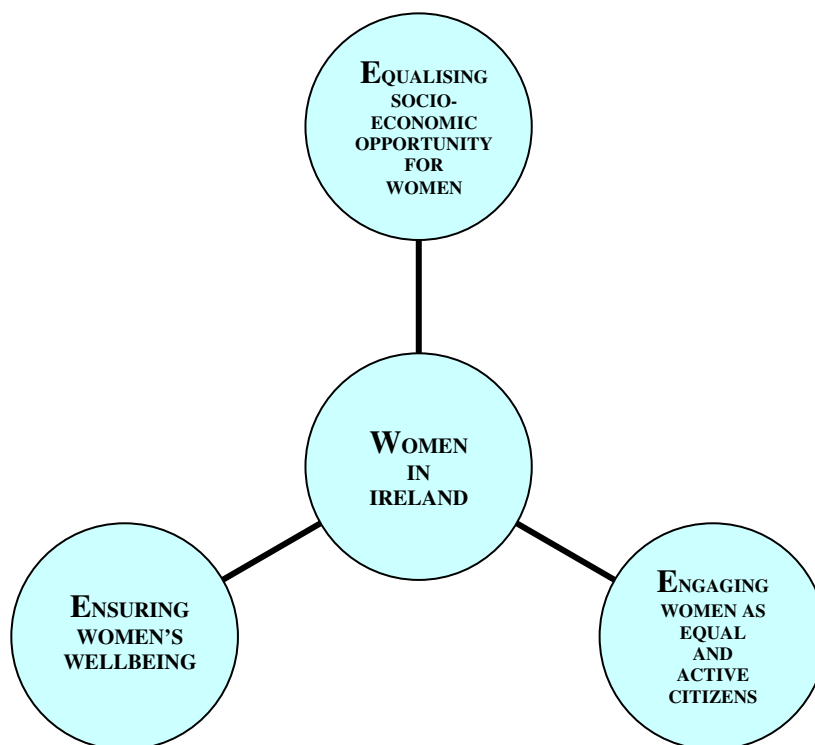


# NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY 2007 – 2016



## MID-TERM REVIEW

**Prepared by Gender Equality Division  
Department of Justice and Equality**



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## **MINISTER'S FOREWORD**

The economic environment has changed very significantly since the National Women's Strategy was published in 2007. Ireland has moved from a period of unprecedented economic optimism to a dark period but thankfully we are now seeing the green shoots of an economic spring.

Despite the economic downturn, Government Departments and Agencies continued to work to deliver the wide range of actions outlined in the Strategy. The task was challenging as resources were scarce. However, as this Report shows, there are many achievements to show for this collective work.

The downturn brought unacceptable levels of unemployment which continues to be a challenge for many families. However, the high level of labour market participation of Irish women added to family incomes and helped to ease that burden, if only a little.

We have seen significant steps to better co-ordinate services for victims of violence and trafficking through the establishment of Cosc and the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, both in the Department of Justice and Equality. We used our Presidency of the European Union to focus on female employment and on the role of media in advancing gender equality.

In common with countries across Europe, and indeed the world, we still have some way to go to achieve de facto or true gender equality. This Report identifies a number of objectives from the Strategy which need more nurturing. I look forward to working with the Monitoring Committee and with other Government Departments, Agencies and civil society to ensure the full implementation of every aspect of the National Women's Strategy by 2016.

**Kathleen Lynch, T.D.  
Minister for Disability, Equality,  
Mental Health and Older People  
March 2014**





**SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOLLOWING REVIEW OF THE  
NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY 2007 – 2016**

**Introduction**

- i. It was intended that the Strategy would impact upon all aspects of women's lives. As a result, it included a very wide range of objectives, focusing not only on economic issues but also on women's well-being and on their engagement in civil society.
- ii. In developing the Strategy, cognisance was taken of Ireland's commitments to gender equality under our Constitution, the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, our membership of the European Union, which actively promotes gender equality particularly from an economic perspective and our commitments under the UN Beijing Platform for Action which actively encouraged State Parties to develop a National Women's Strategy.
- iii. Progress on the implementation of the 200 or more actions included in the Strategy is taking place across a wide range of Government Departments and Agencies. All are represented on the Monitoring Committee which has been chaired since the beginning by the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality.

**Changed Environment**

- iv. In the period since the Strategy was published, the EU has continued to actively promote gender equality and a number of Commissioners and many Commission and Council of Ministers' documents have emphasised the importance of continuing to address gender equality as a vehicle for economic growth, even during an economic downturn. This has been re-emphasised in the Europe 2020 Strategy which sets an ambitious target for employment for men and women. It has also been a focus of the OECD and most recently has been reiterated in the European Commission's Employment Strategy and the European Council position papers in relation to the economic crisis.
- v. The European Pact for Gender Equality was restated and expanded in 2011, while successive EU Presidency countries have undertaken research and brought Council Conclusions forward on a range of gender equality issues since the National Women's Strategy was published.
- vi. As pointed out in Chapters 1 and 2 of this Review, the economic scenario in Ireland has changed very significantly since the publication of the National Women's Strategy in 2007. This has led to significant curtailment of public expenditure programmes, particularly where these might be regarded as discretionary.
- vii. It has also led to a restructuring of the Irish labour market, with very significant and challenging job losses, impacting particularly, but not exclusively on male employment. This has brought unforeseen challenges for the whole population and a sense of uncertainty into people's lives.

**Conclusions**

- viii. The review of the Strategy conducted by the Gender Equality Division in the Department of Justice and Equality concludes that the National Women's Strategy 2007 – 2016 remains relevant to the current economic and social climates. The reduction of funding for positive actions and for some other services presents a challenge. However the national equality Machinery is still in place and following a review completed in 2010/2011, the Equality Authority will be incorporated into a new human rights and equality body in the near future.
- ix. In this context, it is important to bear in mind that while gender equality is a human right, it is also regarded as an economic imperative by the European Union and the OECD. Accordingly, it will be essential to ensure that the work of the national equality machinery, including the new Body, the Government Department with responsibility for gender equality and all relevant Government

Departments and Agencies continue to focus on the economic benefits to be derived from the achievement of de facto or true gender equality in all fields.

- x. The analysis which follows has considered material submitted by the Departments and Agencies and new research completed by Gender Equality Division where material was accessible on the internet. It also takes account of recommendations and comments made by the social partners including the National Women's Council of Ireland.
- xi. The Programme for the Government of National Recovery also included a number of commitments which link with objectives contained in the National Women's Strategy. The objectives of the Strategy in relation to labour market activation are also pertinent at a time when women have lost their jobs due to the economic downturn. In conclusion, the National Women's Strategy continues to be of relevance at its mid-term and Government Departments and Agencies should continue to deliver the actions which, collectively, will help to achieve the Strategy's vision

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

- xii. Despite this positive overall comment, the analysis of each of the objectives within the Strategy prompted some critical comment and recommendations. The paragraphs which follow present each of the Objectives and actions contained in the National Women's Strategy and the relevant recommendation(s) contained in the Review.

#### **Recommendations by Theme**

#### **THEME 1 - EQUALISING SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN (Chapter 3)**

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

##### **Recommendations**

*The need to increase female labour market engagement to achieve the Europe 2020 goals has already been expressed. Mention has been made of the European Commission's guidance to Member States in relation to the availability of childcare to support working mothers and of the need to review tax disincentives to the labour market engagement of women of working age.*

*It is recommended that work be undertaken in Ireland to increase the availability of affordable childcare to support the labour market attachment of women, particularly those on low incomes.*

*Secondly, there is still a very significant pool of women without dependent children who are not active in the labour market in Ireland. While the Department of Social Protection has taken steps to encourage the labour market activation of lone parents, the majority of whom are female, there have been no significant measures to date to encourage the activation of women who have chosen to remain outside the labour market. Accordingly, it is 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.*

- xiv. **Objective 1-B: To decrease the gender pay gap**

##### **Recommendation**

*The complexity of the gender pay gap requires ongoing consideration of a number of issues, including the level of the minimum wage; 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. Most of these issues are central to all aspects of the labour market engagement of women. It is recommended that work continue to ensure that all of these topics are kept in focus to ensure that Ireland continues to have a comparatively low gender pay gap. It is further recommended that Ireland undertake an initiative to publicise Equal Pay Day.*



xv. **Objective 2; To promote the advancement of women in the labour force**

**Recommendations**

*The analysis suggests that stereotyping still plays a large part in career choices, particularly those made by young women. This is surprising, given the strong focus on gender equality which has been mainstreamed in the Department of Education and Skills and in the schools, as evidenced later in this Review.*

*There is a 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.*

xvi. **Objective 3: To support more women as entrepreneurs**

**Recommendations**

*The actions proposed in the Strategy remain relevant and should continue. Many of the other issues raised 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.*

xvii. **Objective 4: To seek to ensure that girls and women achieve their full potential in the education system**

**Recommendations**

*Gender stereotyping in educational choice has already been mentioned in relation to a number of previous objectives under the National Women's Strategy. It is essential therefore that the Department of Education and Skills and the schools continue to encourage girls to diversify into atypical study fields. This is particularly important for the STEM subjects. Here some creative initiatives might be considered in association with sectoral employers. (A major German chemical firm uses a billboard campaign to encourage young people to study science – such initiatives might be explored among the key employers in the sciences and IT sectors in Ireland as a corporate social responsibility initiative on their part.)*

xviii. **Objective 5A : To ensure that childcare services are optimised to meet the needs of parents and children alike**

**Recommendations**

*The cost of quality childcare remains 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 requires care. This is an ongoing issue and will be central to the activation of mothers, be they recipients of welfare benefits or currently outside of the labour market and the welfare system.*

xix. **Objective 5-B : To ensure that the care infrastructure supports women's socio-economic engagement**

**Recommendations**

*In relation to caring, there is an ongoing need to ensure that women are not expected to engage disproportionately in the provision of unpaid caring. This again requires a re-emphasis of the need to share family responsibilities. There are two further issues related to caring which should be fully developed by the relevant Departments. The first is the reintegration of carers into the labour market when their period of full time caring responsibility has come to an end. The second is the protection of the rights of migrant workers who may come to Ireland to work in the care sector.*

**xx. Objective 6-A: To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty**

**Recommendations**

*Government policy should continue to promote labour market activation as a route out of poverty for women and their families. Such policies also require the availability of adequate childcare support for working mothers, particularly those on low incomes.*

**xxi. Objective 6 – B To reduce the numbers of female lone parents who experience poverty**

**Recommendations**

*As above*

**xxii. Objective 6 – C: To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty by increasing pension cover**

**Recommendations**

*It is 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.*

**THEME 2- ENSURING WOMEN’S WELLBEING (Chapter 4)**

**xxiii. Objective 7: To enhance the work/life balance for women**

**Recommendations**

*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 fathers of these leaves. This could be achieved by legislative means, making the sharing of some leaves mandatory, as is happening to a growing extent in other jurisdictions.*

*Secondly there is a 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.*

*Thirdly, there is a need for awareness raising campaigns to increase the numbers of men engaging in family friendly leave arrangements.*

**xxiv. Objective 8-A ; To improve the health status of women in Ireland through gender focused policies**

**Recommendations**

*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. 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.*

**xxv. Objective 8-B: To improve the physical health status of women in Ireland**

**Recommendations**

*Specific programmes should 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.*

*The development of cardio-vascular 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.*

**xxvi. Objective 8-C: To improve the reproductive and sexual health status of women in Ireland**

**Recommendations**

*This successful programme of work on sexual and reproductive health should continue.*

**xxvii. Objective 8 – D: To improve the mental health status of women in Ireland**

**Recommendations**

*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.*

*Secondly, it is recommended that additional and visible programmes to support perinatal depression be undertaken to support sufferers and to raise awareness of the condition.*

**xxviii. Objective 8-E: To promote healthy life styles for the women in Ireland**

**Recommendations**

*As mentioned previously there is a need to continue awareness raising programmes for women on health issues, particularly in relation to weight, which is a contributory factor to health outcomes.*

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

**Recommendations**

*The Irish Sports Council should ensure that material on its “Women and 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.*

**xxx. Objective 10 : To ensure the health and safety of pregnant and breast feeding women at work**

**Recommendations**

*Work should continue to raise the profile of the issues of health and safety for pregnant and breast-feeding women.*

**xxxi. Objective 11 : To protect women from bullying and harassment in the workplace**

**Recommendations**

*Work should continue to address the issues of bullying and harassment.*

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

**Recommendations**

*It is 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.*

*International covenants including CEDAW and the 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 is 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 at improving data on domestic and sexual violence.*

**xxxiii. Objective 13: To address the issue of trafficking of women and children**

**Recommendations**

*The issue of trafficking has gained further prominence in Ireland and demands the active response which has been made to date. In approaching the issue of prostitution, the matter should be dealt with in a sensitive manner, taking account of the fact that some of the sex workers are young women coming from deprived backgrounds who are vulnerable to exploitation.*

*It is worth mentioning that the recently published Department of Justice and Equality Discussion Document on Future Direction of Prostitution Legislation states:*

*“In devising policy responses, including legislative and enforcement measures, it is also crucial to clearly distinguish between human trafficking for sexual exploitation on the one hand, and prostitution on the other. While the two can sometimes overlap, human trafficking and prostitution are different phenomena requiring distinct policy responses, if each is to be targeted effectively, efficiently and in a manner which reflects the relative gravity of different types of criminal activity”.*

### **THEME 3 – ENGAGING WOMEN AS EQUAL AND ACTIVE CITIZENS (Chapter 5)**

#### **xxxiv. Objective 14: To increase the number of women in decision-making positions in Ireland**

##### **Recommendations**

*As the engagement of women in decision-making roles is one of the real gender equality deficits in Ireland, steps should be taken at every level to ensure that women gain more prominence in decision-making and that the contribution they can make is maximised in order to ensure democratic and balanced decision-making.*

*Accordingly it is recommended that the work of the Sub-Committee of the Monitoring Committee be implemented in full.*

*It is recommended that the Human Rights and Equality Commission, when established, monitors the implementation of the commitment in the Programme for Government that will require “all public bodies to take due note of equality and human rights in carrying out their functions”, paying particular attention to the implementation of a gender equality perspective in this regard.*

#### **xxxv. Objective 15: To increase the number of women engaged in the Arts in Ireland**

##### **Recommendations**

*Steps should be taken to ensure that the Arts Council engages more robustly in the issue of gender equality and the Arts.*

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

##### **Recommendations**

*It is recommended that the material prepared for the Irish Presidency of the EU and subsequent work by the European Institute for Gender Equality be used to spearhead greater activity on the part of the media in Ireland in relation to the portrayal of women and their involvement in decision-making in the sector.*

#### **xxxvii. Objective 17-A: To foster the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals through Irish Aid**

#### **xxxviii. Objective 17-B : To use multi-lateral aid and development policy to promote the role of women and gender equality in developing countries**

#### **xxxix. 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**

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

**Recommendations**

*Irish Aid should continue its programme of activities to address all aspects of gender equality in its programme countries and should continue to exploit its high reputation to ensure appropriate programmes continue at the United Nations and its organisations.*

**IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY (Chapter 6)**

- xli. Objective 18: To implement gender mainstreaming as the principal instrument for the achievement of gender equality in Ireland**

**Recommendations**

*Work on the mainstreaming of gender equality should continue, particularly as a priority following the completion of the Irish Presidency Programme on gender equality.*

*A review of the experience of other countries in relation to gender budgeting would also provide insights into the merits of introducing a gender analysis of the Budget in Ireland.*

- xlii. Objective 19: To provide financial support to implement the National Women's Strategy**

**Recommendation**

*It is recommended that cognisance be taken of the recommendations of the EU with regard to the funding of gender equality initiatives to stimulate economic growth and competitiveness.*

- xliii. Objective 20: To ensure that the National Women's Strategy is fully implemented**

**Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the National Women's Strategy continue to be delivered and monitored as before, given its close linkages with many of the key themes in the Programme for Government.*

*Steps should be taken to proactively promote the understanding of the need for gender disaggregated data among both Government Departments and Agencies and in the Central Statistics Office.*



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. The ten-year National Women's Strategy (NWS), published in 2007, set out over 200 actions which, collectively, were intended to enhance gender equality and work to create “an Ireland where all women would enjoy equality with men and would achieve their full potential, while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life”.
2. Responsibility for implementation of the NWS rests largely with a wide range of Government Departments and State Agencies and progress is overseen by a Monitoring Committee chaired by the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality with the support of Gender Equality Division, Department of Justice and Equality. The Monitoring Committee brings together all the implementing Departments and State Agencies together with the social partners. The social partnership model, together with the Government’s commitments associated with the UN Beijing Platform for Action 1994, had been the catalyst for the preparation of this Strategy.
3. The Secretarial team drawn from the Department of Justice and Equality co-ordinates information on the implementation of the Strategy and prepares an annual Progress Report. This material is complemented by additional research on the external environment and on national and international developments of relevance to the achievement of de facto gender equality. To date, three Progress Reports on the NWS have been presented to Government and published on the Department’s website.
4. The NWS was published in a period of unprecedented economic optimism, with marked population growth, both through natural increase and inward migration, and increased public expenditure, supported by the increased tax revenues. Women had played an important role in that economic growth through increased labour market participation, particularly since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This period of prosperity also led to the achievement of high educational standards, particularly among women. Evidence now shows that, during this period, significant numbers of men ended their education at an early stage to enter skilled or low skill positions in the fast growing construction sector, leaving them vulnerable when the over-heated construction bubble burst.
5. The inclusion of a commitment to undertake a periodic review of the Strategy had not envisaged this dramatic change in the economic environment, which first began to manifest itself in Ireland by mid 2008. This change in the economic environment has since spiralled, both nationally, in EU partner countries and in other major world economies. Its impact on gender equality will be explored in the next chapter and throughout the Report.
6. The NWS remains an important document for the women of Ireland, setting out as it does, the way forward to enhance the role of women in Irish society. Despite the economic downturn, the Annual Progress Reports show that there have been significant developments on most of the actions and very significant progress on some, particularly actions impacting on women’s well-being such as cancer screening and the crimes of violence against women and human trafficking.
7. However, the crucial objective of continuing to strive for de facto or true equality in accordance with the original Strategy remains at the centre of the Strategy and of this Review. Apart from the fundamental human rights perspective to gender equality, the European Union continues to emphasise the important role which gender equality can play in achieving sustainable economic growth and competitiveness and therefore it must remain a national economic and social goal even during the period of the downturn.
8. This Review has been undertaken under the auspices of the NWS Monitoring Committee. The social partners, in particular, were asked to submit views on the implementation of the Strategy to date. Due to a time lapse in completing the work by the Department, the social partners were afforded the opportunity to update their original submissions.

9. In undertaking this Review, the Gender Equality Division has examined the material submitted for the Progress Reports. It is also taking account of the economic environment, recently published statistical data, new legislation both national and international, and recommendations, opinions and other materials published by the multi-lateral organizations, with a particular emphasis on the European Union.
10. Ireland is committed at EU, Council of Europe and UN levels to the principle of equality for women and men. While there may be economic restrictions in place nationally, the work on the implementation of the NWS, to date, shows that the commitments on the Objectives and Actions set out in the NWS remain largely in place. Despite the economic downturn, successive Progress Reports have given evidence of advances in many of the objectives of the NWS, many of which do not require significant investment and may, for example, be about changing attitudes. These will be discussed further in the later chapters of this Report.
11. That said, the changing environment also requires us to take a fresh look at some new areas of activity and to make recommendations for action to address issues which have emerged since the launch of the Strategy in 2007. These issues are identified in the remainder of this Review.

### **Overview of this Report**

12. In the period since the Strategy was published, the EU has continued to actively promote gender equality and many EU Council of Ministers documents have emphasised the importance of continuing to address gender equality as a vehicle for economic growth, even during an economic downturn. These goals are still addressed in a pertinent manner in the National Women's Strategy.
13. The review of the Strategy conducted by the Gender Equality Division in the Department of Justice and Equality concludes that the National Women's Strategy 2007 – 2016 remains relevant to the current economic and social climates. The reduction of funding for positive actions and for some other services presents a challenge. However the national equality Machinery is still in place and following a review completed in 2010/2011, the Equality Authority will be incorporated into a new human rights and equality body in the near future.
14. In this context, it is important to bear in mind that while gender equality is a human right, it is also regarded as an economic imperative by the European Union and the OECD. Accordingly, it will be essential to ensure that the work of the national equality machinery, including the new Body, the Government Department with responsibility for gender equality and all relevant Government Departments and Agencies continue to focus on the economic benefits to be derived from the achievement of de facto or true gender equality in all fields.
15. The analysis which follows has considered material submitted by the Departments and Agencies and new research completed by Gender Equality Division where material was accessible on the internet. It also takes account of recommendations and comments made by the social partners including the National Women's Council of Ireland.
16. The Programme for the Government of National Recovery 2011-2016 also included a number of commitments which link with objectives contained in the National Women's Strategy. The objectives of the Strategy in relation to labour market activation are also pertinent at a time when women have lost their jobs due to the economic downturn. In conclusion, the National Women's Strategy continues to be of relevance at its mid-term and Government Departments and Agencies should continue to deliver the actions which, collectively, will help to achieve the Strategy's vision of
 

*An Ireland where all women enjoy equality with men and can achieve their full potential, while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life.*
17. The review which follows looks first at the environment in which the Strategy has been implemented to date and then looks at progress in relation to each individual objective.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

#### Introduction

18. As mentioned in the last chapter, the economic environment both nationally, at European level, and indeed globally, has altered significantly since the National Women's Strategy (NWS) was published in 2007. This has presented challenges for public service delivery and for policy makers. The European Union continues to prioritise gender equality and women's labour market participation as instruments to drive economic growth. Accordingly, the European Commission has continued to encourage Member States to take proactive steps to foster gender equality and to address the economic engagement of women<sup>1</sup>.

