whole of Government approach to improve outcomes for women, recognises the shared responsibility for achieving these results, and the importance of taking measures to the maximum of available resources. The Strategy is a living document that is influenced by its context and will evolve as circumstances change over the period to 2020.
- 1.4 The overall goal for the Strategy is to change attitudes and practices preventing women's and girls' full participation in education, employment and public life at all levels, and to improve services for women and girls, with priority given to the needs of those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, the poorest outcomes. The following six high level objectives are identified, to be advanced through 139 individual actions:
- Advance socio-economic equality for women and girls
 - Advance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of women and girls
 - Ensure the visibility in society of women and girls, and their equal and active citizenship
 - Advance women in leadership at all levels
 - Combat violence against women, and
 - Embed gender equality in decision-making.



- 1.5 A Strategy Committee, chaired by the Minister of State with responsibility for gender equality, continues to meet regularly to advise on the implementation of the Strategy. The terms of reference and list of members are included at **Appendix I**. The Committee met on four occasions during the reporting period, in July and September 2017 and in January and May 2018. The terms of reference and membership of the Committee, and minutes of its meetings, are published online by the Department of Justice and Equality at www.genderequality.ie.
- 1.6 Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice and Equality coordinates the implementation of the Strategy, with ongoing engagement with relevant Departments, agencies and stakeholders. The Division also supports the Strategy Committee in its work.

2. Snapshot of women's situation in Ireland

- 2.1 There have been significant changes in Irish society over the past five years. We have certainly seen some progress made on gender equality issues, most notably in the area of employment, work-life balance, and participation in decision-making, but are acutely aware that there is still a distance to travel.

- 2.2 Following consultation with relevant Government Departments and agencies and advised by the Strategy Committee, the Department of Justice and Equality has identified a set of **high-level indicators** of the situation of women and girls in Ireland. These indicators, set out at **Appendix II**, relate to the themes of education, labour market participation, poverty, health and wellbeing, violence against women, and leadership.



- 2.3 Young women are continuing to do well in completing third-level studies, and this is translating into improved employment prospects. The proportion of 30-34 year old women with such qualifications has stayed consistent at over 58%. The employment rate of recent female graduates, of 34 years and younger, increased by 5 percentage points between 2015 and 2017, standing at 82.6%. However, young women are more likely than young men (13.9% of women aged 15-29 as compared to 11.9% of men) to be neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET), although this rate has shown a decrease of 3 percentage points since 2015.
- 2.4 Between 2014 and 2016 the employment rate of women aged 20-64 grew steadily by 3 percentage points to 65.4%, but remains substantially short of Ireland's national target of 69-71% under the European Semester. Moreover, as the male employment rate has grown faster in recent years and approaches the peak of Celtic Tiger years, the gender employment gap is also expanding, measuring 12.1 percentage points in 2016. No gender pay gap data is available as yet for this period, with the most recent data relating to 2014 when it stood at 13.9%.

2.5 Women's equality can be constrained within the workplace because of their caring roles. They often have not had the same opportunities, or pay, as men as a result. Women still represent the vast majority (98% in 2016) of adults principally occupied in looking after home/family. However, the number of men looking after home/family nearly doubled in the 10 years up to 2016, rising from 4,900 to 9,200. The share of women of working age, 15-64 years, who are active in the labour market saw a 1.4 percentage point increase between 2015 and 2017, to 66.6%. While the active population is increasing, caring responsibilities feature as the main reason for the women aged 20-64 to be economically inactive, at 54.2% of the female inactive population in 2017.

2.6 To facilitate both parents to take an active role in parenting, the Government has committed to expanding paid leave for the first year of a child's life. As a first step, a new statutory scheme of paternity leave was introduced in 2016 providing for two weeks of paid leave for new fathers. In the first full year of the scheme (2017), 26,559 new fathers availed of the leave and benefit and it is anticipated that this take up rate will increase over the coming years.



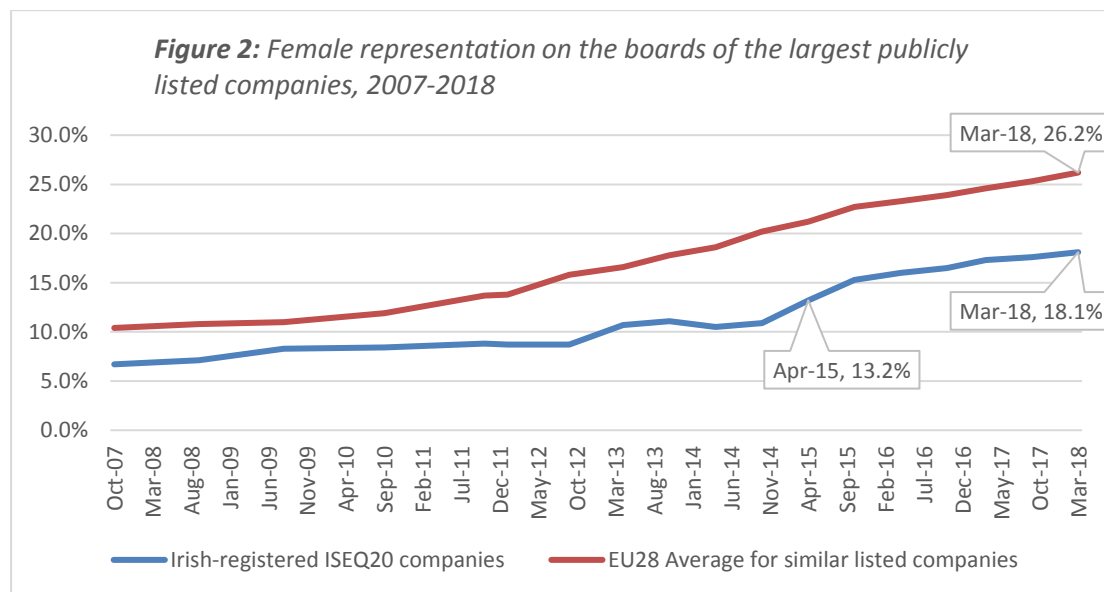
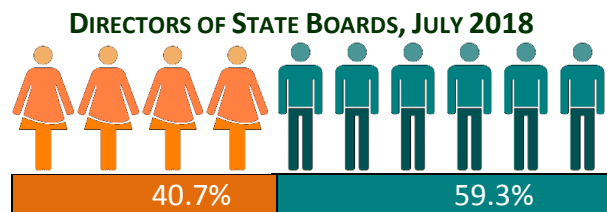
2.7 While premature deaths from chronic diseases among women are falling, from 87.8 to 85.0 per 100,000 persons in the 3 years to 2015, the levels of unhealthy behaviour among Irish women and girls continue to be a concern. Less than one third of 18-64 year old women met recommended guidelines for physical activity as of 2013. As of 2015, 53% of women and girls aged 15 and over were overweight or obese. The prevalence of daily and occasional smoking among this age group is falling slowly, from 21% in 2015 to 20% in 2017.