#### The Irish Economy

19. In Ireland, the collapse of the construction sector and the banking crisis have placed huge pressure on all sectors of the economy and led to economic recession which continued throughout 2012. The Irish economy has contracted significantly over the five years since mid 2007 while employment has fallen by some 299,500<sup>2</sup> and the unemployment rate has increased from 4.5 per cent to 15.0 per cent<sup>3</sup>.
20. There are positive signs arising from export growth and inward investment but forecasters do not envisage any significant level of growth for some years. A further austerity Budget is forecast for 2014 as efforts are made to bring public expenditure and the deficit back to EU Stability Pact levels.
21. This economic downturn has been experienced in a number of other EU Member States to varying degrees but the overarching focus of the EU is on the maintenance of a focus on a mix of austerity measures and job creation initiatives to achieve monetary stability and economic growth. This will be achieved, it is argued, through policies such as Europe 2020 and the maintenance of a focus by Member States on gender equality as an instrument to maximise economic output and economic growth through the utilisation of the skills of their well educated female populations.
22. This chapter looks at the overall economic situation in Ireland and also at the wide body of work which has taken place in a European context since the NWS was published.
23. The banking crisis, coupled with the collapse of the domestic construction sector, led to the situation whereby economic output has declined by about 18 per cent in this period. This decline led to a series of austerity budgets which aimed to bring the public finances into balance.
24. However the critical situation with regard to banking and the instability of the financial markets led to a need for external assistance from the EU. The EU's intervention alone proved inadequate to stabilise the money markets and the radically altered economic situation in Ireland has culminated in the EU-IMF deal, the 'Programme for Assistance to Ireland'.
25. A group of experts was engaged by Department of Finance to review all aspects of Government expenditure (the McCarthy Report) and this was followed by further work by the same team. The Government has established a stand alone Government Department to review public expenditure and public sector transformation. As a result, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has conducted reviews of public expenditure to inform budget decisions and each Government Department was instructed in early 2011 to review every public financial commitment, with a view to achieving the levels of budgetary reform required by the EU/IMF Troika.

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<sup>1</sup> Including statements from Commissioners Spidla and Andor at various EPSCO meetings

<sup>2</sup> CSO; QNHS: Q2/2012: Table 1 a

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

26. As a result of these combined austerity measures since 2008, all Government Departments have been forced to reprioritise their programmes. This has resulted in cuts in some social welfare payments, reductions in the numbers working in the public sector and reductions in supports made available to external bodies, including to the community and voluntary sector. There have been cuts in some social services, including in health and in education.
27. In Ireland, unemployment has increased and emigration has resumed. However, within this overall picture, there are nuances. Male unemployment has largely resulted from the decline in the construction sector. Female unemployment has followed a different pattern and shows less of a decline than that for men. The number of women at work had increased by 57 per cent of its 1998 level before the economic downturn and is currently 38 per cent higher than the 1998 level. Male employment on the other hand is now placed at only 2 per cent above the 1998 level.<sup>4</sup>
28. Many women continue to engage in part-time employment rather than full-time work. In some cases, this is by choice as family and caring responsibilities are taken in to account. In some other instances, however, women are engaged in involuntary part-time employment. The number of women working part time has remained almost stable at about 300,000 since 2008 while the number of men working part-time has increased from some 90,000 in 1998 to over 137,000 at the end of 2012.
29. While inward investment is bringing new employment opportunities, these are often high technology positions and do not match the skills set of those who have become unemployed. This had precipitated discussion on the need to strengthen education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), but the outcomes from these initiatives will only have a long term impact.
30. Gender roles within family units are being re-evaluated as the main earner in a couple may now be the female partner. Where the male partner has been made redundant or has become unemployed, the male partner may become the stay-at-home parent as the female partner continues in or enters employment and childcare costs are often not sustainable in families on a single income.
31. The overall impact of the downturn on men, on women and on families has led to increased personal stress. This can impact more on women where they have either become the sole breadwinner in the family unit; have lost their own income; or where incomes are reduced due to increased personal taxation, coupled in many instances with enforced shorter hours of employment. The lack of certainty about the length of the austerity period is also having a negative impact on personal consumption, which in itself is contributing to the slowness of the recovery.

## **International Developments**

### **European Union**

32. The European Union continues to place considerable emphasis on gender equality and the important economic contribution which women can make through their active participation in the labour market. The focus is threefold – women as human capital, women’s role in enhancing social inclusion for their families through their labour market participation and the need for women to ensure that they do not fall personally into poverty in old age due to their having inadequate pension cover.

### **Europe 2020**

33. The Europe 2020 Strategy was agreed in 2010 and its goal is to ensure that the EU develops as a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. The Strategy sets five ambitious objectives on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate change and energy to be reached by 2020. The *Europe 2020 Strategy* promotes inclusive growth and the need for increased economic engagement of women, noting that:

*"Inclusive growth means empowering people through high levels of employment, investing in skills, fighting poverty and modernising labour markets, training and social protection systems so as to help people anticipate and manage change and build a cohesive society..."*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid: Based on statistical analysis of Eurostat Europe 2020 data

*Europe needs to make full use of its labour potential to face the challenges of an ageing population and rising global competition, policies to promote gender equality will be needed to increase labour force participation thus adding to growth and social inclusion".*

34. The need to develop the EU economy stems, in part, from the significant growth in competitor economies. To set this in context, it is worth noting that the number of women in the labour force in the high growth economies of the BRICs<sup>5</sup> has increased by over 60 million in the period 2000 to 2009, an increase of 12 per cent while the equivalent increase in the EU appears to be only 8 per cent. Over 70 per cent of women in the USA and nearly 75 per cent of women in China are active in the labour market, presenting a challenge to European output levels and competitiveness. The current employment rate for women in the EU is 62.3 per cent, while the comparative statistic for Ireland is now 59.7 per cent for the age group 20 to 64 years, having peaked at 64.1 per cent before the downturn in Ireland (and the ongoing rise in our baseline population).<sup>6</sup>

35. The European Commission has specifically addressed this issue in its Annual Growth Review<sup>7</sup> published in early 2012 and again in 2012. The Annual Growth Survey now calls on Member States to look again at the barriers to women's labour market engagement, specifically recommending that

*Tax benefit systems. Flexible work arrangements and childcare facilities should be geared to facilitating the participation of second earners in the work force.*

36. The Commission develops this theme in the annexe to the same document by stating that

*There is a clear need to foster women's greater involvement in the labour market. The overall employment rate of women is still only 62.4 per cent. Inadequate fiscal treatment of second earners (higher effective taxes for married women than for single earners is seen in some countries as an obstacle impeding continued female participation in or returning to the labour market.*

37. To achieve the goals of Europe 2020, Member States are required to prepare their National Reform Programmes (NRP) to address the key aims of the Strategy, which, in respect of gender equality and women, includes:

- Achieving an employment rate of 75 per cent for men and for women, aged 20-64, by 2020;
- Increasing the numbers of women in scientific research;
- Increasing the numbers of women in managerial positions in scientific research.

38. As a Programme country<sup>8</sup>, Ireland is not required to submit a separate NRP for 2012, given that the rigorous reporting carried out under the lending Programme meets the reporting requirements for NRPs. However, the Irish Government decided to submit an NRP update<sup>9</sup> in April 2012, along with our Stability Programme Update. The NRP update provides a review of progress made under the five headline targets, namely Employment, Research and Development, Climate Change, Education and Poverty. The NRP update lists as one of its key measures in the area of Employment

*"The challenge of targeting cost-effective activation programmes to those most at risk of losing contact with the labour market and drifting into long-term unemployment, and of increasing labour market participation of those cohorts with lower than average participation rates, including lone parents and people on illness/disability payments, and to reintegrate into the labour market the group of women who have interrupted their careers for child rearing".*

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<sup>5</sup> Brazil, Russian Federation, India and China

<sup>6</sup> Eurostat: EU 2020 Indicators: Employment rate for women aged 20 to 64

<sup>7</sup> European Commission: DG Emploi: Annual Growth Survey 2011

<sup>8</sup> Subject to a Memorandum of Understanding with the EU IMF ECB Troika

<sup>9</sup> National Reform Programme for Ireland 2012 Update under the Europe 2020 Strategy

39. With a view to the future, consideration is also being taken nationally of the commentaries of the European authorities in relation to other Member States.

#### **EU Strategies for Gender Equality**

40. The European Commission's *Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015* continues to focus on the five key points as set out in the previous *Strategy A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010*. These are equal economic independence; equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; equality in decision-making; dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence; and gender equality in external actions. The Strategy also deals with a number of horizontal issues.
41. The EU Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020 was adopted at the EPSCO Council in March 2011. This document builds on the previous European Pact for Gender Equality, adopted by the European Council<sup>10</sup> in March 2006. The new Pact states that a new impetus is needed five years after the adoption of the first Pact, particularly to reaffirm and support the close link between the EU Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 and Europe 2020. The new Pact reaffirms the EU's commitments (and therefore Member States' commitments) to closing gender gaps in employment, education and social protection, promoting better work-life balance for women and men and combating all forms of violence against women. It urges action by Member States and the Union, by taking measures to :
- eliminate gender stereotypes, ensure equal pay for equal work and promote the equal participation of women in decision-making;
  - improve the supply of affordable and high-quality childcare services and promote flexible working arrangements;
  - strengthen the prevention of violence against women and the protection of victims, and focus on the role of men and boys in order to eradicate violence.

It also reaffirms the importance of integrating a gender perspective into all policies including external actions of the EU.

#### **Council of Europe**

42. The Council of Europe continues to focus on equality between women and men and has produced a New Resolution on de facto gender equality. One of the main threads running through the activities of the Council of Europe to promote the cause of women is the principle that there can be no lasting solution to the social, economic and political problems of society unless women are fully involved in the process. The Council of Europe has completed a new Convention on Violence against Women (CaHVIO or the Istanbul Convention). Its signature and ratification is currently under consideration in CoE Member States (including Ireland.)
43. The Council of Europe has undergone a restructuring process during 2011 and the existing Steering Committee on Gender Equality (CDEG) has been replaced by a Gender Equality Commission (GEC), with a membership of just 16 Member States. Ireland has been elected to this new Commission. The new structure will concentrate on the implementation of existing resolutions and action plans and on the standards established by the Committee of Ministers and the CDEG in 2007.

#### **United Nations**

44. The achievements of the United Nations Beijing Platform for Action are addressed annually at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). A review of the progress that has been made by the EU Member States in relation to the UN critical areas of concern was carried out in 2010 in the context of the fifteen year review. In the same year, the CSW, and subsequently the annual gathering of UN/ECOSOC<sup>11</sup>, adopted a detailed resolution on the economic empowerment of women. Other recent work themes at CSW included violence against women and education with a special emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The theme for 2012 was Rural Women and it was not possible to gain agreement on "Agreed Conclusions" on this topic, due to the non-negotiable positions taken by some States.

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<sup>10</sup> Council of Prime Ministers

<sup>11</sup> ECOSOC is the United Nations organisation facilitating international cooperation on standards-making and problem-solving in economic and social issues.

### International Labour Organisation

45. Within the International Labour Organisation<sup>12</sup> (ILO), the Bureau for Gender Equality supports and advises constituents and Office staff at headquarters and in the field on matters concerned with promoting and advocating for gender equality in the world of work. It also manages an extensive knowledge base on gender issues, conducts ILO Participatory Audits, and has a Gender Helpdesk which responds to queries to help strengthen the capacity of staff and constituents to address questions of equality in their work. The Bureau also coordinates the global ILO Gender Network, which brings together gender specialists and gender focal points at headquarters and in the field offices.
46. The ILO *Action Plan for Gender Equality* operationalises the 1999 ILO policy on gender equality<sup>13</sup> which identified gender mainstreaming as the strategy to promote equality between women and men. The Action Plan also facilitates 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>14</sup>.
47. The overriding themes emerging from both the international and national economic environment is that there is an ongoing need to maintain a tight focus on the labour market engagement of women and on the advancement of women to maximise their contribution to ensure that they and the State both derive full benefit from their academic achievements, while also contributing fully to the democratic process.

### Social context in Ireland

48. The economic downturn has brought significant social costs. Social transfers had increased significantly during the boom years. Eurostat data show that social protection expenditure measured in Purchasing Power Parities in Ireland increased by 28 per cent from 2003 to 2007, and by a further 41 per cent to 2011, the most recent year for which data are available, compared with EU wide increase of just under 12 per cent in the more recent period. Irish expenditure in 2011 was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in Europe<sup>15</sup>. However, it is also 21 per cent per inhabitant above the EU average. This reflects the significantly high levels of increase in social welfare transfers in Ireland which had been facilitated by the increases in taxation receipts during the then unrecognised economic bubble.
49. The most recent data available on poverty levels in Ireland relate to 2011, and therefore do not fully reflect the ongoing impact of the economic downturn. As the table below shows, the percentage of women and girls in consistent poverty increased for all age groups in 2009 and while sex-disaggregated data is less complete for 2010, the consistent poverty rate for women has increased from 5.4 per cent in 2009 to 6.6 per cent in 2010. This is likely to reflect the significant numbers of female recipients of the One Parent Family payment and other social welfare payments.

RATE FOR PERSONS IN CONSISTENT POVERTY BY AGE AND SEX 2008 TO 2011

Age Group	2008			2010			2011		
	M	F	ALL	M	F	ALL	M	F	ALL
0 to 15 yrs (0 to 17 yrs for 2010 et seq)	5.5	6.8	6.1			8.8			9.3
15 to 64 yrs (18 - 64 yrs for 2010 et seq)	3.8	4.3	4.1			6.2			6.8
65 years and over	1.7	1.1	1.4			0.9			1.9
TOTAL	4.0	4.4	4.2	5.9	6.6	6.2	6.9	6.9	6.2

Source : CSO/EuroSILC

### Population increase

<sup>12</sup> The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the 'tripartite' United Nations agency that brings together representatives of governments, employers and unions to jointly shape policies and programmes promoting 'Decent Work for All'. The ILO was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. Since its foundation in 1919, the ILO has been committed to promoting the rights of all women and men at work and achieving equality between them.

<sup>13</sup> Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the International Labour Office, ILO, 1999

<sup>14</sup> Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work, ILC 98<sup>th</sup> Session, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Eurostat database on social protection : Expenditure on social protection per inhabitant in ppps per inhabitant

50. Results from Census 2011 show a very significant increase in the population in the period since the last Census and since the NWS was published. This is associated in part with a particularly high birth rate in recent years but also with sustained immigration.

**POPULATION (NUMBER) BY SEX AND CENSUS YEAR**

	2006	2011	% Increase
<b>Both sexes</b>	4,239,848	4,588,252	8.2
<b>Male</b>	2,121,171	2,272,699	7.1
<b>Female</b>	2,118,677	2,315,553	9.3
<b>Women as % of Total</b>	49.97	50.47	

Source : CSO 2012

51. The Census results show a population increase of 8.2 per cent during the inter-censal period. As the table above shows, this includes an increase of almost 200,000 women and of about 150,000 men. The CSO estimates that this includes a natural increase of almost 109,000 females, with the balance of 85,000 coming from net female migration. Net male migration is much lower at about 33,500 over the five year period. This overall natural increase creates pressure on social services, including child benefit and education and increases the dependency ratio for the Irish population. The birth rate and fertility rates in Ireland are among the highest in the European Union.
52. The next table looks at the international mix of women now living in Ireland and compares it with the results in the 2006 census.

**PLACE OF BIRTH OF WOMEN LIVING IN IRELAND IN CENSUSES 2006 AND 2011**

Place of birth	2006	Location as % of total	Country group as % of total	2011	Location as % of total	Country group as % of total
<b>Ireland</b>	1,792,524	85.9%	85.9%	1,895,855	83.1%	83.1%
<b>of which living in county of birth</b>	1,332,540	74.3%		1,393,841	73.5%	
<b>of which living in another county</b>	459,984	25.7%		502,014	26.5%	
<b>Born in another country</b>	294,297	14.1%		386,001	16.9%	
<b>United Kingdom</b>	129,273		6.2%	137,170		6.0%
<b>Other EU</b>	79,465		3.8%	142,603		6.2%
<b>Other non-EU European</b>	12,811		0.6%	11,306		0.5%
<b>Africa</b>	21,117		1.0%	27,074		1.2%
<b>Asia</b>	26,555		1.3%	38,574		1.7%
<b>America</b>	20,140		1.0%	25,292		1.1%
<b>Asustralia and New Zealand</b>	4,493		0.2%	3,982		0.2%
<b>Other</b>	443		0.0%			
<b>TOTAL</b>	2,086,821	100.00%	100.0%	2,281,856	100.00%	100.0%

Source CSO : Derived from Socio Economic Statistics Table 18

53. The first statistic of note is that of internal migration for women born in Ireland. This has increased from 25.7 per cent of women in 2006 to 26.5 per cent of women in 2011.
54. The number of women born outside Ireland and living here increased significantly during the inter-censal period, with an overall increase of 92,000 among migrant women, just short of the increase of 103,000 in Irish born women in the same period. As a result, women (including girl children) born overseas now account for over one in six of all girls and women living in Ireland.

55. The most significant increase, in terms of countries of origin groupings, is the European Union, particularly the group of countries excluding the UK. The individual countries of birth which are most significant among recent migrants to Ireland are Poland (from 22,900 in 2006 to over 55,500 in 2011); Lithuania (from 10,800 in 2006 to 18,240 in 2011) and Latvia (from 6,400 to over 11,100 in 2011). With the exception of the USA (and UK countries) no other country exceeds 10,000.
56. This internationalisation requires us to ensure that the NWS meets the requirements of a more disparate population in the future and this should be a key focus of the next National Women's Strategy.





## CHAPTER 3

### THEME 1 EQUALISING SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

#### Introduction

57. This theme links economic engagement with a number of factors which impact upon female labour market participation including education and the availability of childcare to support working mothers, while economic engagement of women is also seen as a route away from poverty and social isolation.
58. As mentioned in the introductory chapters, this theme is also a key focus of the European Union's economic policy and, as such, must remain a key priority for national economic policy.

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

ACTIONS	
1.	Mainstream and actively promote the FÁS "Expanding the Workforce" Process
2.	Strengthen other initiatives which offer supports to enable women to return to the labour market
3.	Undertake survey with a view to developing Action Plan to encourage lone parents to avail of training and re-enter the labour market

59. This objective was first set at a time when Ireland was close to full employment with an unemployment rate of only 4.8 per cent for men and 4.0 per cent for women. The most significant pool of untapped labour was about 280,000 married women of working age who were not attached to the labour market. The economic downturn has altered the employment situation radically as has the new focus on increasing employment Europe wide as contained in Europe 2020.
60. Back in the 2000s, the European Union was working towards a target of an employment rate of 60 per cent for women (aged 15 to 64 years) by 2010. At the time of publication of the NWS, Ireland had just exceeded this Lisbon target at 60.7 per cent but the increase in the base line population and the fall off in female employment due to the recession has resulted in a female employment rate of only 55.4 per cent in Quarter (Q) 2/2012. In absolute terms, the number of women aged 15 to 64 years in employment fell from 881,700 in Q1/2007 to 836,500 in Q2/2012.
61. The numbers of women who are unemployed has increased from 37,600 in Q1/2007 to 102,400 by Q2/2012. It is worth noting that the comparable data for men are 60,500 unemployed males in 2007 increasing to 206,100 in Q2/2012. These data only relate to those who are unemployed and living in Ireland and do not include those who have emigrated to seek work.
62. The Europe 2020 Strategy sets a new EU headline target for employment which, unlike the earlier Lisbon Strategy, does not differentiate targets for male and female employment. The Europe 2020 employment target aims to achieve a rate of 75 per cent for men and women aged 20 to 64 years<sup>16</sup> by 2020. The EU Member States were expected to translate the overall EU-level target into a national employment rate target reflecting their different situations and circumstances. Ireland's national employment rate target range is included in the 2011 National Reform Programme and undertakes

*"to raise to 69-71% the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64, including through the greater participation of young people, older workers and low-skilled workers, and the better integration of legal migrants, and to review the target level of ambition in 2014, in the context of a proposed mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy"...*

<sup>16</sup> Note that there is a change in the age group under consideration from the preceding Lisbon Target

**EUROPE 2020 EMPLOYMENT RATE FOR PERSONS AGE 20 to 64 YEARS BY SEX**

	2007			2012		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
<b>Ireland</b>	83.0	64.4	73.8	68.1	59.4	63.7
<b>EU 27 Average</b>	77.8	62.2	70.0	74.6	62.4	68.5
<b>EU Target for 2020</b>						<b>75.0</b>

Source : Eurostat: Europe 2020 Indicators

**Female Employment in Ireland and the Europe 2020 Strategy**

63. As the table above clearly shows, Ireland has moved from being over 3 percentage points ahead of the EU average employment rate in 2007 to a position where the overall employment rate has fallen to 63.7 per cent and is now nearly 5 per cent behind the EU average. While most Member States chose a point target, Ireland, together with Austria, Cyprus and Italy, adopted a target range of 69-71 per cent for the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 to be achieved by 2020, coupled with the intention to review this target in 2014. The employment rate target range chosen by Ireland encompasses both a realistic base target (69 per cent) and a policy ambition to improve beyond the base by two per cent. It is estimated that Ireland has the productive capacity in its labour supply (underpinned by long-term increases in educational attainment and greater female participation) to make a positive impact on the employment rate in the short-term. This will necessitate the activation of the large pool of women currently outside the labour market as well as the reengagement of those who have been affected by the employment slump.
64. The next table looks at the age profile of men and women who are actually in employment, It excludes the under 20 year olds (which are included in some of the other tables).

**NUMBERS OF MEN AND WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT BY AGE GROUP AND SEX: 2007 AND 2012**

Age range	2007			2012		
	Male	Female	Women as % of Total	Male	Female	Women as % of Total
20 - 24 yrs	133.30	120.00	47.4%	49.30	57.10	53.7%
25 - 44 yrs	637.10	497.70	43.9%	508.30	472.80	48.2%
45 - 54 yrs	231.70	173.80	42.9%	216.90	179.00	45.2%
<b>55 years and over</b>	179.60	92.70	34.0%	165.00	115.00	41.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,181.70	884.20	42.8%	939.50	823.90	46.7%

Source: QNHS Q2/2012

65. The table again shows the very significant impact of the economic downturn on male employment, which has declined by over 240,000 since the NWS was published, Women's employment has only fallen by some 60,000. As a result women now comprise 46.7 of those aged 20 and above in employment, compared to 42.8 per cent five years ago.
66. The table above also shows some interesting statistical trends in relation to the employment of the different age groups. The economic downturn has impacted so badly on young men that women now make up nearly 54 per cent of those aged between 20 and 24 years who are in employment. While there has been a drop in the number of women in the age group 25 to 44 years in employment, both of the older age groupings register an increase in the absolute numbers of women in employment, contrary to the prevailing trend.

67. It is particularly interesting to note the increase of nearly 23,000 in the numbers of women aged 55 and over in the workforce. It is not possible to determine the extent to which this reflects the upward trend in labour market participation or new entrants to the labour market. However, the engagement and retention of older persons especially women in the labour market is now receiving attention among policy-makers in the European Union/Commission.
68. The next two tables quantify the numbers who are employed and unemployed at present<sup>17</sup>. In this regard, the statistics are again reverting to the age grouping 15 to 64 which are the data set published by the CSO at present. They also offer the opportunity to look at developments since 2007.

**MEN AND WOMEN AT WORK IN IRELAND BY SEX AND ATTACHMENT LEVEL 2007 AND 2012**

	2007			2012		
	Male	Female	Women as % of Total	Male	Female	Women as % of Total
<b>Full-time</b>	1121.2	613.0	35.3%	820.7	543.5	39.8%
<b>Part-time</b>	85.4	294.2	77.5%	130.6	293.0	69.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	1206.6	907.2	42.9%	951.3	836.5	46.8%

Source: QNHS Q2/2012

69. The table above shows that the impact of the economic downturn has been greater on male employment with a drop of 255,300 in the number of men at work, compared with a drop of 70,700 for women. As a result, women now comprise 46.8 per cent of the working population, although about 35 per cent of women work part time. The next table looks at the numbers who are unemployed.

**MEN AND WOMEN UNEMPLOYED IN IRELAND BY SEX AND DESIRED WORK ATTACHMENT LEVEL 2007 AND 2012**

Seeking To work...	2007			2012		
	Male	Female	Women as % of Total	Male	Female	Women as % of Total
<b>Full-time</b>	57.0	26.3	31.6%	199.2	80.7	28.8%
<b>Part-time</b>	3.8	15.9	80.7%	6.9	21.8	76.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	60.8	42.2	41.0%	206.1	102.5	33.2%

Source: QNHS Q2/2012

70. The numbers of unemployed men in Ireland are now registered by the QNHS at 206,100, an increase of 145,300 when compared with the 2007 statistics. Almost all are seeking full-time employment. A total of 102,500 women were unemployed and seeking work in Q2/2012, with over three quarters seeking full-time employment. The fact that the numbers of men in particular who are registered as unemployed are much lower than the absolute decrease in the numbers of men at work referred to above reflects the high numbers of men who have emigrated since the economic downturn. Recent CSO statistics suggest that this outflow of men includes both foreign nationals and a significant number of Irish nationals.

<sup>17</sup> Persons aged 15 and over, while previous table refers to those aged 20 and over

71. These statistics all point to the importance of initiatives to increase labour market participation of both men and women. The loss of 150,000 jobs in the over-heated construction sector presents a challenge to Ireland's achievement of the Europe 2020 target. It is essential that steps are taken to ensure that young people, both male and female, are adequately educated/skilled to meet the needs of a modern technologically focused economy before entering the labour market. It also appears to be essential, if Ireland is to achieve its reduced Europe 2020 target that women are actively encouraged to remain in, or to return to, the labour market.

#### **EU Policies on Employment**

72. The views of the European Commission on the two income family model considered necessary to achieve economic growth coincide with opinions promulgated by the OECD. Accordingly, this objective of the NWS to increase female labour market participation is pertinent and important and must be a focus of ongoing Government policy. In this regard it is worth noting that research presented during the Swedish Presidency of the EU in 2009 estimated that there would be an increase of 27 per cent in European GDP if women were to engage in the labour market to the same extent as men. More recent work from the OECD<sup>18</sup> reiterates the capacity to achieve significant economic growth if the levels of attachment of women to the labour market were strengthened.

#### **Incentivising Female Employment**

73. Notice should be taken of the European Commission's views on disincentives to female labour market participation, such as taxation and social benefits, and to the Commission's views that greater sharing of family responsibilities is essential to maximise the contribution which women can make to economic growth in Europe. While central to family support and well-being, the current package of social benefits available to the unemployed may, in some instances, act as a disincentive to employment and needs careful examination.
74. The most significant increase in female employment over the past ten years has been in the public sector, including the education and health sectors. Cuts in public expenditure due to the economic downturn are expected to have an effect on employment in the public sector with its feminised workforce and therefore such cuts will most likely affect proportionately more women. With the anticipated decrease in employment in the public sector, increases in employment will need to come from the private sector.
75. Evidence suggests that there are significant vacancies at present in both the high technology sectors and also in the caring sector, this latter being highly feminised but also offering irregular working hours, which may be suitable for women who do not have childcare needs. The need for increased flexibility in regard to working arrangements in the private sector will be dealt with later in this review.
76. Revisions to the social welfare treatment of lone parents will bring some of this group of women back in to the labour market as their eligibility for the One Parent Family Payment (OPFP) will cease when the youngest child reaches 7 years, instead of 18 years, or 22 years if in full-time education, which applied previously.
77. In the past, income support for people of working age, including lone parents, has been passive in nature, with little systematic engagement by the State with the customer. Policy development in this regard is now changing. Long-term welfare dependency and passive income support to people of working age are considered to not be in the best interests of the recipient, of their children or of society. Lone parent families continue to experience higher rates of 'consistent poverty' in comparison to the population generally.
- EU-SILC figures published in 2012 show that, in 2011, 16.4 per cent of lone parents in Ireland were experiencing 'consistent poverty'.
  - This compared to 6.9 per cent of two-parent households and also to 6.9 per cent of the population as a whole.

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<sup>18</sup> OECD: 2012: Gender Equality in employment, education and entrepreneurship: May 2012

- This implies that the long-term income that the OPFP scheme provided to lone parents up to 2011, until children were aged 18, or 22 if in full-time education, may not be effective in addressing the poverty and social exclusion experienced by some of these families.
78. The best route out of poverty and social exclusion is through paid employment. Work, and especially full-time work, may not be an option for parents of young children. However, supporting parents to participate in the labour market, once their children have reached an appropriate age, will improve both their own economic situation and the social well-being of themselves and their families.
79. The OPFP has played an important role in providing income support to lone parents. Total expenditure in 2012 is estimated at €1.06 billion. Changes have been made to the payment since its introduction in 1991, reflecting the changes taking place in society, the labour market and the expectations and realities of parents' lives, and particularly of mothers, in terms of work and care. The current reforms to the scheme continue that change.
80. Overall, the reforms that are taking place aim to:
- prevent long-term dependence on social welfare support and facilitate financial independence among parents;
  - recognise parental choice with regard to the care of young children, but with the expectation that parents will not remain outside of the labour force indefinitely; and
  - include an expectation of participation in education, training and employment initiatives, with the appropriate social welfare supports being provided in this regard.
81. The reforms to the OPFP scheme also bring Ireland's support for lone parents more in line with international provisions, where there is a general movement away from long-term and passive income support.
82. Women may also become the sole earner in a household, where a partner has been made redundant or become unemployed. Where the woman's income had previously been secondary to the man's income, it has now become the only income to the household. In the current climate, where both partners are unemployed, it is often the woman who is more likely to find employment.

#### **Equality for Women Measure**

83. The Equality for Women Measure disburses up to €2 million on assistance including a 50 per cent contribution of ESF funding each year to projects which target women from disadvantaged communities and offer developmental training to enable them to progress to employment or to mainstream education or training. The initial results from the first two phases of about 35 projects, each of which received up to two successive grants of €30,000, were quite positive with significant numbers of women coming from migrant and Traveller communities and with good progression rates. A further phase of the Measure increased the funding offered to each project to €50,000, again with the same level of ESF support, drawn from the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme. The achievements of the Measure to date are examined further in Chapter 6.

#### **Recommendations**

*The need to increase female labour market engagement to achieve the Europe 2020 goals has already been expressed. Mention has been made of the European Commission's guidance to Member States in relation to the availability of childcare to support working mothers and of the need to review tax disincentives to the labour market engagement of women of working age.*

*It is recommended that work be undertaken in Ireland to increase the availability of affordable childcare to support the labour market attachment of women, particularly those on low incomes.*

*Secondly, there is still a very significant pool of women without dependent children who are not active in the labour market in Ireland. While the Department of Social Protection has taken steps to encourage the labour market activation of lone parents, the majority of whom are female, there have been no significant measures to date to encourage the activation of women who have chosen to remain outside the labour market. Accordingly, it is 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.*

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

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
4.	Implement recommendations in PPF Partnership Report on Male/Female Wage Differentials
5.	Continue work of National Framework Committee on Equal Opportunities at the Level of the Enterprise to address gender pay gap
6.	Introduce statutory employment records which may facilitate research
7.	Ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of the National Minimum Wage
8.	Continue to review the National Minimum Wage as appropriate in conjunction with Social Partners
9.	Undertake research into international good practice in relation to equality proofing at the level of the enterprise
10.	Extend the programme of Equality Audits to consider and report on the gender pay gap
11.	Consider the establishment of a voluntary “quality mark” to show commitment on the part of the employer to equality issues, including gender equality

84. Statistical evidence shows that there has been a narrowing of the gender pay gap in Ireland in recent years, but it is difficult as yet to identify whether this results from changes in one or more of the causal factors. Originally estimated at 21.7 per cent in 2003, more recent statistical models now give a gap of 15.8 per cent in 2003, and this has now narrowed to 12.6 per cent (2010)<sup>19</sup>, although CSO data suggest that it was as low as 10.7 per cent in the economic boom period of 2007.
85. Furthermore, as was previously noted in the NWS, there remain significant differences in the gender pay gap between economic sectors. More recent statistics also show that female part time workers earn more than their male counterparts. The influence of the minimum wage is also important. This complexity is also further enforced in international research where, at present, the EU countries with the lowest gender pay gap are those with the lowest female attachment to the labour market.

**The Minimum Wage**

86. The impact of the minimum wage is likely to have been important for women in Ireland and may well be a contributory factor to the reduction. As in most countries, low paid employments are usually undertaken by women. Recent statistics from the CSO<sup>20</sup> show that 8 per cent of men earn under €10 per hour, while a further 47 per cent earn between €10 and €20 per hour. On the other hand 12 per cent of women earn under €10 and a further 51 per cent earn between €10 and €20 per hour. Accordingly, only 55 per cent of men earn less than €20 per hour compared to 63 per cent of women. At the other end, 6 per cent of men and only 3 per cent of women earn over €50 per hour.
87. The National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) undertakes inspections under the National Minimum Wage Act. In 2011, NERA concluded 1,169 cases under the National Minimum Wage Act and reports compliance in 51 per cent of cases while the following year, it undertook 1,316 inspections under this legislation and again found a compliance rate of 51 per cent. However, it points out that breaches in compliance largely relate to record keeping and that 85 per cent of those inspected were compliant with the minimum rate of pay. Where there is evidence that employees have been paid less than their statutory minimum requirement, the employer is requested to rectify the matter by paying the employee the correct rate in the future and making good previous underpayments. In 2011, NERA recovered €268,234 in unpaid wages and in 2012 it recovered €323,176.
88. In addition to agreements such as the National Minimum Wage, some employees in Ireland are covered by other agreements regarding their employment. These agreements deal with the pay and working conditions of the employees concerned and may be included in an employee’s contract of

<sup>19</sup> European Commission Annual Report on Equality between Women and Men: April 2012

<sup>20</sup> CSO: National Employment Survey 2008 and 2009, published 2011

employment. The various agreements on pay and conditions made by Joint Labour Committees (JLCs) are known as Employment Regulation Orders (ERO's). The Labour Court made an ERO confirming proposals submitted by a JLC. This Order was legally binding. Following a High Court decision, all EROs ceased to have statutory effect from 7<sup>th</sup> July 2011. Some of the JLC sectors of employment covered by EROs include: catering; contract cleaning; hairdressing; hotels; and retail, grocery and allied trades. These sectors would have a high concentration of female employment. Following the High Court decision described above, NERA cannot enforce EROs that were in force on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

89. The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2012 reforming the Joint Labour Committees and Registered Employment Agreements (REAs) wage-setting mechanisms came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012. The Act's provisions include:
- JLCs will have the power to set a basic adult rate and two additional higher rates;
  - Companies may seek exemption from paying ERO and ERA rates due to financial difficulty;
  - JLCs will no longer set Sunday premium rates. A new Code of Practice on Sunday working is to be prepared by the Labour Relations Commission; and
  - When setting rates JLCs will have to take into account factors such as competitiveness and rates of employment and unemployment.
90. The impact of the gender pay gap on the life time earnings of women is self-evident. There is one unexpected feature of the Irish experience of the gender pay gap however, in that female part time workers earn more than their male counterparts. There are also significant differences in the gender pay gap for people working in certain roles and these will be referred to again later in this report.
91. The Gender Pay Gap remains a very complex but important issue for women's economic independence. It also affects women's pensions and impinges on women's risk of poverty in old age. Much has been written about the causes of the gender pay gap.

#### **EU Policies on the Gender Pay Gap**

92. This topic is equally important to the EU and is specifically identified in the "Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015" where one of the five key priorities which have been identified is "Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value". Indeed equal pay has been enshrined in the Treaties since 1958 and was adopted in Ireland shortly after our accession to the EU. The key actions of the EU Commission on this topic, according to the EU Strategy, will be to explore ways to improve the transparency of pay as well as the impact of part-time work and fixed term contracts on pay equality, to support equal pay initiatives in the workplace, to institute a European Equal Pay Day and to encourage women to enter non-traditional professions.
93. Most Member States have taken steps to publicise Equal Pay Day and it is strongly recommended that this be done in Ireland. While current EU statistics on the gender pay gap show that, at 12.6 per cent, Ireland is better than the EU average, these data exclude the public sector where officers of equal grade enjoy equal pay but where the prevalence of men in the more senior grades such as the health services and the academic world mean that the average gender pay gap in these sectors is wide.
94. In Ireland, it had been assumed that the enhanced education of women, increased female engagement in the labour market and the wider availability of childcare services would all lead to a reduction in the gender pay gap. International research also suggests that other issues which affect the gender wage gap include: time taken away from the workforce, generally by women, for childrearing and for other family responsibilities; horizontal and vertical labour market segregation; reconciliation of work, family and private life; the lack of pay transparency; and the impact of gender stereotypes.
95. Research undertaken by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) on the basis of the 2003 Employment Survey and published in 2009 found evidence that the length of labour market experience outweighed higher educational attainment by women in impacting on the gender pay gap in Ireland. It also found that, in all economic sectors, married men earned more than women

or their single counterparts. Female earnings were higher in foreign firms and also in companies with centralised wage bargaining. (In this regard, women are now more likely than men to be employed in unionised businesses and outnumber men in union membership.)

96. The EU addressed this issue during the Belgian EU Presidency in the second half of 2010. Council Conclusions on 'strengthening the commitment and stepping up action to close the gender pay gap, and on the review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action' were adopted in December 2010. Member States are encouraged to use the updated indicators to track the gender pay gap.
97. The Commission's current gender equality strategy also targets the gender pay gap. A recent conference organised by the Commission heard evidence of the changes which were taking place in the UK in relation to outlawing "salary silence" clauses in employment contracts which is already leading to a greater understanding of the differences in the full payment package paid to men and women as a result of performance related pay. In all instances, evidence shows that women receive lower remuneration where individualised pay applies.

**Other factors**

98. It is likely that in Ireland many factors contribute to the continuing gender pay gap including the prevalence of individualised pay bargaining in the private sector together with strict confidentiality clauses. Evidence gathered some time ago suggests that occupations where there are more transparent pay scales and union assisted pay bargaining there tends to be a narrower gender pay gap. A number of EU Member States have piloted an awareness raising tool developed by the Federal Government in Switzerland and this is worthy of consideration. The Equality Authority has made ESF funding available to IBEC to enable it to develop a gender pay audit tool which will enable employers to determine whether there are gender pay issues in their companies.
99. As mentioned previously, the amount of time which women spend away from the labour market on caring duties is also regarded as a significant contributory factor in relation to the gender pay gap. In Ireland maternity leave, although not fully paid in all instances, is among the most generous in Europe in terms of length. It may be complemented by the option of a period of unpaid leave. There are no incentives for men to participate in the sharing of family related leave and this is very uncommon. The European Union sends significant messages through Council Conclusions and policy documents in relation to the importance of this issue for the future economic stability of Europe. Accordingly it is an issue which must be dealt with in a proactive manner if attitudes in relation to the sharing of family leaves are to be changed and real progress made in this regard in Ireland.

**Recommendation**

*The complexity of the gender pay gap requires ongoing consideration of a number of issues, including the level of the minimum wage; 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. Most of these issues are central to all aspects of the labour market engagement of women. It is recommended that work continue to ensure that all of these topics are kept in focus to ensure that Ireland continues to have a comparatively low gender pay gap.*

*It is further recommended that Ireland undertake an initiative to publicise Equal Pay Day.*

**Objective 2: To promote the advancement of women in the labour force**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
12.	Expand the range of apprenticeships and, where appropriate, transformation of traineeships into apprenticeships
13.	Develop guidance materials for the preparation of comprehensive gender equality policies in the workplace
14.	Develop initiatives to open debate on, and engage with, planned and systematic approaches to workplace equality
15.	Introduce new projects with business networks and trade unions to develop supports for their



members on workplace equality
16. Introduce cross-functional training programmes for female management trainees to avoid the “glass walls” phenomenon
17. Continue to foster the “Leadership Initiative” developed under the Equality for Women Measure of the 2000 – 2006 National Development Plan
18. Develop positive action measures to support in-house training for the advancement of female workers
19. Consider the need for publicity campaigns to encourage women to avail of training opportunities at the level of the enterprise

100. This Objective deals with the advancement of women in their careers. Once a woman joins the labour market, it is by no means certain that she will advance at the same rate as her male equivalent. Some occupations and careers have mainly female employees but mainly male managers - such as education – while in other work sectors, women tend to be streamed into so-called female roles such as human resources. These glass ceilings and glass walls need to be broken so that women and men are considered equal in the workforce. In Ireland, the lack of women in senior level positions has, in the past, been attributed to the marriage bar but that explanation is no longer the only one and there are many reasons for the lack of advancement of women in the workforce.