2.8 In the most recent assessment of the prevalence of physical and sexual violence against women, published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014), 8% of women and girls in Ireland aged 15-74 years reported having experienced such violence in the 12 months prior to survey interview.

2.9 There has been steady progress towards improved gender balance in the decision-making and leadership spheres. The Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 introduced gender quotas for national politics, requiring political parties to select at least 30% of each gender for national elections or be subject to a cut of 50% of their State funding. Female representation in the Dáil increased to 22.2% after the 2016 general election (from 15.1% in 2011), but remained below the EU average of 28.7%. In 2017, women members of the Oireachtas established the Irish Women's Parliamentary Caucus, as a cross-party forum to discuss and campaign on issues predominantly affecting women. The Caucus, whose membership is open to current and previous women members of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann, is supported by a secretariat provided by the National Women's Council of Ireland.

2.10 In the wider public sector, the share of State Boards having at least 40% of each gender among their membership increased by 6 percentage points between 2015 and 2018, standing at 48.9%. A revised model for Ministerial appointments to State boards was introduced in November 2015, providing for all appointments to be advertised openly on the State Boards portal operated by the Public Appointments Service in line with new guidelines for Government Departments on appointments to State Boards. While the average representation of women on State Boards has now reached 40.7%, there remains a great deal of variation across individual boards.

2.11 Women are less visible at the senior levels of Irish business. In the private sector, while the share of female directors of Irish-registered listed companies on the ISEQ20 Index increased between 2015 and 2018 from 13.2% to 18.1%. However, this is still some 8 percentage points below the EU28 average, and well short of the 40%-60% range often mentioned as a minimum guideline for representation of both genders and which the European Institute of Gender Equality describes as the “gender-balance zone”.



2.12 Key emerging issues

Since the Strategy was developed in early 2017, the Irish economy and society have continued to evolve and additional issues, not identified as priorities in the 2016/2017 consultations, are emerging as potential challenges to advancing gender equality.

A statutory entitlement to paid paternity leave was first introduced in Ireland in 2016. The take-up of this leave by new fathers and initiatives to improve access to high-quality, affordable non-parental care (including Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare) give parents greater choices about balancing working and caring. “First

5”, the recently published whole-of-Government strategy for babies, young children and their families (2019-2028) seeks to build on these supports for parents. This strategy sets out the Government plans for a new paid parental leave scheme to ensure children can spend more time with their parents, especially in the first year. This will deliver extended entitlements to paid leave for both fathers and mothers. This scheme will be accompanied by a range of other measures to develop greater family-friendly flexible working arrangements. Members of the Strategy Committee have identified family homelessness as a growing concern with implications for the agenda to advance gender equality, particularly in light of its increasing impact on lone parent families of which the majority are female-headed households. The impact of homelessness on young children's wellbeing is also acknowledged in “First 5”.

The global #MeToo movement has put a spotlight on sexual harassment experienced by women and girls in Ireland. Research by IHREC and the ESRI has found that discrimination is felt acutely among specific groups in Ireland, with Travellers being those most affected by discrimination in seeking work and accessing private services.

Such issues point to a need to continue to analyse the causes of social problems and to systematically and routinely feed the findings of such analysis back into the design and review of social and fiscal policy measures. There remain ongoing challenges with the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data by public bodies to inform such policy development and monitoring of progress. Since the commencement of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), some hesitation in collecting equality-related data has been noted among both public and private sector bodies, with concerns that less data may be available in the future for monitoring of equality impacts. This highlights an emerging demand for guidance for data holders and processors that explicitly refers to the new GDPR-compliant environment and responds to their need to produce equality impact information.

3. Overview of progress during 2017/2018

The Strategy Committee has put in place a traffic-light scorecard system aimed at enabling it to monitor progress on individual actions and across each objective.

OBJECTIVE		Status of Actions			No. Actions
		Not yet started	In progress	Completed	
1	Socio-economic	2	38	5	45
2	Physical & Mental Health	2	25	2	29
3	Visibility & Citizenship	4	10	2	16
4	Leadership	3	13	1	17
5	Violence against Women	2	11	3	16
6	Decision-making	4	12	0	16
TOTALS		17¹	109	13²	139

¹ Actions not yet commenced are: 1.3, 1.13, 2.15, 2.20, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.12, 4.2, 4.14, 4.16, 5.9, 5.10, 6.3, 6.4, 6.13 and 6.15.