#### Women in Leadership Positions

101. There have, nevertheless, been some improvements in the role of women in management and professional roles. The CSO has recently changed the classifications in regard to occupation as measured under the QNHS. The table above shows that employment has been maintained for both men and women in higher end occupations. There has been a small increase in the number of women in the professional classification, where women now hold 58.3 per cent of all positions. Gender parity in the professions had been achieved in late 2006. The numbers of women in management roles has also increased slightly.

MEN AND WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFIED BY OCCUPATION 2007 AND 2012

Sector	2007			2012			Percentage of women	
	Male	Female	Women as % of Total	Male	Female	Women as % of Total	2007	2012
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	96.2	44.3	31.5%	102.7	47.4	31.6%	5.0%	5.7%
2. Professional	136.2	188.4	58.0%	141.2	197.8	58.3%	21.1%	23.6%
3. Associate professional and technical	121.6	70.1	36.6%	128.4	78.9	38.1%	7.9%	9.4%
4. Administrative and secretarial	45.4	197.0	81.3%	41.3	161.6	79.6%	22.1%	19.3%
5. Skilled trades	398.8	31.7	7.4%	236.8	27.6	10.4%	3.6%	3.3%
6. Caring, leisure and other service	19.0	115.7	85.9%	21.7	121.1	84.8%	13.0%	14.5%
7. Sales and customer service	52.4	116.7	69.0%	48.8	98.7	66.9%	13.1%	11.8%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	141.3	20.3	12.6%	115.3	21.9	16.0%	2.3%	2.6%
9. Elementary	182.8	104.9	36.5%	111.5	78.6	41.3%	11.8%	9.4%
Other/Not stated	3.0	2.6	46.4%	3.6	2.9	44.6%	0.3%	0.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1196.7</b>	<b>891.7</b>	<b>42.7%</b>	<b>951.3</b>	<b>836.5</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: QNHS Q2/2012

102. The most significant downturn for the two sexes are in sectors 5 (skilled trades) and 9 (elementary occupations). These are the occupations most likely to be associated with education completion at the end of or before the end of the secondary cycle. Over the period since publication of the NWS, the number of women professionals has continued to increase and as a result, women now occupy 58.3 per cent of all professional roles in Irish employment.

103. It is also interesting to look at trends in relation to the economic sectors in which men and women are now employed. These are shown in the table overleaf. As expected, sectors such as “construction”, “wholesale and retail trade” and “accommodation and food services” have shrunk disproportionately. While the impact of the former on women’s is comparatively minor, over 30,000 of the female jobs lost since the downturn are in the latter two sectors. This table is also important in showing the key role played by the public sector as a provider of employment

opportunities for women. Over 340,000 women work in the three economic sectors “public administration”, “education” and “human health and social work”.

#### MEN AND WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFIED BY ECONOMIC SECTOR 2007 AND 2012

Sector	2007			2012			Percentage of women per sector	
	Male	Female	Women as % of Total	Male	Female	Women as % of Total	2007	2012
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	98.5	10.6	9.7%	76.6	10.6	12.2%	1.2%	1.3%
Industry	219.5	85.0	27.9%	162.2	66.7	29.1%	9.5%	8.0%
Construction	258.5	12.3	4.5%	92.6	6.2	6.3%	1.4%	0.7%
Wholesale and retail trade;	148.6	144.9	49.4%	132.7	125.4	48.6%	16.2%	15.0%
Transportation and storage	76.2	16.6	17.9%	70.3	18.8	21.1%	1.9%	2.2%
Accommodation and food service	55.1	77.8	58.5%	52.8	60.7	53.5%	8.7%	7.3%
Information and communication	45.6	20.2	30.7%	54.9	23.1	29.6%	2.3%	2.8%
Financial, insurance and real estate	41.7	58.4	58.3%	43.7	53.0	54.8%	6.5%	6.3%
Professional, scientific and technical	63.4	43.8	40.9%	59.5	39.0	39.6%	4.9%	4.7%
Administrative and support service	36.2	37.7	51.0%	31.4	28.9	47.9%	4.2%	3.5%
Public administration and defence;	49.6	52.4	51.4%	52.4	47.3	47.4%	5.9%	5.7%
Education	38.1	102.2	72.8%	36.2	108.4	75.0%	11.4%	13.0%
Human health and social work	35.9	175.1	83.0%	47.4	189.7	80.0%	19.6%	22.7%
Other NACE activities	39.5	58.3	59.6%	38.8	58.7	60.2%	6.5%	7.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1206.4</b>	<b>895.3</b>	<b>42.6%</b>	<b>951.5</b>	<b>836.5</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: QNHS Q2/2012

#### EU Policy

104. The EU produced a report in 2010<sup>21</sup> which states that "One crucial resource for future growth in Europe lies in the untapped economic potential of women and their full integration into the decision-making process in all areas of the economy is crucial".<sup>22</sup> The report also points to two broad groupings of stereotypes which act as barriers to women's advancement. These are stereotypes relating to the traditional division of labour and those relating to gender-based personal characteristics and perceptions of what it takes to be successful in business and to be a good leader.<sup>23</sup>

#### Irish Initiatives

105. The 'Women and Ambition in the Irish Civil Service' study carried out by Trinity College Dublin in 2007 and funded by the Department of Justice and Equality<sup>24</sup> analysed the barriers and facilitators to the career ambitions of women in the upper levels of the Irish Civil Service. It found that
- 60 per cent of men and women described themselves as ambitious. However, it was significant that male ambition was regarded by respondents as positive and natural whereas female ambition can be perceived as a negative trait,
  - male senior managers outnumber their female colleagues by 56 per cent,
  - only 35 percent of women in senior management had one or more children compared with 66 per cent of men,
  - 86 per cent of senior male managers are married and all have children but only 56 per cent of senior female managers are married and only 53 per cent have children.
106. A Sub-Committee of the NWS Monitoring Committee has undertaken work on women in decision-making in different sectors including the Public Sector (both employment and State board membership), the Judiciary, the Diplomatic Service, the Private Sector (both employment and corporate board membership). Their Report is complete and will be sent to Government in late 2013.

<sup>21</sup> 'More Women in Senior Positions – Key to economic stability and growth' European Commission, 2010.

<sup>22</sup> As above, p.6.

<sup>23</sup> As above p.35.

<sup>24</sup> TCD: School of Gender Equality Studies: April 2007

### **Equality for Women Measure**

107. As set out above, phase 2 of the current Equality for Women Measure was launched in May 2010. EWM Strand 3 on Career Development aims to support the provision of training and education to enable women who are in employment to advance their careers. The quality of the projects which were submitted for consideration for funding was disappointing and therefore only two projects on career development were selected. One of these projects subsequently withdrew from the process. Many of the project proposals submitted had sought funding for internal training courses, the provision of which was outside the scope of the Measure.

### **IBEC Initiatives**

108. In 2009, IBEC established a 'Women in Enterprise Project' to complement the actions and objectives of the NWS in relation to women and work. The project plan has three action points: first the production of a 'Women in Enterprise' report which will collate the knowledge, data and insights available to IBEC through its network of 8,000 employers; second the development of a set of 'maternity positive' resources for business, maternity issues having been identified as a key pivot for women's career development and opportunity and third exploration of the feasibility of developing a range of tools and audits, including a gender pay audit, gender Q mark and broader diversity benchmarking initiatives. This work is being carried out by IBEC's Diversity Project Officer and it is shaped by an advisory group consisting of CEOs and senior female business executives. It is hoped that this project will continue and translate to a broad range of IBEC members.

### **Irish Research**

109. A survey undertaken for the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme and the Equality Authority by the ESRI and published in 2011 found that about a fifth of women who returned to work after a pregnancy experienced a reduction in training opportunities while almost a quarter experienced reduced promotion opportunities. These percentages increased to 34 per cent and 41 per cent respectively where the mother opted to reduce her working hours. There is a caveat to this research in that the research period coincides with a significant economic downturn. However, it suggests that there is still a need to increase awareness among employers of the need to accommodate family life commitments in order to maximise the economic benefits to be derived from their workforce.
110. The advancement of women in employment is also affected by gender segregation. This is cited as a contributory factor in a number of gender inequalities, including the gender pay gap. There is evidence to suggest that feminised sectors attract lower pay rates than predominantly male sectors. Steps are being taken through a range of initiatives in the education sector to attract girls in particular into traditionally male occupations. IBEC reports that a number of employers in the IT sector particularly have started to visit schools to encourage more girls to consider careers in IT, to counteract some of the perceived stereotypes. However the downturn has impacted significantly on the availability of apprenticeship places in the construction sector. Over the past three years, the range of apprenticeship options in Ireland has been refined. However few of the new apprenticeships on offer are likely to be attractive to young women. The Government "Action Plan for Jobs 2012" confirms a commitment to review the apprenticeship model. The intention is to provide an updated model of training that will deliver the necessary skilled workforce to service the needs of a rapidly changing economy. The Department of Education and Skills is developing a paper setting out the various issues which will form the basis of a consultation process, as part of the overall review.
111. The evidence to date from both the TCD Report and the ESRI report suggests that there is still a need to foster attitudinal change on the part of employers and broader society to ensure that the role which women can and do play in the workplace is fully recognised and optimised. This can be achieved by targeted information campaigns.

### **Recommendations**

*The analysis above suggests that stereotyping still plays a large part in career choices, particularly those made by young women. This is surprising, given the strong focus on gender equality which has been mainstreamed in the Department of Education and Skills and in the schools, as evidenced later in this Review. There is a 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.*

**Objective 3: To support more women as entrepreneurs**

<b>ACTIONS</b>
20. Ensure that training and development programmes meet the particular needs of and are accessed by female entrepreneurs
21. Promote entrepreneurship amongst women, through initiatives such as “Start your own Business” courses, award schemes, promotion of appropriate role models, etc.
22. Ensure that girls are actively participating in schools’ entrepreneurship programmes
23. Further develop the support networks in place for female entrepreneurs
24. Foster the availability of childcare to support persons who might be working atypical hours as start up entrepreneurs

112. CSO statistics suggest that Ireland is not a significantly entrepreneurial nation, if the numbers who are self-employed, with or without employees, are regarded as a measure for entrepreneurship. Over the ten year period to Q1/2007, the numbers of women employees in Ireland increased by almost 57 per cent while the numbers of women who were self employed increased by only 14 per cent to 51,700. The trend for men in the same period was not dissimilar, with an increase of 16 per cent in the number of male self-employed persons (to 278,300) and a 43 per cent increase in male employees.
113. In the period since the NWS was published, the number of male self-employed persons has fallen back to 1998 levels, but the number of women who are self employed has increased overall to 58,400. Just over 20 per cent of all self employed persons are female. This is far below the EU average of 33 per cent.

**EU Policy**

114. The European Union notes that

*The proportion of female entrepreneurs at 33 per cent (30 per cent in start ups) is some way short of the optimum and most women still do not consider entrepreneurship as a relevant career option. The implementation of the revised directive on self-employed women should remove a major barrier to female entrepreneurship. Young women should also benefit from the growing emphasis on entrepreneurship as one of the basic skills that schools should teach all pupils as foreseen in the Youth on the Move flagship project [under Europe 2020]<sup>25</sup>*

115. The NWS seeks to support more women as entrepreneurs by emphasising the training and development of girls and women in entrepreneurship as well as the further development of support networks for women in business and practical supports such as childcare availability.

**Equality for Women Measure**

116. The Equality for Women Measure has made ongoing ESF and Exchequer funding available for two projects which have been successful in promoting female entrepreneurship. The first is National Women's Enterprise Day (NWED) which is now in its fifth year, an initiative of the City and County Enterprise Boards. NWED attracts an attendance of some 250 women entrepreneurs each year. Apart from the obvious networking opportunities and a range of prominent speakers and presentations by successful women entrepreneurs, each participant is afforded the opportunity of a one to one mentoring session on a chosen aspect of their business with an expert during the day. This event receives an ESF funding contribution of about €50,000 per annum. Feedback from the participants is very positive.
117. Another ongoing initiative which received ESF/Exchequer funding under the EWM and additional support from Enterprise Ireland is called “*Going for Growth*”. Participants are normally entrepreneurs who are owner managers of a business which has been trading for at least two years.

<sup>25</sup> European Commission: Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010 – 2015 P. 12

They must be seriously committed to growing their businesses. The initiative is supported by a pool of very successful female entrepreneurs who offer their services on a pro bono basis. Participants have the benefit of sharing experiences and learning from peers and they also gain knowledge from the leading female entrepreneur. Over ninety per cent of the participants to date have indicated that they felt nearer to achieving their growth goals as a result of their participation in the initiative. This project was included by the European Commission in the 2009 selection of good practices in female entrepreneurship activities and was also selected to represent Ireland in an international entrepreneurship competition in late 2010.

118. Phase 2 of the current Equality for Women Measure was launched in May 2010 and included a strand on 'Developing Female Entrepreneurship'. A total of 10 projects were selected for funding of up to €50,000 each. It was intended that 375 women would attend training and 205 women would avail of mentoring through these 10 projects. The funding was replicated for a further year to April 2012 and has again been extended to the end of 2012.
119. The array of project proposals selected for support was quite diverse, including a project working with women from the Traveller community and a project working with programme refugees in a rural setting. Decisions about the structure of the last phase of the Equality for Women Measure 2008 – 2013 will be taken in mid 2012 and will depend on the availability of ongoing Exchequer match funding, a prerequisite of ESF funding, and the outcomes of the existing projects.

#### **Educational Initiatives to Foster Entrepreneurship**

120. The education system continues to foster entrepreneurship, both in the secondary curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Girls comprise more than half of those studying business at Leaving Certificate level, where the course includes a module on entrepreneurship. Within Transition Year, girls accounted for 62 per cent of the participants in the “Mini-Company” Programme and 56 per cent of participants in other enterprise education programmes. Female students accounted for 40 per cent of the winning teams in the 2010 Student Enterprise Awards.
121. This evidence suggests that while considerable resources are being invested in entrepreneurship, the outputs are somewhat disappointing. It is recommended that the Equality for Women Measure continue to fund initiatives to foster female entrepreneurship while it is a matter for the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to give further consideration to the steps required to achieve the European Union’s Europe 2020 initiatives in relation to entrepreneurship.

#### **Recommendation**

*The actions proposed in the Strategy remain relevant and should continue. Many of the other issues raised 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.*

#### **Objective 4 To seek to ensure that girls and women achieve their full potential in the education system**

<b>ACTIONS</b>
25. Complete the Report of the Science, Education and Technology Committee and present it to the Minister for Education and Science in 2007
26. Continue to support Teenage Parenting Projects through School Completion Programme
27. Complete development of guidelines on gender mainstreaming for second level schools
28. Include gender mainstreaming in subject evaluations and in individual Whole School Evaluations
29. Provide training on gender mainstreaming to all new and serving school inspectors
30. Continue to provide supports through further and adult education programmes for “hard-to-reach” groups of adults, including those who left school without qualifications and who need second-chance educational opportunities
31. Foster increase in FETAC accreditation for women in further education
32. Deliver “Women into Educational Management” Courses as required nationally.
33. Provide funding for research projects on gender issues within education

122. While the educational standards of women exceed those of men in Ireland, there are still challenges which impact upon the achievement of de facto gender equality, particularly in the workplace. As a result, the State is not deriving full economic benefit from its well educated female population. It will be recalled that the optimisation of human capital is a key focus of Europe 2020, which also places considerable emphasis on high technology education and employment.
123. Despite their high levels of academic achievement, women in Ireland are less likely to be found in the high added value industries, except in HR and marketing roles, and are less likely to achieve top decision making roles in any sector. This arises in part because of subject choice at school which may be influenced by gender stereotypes. There is evidence from the pre-school sector that gender stereotypes manifest themselves from the earliest years and are therefore an ongoing challenge for educators at all levels.
124. That said, the Department of Education and Skills continues to report an awareness of the key issues and activity in relation to all of the actions outlined in the NWS.

#### **Education in STEM subjects**

125. The education and training of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is one of the critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and is an important objective in the NWS. This topic was dealt with in 2007 by EU Council Conclusions and a set of indicators was agreed by the Member States. The recommended indicators measure the numbers of women third level graduates in maths, sciences and the technical disciplines; track the employment rate of women by the highest level of education attained; the proportion of women to men graduating with doctorates; and also the proportion of female academic staff.
126. This topic was also the key theme for the 2011 meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Apart from the mainstream discussion at CSW a number of key Member States, including the USA and South Korea hosted side events to share their good practices in the development of the sciences among girls. Science fairs were cited as particularly beneficial in a number of instances.
127. The EU 2020 economic policy document also emphasises the need to retain highly-skilled women in scientific and technical fields. In order for Ireland to retain such women, it first has to have a supply of suitably qualified women in the labour market. The path to increasing the number of female graduates in science, engineering and technology starts with subject choice for girls at second level. Increased awareness-raising can be used to tackle such issues as stereotyped subject and career choices and the streaming of girls into more traditional subjects.
128. A number of initiatives are being undertaken by the Department of Education and Skills in this regard. The Department reported in its most recent progress report on the NWS that some €2 million per annum is now allocated to FORFÁS to promote the take up of STEM subjects in schools. The initiative includes a wide range of innovate approaches, although girls are not being specifically targeted. A second initiative, being delivered through University of Limerick, aims to enhance the teaching of mathematics and science at all levels throughout the educational cycle. However again there is no emphasis on female pupils who are significantly under-represented in these courses. Guidance counsellors are also encouraged to adopt a proactive approach to encourage the participation of girls in these subjects.
129. The first action identified in the NWS related to the teaching of science, maths and technological subjects (STEM). The table overleaf, taken from the most recent Progress Report, shows that there has not been any significant increase in girls' participation in the sciences since 2007, despite ongoing efforts and investment on the part of the Department of Education and Skills.

**NUMBERS TAKING SELECTED SUBJECTS 2007, 2009 AND 2011 – BOYS AND GIRLS**

Subject (higher level)	Boys				Girls			
	2007	2009	2011	Absolute Change	2007	2009	2011	Absolute Change
Biology	5,441	6,858	8,410	2,969	12,080	13,244	14,267	2,187
Chemistry	2,407	2,614	2,743	336	3,322	3,423	3,529	207
Mathematics	4,472	4,681	4,479	7	3,916	3,739	3,758	(-158)
Physics	3,657	3,398	3,462	(-195)	1,566	1,296	1,320	(-246)
Design & Communication Graphics*	2,610*	3,714*	3,552	942	268	396*	442	174
Construction Studies	5,922	6,703	6,519	597	404	510	368	(-36)
Engineering	3,227	3,422	3,812	585	134	181	148	14

Source CSO 'Women and Men in Ireland 2007, 2009 & 2011'

\*In 2009 the Subject "Technical drawing" was renamed as "Design & Communication Graphics"

130. More positively, there has been a significant increase of some 37 per cent in the number of girls presenting for higher level Mathematics in 2012 (5,159) compared to 2011 (3,758). In this regard, a range of initiatives have been introduced by the Department of Education and Skills to encourage both girls and boys to take the honours Leaving Certificate paper, including:

- the introduction of 'Project Maths' in all post-primary schools;
- the provision of 25 bonus points for students who achieve a grade D3 or higher in higher level Maths;
- the funding of a postgraduate Diploma in Maths to up-skill out-of-field Maths teachers; and;
- the prioritisation of Continuing Professional Development for Maths teachers.

131. With regard to the science subjects, the Department of Education and Skills is committed to strengthening the quality of science teaching and learning, promoting increased scientific literacy and encouraging more students, both girls and boys, to choose science subjects. An important element of the Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation 2006-2013 is to increase the proportions of students studying the physical sciences in senior cycle. Revised draft syllabuses in Physics, Chemistry and Biology have been developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) which provide a strong focus on practical investigative approaches and practical assessment, as a follow on from the changes introduced at junior cycle in 2003. The Department of Education and Skills is awaiting the NCCA's proposals on the Leaving Certificate Science Syllabuses.

**Teen parents**

132. The Department continues to support a number of Teen Parenting projects around the country. In 2010, the projects supported 1,334 young mothers, thanks to a State contribution of over €370,000. Furthermore a number of youth and community projects provide childcare or other supports for teen parents.

133. The Department of Education and Skills continues to prioritise gender mainstreaming in its work. This includes the delivery of training programmes for inspectors, the inclusion of a gender perspective in Whole School Evaluations, particularly but not exclusively in the Social, Personal and Health Education subject area and the dissemination of eQuality Measures a resource to help post-primary schools to promote gender equality.

134. Europe 2020 also emphasises the need to capitalise on highly educated women as an economic human capital resource.

135. In Ireland, more women than men graduate from third level, with 16,779 women graduating in 2002 compared with 11,499 men. By 2007, 33,229 women graduated from third level compared with 25,595 men. More men than women graduate in technical areas such as engineering with 510 women graduating in the fields of engineering, manufacturing and construction in 2002. In 2007 the comparable figures were 814 women and 4,207 men.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Source 'Women and Men in Ireland 2004' and 'Women and Men in Ireland 2009', CSO.

### Gender equality in Education

136. In line with the action sought under this NWS Objective, Gender Guidelines for both secondary and primary schools have been completed and circulated to schools. In addition, all school inspectors receive training on gender mainstreaming as part of their continuing professional development.

### Second Chance Education

137. Apart from being an action commitment in the NWS, second chance education for early school leavers links with the Europe 2020 target to move people from poverty. The Department of Education and Skills provides second chance education for early school leavers. This links with the Europe 2020 target to move people from poverty (Guideline 10). A range of Adult and further education services is available in Ireland including the Back to Education Initiative which enables adults to access part-time further education options. This will contribute towards countering early school drop out and to improving the performance of education and training systems in line with Guideline 9 of EU 2020.
138. A social welfare payment is available to qualified adults who undertake a return to education. The demand for this allowance has increased significantly since the economic downturn as shown in the next table. With the higher drop-out rates for boys it is not surprising that men form the more dominant part of the beneficiaries under this Scheme. As the table shows the number of beneficiaries of the allowance has increased from just under 6,000 in 2007 to over 25,000 in 2010. The significant increase in the number of men is probably linked to the loss of employment of unskilled and semi-skilled male workers in the construction and other sectors. The cost of the Scheme has trebled over the four year period.

DEPT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION BACK TO EDUCATION ALLOWANCE : NO. OF BENEFICIARIES BY SEX AND ANNUAL COST

	Male		Female		Female as % of total		Total cost of scheme	
	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012
	No.	No.	No.	No.	%	%	€000	€000
<b>Back to Education Allowance</b>	3,243	15,010	2,737	10,023	45.8	40.0	64,142	199,567

Source: Statistical Information, Department of Social Protection

### Female Leadership in Education

139. In relation to women in educational management, it is noteworthy that, in November 2010, the Irish Times published an indicative table showing the top 100 earners in education in Ireland. It shows that there were only 20 women out of the 100 top earners and only 2 women in the top ten earners. The 100 persons were mainly made up of Heads of education related institutions and third level academic staff. This rough poll is indicative of the prevalence of men in decision-making positions in Irish education despite this being a generally feminised sector.
140. In order to encourage more women into decision-making roles in education, the Drumcondra Education Centre runs 'Women into Educational Management' courses to provide support for female teachers who wish to move into administrative or management roles. This training contributes to mitigating the gender segregation and stereotyping in employment in education where most teachers tend to be female and most heads of schools tend to be male.

### Recommendations

*Gender stereotyping in educational choice has already been mentioned in relation to a number of previous objectives under the National Women's Strategy. It is essential therefore that the Department of Education and Skills and the schools continue to encourage girls to diversify into atypical study fields. This is particularly important for the STEM subjects. Here some creative initiatives might be considered in association with sectoral employers. (A major German chemical firm uses a billboard campaign to encourage young people to study science – such initiatives might be explored among the key employers in the sciences and IT sectors in Ireland as a corporate social responsibility initiative on their part.)*



**141. Objective 5A To ensure that childcare services are optimised to meet the needs of parents and children alike**

<b>ACTIONS</b>
34. Work towards a quality standard for childcare services, taking account of developments across the spectrum of early childhood development and care
35. Develop and implement the National Training Strategy for childcare
36. Implement and achieve the targets set for childcare places under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP), the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) and any successor programme(s)
37. Implement the EOCP, NCIP and any successor programme(s) in a way which focuses on poverty and disadvantage
38. Implement and achieve the targets set under the NCIP and “Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools” (DEIS)
39. Monitor whether the implementation of the NCIP is impacting positively on working mothers in terms of their continued participation in the labour force
40. Monitor increasing female labour market participation

142. The availability of affordable childcare is still a key issue for gender equality. It underpins all aspects of women's economic engagement. This imperative to ensure the availability of childcare services to support working mothers, has been stressed in a number of high level European Union policy initiatives.

143. In reviewing the “bottlenecks” to the achievement of increased labour market participation by women under the Europe 2020 Strategy for economic growth and competitiveness, the Commission has called specifically on Member States to address this topic and ensure the availability of affordable childcare. As mentioned previously, some Member States have been advised to prioritise their supply of childcare under the Europe 2020 Review process. While Ireland is currently excluded from this process, the need for adequate affordable childcare to support employment cannot be disregarded.

144. More recently, the EPSCO Council (March 2011) approved the European Pact for Gender Equality, a revision of the 2006 Pact which had been agreed at European Council level. The new European Gender Pact states that Member States should

*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.*

**Development of Childcare Services**

145. The supply of both community-based and private sector childcare places increased considerably in the last decade or so in Ireland as a result of the investment of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000 – 2006 which received considerable ERDF and ESF funding and the National Childcare Investment Programme which covered the period 2006 to 2010 and which was funded by the Exchequer. While this investment programme of some €450 million over the period 2000 – 2006 (both capital and current expenditure) was specifically linked to the support of employment, training and education, more recent developments in relation to the provision of childcare and supported childcare in Ireland have focused primarily on the needs of the child.

146. The NWS actions relate largely to the further development of this work and the implementation of a programme to further enhance the quality of childcare in Ireland. However, a number of other positive measures have also been put in place. This includes the provision of a year of free pre-school education for children aged 3 and a half and upwards. This is considered very beneficial to the development of the child and enhances opportunities for development in later life. It also provides an element of free childcare to parents in that age group. In the first full year of the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme, over 63,000 children availed of the scheme, with an estimated participation rate of 94 per cent.

147. New arrangements have also been put in place through the Childhood Education and Training Support programme to support mothers attending FÁS and VEC courses, making 4,800 subvented or free places available to qualified parents each year. As a result qualified parents receive free childcare places for their children, with the State making an increased payment to the childcare provider. Places provided may be pre-school part or full time care or afterschool and it is estimated that over 2,800 full-time equivalent places are supported.
148. Another initiative, the Community Childcare Subvention Programme, previously introduced in 2008, was mainstreamed in 2010 and now supports additional numbers of mothers in low income employment. The Programme enables parents to avail of Community based childcare with fees paid on a tiered basis. Those who qualify include parents on Family Income Supplement, social Welfare Benefits, including the One Parent Family Payment and holders of medical cards and GP Visit cards. The subvention can be as much as €95 per child, and, at present, it is estimated that the CCS Scheme benefits almost 24,000 children in 10,800 whole time equivalent childcare places. Another cadre of parents can avail of community childcare “at cost”. And it is estimated that some 6,000 children avail of this “at cost” initiative.
149. Despite these initiatives, the availability and affordability of childcare remains an issue for some parents. However, the provision of a quality service necessitates a well-trained workforce and high standards which are therefore costly to deliver. The increased levels of child benefit were intended to help assist parents with their childcare costs and while these have reduced somewhat in recent years, they are still nearly four times higher than they were a decade ago and now cost the Exchequer some €2.2 billion per annum.
150. The State’s commitment to the development of childcare back in 1998 was linked to the growing needs of working parents. It would be useful if a nationwide survey of the availability of childcare places were undertaken to identify gaps in service availability. While services were formerly less widely available in rural areas, the community sector has played a significant role in the development of services in both rural and urban settings. It would also be useful to conduct an audit to determine the extent to which Ireland has met the Barcelona targets.

#### Enhancing the Quality of Childcare

151. New regulations for childcare services were agreed in 2006 and these were fully implemented by regulation at the end of 2007. A new framework for the sector has also been rolled out which has led to the provision of an enhanced service. Providers of the free pre-school childcare must be qualified to at least FETAC Level 5 and those childcare centres which have more highly qualified staff may be eligible for higher payments from the State. A new Workforce Development Plan for the childcare sector has also been published and is being implemented on a phased basis.

#### Increasing labour market participation of mothers

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN WITH CHILDREN 2007 and 2012

Age group of children	In employment		Unemployed		Not economically active		TOTAL	
	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012
One or more children aged under 5	138.9	166.8	6.0	22.0	100.5	103.5	245.4	292.3
Children aged 5 to 14 and/or older	162.6	158.1	6.7	21.4	92.1	100.1	261.4	279.6
All children aged 15 or over	118.8	123.7	3.3	8.9	141.8	132.5	263.9	265.1
TOTAL	420.3	448.6	16.0	52.3	334.4	336.1	770.7	837.0

Source: QNHS Q2/2012

152. This target is closely linked to Objective 1. The table above reviews the economic engagement of mothers in the labour market. It includes mothers in families and lone parents. As the first pair of columns clearly show, despite the economic downturn, there has been an increase of almost 30,000 in the number of women with children who are at work. This increase is particularly marked for women with children in the younger age groups, those in the category where at least one child is under 5. This category represents an increase of 20 per cent while the overall increase in the number of women with children at work was just 6.7 per cent for the same period. The numbers of

mothers who are unemployed has increased more than threefold in the period since the NWS was implemented, largely as a result of the economic downturn.

153. The table also shows that over 336,000 women living in family units are outside the workforce. However the cohort with children aged over 15 may well include some persons who are retired. Nevertheless it provides another indicator of the untapped pool of female labour existing in Ireland at present. Numerically this figure remained relatively static over the past four years but, in comparative terms the percentage of women outside the labour market had actually fallen, with some 500,900 economically active, albeit that some 52,300 mothers are currently unemployed.

### Recommendations

*The cost of quality childcare remains 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 requires care. This is an ongoing issue and will be central to the activation of mothers, be they recipients of welfare benefits or currently outside of the labour market and the welfare system.*

### Objective 5-B : To ensure that the care infrastructure supports women’s socio-economic engagement

41. Ensure that payments and supports to carers are efficient and effective, recognising their needs and adequately addressing poverty and social exclusion and are adaptable to the needs of carers in a changing environment (i.e. care sharing arrangements)
42. Continue to review the scope for further developments of the Carer’s Allowance/Benefit subject to available resources
43. Develop a structured consultation process to inform future policy on care supports
44. Develop training initiatives for carers as priorities permit
45. Inter-Departmental Working Group will continue to examine the strategic policy, cost and service delivery issues associated with long term care provision, with appropriate consultation
46. Devise a National Carers’ Strategy in consultation with social partners and all relevant Departments/ Agencies

154. While there were considerable increases in the levels of welfare payments to support caring in Ireland before the economic downturn, the issue of caring for elderly relatives and other dependent relatives is still a matter for discussion and development at both EU and national levels. Successive EU documents have highlighted the need for Member States to address elder care as a support resource for their working offspring, no country has yet emerged as a model of good practice in this regard.
155. Most recently the revised and strengthened European Gender Pact, agreed at the EPSCO Council in June 2011, re-emphasised the need to develop care support services to foster female labour market engagement.

#### National Carer’s Strategy

156. At the time of publication of the NWS, the Department of Social Protection had planned to develop a Carer’s Strategy but this proposal was shelved due to the economic downturn. The Programme for Government published by the incoming Government in March 2011 includes a new commitment to develop a National Carer’s Strategy. In November 2011, the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy agreed that Ms Kathleen Lynch TD, Minister of State for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People would co-ordinate the development of the National Carers’ Strategy with support from the Minister for Social Protection.
157. The National Carer’s Strategy was subsequently published by Minister of State Lynch on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2012. The table overleaf sets out the key goals and objectives of the new Strategy

## NATIONAL CARERS' STRATEGY 2012 - KEY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals	Objectives
Recognise the value and contribution of carers and promote their inclusion in decisions relating to the person that they are caring for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen awareness and recognition of the role and contribution of carers at national, regional and local level</li> <li>• Include carers in care planning and decision making for those that they care for</li> <li>• Recognise the needs of carers by provision of income supports</li> </ul>
Support carers to manage their physical, mental and emotional health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the development of supports and services to protect the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of carers</li> <li>• Support children and young people with caring responsibilities and protect them from adverse impacts of caring</li> </ul>
Support carers to care with confidence through the provision of adequate information, training, services and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the availability of user friendly and timely information and advice</li> <li>• Provide relevant and accessible carer training opportunities for carers</li> <li>• Promote the development of accessible living environments for all</li> </ul>
Empower carers to participate as fully as possible in economic and social life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable carers to have access to respite breaks</li> <li>• Enable carers to remain in touch with the labour market to the greatest extent possible</li> </ul>

### **Other Issues relating to Elder Care**

158. The Programme for Government also includes further commitments on the care of older people as follows:

*Investment in the supply of more and better care for older people in the community and residential settings will be a priority of this Government.*

*Additional funding will be provided each year for the care of older people. This funding will go to more residential places, more home care packages and the delivery of more home help and other professional community care services.*

*The fair deal system of financing nursing home care will 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.*

159. A call for submissions to inform the review of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme was made in national newspapers and by notice placed on the Department of Health website on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012. The closing date for receipt of submissions was 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012. A summary report of the submissions received will be published once all of the submissions have been analysed. Thereafter, the Department of Health will be seeking tenders through the public procurement process for the carrying out of the review. This process will take approximately four months. It is anticipated that the review itself will take approximately three months to complete. The Department of Health expects that the review will commence in the last quarter of 2012 and will be completed in early 2013. The Terms of Reference for the review of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme are:

- Taking account of Government policy, demographic trends and the fiscal situation –
  1. To examine the ongoing sustainability of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme;
  2. To examine the overall cost of long-term residential care in public and private nursing homes and the effectiveness of the current methods of negotiating/setting prices;
  3. Having regard to 1. and 2. above, to consider the balance of funding between long-term residential care and community based services;
  4. To consider the extension of the scheme to community based services and to other sectors (Disability and Mental Health); and
  5. To make recommendations for the future operation and management of the scheme.

160. As the Scheme is statutory based, the implementation of any recommendations arising from the review may require significant amendments to the Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act, 2009.
161. The full achievement of these commitments together with the implementation of the Carer's Strategy will assist in addressing the needs for elder care and the wellbeing of carers.

### Supports for Carers

162. The Department of Social Protection makes both benefit and assistance payments available to carers who qualify under the Department's eligibility criteria. The following table shows the numbers of men and women who qualified for these supports in 2007 and in 2010 and also shows the amounts paid by the Department for each of the schemes in both years.

DEPT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION SUPPORTS TO CARERS : NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES BY SEX AND TOTAL ANNUAL COST

	Male		Female		Female as % of total		Total cost of scheme	
	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012
	No.	No.	No.	No.	%	%	€,000	€,000
Carer's benefit	272	290	1,808	1,348	86.9	82.3	26,899	24,453
Carer's Allowance	6,597	11,187	26,470	41,022	80.0	78.6	361,257	509,671
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,869</b>	<b>11,477</b>	<b>28,278</b>	<b>42,370</b>	<b>80.5</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>388,156</b>	<b>534,124</b>

Source: Statistical Information, Department of Social Protection

163. Carer's benefit is currently a minimum of €205 per week, while the full rate of carer's assistance is €204, slightly ahead of the 2007 rates of about €200 per week. However carer's assistance is means tested where the recipient has other income. In both instances, the recipient can receive additional payments for dependents.
164. With the significant increase in the number of beneficiaries of the Carer's Allowance, between 2007 and 2010, the overall cost to the Exchequer rose to over €509 million in 2010. Women represent over 78 per cent of the beneficiaries of these schemes, which, while showing a marginal decrease on earlier years, still shows the reliance of Irish society on women to fulfil caring roles, often to the detriment of their career opportunities.
165. The Department of Social Protection makes provision for care sharing by allowing two people to care for a person on a week on/week off basis and share the Carers' Allowance payment and the Respite Care Grant.
166. The Carers' Benefit scheme can operate in conjunction with the Carers' Leave Act 2011 which provides an entitlement for an employee to avail of unpaid leave from his/her employment to enable him/her to personally provide full-time care and attention to a person in need of such care.
167. The National Carers' Strategy contains a number of commitments for the Department of Social Protection mirroring those in Objective 5-B above and including the review of existing transition arrangements for carers when their caring role ceases.
168. As with childcare, there is a significant need to promote the better sharing of such family responsibilities between men and women of working age to ensure that both have an opportunity to develop their careers and maximise their employment opportunities.

### Recommendations

*In relation to caring, there is an ongoing need to ensure that women are not expected to engage disproportionately in the provision of unpaid caring. This again requires a re-emphasis of the need to share family responsibilities. There are two further issues related to caring which should be fully developed by the relevant Departments. The first is the reintegration of carers into the labour market when their period of full time caring responsibility has come to an end. The second is the protection of the rights of migrant workers who may come to Ireland to work in the care sector.*

**Objective 6-A: To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
47.	Ensure that future NAP inclusion continues to address the specific circumstances of vulnerable women and that appropriate policy responses are developed to meet their needs
48.	Review treatment of unemployed persons available for part-time work only in the social welfare system
49.	Social welfare provision for widows to be kept under review and further improvements to be considered, as appropriate in a budgetary context
50.	Increase the Qualified Adult payment to the level of the Old Age (Non-contributory) Pension in accordance with the terms of <i>Towards 2016</i>
51.	Consider proposals for the abolition of qualified adult allowances in social assistance and implementation of decisions arising from Government Discussion Paper 'Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents'
52.	Review increase for Qualified Adult payment for pensioners within the social welfare system so that women can easily access independent payments

169. The EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) reviews the levels of poverty in Member States and reports annually. The Central Statistics Office publishes the Irish Report.

**POVERTY RATES BY SEX AND YEAR**

Sex	At Risk of Poverty Rate			Deprivation Rate			Consistent Poverty Rate		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
Male	14.1	14.3	16.3	16.8	21.7	23.0	5.5	5.8	6.9
Female	14.1	15.1	15.6	17.7	23.5	26.0	5.4	6.8	6.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	14.1	14.7	16.0	17.1	22.6	24.5	5.5	6.3	6.9

Source : CSO/EuroSILC

170. The latest year for which data are available is 2011. This shows that the consistent poverty rate for women was 6.9 per cent, an increase of 1.5 percentage points on the 2009 rate of 5.4 per cent. Men experienced a similar aggravation of the level experiencing consistent poverty. Men experienced a higher increase in the “at risk of poverty” rate over the same time period, but the deprivation rate for women increased to 26 per cent for women compared with 23 per cent for men.

171. Following a review in 2011, including a public consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, the Government has adopted a revised timescale in terms of the national poverty target, from the 2010 baseline rate, as follows:

- to reduce consistent poverty to 4 per cent by 2016 (interim target); and
- to reduce consistent poverty to 2 per cent or less by 2020.

172. The 2011 rate can also be compared with the 2005 baseline rate when the national poverty target was set of 7.2 per cent. The 2011 figure still represents an overall improvement of 0.3 percentage point, but is a disimprovement compared with the low point of 4.5 per cent in 2008. Looking forward, there is a gap of 2.9 percentage points to be bridged if the 4 per cent interim national poverty target is to be reached (by 2016) for women.

173. The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, the Government’s strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion identifies twelve high level goals to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, including women, across the five lifecycle groups of children; people of working age; older people; people with disabilities; and communities. The Plan also identifies some one hundred and fifty actions by departments and agencies with a remit in social policy, in order to make a decisive impact on poverty over the period to 2016.

174. Much of the improvement in the “at risk of poverty” rates in recent years had been attributed to the increases in social transfers in the latter years of the last decade. However such rates have since been reduced as a result of the economic downturn and this has impacted on poverty rates.
175. A number of research projects have been undertaken by Department of Social Protection in order to make the welfare system more responsive to changing circumstances. This includes changes to the Qualified Adult rates which have now moved much closer to the Non-Contributory pension rates, now equivalent to 94.2 per cent.
176. The Family Income Support (FIS) Scheme also helps to address poverty. FIS is an income support payment to employees on low earnings with children that effectively preserves the incentive to take up or to remain in employment in circumstances where the employee might only be marginally better off than if she/he were claiming other social welfare payments. As the table below shows, 58 per cent of the recipients are women, representing a slight decrease in percentage terms over the time span of the NWS to end 2012 but it is noteworthy that the actual number of women beneficiaries has increased by just over 4,700. The cost of the Family Income Support Scheme in 2012 was €223.6 million, representing an increase of nearly 60 per cent since 2012.