² The actions reported as completed are 1.5, 1.8, 1.30, 1.34, 1.36, 2.24, 2.27, 3.7, 3.13, 4.9, 5.4, 5.11 and 5.12.

The table above presents a summary of progress across the Strategy as a whole. In addition to the high-level indicators set out at Appendix II, a set of action-level indicators are also being identified to assist the Strategy Committee in monitoring progress and impact in the implementation of individual actions. By July 2018, work had commenced on 122 (88%) of the 139 actions in the Strategy, with 13 actions reported as having been completed.

4. Key Achievements

Areas which have been a focus of substantial activity over the past year include addressing violence against women, understanding the gender pay gap, and promoting board diversity and women's representation in leadership. In addition, a pioneering Equality Budgeting initiative was undertaken as part of Budget 2018, the Government's programme of referendums progressed, and women's empowerment continued to be promoted in Ireland's external relations.

4.1 Addressing violence against women

Work has continued on implementing the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021. Tusla's budget for Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) services (action 5.7) was €23.8m in 2018, an increase of €1.7m over 2017 and was increased further to €25.3m for 2019.

The work undertaken since May 2017 has significantly developed the legal framework to address such violence and to support victims. With the enactment on 8 May 2018 of the Domestic Violence Act 2018 the protections available to victims of domestic violence have been enhanced (action 5.12). The Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017 was enacted on 5 November 2017 and transposes the EU Victims Directive (Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime) into Irish law (action 5.11). The General Scheme of legislation to give extraterritorial effect to certain provisions of domestic violence legislation was approved by Government for drafting May 2018. The Criminal Law (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) Bill 2018 was published on 26 November and passed Second Stage of the Seanad on 18 December. This legislation, when enacted, will complete the work required to enable Ireland to ratify the Istanbul Convention (action 5.1). Civil Legal Aid Regulations have also been amended to ensure that from 1 January 2018 applicants for legal aid will no longer have to pay a financial contribution for access to civil legal aid in cases where the only remedy sought is an order pursuant to the Domestic Violence Act 1996 in the District Court (action 5.4).

A resource manual for Community Healthcare Organisation staff, "HSE National Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence Training: Recognising and Responding to Victims of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) in Vulnerable or At Risk Communities" has also been developed by the HSE in collaboration with Sonas (action 5.6), while the Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) training programme has received accreditation from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) and Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW). Four Community Health Organisation areas have commenced delivery of the Programme with 140 frontline staff trained to date. The publication of further resources and additional training are planned for later in 2018.

An important element to support this work is the data gathering and research to underpin the development and implementation of key policies. A Postgraduate Research Network on

domestic and sexual violence has been established. A data committee of key State actors are also working towards a "gold standard" of data collection (action 5.2). Following a request by the Taoiseach, a scoping group was established by the Department of Justice and Equality to consider the availability of data and make recommendations on a study to identify the prevalence of sexual abuse and violence in Ireland today and emerging trends. The Government has decided that the CSO will conduct this survey.

The “**What Would You Do?**” awareness campaign on domestic violence, a high impact media campaign to reach a national audience which features TV ads, short videos, cinema, radio, outdoor, social and digital advertising continued in 2017 and 2018, including the #mydoorsopen campaign which ran from 28 August to 24 September 2017. The call to action directs people to information and advice on how bystanders can intervene to help where it is safe and legal to do so. The campaign entered the third and final year of the domestic violence phase in 2018 and it marks the evolution of the campaign from an awareness raising objective to an educational one. The campaign will change focus to sexual violence in 2019 (action 5.3).

In November 2017, the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht announced a suite of measures on sexual harassment and abuse of power in the workplace in the arts and culture sector, including specific initiatives in conjunction with the Arts Council. The National Cultural Institutions (NCIs) are all working on the drafting and implementation of gender policies (action 3.8).



4.2 Gender Pay Gap

A public consultation was conducted in autumn 2017 on factors contributing to the existence of the gender pay gap and measures to address it. Summary results were presented at a national symposium on the Gender Pay Gap held on 10 January 2018, hosted jointly by the Minister for Justice and Equality, Charles Flanagan TD, the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Heather Humphreys TD and Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration David Stanton TD. Further consultations have taken place between union and employer stakeholders to address the gender pay gap.

As a contribution to a wider package of measures to address the gender pay gap and aiming to increase wage transparency, work continued on the proposed introduction of compulsory wage surveys for business. The General Scheme of the **Gender Pay Gap Information Bill** was approved by Government and published in June 2018. The General Scheme has been submitted to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality for pre-legislative scrutiny (actions 1.21-1.23).

Supports for working parents

New measures have been introduced to extend and enhance supports for working parents. This package of measures includes additional maternity leave and benefit for mothers of premature babies born on or after 1 October 2017 (action 1.2).

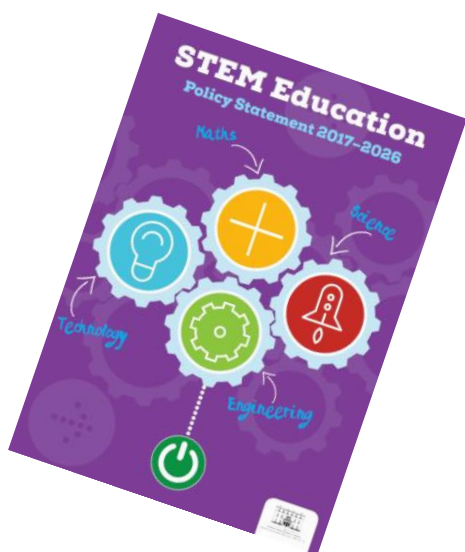
Work is continuing on the phased implementation of the new Affordable Childcare Scheme of financial support for parents towards the cost of quality early learning and care and school-age childcare (action 1.4). A pre-cursor phase, involving an increase to existing subsidies and the introduction of a new universal subsidy, took place on schedule in September 2017. The Childcare Support Bill, which underpins the Scheme, was passed by the Oireachtas in June 2018 and subsequently enacted on 2 July. Work is ongoing on secondary legislation and formal policy guidelines. Regulations to provide for the registration of school age childcare services by the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate were drafted. These regulations (which were signed by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in December 2018 to come into effect on 18 February 2019) will allow school age childcare providers to register with Tusla for the first time and therefore participate in the Affordable Childcare Scheme from the outset. Officials from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Pobal are working with an IT developer, Codec, to develop the ICT system to support the Scheme in advance of its launch in October 2019.

In September 2017, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs commissioned an Independent Review of the Cost of Providing Quality Childcare. By July 2018, a literature review, stakeholder engagement and the survey of childcare providers were completed and these were informing the development of a cost model and cost calculator. Work on drafting a report of this Review was also at an advanced stage (action 1.6). Guidelines for the use of school buildings out of hours, such as for school-age childcare, were completed in October 2017 and have been published on the website of the Department of Education & Skills (action 1.5).

Challenging stereotypes and tackling occupational segregation

Measures are also being advanced to address occupational segregation and, in particular, the low representation of females in apprenticeships and in STEM-related occupations, which are key growth areas in the economy. SOLAS commenced work on a review of pathways to participation in apprenticeship in late 2017 to examine patterns of participation in apprenticeship by underrepresented groups, including women, with a view to identifying any barriers and make recommendations for the future (action 1.11). The review was completed in late 2018 and its results published on the SOLAS website, www.solas.ie, with work already underway in many of the areas identified for action. As at end of 2018, there were 341 female apprentices registered across the 36 apprenticeship schemes on offer, more than double the 2017 figure of 151, and a significant increase on the 2015 figure of 26.





The **STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026** and Implementation Plan 2017-2019 were published in November 2017 (action 1.8), and the focus has now moved to implementation and monitoring progress. One of the principles underpinning the policy statement is that "STEM education should be for learners of all backgrounds, ability and gender". The aims of the policy include seeking an increase in the uptake of STEM related subjects for learners of all backgrounds, ability and gender, with a particular focus on uptake by females. Success in this regard is to be measured against targets to increase uptake of STEM subjects by females by 40% by 2026.

A review of the existing research base on barriers to the uptake of STEM careers by females has been completed and a report is currently under consideration (action 1.9). Work is also ongoing by the Department of Education and Skills in collaboration with Science Foundation Ireland on guidelines for promotion of STEM careers to young people and parents, having particular regard to the gender imbalances in the sector, with a "**Females in STEM**" working group being established. The implementation of a STEM education awareness campaign is expected to get underway in late 2018 (action 1.10).

Also in this area, a **SEAI Women in Energy Network** has been established, with the aim of generating discussion on participation of women in the energy sector (action 6.8).

In May 2017 the Springboard+ programme, providing free or subsidised higher education courses in a range of areas including information and communications technology (ICT), construction, hospitality, business start-up and international financial services for people who are unemployed or wish to reskill, was extended to include homemakers who wish to return to the labour market (action 1.12). In the 2017/2018 academic year, 480 returners enrolled in the programme, representing 7.3% of all participants. Of this group of returners, 412 (86%) were female.

4.3 Women's representation in leadership and promoting board diversity

Board diversity and the executive pipeline – private and public sectors

A **Gender Equality Taskforce** was appointed in November 2017 by Minister Mitchell O'Connor to oversee a national systems review of the recruitment and promotion policies and practices currently in place in higher education institutions, with a view to identifying good practice and highlighting areas that need improvement. The Taskforce is expected to submit its report shortly. With all seven universities have now having received an Athena SWAN bronze award, the Gender Taskforce Action Plan will also provide an update on the intention to require higher education institutions to have Athena SWAN gender-equality accreditation in order to be eligible for research funding from Science Foundation Ireland, the Irish Research Council and the Health Research Board (action 6.12). A New System Performance Framework for Higher Education Institutions was launched in January 2018. The framework includes metrics

in relation to the recommendations of the 2016 HEA Gender Equality report and will also respond to the 2018 Gender Taskforce Action Plan (action 4.13).

The ESRI concluded its research on gender balance in the senior Civil Service, with a report published in December 2017 (action 4.9). Further actions relating to flexible working and maternity leave are under consideration in accordance with Action 8.5 of Civil Service Renewal Plan.

Since the introduction of new Guidelines for identifying candidates for appointment to positions on State Boards, the proportion of applications received by the Public Appointments Service (PAS) from female candidates has increased and accounted for 35% of applications in 2017. PAS also reported there had been significant improvements in the proportion of females among the candidates appointed, increasing from 45% in 2015 to 52% in 2017. The average female representation across State Boards exceeded 40% for the first time in July 2018, reaching 40.7%, and almost half of boards, 48.9%, had met the 40% target in respect of their membership.

Co-chairs Gary Kennedy and Brid Horan with An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, Minister David Stanton and Minister Mary Mitchell-O'Connor at the launch of the Better Balance for Better Business Review Group

Preliminary work was undertaken during 2018 with a view to establishing the business-led '**Better Balance for Better Business**' Review Group (action 4.1). The Review Group of senior figures in business and the public service, led by co-chairs Gary Kennedy and Bríd Horan, is to identify a programme of measures to boost the percentage of women on corporate boards in Ireland, engage with companies to make the case for change and report annually on its progress. The initiative was launched by the Taoiseach on 30 July 2018 at an event addressed also by Ministers Stanton and Mitchell O'Connor. The Review Group is expected to report with recommendations in March 2019.