DEPT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION FAMILY INCOME SUPPORT : NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES BY SEX AND TOTAL ANNUAL COST

	Male		Female		Female as % of total		Total cost of scheme	
	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012
	No.	No.	No.	No.	%	%	€,000	€,000
Family Income Support	8,742	13,569	14,081	18,736	61.7	58.0	140,020	223,608

Source: Statistical Information, Department of Social Protection

177. In this regard it is also worth recalling from paragraph 116 above the significant numbers of women who are availing of the Back to Education Allowance which will enable them to enhance their economic prospects and the passage away from the poverty trap in many instances.

### Recommendations

*Government policy should continue to promote labour market activation as a route out of poverty for women and their families. Such policies also require the availability of adequate childcare support for working mothers, particularly those on low incomes.*

### Objective 6 – B: To reduce the numbers of female lone parents who experience poverty

ACTIONS	
53.	Progress further work aimed at assisting children in families on low incomes including a review of child income supports which avoid employment disincentives. This work will be informed by the NESC study on second tier child income support
54.	Bring forward proposals aimed at supporting lone parents, and other parents on low income, into employment, with a view to ending welfare dependency and achieving a higher standard of living for themselves and their children
55.	Value of child income support measures for those on social welfare to be maintained as 33 to 35 per cent of the minimum adult Social Welfare payment rate

178. The Department of Social Protection published its Policy and Value for Money Review of Child Income Support and Associated Spending Programmes in November 2010. The Report notes in its introduction that the conclusions reached do not necessarily represent Government policy but are expected to play a role in informing future policy development.
179. The report examined the objectives of child income support policy, considered if these objectives remain valid, if programme spending and associated administrative costs were well configured to meet these objectives and if alternative approaches would achieve better outcomes and impacts. The report identifies the primary and secondary objectives of child income support payments as follows:

- *Primary objectives:* Child income support payments provide (i) universal assistance with the cost of child-raising to all families (horizontal redistribution) and (ii) targeted child-related assistance to families who are at risk of poverty (vertical redistribution).
- *Secondary objectives:* The evolution of policy has also seen other objectives emerge over time with varying significance. These include: the reduction of financial disincentives for parents to take up work; financial assistance with specific costs, such as the cost of paid childcare and the provision of an independent income source for women in the home.

180. Given the association between the lack of parental employment and poverty, the objective concerning employment disincentives is particularly significant for this current review of the National Women's Strategy.
181. The Value for Money (VFM) Review considered the impact of the overall design of payments on better outcomes for children and on the labour market outcomes for their parents and concluded that child income support payments had some success in meeting the primary objectives (outlined above) over the period of review. However, the Review found that in view of the significant level of spending and the current fiscal circumstances, it is unlikely that better outcomes would be attained with more spending, and that while less spending of itself will not lead to better outcomes, these might be secured if it resulted in better child-related services or in a rebalancing between universal and selective spending.
182. The Review compared and examined a range of possible approaches to achieve better effectiveness and efficiency in child income support spending and found that there is a need to rationalise the current system of payments and selective programmes in particular in order to provide more consistent assistance to low income families and to encourage parental employment. In line with a finding of the Review to further examine an outline proposal to bring together the components of the various child income support payments into a unified payment, the Department of Social Protection conducted a feasibility study for an integrated child and family income support payment that could replace child benefit, qualified child increases and the family income supplement. Both the Review and the technical study were used by the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare as part of its deliberations on the issue of child and family income supports.
183. In relation to lone parents, following an in-depth consultation in 2006, the Department of Social Protection piloted new arrangements to encourage recipients of the lone parents allowance to return to employment. This was followed by legislation which was enacted in 2010. The 2010 Annual Report of the Department of Social Protection outlines the changes:

*The current duration of the one-parent family payment, which is payable until the youngest child in a lone parent family reaches the age of 18 years - or 22 years if in full-time education - is not in the best interests of the recipient, their children or society.*

*In general, the best route out of poverty is through paid employment. It is recognised that work, and especially full-time work, may not be an option for parents of young children. However, it is believed that supporting parents to participate in the labour market, once their children have reached an appropriate age, will improve both their own economic situation and the social well-being of themselves and of their families.*

184. Since 2010, there have been further revisions to the One Parent Family Payment (OFP). This includes ceasing an individual's entitlement to the lone parent allowance when their youngest child reaches 7 years, instead of 18 years, or 22 years if in full-time education, which had applied previously. However, it should be noted that special provision is made for families with children for whom the domiciliary care allowance is paid and for the recently bereaved (both married and cohabiting) so that these age restrictions do not apply to them for a period of time. For a parent who is claiming domiciliary care allowance in respect of one of their children, this payment and the OFP payment will continue until their children reach 16 years of age.
185. In the past, income support for people of working age, including lone parents, has been passive in nature, with little systematic engagement by the State with the customer. This is now changing. Long-term welfare dependency and passive income support to people of working age are not in the



best interest of the recipient, of their children or of society. Lone parent families continue to experience higher rates of ‘consistent poverty’ in comparison to the population generally.

186. Overall, the reforms that are taking place aim to:

- prevent long-term dependence on social welfare support and facilitate financial independence among parents;
- recognise parental choice with regard to the care of young children, but with the expectation that parents will not remain outside of the labour force indefinitely; and
- include an expectation of participation in education, training and employment initiatives, with the appropriate social welfare supports being provided in this regard.

187. The table which follows shows the statistics for recipients of the One Parent Family Payment in 2007 and 2010. Almost 98 per cent of recipients of this payment are women while the cost of the Scheme now exceeds €1.05 billion per annum, but showing a small decrease of €31 million in terms of expenditure when compared with 2011, while the number of beneficiaries declined by 2,400 in the same time period/

DEPT OF SOCIAL ONE PARENT FAMILY PAYMENT : NO. OF BENEFICIARIES BY SEX AND ANNUAL COST

	Male		Female		Female as % of total		Total cost of scheme	
	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012
	No.	No.	No.	No.	%	%	€million	€million
<b>One Parent Family Payment</b>	1,773	1,984	83,311	85,934	97.9	97.7	962.4	1,057.7

Source: Statistical Information, Department of Social Protection

188. Recipients of the One Parent Family Payment are permitted to work for a limited number of hours while retaining their benefits. This payment is often supplemented by a rent allowance, a medical card and other forms of assistance.

189. The steps to disincentivise parents with older children from remaining outside the labour market links both with the ethos that employment is a road out of poverty and with the aims of Europe 2020 to remove barriers including welfare disincentives which militate against labour market participation.

190. The availability of subvented childcare referred to under Objective 5 above also helps to incentivise lone parents to return to the labour market. Similarly the availability of the Back to Education Initiative and the Teen Parenting Support Initiatives referred to in relation to Objective 4 (education) are also likely to assist some lone parents.

191. All of this work is complemented by a number of other initiatives which aim to assist the lone parent. These include an initiative focusing on the retail trade, a targeted initiative by FÁS and an initiative supported by the Department of Justice and Equality and the ESF under the Equality for Women Measure. In addition to this particular initiative, many of the other “Access to Employment” projects under the EWM attract lone parents who have need of confidence building and more specific training.

## Recommendations

*As above*

## Objective 6 – C: To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty by increasing pension cover

ACTIONS
56. In accordance with <i>Towards 2016</i> and having regard to available resources, build on the commitment of €200 per week which was achieved in 2007
57. Support initiatives to increase participation of women in the workforce
58. Improve information and awareness among families working together to ensure that they are appropriately insured for social welfare purposes through the preparation of information leaflets

and subsequent publicity campaigns
59. Ensure qualifying conditions for contributory pensions are appropriate and strike a reasonable balance between the level of contributions made and benefits paid
60. Review the issues and costs associated with a switch to a system of credited contributions and review the backdating of the Homemakers Scheme
61. Bring forward and implement Budget proposals in relation to pension rates and conditions
62. Promote extensive, secure and adequate supplementary pension provision, particularly for women, in consultation with the Pensions Board
63. Increase the number of women, particularly marginalised women, with adequate supplementary pension coverage in line with Government targets
64. Develop women-focused initiatives by the Pensions Board as part of the National Pensions Awareness Campaign

192. This objective focuses on pension cover as a means to avoid poverty among older people. As with the previous objective there are many factors which impact on financial well-being in older age – many of which are receiving considerable discussion at EU level. These include issues such as women’s labour market engagement, the gender pay gap, the opportunities women have for promotion during their careers. Earlier in this report the linkages between all of these factors and interruption of the career for child rearing were also explored.
193. EU SILC data show that in 2009 and following social transfers, 9 per cent of women aged 65 – 74 years and 11.5 per cent of women aged over 75 years were at risk of poverty. This compares with 8.8 per cent and 9.1 per cent of men in the same age groups. These data appear to fluctuate annually as the 2010 data show that in the more recent year, 7.7 per cent of women aged 65 – 74 years and 10.7 per cent of women aged over 75 years were at risk of poverty in 2010. This compares with 11.1 per cent and 9.1 per cent of men in the equivalent age groups. This ongoing fluctuation in data makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions from the data trends. Comparative data are not available for subsequent years as the SILC data are not gender disaggregated.
194. The need for women to augment their state pension entitlements has been a focus of the Irish Pensions Board for some time. However, there are no reports of any significant progress in this regard.
195. Pension cover for female workers increased significantly in comparison to their male counterparts, according to the CSO QNHS Pensions Update Module published in September 2008. In Q1 2002, 45% of females and 57% of male workers had a pension. In Q1 2008, this gap had narrowed, as the rate for female workers had increased to 50% and the rate for males was 56%. In Quarter 4 2009, the pension coverage for female workers fell by one percentage point to 49%, while pension coverage for male workers fell by four percentage points to 54%
196. The figures from the CSO demonstrate that half of women do not have a pension. This is potentially a very serious situation for women and has implications for poverty in older age. The National Pensions Board is running a National Pensions Awareness Campaign to increase pension awareness, understanding and uptake. As well as carrying out media campaigns and providing promotional material the Pension Board makes available a leaflet entitled "Women and Pensions".
197. Accordingly it is strongly recommended that this objective of the NWS become a key objective in the coming years with a view to increasing awareness of the need for adequate pension provision and for planning for old age among women whose life expectancy at age 65 is now 19.8 years<sup>27</sup>.

## Recommendations

*It is 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.*

<sup>27</sup> Source : CSO : Based on 2006 Census

## CHAPTER 4

### THEME 2 – ENSURING THE WELL-BEING OF WOMEN

#### Introduction

198. As noted previously, the period since publication of the NWS covers the most pronounced economic recession since the foundation of the State. Therefore, this period has been one of particular challenge in relation to the welfare and well-being of the entire population. It is widely acknowledged that such challenges can fall disproportionately on women who, as home-makers, are required to maintain the family's well-being in the face of unemployment of one or both partners, reduced or no incomes, be they from employment or welfare.
199. The delivery of State support services has been particularly challenged in the same period and the need for further public expenditure adjustments for at least three further budgets does not make the prospects look any more promising for many families or individual men or women in the near future.
200. That said, a review of the implementation of a range of the actions under this theme of the NWS shows that there has been at least some progress with regard to women's well-being. This includes work by the Department of Justice and Equality on a number of safety issues which largely impact upon women – viz. violence and trafficking. There have also been positive developments in relation to some cancer screening programmes and other health promotion initiatives.
201. Furthermore, ongoing dialogue at EU level in the intervening four years requires that the Department of Justice and Equality in tandem with partner Departments look at issues such as the take up of family leaves to support female labour market engagement in both the public and private sectors.
202. The paragraphs which follow within this chapter will look at each objective which falls under this theme and will present a report of progress to date, while highlighting actions which still need to be progressed and new actions which must be considered.

#### Objective 7 - To enhance the work/life balance for women

ACTIONS
65. Continue to support work of National Framework Committee on Work/Life Balance
66. Encourage employers to adopt a wide range of options to enhance the work/life balance of their staff
67. Review the DSFA Unemployment Benefit and Assistance Schemes with particular reference to the treatment of part-time and atypical workers
68. Continue to keep under review the treatment of part-time and other atypical workers in the Social Welfare system

203. The reconciliation of work and family life and the sharing of family responsibilities are seen as major factors which have to be addressed, both across Europe and in Ireland, if countries are to achieve increased labour market participation for women and to maximise the economic benefits of women's high standards of education in accordance with the objectives of Europe 2020.
204. The topics of work/life balance and the reconciliation of work and family life have been developed significantly at EU level since the publication of the NWS in 2007. The European Union has long advocated the sharing of family responsibilities in order to assist women and men in linking their work and family life. It similarly encourages women and men to share family leave packages so that the career paths of both parents can advance and women in particular can maximise their career opportunities and the beneficial use of their educational achievements. However, in very many families and among many employers, and indeed across society at large, this necessitates the removal of prejudices which still see women in the primary caring role, while seeing that only men can work at the highest levels.

205. Developments at EU level included new legislation on parental leave<sup>28</sup> and on leave for assisting spouses and proposals for further legislative amendments, a number of EU Presidency conferences, discussions at Informal Councils of EU Gender Equality Ministers and the inclusion of specific references to the issue in the European Gender Pacts.
206. In relation to work-life balance, the European Gender Pact 2011 – 2020 calls on Member States and the European Union as appropriate to take measures to promote better work-life balance for women and men to
- 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.
207. The issues of childcare and care for other dependents raised in the EU Gender Pact have already been dealt with in Chapter 3 – see paragraphs 141 to 153 inclusive.
208. The social partners in Ireland have been active for a long period in addressing these biases. IBEC took the welcome step of publishing an excellent guidance document for its members entitled the Maternity and Parenting Toolkit, published in 2011. This piece of work arose because studies by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency/Programme and others found that pregnancy, maternity leave and the return from maternity leave can be periods of upheaval and adjustment for women in the workplace and, if not properly managed by all stakeholders, can lead to the loss of talented women from organisations. The purpose of the Toolkit is to assist employers in proactively and positively managing their workforce during pregnancy, maternity leave and upon return from maternity leave. IBEC also keeps members fully briefed on issues in relation to the implementation of the Maternity Leave legislation through its website.

#### **Maternity Leave**

209. Although not dealt with in any detail in the NWS, the issue of family leave and flexible working arrangements is central to the economic engagement of women. The European Commission has proposed a draft Directive to the Council of Ministers which would provide for the extension of the minimum maternity leave entitlement across Europe to 18 weeks. Consultation with the European Parliament brought a call for an amendment, which has resulted in a block on progress at this time. The proposed amendment relates to the level of payment to be made to beneficiaries of maternity leave and the proposals are regarded by some Member States as being inappropriate to the current difficult budgetary period.
210. On a positive note, maternity leave in Ireland already exceeds this new time period proposed by the Commission. Maternity leave in Ireland was increased to 26 weeks in Budget 2006 with the eligible beneficiary mother receiving either a maternity support payment from her employer or a social welfare benefit which has both a lower and an upper limit, or a mix of both. Women in employment can opt to take up to 16 additional weeks without pay or a social welfare payment.
211. This period of leave exceeded, and continues to exceed, almost all European Member States, although the levels of remuneration may be somewhat higher proportionately in some Member States, albeit for much shorter periods. On the EU-17 group of countries<sup>29</sup>, only the UK offers a more generous system than Ireland and the average for that group is only 19 weeks, significantly skewed by the generous arrangements in the UK, which, if excluded, bring the EU-16 average down to 15 weeks.<sup>30</sup> Some of the CEEC countries which joined the EU in 2004 offer more generous leave arrangements.

<sup>28</sup> Ireland successfully sought a derogation on the Parental Leave Directive and now has until March 2013 to transpose the Directive.

<sup>29</sup> Member States before 2004, viz excluding the CEECs, Cyprus and Malta

<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that the State financial support per week on maternity benefit (following a short period of six weeks on 90 per cent of current pay) is about €160 in the UK compared with variable rates of between €217 and €282 per week in Ireland.

212. Studies on the gender pay gap suggest that long periods away from the labour market, for example on extended periods of maternity leave, can impact upon career progression and life time earnings. This also impacts on pension entitlements. Attitudes of employers to female employees are also influenced by such bias.
213. In 2012, 22,850 women availed of Maternity Benefit totalling almost €303.2 million, paid by the Department of Social Protection. Some of these women will also receive additional payments up to their full salaries from their employers while they were on maternity leave while many women in the public sector also receive their full salaries while they are on maternity leave, but they may not qualify for Maternity Benefit.
214. The birth rate in Ireland had increased over the past number of years, linked to demographic changes. The number of births increased from an average of about 61,500 per annum in the mid years of the last decade to reach 65,400 in 2006, and 75,000 in 2008 before falling slightly below this level in 2010 and 2011. As a result, the cost to the Exchequer of Maternity Benefit has increased from €181 million in 2006 to €324 million on 2010, but it fell slightly in 2011 and 2012 .

#### **Family Leaves**

215. As mentioned above, since the NWS was published, the issue of maternity leave, parental leave and the sharing of leaves between partners has been much explored at EU level. Time use surveys (including a limited survey in Ireland) have shown that women continue to carry out a disproportionate part of family caring duties even when their attachment to the labour market is similar to that of their partner.
216. A number of Member States make available short periods of paid or partly paid paternity leave to fathers. This enhances the culture of sharing of leave responsibilities, both at family level and also among employers. The availability of parental leave is also an incentive to the engagement of both parents in the sharing of work and caring. In Ireland, unpaid parental leave is available for up to 14 weeks before the child reaches eight years. Although there are no comprehensive “take up” statistics, evidence suggests that it is largely availed of by women.
217. Prominent men in the Scandinavian countries, including a number of Government Ministers, have availed of both paternity leave and parental leave, serving as excellent role models for other men and for employers. Recent UK Prime Ministers have also displayed a more open engagement with the sharing of responsibilities for family life which again endorses this important facet of modern life for both men and women if both are to optimise their career development, for the betterment of both family and the broader economy.
218. However there is little evidence of a similar culture change in Ireland if the evidence of take up by men of family friendly leave arrangements is regarded as a benchmark. There is a real need for enhanced efforts on the part of employers and unions/staff associations to be aware themselves of the benefits of and to promote awareness of the role of each partner in the two income family structure which now prevails in many countries and which is regarded as necessary to foster European growth and competitiveness.

#### **Recommendations**

*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 fathers of these leaves. This could be achieved by legislative means, making the sharing of some leaves mandatory, as is happening to a growing extent in other jurisdictions.*

*Secondly there is a 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.*

*Thirdly, there is a need for awareness raising campaigns to increase the numbers of men engaging in family friendly leave arrangements.*

## Objective 8-A - To improve the health status of women in Ireland through gender focused policies

ACTIONS
69. Incorporate a gender dimension into health policy planning at the earliest possible stage of development, e.g. the Cardiovascular Strategy
70. Ensure that the ongoing redevelopment of the health services structures includes representation of women at all decision-making levels
71. Update women's health structures in light of recent health reform in collaboration with the Health Service Executive and the Women's Health Council target
72. Put in place health policies and services that allow women full access (e.g. transport, childcare/ eldercare, privacy)
73. Put in place health policies and services to support carers (respite, Counselling, information, financial security)

219. The restructuring of a number of State Agencies in 2009 impacted upon two health focused agencies which impact upon women's health care. The Women's Health Council was subsumed into the Department of Health. The Crisis Pregnancy Agency was integrated into the Health Service Executive (HSE) as the Crisis Pregnancy Programme. While the former change may have impacted on the output of research and actions which specifically target women, as will be shown later the Crisis Pregnancy Programme continues to deliver a significant body of work.

### Gender Mainstreaming in the HSE

220. The HSE has initiated a major and welcome project on Gender Mainstreaming in Health Service Policy and Provision since the NWS was published. In 2010, the HSE finalised and approved a Health Inequalities Framework. A key component of the framework in terms of addressing health inequalities is addressing gender as a core determinant of health. The HSE has entered into a partnership with the National Women's Council of Ireland to explore gender mainstreaming within a health service context and to develop a robust tool which can be used by HSE staff at all levels when considering gender. For example it aims to ensure gender proofing mechanisms are taken into account in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all health policies.

221. The report, has drawn on approaches taken in other countries such as Canada, Sweden, the UK and Northern Ireland. It contains a summary of consultations carried out during 2011 with key stakeholders identified by the HSE Steering Committee and contains a review of existing national and international commitments that the Irish State has made in relation to gender mainstreaming. The document identifies how the health care system can embrace the principles of human rights, equality, respect and dignity and sets out clear mechanisms, approaches and practical advice to be adopted in the implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy.