Women in political leadership

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has recently commenced a project to advance the commitment to promote the participation of women in the 2019 local elections and, in that regard, has been engaging with relevant stakeholders to ascertain their views. The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG), the NWCI, Longford Women's Link, Akidwa and the Oireachtas Women's Caucus, among others, have been consulted to date. Under this initiative, funding of €62,295 has been approved for 2018 for the organisation, Women for Election with a view to encouraging more women to run for election and provide them with suitable training and mentoring (action 4.5).

The legacy of the suffrage movement was highlighted on 17 April when Seanad Éireann hosted a debate by the 16 winners of the Oireachtas all-island school competition, on the question "has the struggle for freedom, justice and equality been realised in Ireland's institutions, culture and society?".



4.4 Equality Budgeting Initiative

A pilot programme of equality reporting has been undertaken for the 2018 budgetary cycle under the leadership of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Six policy programmes across 6 Departments were selected for the pilot, relating to diverse policy areas as follows: skills development programmes; innovation in business; sports and recreation services; arts, culture and film; health and wellbeing; and sectoral programmes for children and young people. A progress report on the pilot was included as Part 3 of the Public Service Performance Report published in April 2018 (action 6.14).



4.5 Programme of referendums

An indicative timetable was agreed by Government and announced on 26 September 2017 for a number of referendums on constitutional amendments and reforms to local government. This provided that a referendum would be held on the Eighth Amendment in May, with a referendum on Article 41.2.1 which deals with women's life within the home, held in October 2018.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution launched its Report on 20 December 2017. The Thirty-sixth Amendment of the Constitution Bill 2018 was passed by both Houses on 28 March. The Referendum subsequently took place on 25 May 2018 and the proposal to amend the Constitution was carried (action 2.27).

The General Scheme of a Bill to amend the Constitution to delete Article 41.2 of the Constitution was published on 3 July 2018 and submitted for pre-legislative scrutiny by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality.

4.6 Promoting women's empowerment in Ireland's external relations

In 2017 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade published and rolled out Irish Aid's Social Protection Strategy with a focus on supporting sustainable social protection programmes that address gender inequality (action 1.44). In 2018 the Department announced it would double its commitment to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which identifies girls' education as a priority theme. In March 2018, Ireland successfully chaired the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which adopted Agreed Conclusions on "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls" (action 1.42). Minister of State for International



Development Ciarán Cannon was named a Political Champion for Education in Conflict in April 2018, spearheaded by Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, an advocate for girls' education (action 1.43).

The OECD Development Assistance Committee reported in February 2018 that Ireland was one of three countries focusing more than 80% of their bilateral development aid on interventions that support gender equality.

5. Other Developments

Other areas which have seen important activity during 2017/2018 include the following:

Initiatives in the health field

- The “**Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery**” strategy, aiming to address the harm caused by substance misuse in Irish society was launched in mid-2017 and includes a commitment to increase the number of drug and alcohol liaison midwives to 5 by end 2018 (action 2.24).
- Priority actions for 2018 under the National Maternity Strategy remain on track, and include improving quality and safety, establishing community midwifery teams and increasing access to anomaly scanning (action 2.19). In addition, the new **HSE Model of Care for Specialist Perinatal Mental Health in Ireland** launched in November 2017. Funding of €3m was allocated for 2017 and 2018 to complete 3 new specialist perinatal hubs, and expand 3 existing hubs (action 2.22).
- Preliminary indications are that the national uptake of a 1st dose of HPV vaccine has increased in 2017-18, from a rate of 51% in 2016-17 (action 2.26).
- The second **HSE National Intercultural Strategy** is in preparation and will include a specific section directed to the care and support of women and girls from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The final draft has been forwarded to senior HSE management for sign-off (action 2.7).



initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion across various sectors

- The **Irish Sign Language Act 2017** was signed in December 2017. Section 8 provides a duty on public bodies to provide ISL interpretation to service users, while Section 9 provides the DEASP may fund additional supports. Additional funding of €390,000 for Sign Language Interpretation Services has been secured in respect of Budget 2018. This allocation will ensure expansion of the remote interpretation service to evenings and weekends, increase in the number of trained Sign Language and Deaf Interpreters, establishment of a quality-assurance and registration scheme for interpreters, and provision of on-going professional training and development for interpreters (action 3.13).

- Specific actions focusing on the participation in public life by Traveller and Roma women have been included in the new **National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy**. Funding commenced in 2017 for new Traveller projects in Wexford, Cavan and Dublin, while six Roma projects will receive funding totalling €210,000 in 2018 for activities to support the inclusion of Roma within Irish society (action 3.11).
- A first **LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020** was developed, and subsequently published in June 2018 (action 2.11).
- The Defence Forces have developed a **Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**, appointed a Gender, Equality and Diversity Officer and made Gender Advisors available to all Brigades/Formations, along with trained Gender Focal Points on all overseas units and ships. Females represented 9.7% of new entrants (General Service Recruits, Cadets and Direct Entry Specialists) to the Permanent Defence Force in 2017 and 6.6% of the strength of the Permanent Defence Force as of 31 December 2017 (action 1.16).
- Awareness of gender diversity in farm organisation leadership has increased, with a number of women being elected as county chairs. Regional networks for women in farming have formed such as West Women in Farming Ireland (WWFI) and South East Women in Farming Ireland (SEWFI), along with new networks in agri-business leadership such as the **Ceres Network** and the **Agrifood Diversity & Inclusion Forum** (action 4.3). In addition, the Agricultural Statistics Liaison Group, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the CSO are in consultation to develop further statistics on employment by gender in the agri-food sector (action 1.39).



measures aiming to address poverty

- Funding was secured for 2018 for a project to develop a step down facility from prison for female offenders (action 2.13). It is expected to publish a request for tender before end 2018.
- In 2017 the Warmer Homes and Warmth and Wellbeing schemes were extended to those in receipt of One Parent Family Payment (action 6.7).
- The **Action Plan for Jobless Households** was published in September 2017 (action 1.34) and a review conducted of the financial and social effects of the amendments to the One-Parent Family payment made since 2012 (action 1.36).

promoting female entrepreneurship

- Over 150 female entrepreneurs have taken part in ACORNS programmes, rural female entrepreneurs at start-up stage, in the three cycles between 2015 and 2017. The progress of those who completed the third year of the programme in 2018 showed combined sales increased by €790,000 over the six months of this third cycle. The participants are now reporting annualised sales of over €1.67 million, representing a 90% increase. There were 9 first time exporters and 10 additional participants expect to have export sales by the end of 2018. 13 additional fulltime employees, and 19 additional part-time employees were hired during the period. The new edition of the ACORNS Booklet of Available Supports was published to provide support to female entrepreneurs, whether or not they are on the programme (action 1.24)
- 67 female-led start-up companies were approved for funding by Enterprise Ireland in 2017 out of 181 companies supported (37%). Female-led companies were 25 (27.8%) of the 90 new High-Potential Start-Ups approvals, and 42 (46%) of 91 Competitive Start Fund approvals for early-stage businesses. The most recent Competitive Start Fund for female entrepreneurs was launched in May 2018 with a total of €1m funding available for up to 20 female-led companies. A total of 100 funding applications were received and the final selection for funding is currently underway. In addition to securing vital funding, 15 of the successful applicants will be offered a place on the INNOVATE accelerator programme, delivered by Dublin BIC, which works to increase the capabilities of the participants and move them to investor-ready capacity within a short period (action 1.25).
- Following an Open Call for Proposals in 2016 under the Women's Entrepreneurship strand of the ESF co-funded Gender Equality Activity, funding of €1.2m was made available to 5 projects for a 3 year period. A range of activities are being funded targeted at supporting women, irrespective of their economic status, to realise their full business potential, with 143 women nationwide currently participating in programmes (action 1.29).
- National Women's Enterprise Day was marked in October 2017 by a series of 15 regional events organised by the Local Enterprise Offices in Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Mayo, Carlow, Laois, Tipperary, Cork, Cavan, Monaghan, Meath, Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Wexford (action 1.27). Enterprise Ireland's Fuelling Ambition Roadshow 2018, a series of 7 events held between March and May, was run in partnership with Network Ireland and supported by the Entrepreneurs Academy and aimed to encourage, support and drive the ambition of female entrepreneurs (existing and new) nationally by showcasing thriving Irish female entrepreneurs. Events were held in Waterford, Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Killarney, Monaghan and Roscommon and attended by up to 600 female entrepreneurs (action 1.26).

and encouraging female participation in sport

- The **National Sports Policy 2018-2027** has been published (action 3.5).



- The Ladies Football and Camogie Finals have been designated as Events of Major Importance, to ensure they are available for free-to-air broadcasting (action 3.7).

5. Vision and strategy to 2020

5.1 Lessons learned

Since the period from May 2017 to July 2018 represents the first year of the Strategy's implementation, it was anticipated that lessons would emerge that could be learned in order to improve the administration of the Strategy in future years, as well as the progress being made to advance and complete actions in line with the planned timescales.

The administration of the Strategy has, as with any programme, encountered some challenges in the first year.

The association of high-profile events with actions under the Strategy has helped to bring awareness of the existence of the Strategy itself, its objectives and package of actions to a wider audience. However, there is still limited knowledge and recognition of the Strategy outside the equality sector, which reduces its potential influence, particularly in regard to embedding gender equality in decision-making structures.

The development of indicators for tracking progress has encouraged increased reflection at Departmental and individual project level on the aims and outcomes of actions and how these could be objectively measured. The process has not been without difficulty and has taken considerably longer than envisaged. Nevertheless, this reflection has been greatly enriched by the contributions of the Strategy Committee. It has been agreed with the Committee to populate and review these indicators on an ongoing basis with a view to improving their relevance.

As actions have not always progressed smoothly, the Strategy Committee decided from its initial meetings to provide time at each meeting to hear from projects experiencing issues and provide feedback. This exercise has been very useful in receiving advice, adjusting timelines and priorities as necessary and managing stakeholder expectations.

In addition, work has yet to begin on 17 of the 139 actions, where these are not planned to commence until later in the implementation period.

In conclusion, the National Strategy for Women and Girls has made a positive contribution in its first year to advancing gender equality in many sectors in Ireland. A sound foundation is in place on which to build in 2019.

5.2 Looking ahead to 2020

Over the next two years, the Committee will seek to build greater awareness of the Strategy among public, private and community sector actors, in order to increase its influence. Potential measures include strengthening linkages between the National Strategy for Women and Girls and other elements of the Government's Integrated Framework for Social Inclusion to tackle inequality and poverty, and featuring the Strategy name, vision and objectives more prominently in events and publications associated with its actions.

A focus will be maintained on developing an action plan on women's health and on alleviating poverty among women and girls.

A greater emphasis will be put making progress on systematically embedding gender equality in the decision-making processes of public bodies. A potentially transformative set of actions with this aim in mind is addressed to Departments and public bodies under the leadership of the Department of Justice and Equality. Chief among these actions are:

- reflecting gender equality in applying the public sector duty under section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 in strategic planning, policies and practices (action 6.1);
- considering gender impact in the development of new strategies and the review of existing strategies (action 6.6) and ensuring the design and review of funding and grant schemes include measures to ensure gender equality (action 6.11),
- developing the evidence base for gender proofing by identifying knowledge gaps in relation to gender inequality and driving improvements in the data infrastructure and analysis required to close those gaps (action 6.13), and
- advancing gender budgeting (action 6.14).