### Recommendations

*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. 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.*

## Objective 8-B - to improve the physical health status of women in Ireland

ACTIONS
74. Extend Breast Check screening programme nationally
75. Extend the Cervical screening programme nationally
76. Treat women with breast cancer at specialist breast centres
77. The Women's Health Council and the National Cancer Registry of Ireland to conduct a study on older women and cancer in Ireland
78. Put measures in place to increase awareness about the incidence of cardiovascular disease among women, for both women themselves and for their health care providers
79. Make women and their health care providers aware of the different manifestations of cardiovascular disease among women
80. Introduce appropriate gender sensitive diagnostic measures of cardiovascular disease
81. Use proven methods of treatment for cardiovascular disease to their full extent among women where appropriate
82. Increase access to cardiac rehabilitation programmes among women

### **Breast Cancer Screening**

222. There are approximately 2,700 breast cancers diagnosed in Ireland each year. Each of the specialist centres serves a population of 500,000. Each centre diagnoses a critical number of patients to justify its specialist designation. Triple assessment is provided to patients on their first appointment. The NCCP has developed a Programmatic approach to the delivery of radiotherapy services.
223. Between February 2000 (when BreastCheck first began screening) and the end of November 2011, the programme has provided 826,210 mammograms to 368,851 women and has detected 5,071 cancers. The Annual Report of BreastCheck published in 2011, shows that during 2010 and early 2011, 120,730 women attended for their BreastCheck mammogram and the acceptance rate of invitation to screening again surpassed the BreastCheck target of 70 per cent. Of all women screened, 5,504 were re-called for assessment following their initial screening mammogram and 814 women had a breast cancer detected, representing 6.74 cancers for every 1,000 women screened. A further 128,000 women were screened in 2012.
224. In 2010, the major increase in the numbers of women invited and screened was in those invited or screened for the second or subsequent time. In 2010, 46,405 women were screened by BreastCheck for the first time and 74,325 women had previously had at least one BreastCheck mammogram. In 2009, 65,572 of the women screened were invited for their first mammogram and 55,588 women had previously had at least one BreastCheck mammogram. This increase in the number of women screened for the subsequent time, reflects the completion of the first round of the national expansion of BreastCheck.
225. Among those who have previously not attended their screening appointment, the acceptance rate is low and continues to fall, due to persistent nonattendance by some women who neither attend nor formally opt-out of the programme. As a result they continue to be invited for screening. Among those women who have previously attended and are re-invited for subsequent screening, the acceptance rates continue to be high.
226. Accordingly while the take up rate is ahead of the target of 70 per cent, a significant number of women still do not avail of this service, thereby placing their health at risk.
227. The breast cancer treatment service has now been reorganised in accordance with the Health Policy and the NWS and all breast cancer diagnostic and surgical services are delivered at eight hospitals nationwide with an additional outreach service in Letterkenny .
228. Work on the TREAT Study on older women and cancer is ongoing. Some results were presented at conferences during 2011 and the results of the extensive interview process are now being analysed in order to inform future policy decisions.

### **Delivery of Breast Cancer Care**

229. The breast cancer treatment service has now been reorganised in accordance with the Health Policy and the NWS and all breast cancer diagnostic and surgical services are delivered at eight hospitals nationwide with an additional outreach service in Letterkenny.

### **Cervical Screening**

230. The National Cancer Screening Service Annual Report advises that CervicalCheck became available to over 1.1 million eligible women aged 25-60 on 1 September 2008. The aim of CervicalCheck is to reduce the incidence and mortality rate of cervical cancer by detecting changes on the cells of the cervix before they become cancerous. Over time, based on a target uptake of 80 per cent, a successful national, quality assured cervical screening programme, has the potential to significantly reduce incidence and mortality rates of cervical cancer in the screened population, by as much as 80 per cent.
231. Since its launch on 1 September 2008, CervicalCheck has proved successful, with on average 1,000 women availing of a free smear test per day. During its first year of operation, CervicalCheck operated an open access system of invitation, to ensure that the initial expected interest from women could be effectively accommodated. At that time, any woman who wanted to avail of a free smear test could arrange an appointment with a registered smear taker of her choice.

232. In September 2011, CervicalCheck completed its first three year screening round. Since the launch of the programme in September 2008 to the end of August 2011, almost 950,000 smear tests have been processed and more than 720,000 eligible women aged 25-60 have had at least one free CervicalCheck smear test. In 2012, 323,961 women received at least one smear test with Cervical Check and an electronic referral system was established for colposcopy services, to reduce unnecessary testing,
233. As proven internationally, the next step was to introduce and establish an organised ‘call, re-call’ system of invitation. Further, following the first successful year of cervical screening it was essential that the programme focused on motivating those women who had not proactively attended for screening, by contacting them directly with an invitation for a free smear test, and encouraging them to attend.
234. The Programme for Government for National Recovery 2011-2016 also contains the following commitments in relation to cancer screening for women and girls:

*“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”.*

#### **Cardiovascular Care**

235. In relation to cardiovascular care, in May 2007, the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) and the Women’s Health Council published ‘*Cardiovascular Disease in Women – Quality in Practice Committee*’. The Report assesses the risk factors for Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) in women and outlines the gender differences in presentation, diagnosis and outcome. The Report notes that menopausal status can be a significant risk factor for CVD in women, with the incidence rising sharply after the menopause. The Report also notes that “Symptoms arising from myocardial ischaemia in women may be difficult to diagnose because they may present ‘atypically’ (the ‘typical’ symptoms having been classically taken from studies on men), with the following: shoulder, neck or abdominal pain; nausea; fatigue and dyspnoea” and as such “women are more likely to delay seeking medical care when their symptoms do not match their expectations”.
236. The Department of Health launched “Changing cardiovascular health: Cardiovascular Health Policy 2010-2019” in 2010. This policy establishes a framework for the prevention, detection and treatment of cardiovascular diseases, which seeks to ensure an integrated and quality assured approach in their management, so as to reduce the burden of these conditions. It set out a model for stroke care including rehabilitation through an integrated service.
237. In addition, the Policy acknowledges the key role that primary care plays in raising awareness, in risk assessment, and management of cardiovascular disease. The Policy identifies the need for Primary Care Teams to support patients with or in danger of developing a cardiovascular disease. A shift to community based care is envisaged for such patients, with Primary Care Teams providing structured proactive care supported by specialist ambulance services.
238. The policy document identifies a number of significant factors contributing to cardio-vascular illness in Ireland. These will be mentioned in the paragraphs under objective 8 – E, as they pertain to factors which relate to healthy lifestyles.

#### **Recommendations**

*Specific programmes should 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.*

*The development of cardio-vascular 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.*



## Objective 8-C - To improve the reproductive and sexual health status of women in Ireland

ACTIONS
83. Ensure that all women have access to information on fertility; contraception and sexual health matters
84. Develop framework to ensure geographical equity of access to contraceptive services for women
85. Offer screening programmes for sexually transmitted infections regularly
86. Provide increased information on sexual and reproductive wellbeing through the SPHE programme in schools
87. Ensure that ante-natal care, maternity services and post-natal care are woman-centred
88. Ensure that information and counselling services are available in cases of crisis pregnancy
89. Ensure that information is available to all women on health, wellbeing and other relevant advice in relation to menopause

239. As mentioned previously, the Crisis Pregnancy Agency has been integrated into the HSE as the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme (CPP). The CPP continues to deliver a significant body of work which aims to reduce the incidence of crisis pregnancy including abortion among women living in Ireland. The estimated abortion rate (number of abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44) has fallen from 7.5 in 2001 to 4.8 in 2008 and to 4.1 in 2011. 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.
240. Since the publication of the NWS, the case of *A, B and C –v – Ireland* was heard in the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights. Three applicants, A,B and C, all of whom had crisis pregnancies, brought proceedings against Ireland before the European Court of Human Rights claiming violations of Articles 2, 3, 8, 14 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
241. In its judgment delivered on 16 December 2010 the Grand Chamber determined that there had been no violation of the Convention in relation to the first and second applicants, Ms. A and Ms. B. The Grand Chamber determined that there had been a violation of Article 8 of the Convention in relation to applicant Ms. C.
242. As indicated in its Action Plan filed on 16 June 2011, Ireland committed to ensuring that the judgment in this case is implemented expeditiously. The Government committed to establish an expert group, drawing on appropriate medical and legal expertise with a view to making recommendations to Government on how this matter should be properly addressed. In the Action Plan the Government also indicated that it would, by the end of 2011, submit an Action Report outlining the Expert Group's detailed terms of reference, membership and meeting schedule. The Expert Group was established by the end of January 2012 and tasked to report back to Government within six months on the following issues:
- To examine the *A, B and C v Ireland* judgment of the European Court of Human Rights;
  - to elucidate its implications for the provision of health care services to pregnant women in Ireland;
  - to recommend a series of options on how to implement the judgment taking into account the constitutional, legal, medical, and ethical considerations.

The new legislation was passed in the Dáil and Seanad in Summer 2012, regularising the legal position in accordance with the Constitutional position as had been approved by Referendum previously.

### Contraception Campaigns

243. The CPP has been very active, since its establishment, in the development and the delivery of cutting edge information campaigns on all aspects of fertility, contraception and sexual health matters. Their age appropriate campaigns target different age groups, from teenagers through to older women and use a range of media, including television, leafleting and innovative campaigns

to young people at sports and music events. The three principal age groups targeted by the campaigns are as follows:

#### **Adolescent Girls**

244. In December 2009, the Agency launched **b4udecide**, an education and information initiative that aims to encourage teenage girls (and boys) to make healthy, responsible decisions about relationships and sex. The website, [www.b4udecide.ie](http://www.b4udecide.ie), features quizzes, polls and video interviews with young people on forming healthy relationships, dealing with peer pressure and why it's better for young people to wait until they are older before having sex for the first time. A section on the website, called "The Facts" deals with the age of consent, contraception, STIs and crisis pregnancy. Visitors to the website can also view interviews with professionals who work in the fields of sexual health, youth work, and counselling. In 2011, lesson plans for youth workers and teachers to assist them in delivering Relationships and Sexuality Education in the classroom and youth work settings were launched and disseminated. The CPP attends relevant events for young people to showcase the **b4udecide**.ie regularly. It has also developed educational material for teachers and youth workers to accompany the campaign.
245. In this regard, it is interesting to note that, while the total number of births to all women rose from 70,620 in 2007 to 73,742 in 2010, the number of births to teenagers (women under 20) decreased from 2,505 in 2007 to 1,720 in 2011. This represents a decrease of just under 45 per cent in the number of teen pregnancies recorded in 2000 (3,116).

#### **Women in early adulthood**

246. The CPP continues to deliver the 'Think Contraception' campaign, aimed at sexually active young women and men aged 18-24 years. This campaign, comprising of TV and cinema ads and outreach activities, aims to promote consistent use of contraception, is well recognized among the target audience and has maintained high awareness levels of approx. 80% since 2002. Leaflets are distributed through pharmacies, GP surgeries and to Student Health Centres. Mass dissemination of 'Think Contraception Protection Packs' (which includes a sexual health leaflet and a condom) takes place annually in various locations around the country including the Oxegen music festival, colleges, universities, pubs and clubs.

#### **Women aged 35-55**

247. The CPP has developed 'Contraception 35-55'; a leaflet on contraception, fertility and sexual health information for women 35 – 55 years of age. This leaflet is disseminated through GP surgeries, pharmacies and directly to women at various national events. It provides information on sexual and reproductive health issues for women between the ages of 35 and 55, including menstrual cycle changes, fertility changes and the peri-menopause. This was the most popular HSE CPP resource disseminated by [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie) in 2010.
- 
248. In relation to the availability of contraception, in its previous Strategy, the CPP committed to improving access to and information on contraception and contraceptive services particularly for groups at risk of crisis pregnancy. The CPP has provided funding for ongoing and pilot models of service delivery to improve access to contraceptive services, to increase take-up of services, and to promote consistent and correct contraceptive use – particularly among at-risk groups.
249. Since early 2011, the licence of a brand of emergency contraception available in Ireland was changed from prescription only (PO) to over the counter (OTC). This change made emergency contraception available from pharmacists nationwide without a prescription. The CPP has worked collaboratively and proactively with stakeholders to ensure its availability is effectively and correctly communicated with a view to unlock the potential of Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC) to reduce unplanned pregnancies in Ireland.

#### **General Practitioner Training**

250. Since the publication of the NWS, the CPP has been working with the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP), funding GP training in Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC). The three year pilot programme (2008-2010) to develop standards for GPs in relation to training and insertion of all LARC devices was evaluated and in 2011 the ICGP began to roll out the training nationally through phases 1 and 2. Certification is being provided to GPs who have significant experience in LARC methods and who are adhering to best practice standards as set out during the

pilot project and it is hoped that a number of these may go on to become tutors. Phase 1 and 2 combined will enable the rollout of training to GP trainees and to GPs who have no experience in LARC methods. The programme aims to work towards the development of an ongoing education programme for GPs on a national basis, which will result in the award of an Advanced Certificate in Contraception. The aim is to increase the quality of, access to and the safety of contraceptive services for patients.

### STIs

251. The Annual Report 2012 of the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) shows that in 2012, a total of 12,719 Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) were reported in Ireland, an increase of over 127 per cent on the 2009 data. Males accounted for 55.6 per cent of all notifications and females for 42.8 per cent (gender was unknown in 1.6 per cent of notifications). The table below shows the notifications of STIs by gender and age group in 2012 .

NOTIFICATION OF STIS BY GENDER AND AGE GROUP 2012

Sexually Transmitted Infections	Gender			Age Group					TOTAL
	Male	Female	Not known	0-19 yrs	20- 29 yrs	30-39 yrs	40+yrs	Not known	
Total	7070	5440	209	1441	7523	2462	1254	39	12719
% of Total STIs	55.6	42.8	1.6	11.3	59.1	19.4	9.9	0.3	

Source:Annual Report 2012 Health Protection Surveillance Centre HSE

### Relationships and Sexuality Education

252. Social Personal and Health Education, which includes relationships and sexuality education, is a mandatory programme in primary and junior cycle education. In senior cycle, all schools are required to provide an RSE programme. The Department of Education issued a circular in 2010 to all post primary schools reminding them of their obligations in this area and of the training and resources available. An SPHE Journal focusing specifically on Relationships and Sexuality Education was finalised in electronic form in 2010. It was made available on the SPHE website in electronic form for all post primary schools. Recent survey<sup>31</sup> findings show that young people are more likely to receive sex education now than in the past. Of those who received sex education, approximately 90% of 18-25 year olds said that they received it in school, compared with 80% of 26-35 year olds. The quality of the sex education they received has also increased.
253. The TRUST pack, a relationships and sexuality education (RSE) resource for senior cycle students in post – primary schools, was developed in 2008 through a partnership between the Department of Education and Science, the HSE and the HSE CPP. The resource contains lessons on human reproduction and fertility, contraceptive methods, unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and transmission and is available to SPHE teachers through TRUST training. This resource continues to be rolled out in post primary schools nationwide.

### Crisis Pregnancy Counselling

254. Since 2001, crisis pregnancy counselling services have been expanded nationally. The ‘Positive Options’ campaign is aimed at all women, but particularly 18-24 year old women, to raise awareness of State-funded crisis pregnancy counselling services. It promotes the availability of free, non judgemental counselling services. Awareness is high with 72 per cent of the target audience aware of the “Positive Options” Campaign and its messages. “Positive Options” leaflets and wallet cards are distributed, primarily to GP surgeries and pharmacies, while a website and text messaging service are also used as is advertising in the Golden Pages nationwide. The campaign was re-developed and re-launched during 2011 with newly executed TV, radio, poster and online advertising.
255. To ensure a high standard in service delivery, funding was provided to improve standards through training and supervision and for the ongoing delivery of the Crisis Pregnancy Counselling Skills Course with the National University of Ireland Maynooth and associated alumnae seminar.
256. The website [www.abortionaftercare.ie](http://www.abortionaftercare.ie) was developed to generate awareness of post-abortion medical check-ups and counselling available free of charge to women who have had an abortion abroad. The website was advertised through online and print advertising. .

<sup>31</sup> Irish Contraception and Crisis Pregnancy Study, 2010. McBride et al, 2012.

257. The CPP has also commissioned the first stage of a project which envisages the design of Guidelines for counselling women with an intellectual disability who experience crisis pregnancy. The first stage is a review of the relevant literature which has now been completed and will inform the subsequent stages of the project. The National Disability Authority is partnering the CPP in this project.

#### **Maternity Care**

258. In relation to maternity care, since the publication of the NWS, work has commenced on each of the solution areas associated with the objectives of the HSE's Quality Clinical Care Directorate programme on Obstetrics and Gynaecology. These include increasing the number of patients attending for antenatal care for early pregnancy from 55% of total births in 2007 to 70% in 2012 and improving choice by developing and delivering new models of maternity care. The first guideline developed by the group, 'Ultrasound Diagnosis of Early Pregnancy Miscarriage', was finalised and released to the 19 maternity units in late 2010.

259. The HSE has rolled out campaigns in 2010 pertaining to Breastfeeding and Vitamin D. Ongoing training and support on ante and post-natal nutrition and on infant nutrition for healthcare workers is provided on an ongoing basis.

260. Maternity services consumer/staff groups were set up throughout the North East to identify and implement women's priorities; e.g.

- developing women friendly protocols;
- promote improved services for ethnic minorities;
- funding for breastfeeding support groups;
- providing UNICEF peer breast feeding training in collaboration with Public Health Nurses;
- improving quality of antenatal clinics, improve waiting times and facilities; and
- providing practical and professional advice and support to consolidate and strengthen current parent, baby and toddler support groups.

#### **Menopause**

261. The Menopause Guide was published in 2008 as one of the actions identified from research done by the Women's Health Council (subsumed into the Department of Health and Children in October 2009). The Manager for Information Resources in Health Promotion worked with the WHC to produce the resource and over 25,000 booklets were distributed through the storage and distribution facility of the HSE. The resource was distributed to Libraries, Citizen Information Centres, GPs, Women Centres, Community and Voluntary groups and to Health Promotion Departments.

#### **Recommendations**

*This successful programme of work on sexual and reproductive health should continue.*

#### **Objective 8 – D - To improve the mental health status of women in Ireland**

<b>ACTIONS</b>
90. Expand information on mental health in the SPHE programme in schools
91. Institute a regular community survey to monitor progress on mental health development
92. Provide counselling services through primary care referrals
93. Consider the introduction of awareness campaigns relating to mental health among women in the peri-natal period

262. Shortly before the NWS was published, the new Strategy for Mental Health, "A Vision for Change" had been published. It<sup>32</sup> recommended a comprehensive model for mental health service provision in Ireland to build and foster positive mental health across the entire community and for providing accessible community-based specialist services for people with mental illness.

<sup>32</sup> Department of Health and Children : A Vision for Change : Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy : 2006

263. Somewhat surprisingly, “A Vision for Change” did not include recommendations specific to the treatment of mental health illness in each gender. As the statistics in the table below show, there are quite significant differences in the diagnoses of admissions to the psychiatric services in Ireland.

#### Incidence of Psychiatric Illness

264. The table below shows a decrease in the number of hospital admissions of both sexes to psychiatric services over the period 2006 to 2012. This may well parallel the greater emphasis on community based interventions proposed in “A Vision for Change”. The statistics show that the reduction in admissions is slightly higher for men than for women and that women now account for 49.8 per cent of admissions.

ALL ADMISSIONS TO PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS BY GENDER AND DIAGNOSIS 2006 AND 2012

Diagnosis	2006			2012			% Increase (decrease)	
	Male	Female	Women as % of Total	Male	Female	Women as % of Total	Male	Female
Organic Mental Disorders	245	225	47.9%	241	216	47.3%	-1.6	-4.0
Alcoholic Disorders	1,763	1,004	36.3%	843	518	38.1%	-52.2	-48.4
Other Drug Disorders	508	155	23.4%	618	213	25.6%	21.7	37.4
Schizophrenia, Schizotypal and Delusional Disorders	2,499	1,476	37.1%	2,176	1,545	41.5%	-12.9	4.7
Depressive Disorders	2,415	3,503	59.2%	2,438	2,947	54.7%	1.0	-15.9
Mania	1,201	1,528	56.0%	924	1,173	55.9%	-23.1	-23.2
Neuroses	512	644	55.7%	745	812	52.2%	45.5	26.1
Eating Disorders	17	161	90.4%	13	186	93.5%	-23.5	15.5
Personality and Behavioural Disorders	264	457	63.4%	323	748	69.8%	22.3	63.7
Intellectual Disability	76	106	58.2%	44	20	31.3%	-42.1	-81.1
Developmental Disorders	12	8	40.0%	15	2	11.8%	25.0	-75.0
Behavioural and Emotional Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence	14	9	39.1%	12	3	20.0%	-14.3	-66.7
Other and Unspecified	732	754	50.7%	722	676	48.4%	-1.4	-10.3
TOTAL	10,258	10,030	49.4%	9,114	9,059	49.8%	-11.2	-9.7

Health Research Board: Activities of Irish Psychiatric Services

265. The table also shows some interesting trends in relation to the diagnosis causing the admission. “Depressive Disorders” is the principal cause of admission for both men and for women, with almost 56 per cent of these admissions being women. Men on the other hand account for about 58 per cent of admissions for “schizophrenia, schizotypal and delusional disorders” and for “alcoholic disorders.” That said, there has been an increase in the comparative percentage of women being admitted for both “alcoholic disorders” and for “other drug disorders”, although admissions for alcoholic disorders have decreased by more than half for men and marginally less than half for women.
266. Admissions of women for “other drug disorders” increased by over 37 per cent since 2006 (compared with an increase of 21.6 per cent for men) although women still only account for 26 per cent of all admission for this diagnosis. Admissions of women for eating disorders has also increased significantly (+15.5 per cent for women) over the past six years and these accounted for 186 female admissions in 2010 (compared with 161 female admissions six years earlier).