With a view to the local elections in 2019 and next general election, the Committee will ensure actions to increase women's representation in decision-making structures at all levels are given prominence. Building on progress to date, an interdepartmental group on gender balance on State Boards will be convened to identify and report on best practices which could be adopted across Government.

Work will also begin on the 17 actions not yet commenced.

Finally, active consideration is being given to measures which could be incorporated into the Strategy to respond to emerging issues and ensure appropriate follow-up to completed actions.



Appendix I: Strategy Committee

1. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the National Strategy Committee for the implementation and monitoring phase of the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020, are as follows:

1. The Strategy Committee (“the Committee”) shall advise on the development and implementation of the new Strategy by the Department of Justice and Equality.
2. The Committee shall advise the Department of Justice and Equality on the following, having regard to the results of the public consultation to inform the new National Strategy for Women and Girls, and to the individual members’ expertise and experience:
 - key issues for women and girls in Ireland that are most relevant to address over the next four years;
 - the priority high-level objectives to be pursued under the new National Strategy for Women and Girls;
 - the outcomes which the Strategy should aim to achieve; and
 - actions which could be taken to advance those objectives and achieve those outcomes.
3. The Committee shall provide information to the Department of Justice and Equality on:
 - data relevant to the situation as regards gender equality in Ireland;
 - indicators, targets and means of monitoring progress towards the achievement of gender equality in Ireland;
 - any other relevant matters.
4. The Committee shall also advise the Department of Justice and Equality on the following:
 - the prioritisation of actions to be implemented under the Strategy;
 - the development and use of a traffic light system and scorecard to monitor progress on individual actions and across each objective;
 - the task of assessing whether further action is required on specific issues or if actions need to be added to the Strategy or changed to respond to changing needs, and make recommendations in this regard; and
 - the preparation of annual progress reports, mid-term review and final evaluation report of the Strategy.

2. List of members

As of July 2018, the membership of the Strategy Committee is as follows:

Minister of State Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality,
Immigration and Integration David Stanton TD (**Chair**)

Paula Barry-Walsh (and alternate Aisling Cronin), Department of Agriculture, Food
and the Marine

Dr Carol Baxter and Marion Walsh, Department of Justice & Equality
 Laurence Bond (and alternate Walter Jayawardene), IHREC
 Nina Brennan (and alternate Eoghan Richardson), Department of Business,
 Enterprise & Innovation
 Valerie Byrne (and alternate Ann Howard), Department of Defence
 Síona Cahill, Union of Students in Ireland (USI)
 Sandra Cairns, Public Appointments Service (PAS)
 Anne Donegan (and alternate Faris Bader), Department of Finance
 Rachel Doyle, The Community Platform
 Deirdre Garvey, The Wheel
 Alison Geraghty (and alternate Margaret O’Gorman), Department of Culture,
 Heritage & Gaeltacht Affairs
 Nichola Harkin, Ibec
 Dr. Cate Hartigan (and alternates Helen McCormack and Fergal Fox), Health Service
 Executive
 Miriam Holt, National Collective of Community-based Women’s Networks (NCCWN)
 Sarita Johnston, Enterprise Ireland
 David Joyce, ICTU
 Maria Joyce (and alternate Gabi Muntean), National Traveller Women’s Forum,
 representing Traveller & Roma women’s groups
 Jason Kennedy, Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government
 Neville Kenny (and alternate Margaret McCarthy), Department of Education & Skills
 Jennifer McCarthy Flynn, National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCII)
 Dr Kara McGann, Ibec
 Rebecca Minch, Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment
 Moira Murrell, City and County Management Association (CCMA)
 Emer O’Brien (and alternates Nicole McHugh and Abby Ryan), Department of
 Foreign Affairs and Trade
 Anmarie O’Connor, Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
 Orla O’Connor, National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCII)
 Kate O’Flaherty (and alternate Dr Fiona Mansergh), Department of Health
 Karen O’Loughlin (and alternates Ann Russell and Suzanne Griffin), SIPTU
 Deirdre O’Neill, Department of Public Expenditure & Reform
 Denis O’Sullivan (and alternates Sean McNamara and Michael Keenan), Department
 of Children & Youth Affairs
 Geraldine O’Sullivan, Irish Farmers’ Association
 John Orme (and alternate Paula Dowd), Department of Rural & Community
 Development
 Olive Walsh, Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport
 Tanya Ward, Children’s Rights Alliance, representing community and voluntary
 organisations

Former Strategy Committee members and alternates who served on the Committee between May 2017 and July 2018 are as follows:

Niamh Allen, National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCII)
 Grace Bolton and John Lohan, Department of Children & Youth Affairs
 Gerard Considine, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 John Healy, Department of Culture, Heritage & Gaeltacht Affairs
 Maria Hurley, Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection

Lisa Keyes, Public Appointments Service (PAS)
Paul Lemass and Grant Couper, Department of Housing, Planning & Local
Government
Orla McBreen and Steven Fadian, Department of Public Expenditure & Reform, and
Gavan O'Leary and Gráinne Morrissey, Department of Education & Skills.



Appendix II: Key indicators

Indicator name (definition)	FEMALE	MALE (for comparison)
Socio-economic equality		
• Poverty		
At risk of poverty rate ^(g) (share of population at risk-of-poverty, i.e., persons with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers).)	17.4% (2014) 16.9% (2015) 16.8% (2016)	17.0% (2014) 16.9% (2015) 16.1% (2016)
• Education		
Tertiary educational attainment ^(a) (share of the population aged 30-34 who have successfully completed tertiary studies)	58.2% (2015) 58.1% (2016) 58.9% (2017)	45.1% (2015) 46.3% (2016) 47.5% (2017)
• Employment		
Employment rate ^(a) (share of the population aged 20 to 64 which is employed)	63.8% (2015) 65.4% (2016) 67.0% (2017)	76.1% (2015) 77.5% (2016) 79.1% (2017)
Gender employment gap ^(a) (percentage point difference between employment rates of men and of women aged 20-64)	11.7 pps (2014) 12.3 pps (2015) 12.1 pps (2016)	n/a
Employment rate of recent graduates ^(a) (% of graduates aged 20-34 who are employed)	77.6% (2015) 82.8% (2016) 82.6% (2017)	77.7% (2015) 80.7% (2016) 84.7% (2017)
Gender pay gap in unadjusted form ^(a) (difference between average gross hourly earnings of male and of female employees, as % of male earnings)	12.2% (2012) 12.9% (2013) 13.9% (2014)	n/a
Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) ^(a) (share of the population aged 15 to 29 who is not employed and not involved in education or training)	17.0% (2015) 15.0% (2016) 13.9% (2017)	16.4% (2015) 14.4% (2016) 11.9% (2017)

Indicator name (definition)	FEMALE	MALE (for comparison)
Active population ^(b) (share of the population aged 15-64 who are economically active, i.e. employed or unemployed)	65.2% (2015) 66.3% (2016) 66.6% (2017)	79.0% (2015) 79.2% (2016) 78.8% (2017)
Inactive population due to caring responsibilities ^(a) (share of inactive population aged 20-64, inactive due to caring responsibilities)	56.0% (2015) 57.1% (2016) 54.2% (2017)	9.2% (2015) 9.0% (2016) 10.5% (2017)
Health and Well being		
Death rate due to chronic diseases ^(a) (Standardised death rate for females aged under 65 of chronic diseases (malignant neoplasms, diabetes mellitus, ischaemic heart diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, chronic lower respiratory diseases and chronic liver diseases). No. per 100,000 persons aged less than 65.)	87.8 (2013) 85.6 (2014) 85.0 (2015)	126.3 (2013) 122.3 (2014) 114.9 (2015)
Women meeting the national guidelines for physical activity ^(e) (share of the population aged 18-64 undertaking at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity, per week)	31.9% (2013)	30.7% (2013) 28.1% (2015)
Obesity rate ^(d) (share of the population aged 15 or over who are overweight or obese (BMI>25)).	53% (2015)	70% (2015)
Smoking prevalence ^{(a) (d)} (share of the population aged 15 or over who are daily or occasional smokers)	21% (2015) ^(d) 20% (2017) ^(d)	24% (2015) 25% (2017)
Leadership		
State Boards meeting 40% gender balance target ^(c) (share of State Boards having at least 40% of female and 40% of male board members)	43.0% (2016) 48.9% (2017) 48.9% (2018)	n/a
Positions held in senior management ^(f) (share of board members in the largest publicly listed companies, i.e. Irish-registered companies on the ISEQ20 index)	16.5% (2016) 17.6% (2017) 18.1% (2018)	83.5% (2016) 82.4% (2017) 81.9% (2018)

Indicator name (definition)	FEMALE	MALE (for comparison)
Seats held in national parliaments and governments ^(f) (share of all seats that are held, by gender)	16.3% (2016) 22.1% (2017) 22.1% (2018)	83.7% (2016) 77.9% (2017) 77.9% (2018)
Violence against Women		
Physical and sexual violence to women experienced within 12 months prior to the interview ^(a) (share of women aged 15-74 who answered "yes" when they were asked whether they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or non-partner in the 12 months prior to the interview)	8% (2014)	n/a

Sources:

(a) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

(b) Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/tepsr_wc130

(c) Department of Justice and Equality (not published).

(d) Healthy Ireland Survey, Statbank tables IH095 and IH075, www.cso.ie

(e) Irish Sports Monitor, www.sportireland.ie

(f) European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender Statistics Database, <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/das>

(g) Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC), Statbank table SIA12, www.cso.ie

Strategy Committee – National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020

Statement of compliance with the Transparency Code

The Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 provides for an exception from the requirement to register as lobbying activity communications between the members of certain types of working groups and committee, provided specified transparency criteria are met as set out in the Transparency Code, prepared in accordance with Section 5(7) of the Act. The Chairperson is responsible for overseeing and conducting the work of the Committee in a manner which ensures that the Committee operates in a manner fully in accordance with its terms of reference and in the public interest. The Chairperson will also include with the annual report of the Committee a statement confirming its compliance with the [Transparency Code](#).

In line with the Transparency Code, I confirm the following information has been published in respect of the Committee on the Department of Justice and Equality gender equality website, www.genderequality.ie:

- 1) Name of Chairperson together with details of his or her employing organisation;
- 2) Names of Members together with details of their employing organisation;
- 3) Whether any non-public servant members were previously designated public officials;
- 4) Terms of reference of the Committee;
- 5) Agenda of each meeting;
- 6) Minutes of each meeting;
- 7) Expected timeframe for the Committee to conclude its work;
- 8) Reporting arrangements; and
- 9) that this information is published in a prominent place on the organisation's website and is easily accessible, and that procedures are in place for updating the information published every 4 months, after each of the Committee's meetings, commencing in June 2018.

David Stanton, T.D.

Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration.

(Chair of the Strategy Committee)

NOTES





“an Ireland
where all women enjoy equality with men
and can achieve their full potential,
while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life”



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Comhionannais
Department of Justice
and Equality