#### Gender Mainstreaming in Mental Health Services

267. The National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCI) has been allocated funding by the Health Service Executive (HSE) to undertake a pilot project on gender mainstreaming in the area of mental health which will take place during 2013. This is part of the implementation of the recommendations of the soon to be published HSE/NWCI Gender Mainstreaming Framework document which aims to integrate a gender dimension into HSE health service policy, planning and service delivery.

#### Mental Health Awareness

268. The HSE consulted with the general public on their attitudes to mental health. '*Mental Health in Ireland- Awareness and Attitudes*' was published in 2007 as a baseline survey for the HSE Your Mental Health campaign and a further baseline study in 2009 relating to young people. '*Young People and Mental Health – A National Survey*'.
269. The HSE runs two mental health awareness campaigns, the first aimed at the general population [www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie) and a second aimed at young people [www.letsomeoneknow.ie](http://www.letsomeoneknow.ie). These campaigns began in 2007 (general) and 2009 (young people) and continue to be rolled out.
270. '*Working Things Out Through SPHE*' was launched in 2010 as a resource aimed at promoting the mental and emotional health of young people. It was developed by the Mater Hospital Child and Adolescent Health Service under the leadership of Professor Carol Fitzpatrick and the SPHE Support Service. The resource consists of a DVD and a number of accompanying lessons and is supported by training for teachers. Further development is currently under way through an interdepartmental committee involving the National Office for Suicide Prevention, the National Educational Psychological Service, the HSE, and the education sector to develop a framework for schools on promoting positive mental health.
271. Although not specifically targeting women, the “See Change” campaign has been influential in promoting the removal of the stigma which has long been associated with mental illness in Ireland. The campaign aims to positively change social attitudes and behaviour, to inspire people to challenge their beliefs about mental illness and to be more open in their attitudes and behaviour and to encourage people in distress to seek help. A network of national and local organisations across the country carries the anti-stigma message through local broadcasts, local print media and a range of other activities.
272. The need for additional funds for the implementation of “A Vision for Change” was acknowledged by the Government through Budget 2012 which has provided a special allocation of €35m for mental health in line with the Programme for Government. These resources are likely to contribute to the achievement of the commitments contained in the NWS.

#### **Perinatal Mental Health**

273. Perinatal mental health has been the focus of work by both regional parts of the HSE and the Irish College of General Practitioners since the NWS was published. While apparently quite localized, this work has resulted in awareness raising campaigns, in multi-disciplinary training in the prevention, identification and management of post-natal depression for health service practitioners and the development of dedicated support groups.
274. The HSE has translated a post-natal depression booklet to languages suggested by the language hub and has distributed to health care professionals and maternity hospitals for dissemination.
275. As an issue affecting very large numbers of women across the whole country, it would be desirable if a more centralized approach were taken to the development of a national policy to address this issue to ensure that women in all parts of the country have access to services and supports from appropriately trained health practitioners in the event that they experience post-natal depression. This might be linked to an outreach service, awareness of which might be circulated to women as they leave a maternity facility.

#### **Recommendations**

*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.*

*Secondly, it is recommended that additional and visible programmes to support perinatal depression be undertaken to support sufferers and to raise awareness of the condition.*

## Objective 8-E - To promote healthy life styles for the women in Ireland

ACTIONS
94. Emphasise the importance of exercise in life-skills programmes
95. Tailor and promote physical recreation initiatives specifically for women as a healthy lifestyle option, especially for teenage girls
96. Promote positive messages about eating more fruit/ vegetables/ fish
97. Encourage greater participation of women in sports activities at local level and in mass participation events such as mini-marathons through facilitation of year-round training groups
98. Encourage women in the older age groups to engage in low impact exercise programmes including walking, yoga and pilates to ensure sustained fitness into old age and to diminish the risk of osteoporosis
99. Increase access to healthier food choices, targeting in particular less well off women and women in the workplace
100. Introduce media campaigns to reduce smoking and drinking specifically targeting young women
101. Continue smoking cessation programmes

276. Successive Progress Reports on the implementation of the NWS show significant different interventions which aim to promote healthy lifestyles for women in Ireland. These include, among others:

- the development of specific recommendations in relation to physical activity, laying out guidance for different age cohorts,
- the development of healthy eating guidelines,
- a three year national obesity campaign,
- a campaign by the HSE, in partnership with Crosscare on increasing access to healthier food choices particularly for less well off women and women in the workplace. The peer led food poverty programmes “Healthy Food Made Easy” and “Cook It” were delivered across the four HSE areas,
- Since May 2011, Safefood has promoted its ‘Stop the Spread’ campaign, a two-year all-island broadcast media campaign asking all adults on the island of Ireland to find out what their waist size is and to promote awareness of the less than optimal sizes. The campaign is also supported by pharmacies and chemists.

### Weight awareness

277. Despite these ongoing campaigns and interventions, research suggests a significant increase in overweightness and obesity in the intervening period. The SLÁN 2007 Survey provided the first national assessment of measured BMI in adults, aged 18 and over.<sup>33</sup> Overall, 38 per cent of the population were identified as being overweight (44 per cent men and 31 per cent women) while a further 23 per cent were identified as being obese (22 per cent men and 23 per cent women).

278. Another comparative study, undertaken by an Alliance of the Universities, shows a time line for levels of obesity and overweightness over a twenty year period. This study looks at men and women in the age group 18 to 64 years only.

**Degree of Overweightness and Obesity among Irish Adults aged 18 - 64 years 1990 to 2011**

Weight level	Male			Female			Increase/Decrease since 2001	
	1990	2001	2011	1990	2001	2011	Male	Female
Underweight to Normal	41.4	33.6	33.3	58.7	51.5	47.8	-0.9	-7.2
Overweight	50.8	46.3	43.8	28.2	32.5	30.9	-5.4	-4.9
Obese	7.8	20.1	25.8	12.9	15.9	21.3	28.4	34.0

(2) Source: Irish Universities Nutrition Analysis using WHO BMI Analysis

279. As the table above shows, more than half of all women of working age (and two thirds of men in the same age group) are now at least overweight. The levels of obesity for both sexes have increased considerably among both women and men in the past ten years with an increase of over a third in the proportion of obese women, resulting in over 1 in 5 women and 1 in 4 men being

<sup>33</sup> Department of Health Slán Survey, quoted in the National Cardio-Vascular Strategy 2011.

obese. With evidence of women's making key consumption decisions within the household there is a significant need to take further firm steps to create awareness of this issue.

280. Indeed, the linkage between these goals and the objective of decreasing the incidence of cardiovascular disease (objective 8 – B) cannot be disregarded. In this regard a repetition of some of the key comments in the National Cardiovascular Strategy are meritorious:

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable mortality, with Ireland ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> highest for smoking-related causes of death in the EU15. While the smoking ban in the workplace introduced in 2005 has significantly reduced exposure to secondary smoke, smoking rates for adults are still high – at 29% (31% of men and 27% of women).
- Average daily salt intake is significantly above the recommended amount, men currently consuming 10g/day of salt and women 9g/day. Most dietary salt comes from foods as purchased (e.g. takeaways, processed 'ready-make' meals) rather than from adding salt in cooking or at the table.
- Levels of physical activity among the population are inadequate. For example, only 55% of SLÁN 2007 respondents reported being physically active according to the following definition: 'Taking part in exercise or sport 2-3 times per week for 20 or more minutes at a time or engaged in more general activities such as walking, dancing or cycling, 4-5 times per week accumulating to at least 30 minutes per day'<sup>34</sup>. Men were found to take part more frequently and in more strenuous physical activity than women. However, over one-fifth of adults (22%) reported being completely *inactive*, with lack of interest or 'no time' being given as the main reasons for this.

#### Smoking, alcohol and drugs

281. New cases of lung cancer in women have increased by 17.6 per cent in 2010, whereas breast cancer cases are increasing at a much lower rate. Lung cancer is now the biggest cancer killer for both men and women with 1,708 people dying in 2010 (1,006 men and 702 women). Breast cancer deaths for the same period numbered 634. Smoking is the key cause of lung cancer and the number of cases is expected to grow each year as we see the effect of increasing numbers of women smoking over the past twenty years take hold. For the first time, more women in Ireland are dying from lung cancer than breast cancer. Almost one in three women in Ireland now smoke. The burden of smoking related illness is being carried by disadvantaged women. More than half of disadvantaged women aged 18-29 smoke. This is twice the rate of non-disadvantaged groups. The poorest women in Ireland have a rate of lung cancer incidence which is almost twice that of the richest<sup>35</sup>.

282. Successive NWS Reports have also reported initiatives to decrease levels of smoking, alcohol and drug use. The ongoing incidence of usage of all three substances is explored in the next table (opposite) which is drawn from the cross-Border Drug Use in Ireland Report. The statistics included here relate to drug usage in the Republic of Ireland in the previous year only.

Prevalence of drug use in Previous Year in Ireland by Gender 2006/7 and 2010/11

Drug type	Male		Female		%Inc/Dec since 2010	
	2006/07	2010/11	2006/07	2010/11	Male	Female
Any illegal drug	9.8	10.4	4.7	3.6	6.1	-23.4
Sedatives or tranquilisers	3.7	5.7	5.7	7.3	54.1	28.1
Anti-depressants	3.0	4.0	5.7	5.6	33.3	-1.8
Tobacco	36.8	35.7	35.8	29.4	-3.0	-17.9
Alcohol	86.4	87.5	81.7	83.2	1.3	1.8

Source : National Drugs Advisory Board 2011

283. The table suggests a decrease in the use by women of illegal substances, with female users less than a third of male users. Women's use of tobacco may also have fallen, to just under 30 per cent. The use

<sup>34</sup> (Morgan *et al*, 2008)

<sup>35</sup> Statistics courtesy of the Irish Cancer Society, from the lung cancer data 2009 and 2010 National Cancer Registry of Ireland (Annual Report 2011).



of alcohol increased slightly for both men and women with a marginally higher increase in usage of alcohol by women. Although low in their baseline usage when compared to use of tobacco and alcohol, the use of sedatives, tranquilisers and anti-depressants has increased over the past four years, but more particularly among men although women remain the higher consumers of each of these medications.

284. The need for ongoing programmes to address all of these issues is obvious. The costs to the economy of illness related to all of these abuses and the need for long term medical care is already widely recognized. However campaigns have to date been less than successful in creating awareness of the issues in terms of both national and personal loss.

**Recommendations**

*As mentioned previously there is a need to continue awareness raising programmes for women on health issues, particularly in relation to weight, which is a contributory factor to health outcomes.*

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

ACTIONS
102. Undertake research on mass participation events such as Women’s Mini-Marathon
103. Implement recommendations based on findings of this research
104. Encourage more women to take up volunteer positions in National Governing Bodies (NGBs) in sport
105. Hold two “Women in Sport” networking/information-sharing sessions per year
106. Develop a resource for use in NGBs to encourage women to take up senior positions
107. Develop “Women in Sport” coaching projects to advanced coaching levels
108. Provide targeted funding to NGBs for special initiatives to attract/retain women's involvement in sport
109. Inform women about their possible participation in mass participation events
110. Inform women about local sports structures and opportunities to participate in their areas
111. Increase capacity of organisations to deliver programmes to women and girls
112. Develop awareness of the “Women in Sport” brand associated with projects under the initiative
113. Promote participation of “Women in Sport” by highlighting opportunities and good practice on Irish Sports Council Website and in mass media.

285. Over the past four years, the Irish Sports Council has reported considerable activity in relation to the increased engagement of women in sport. This has included a very significant number of sports events for women at both competitive and non-competitive events and the engagement of women in sports management.

286. While the Irish Sports Council website contains significant material on the outcomes of women’s competitive sport at national and international levels, the decision of the Irish Sports Council to migrate its resources on its “women in sport” programme to one social medium only confines access to this information to those who are willing to sign up to that social networking medium. For example the website states that

*Funding dedicated to the Women in Sport programme has increased year on year from €750K in 2005 to €2.2 million in 2008. Most of this funding is targeted towards programmes rolled out by both National Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Sports Partnerships as the delivery agents for sport and physical activity for the Irish Sports Council. There has been a tremendous amount of goodwill and support for the Women in Sport Programme from both sporting organisations and participants alike.*

However all additional material and more up to date material is apparently only available on “Facebook”.

**Recommendation**

**The Irish Sports Council should ensure that material on its “Women and Sport Programme” should be available on both its website and on a social media site to ensure that it reaches the widest possible number of women.**

**Objective 10 - To ensure the health and safety of pregnant and breast feeding women at work**

ACTIONS
114. Where risks to pregnant and breast feeding women occur, ensure that all employers include an assessment of these risks as an element of the Safety Statement
115. Continue to create awareness of potential hazards to pregnant and breast feeding mothers within the work place

287. The HSE has appointed a New National Breastfeeding Co-ordinator whose role is to advocate for development of workplace breastfeeding policy. This appointment has also contributed to a number of campaigns to promote breastfeeding. The most recent campaign sought to highlight that:

- Breastfeeding is the perfect way to feed children and also fits in with the demands of modern life;
- Women should be supported to continue to breastfeed for as long as they wish;
- We can all work together to encourage greater social acceptance of this important and natural practice when women are out and about.

288. A campaign was launched in 2009 by the HSE Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Committee (BSIC) to increase breastfeeding rates in Ireland by two per cent a year. In June 2011, the ESRI published the Perinatal Statistics Report 2009, which showed inter alia that 45 per cent of babies were exclusively breastfed at discharge from hospital, compared to 44 per cent in 2005 and 38 per cent in 2000. Breastfeeding was found to be more common than artificial feeding when mothers were aged thirty years and older. The presence of exclusive breastfeeding at discharge from hospital varied by geographic location with infants born to mothers in county Dublin reporting the highest rate of breastfeeding. Mothers in a higher professional occupation recorded breastfeeding rates of over 63.3 per cent compared to the lowest rate for unemployed mothers of whom only 27.4 per cent breastfed.

289. The issues of “women’s welfare at work” and the “safety of women during pregnancy” do not appear as prominently as previously on the Health and Safety Authority web-site. It is recommended that this be addressed by the Authority as it creates a useful awareness of the issue among employers and employees if it appears prominently on the website.

**Recommendations**

*Work should continue to raise the profile of the issues of health and safety for pregnant and breast-feeding women.*

**Objective 11 - To protect women from bullying and harassment in the workplace**

ACTIONS
116. Preparation of a revised Code of Practice for employers and employees in the prevention and resolution of bullying at work
117. Media campaigns to promote awareness of bullying
118. Further consideration of bullying and harassment under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
119. Identify and gather better statistics and indicators in relation to the incidence of bullying

290. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) published the ‘*Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work*’ in 2007. Each year the HSA publishes statistics on the numbers of inspections of bullying policies carried out in companies with more than 50 employees. There is evidence to suggest that there is a policy place in a significant number of the companies inspected. (This was at 94 per cent in the 550 inspections carried out in 2008 and at 87 per cent among the 607 company inspections carried out in 2012).

291. There was also evidence of the retention of records of bullying instances among the firms inspected. A third of the firms inspected in 2010 had records of incidents, although this represents a downward swing from the previous year, when 63 per cent of the companies inspected had

records of bullying complaints. This would appear to endorse the view that bullying is quite widespread in the workplace. Gender disaggregated data on the complainants are not available from this source.

292. The Equality Authority continues to receive queries from members of the public each year in relation to harassment and has advised from its records that some three quarters of queries in relation to harassment under both the Employment Equality Acts and under the Equal Status Acts come from women. In June 2012 a revised Code of Practice for the prevention of harassment in the workplace was published by the Equality Authority following consultation with IBEC, ICTU and other relevant organisations.

**Recommendations**

*Work place settings should continue to address the issues of bullying and harassment.*

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

<b>ACTIONS</b>
120. Establish an Executive Office under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to provide a well co-ordinated “whole of Government” response to violence against women and domestic violence
121. Augment the research team in the National Crime Council to enable it to provide dedicated research to support the Government response to Violence against Women
122. Ensure that the voluntary and statutory frontline services address the needs of victims of domestic violence and dependent family members
123. Ensure that essential supports are available to all recent victims of sexual violence on a 24-hour basis
124. Personnel of all health services to be trained to fully understand the impact of sexual, emotional and physical abuse
125. Provide emergency accommodation for women forced to leave their homes because of domestic violence
126. Implement the recommendations of the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women (NSCVaW) subgroup on treatment services for victims of rape and sexual assault.
127. Promote effective criminal justice responses, including any necessary legislative responses.
128. Implement the findings of the 2005 review of Garda policy on domestic violence
129. Provide funding for the development, operation and ongoing monitoring of effective intervention programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence
130. Develop and expand Sex Offender Treatment Programmes
131. Develop appropriate media and other strategies which ensure that victims of Violence against Women (VaW) are aware of the services available in their area
132. Provide funding to the NSCVaW and to local and regional groups to undertake awareness raising initiatives
133. Develop targeted campaigns to raise awareness of VaW amongst a wide audience, including the general public, service providers and all agencies within the criminal justice system

**Institutional Arrangements to address Violence against Women**

293. Six Government Departments, their agencies and up to 100 NGOs are involved in work relevant to the prevention and alleviation of domestic and sexual abuse. State action to tackle violence against women was significantly enhanced by the 2007 decision to establish a dedicated office for this purpose.
294. Cosc, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, was established in June 2007 as an executive office of the Department of Justice and Equality. Cosc is an Irish word meaning to stop or prevent. The key responsibility of the office is to ensure the delivery of a well co-ordinated "whole of Government" response to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. The work of Cosc covers issues relating to such violence against both women and men, including older people.

**National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence**

295. Cosc, in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders in government and non-governmental organisations, developed the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence

for the period 2010 to 2014. The Government approved the Strategy in January 2010 and it was launched in March of that year. Cosc is responsible for driving implementation of the strategy and a high-level group chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of Justice and Equality monitors progress on implementation. Copies of the National Strategy and progress reports are published on the Cosc website ([www.cosc.ie](http://www.cosc.ie)).

296. The National Strategy is a statement of Government priority actions to address domestic, sexual and gender-based violence in Ireland in the five-year period from early 2010 to the end of 2014. The Strategy sets out a plan for ‘whole-of-government’ action for a more effective system to tackle these types of violence. The Strategy aims to provide a strong framework for sustainable intervention to prevent and effectively respond to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. It presents evidence to help understand the complexities of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and to inform the development of responses. The model chosen for the Strategy focuses on primary and secondary intervention while placing an emphasis on co-ordinated impact assessment and the generation of evidence on which policy and service planning is firmly based.
297. The High-Level Goals cascade down into detailed ‘on the ground’ activity through 14 key objectives, 23 actions and 59 activities. Progress indicators and structures for implementation are also set out by the Strategy.
298. The four High-Level Goals of the strategy are:
- To promote a culture of prevention and recognition through increased understanding of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.
  - To deliver an effective and consistent service to those affected.
  - To ensure greater effectiveness of policy and service planning.
  - To ensure efficient and effective implementation of the strategy.
299. The National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010 – 2014 contains a specific action the aim of which is to improve data on domestic and sexual violence. A Data Committee has been established to progress this work and it comprises representatives of the Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Health Service Executive, the Central Statistics Office and the Probation Service.
300. This work is already highlighting the importance of data across a wide range of activities relating to violence against women. It is intended that improvements in this area will lead to greater effectiveness of policy and service planning, in addition to informing the monitoring and reviews of the implementation of the strategy. A significant body of research has also been completed to inform the Strategy and subsequent policy decisions.
301. During 2012, Cosc undertook a mid-term review of its Strategy and as a result of the review the targets attached to activities were recalibrated.

**Services to address Violence against Women**

302. The Garda Síochána Domestic Violence Intervention Policy was updated in early 2008 and is available on the Garda website ([www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)) for access by the general public. An information sheet on personal safety in relation to Domestic Violence, presented in a practical and accessible format, is made available on the website of An Garda Síochána and in Garda stations. The Garda Policy on Domestic Violence emphasises the need for the investigating garda to provide accurate advice on legal and other support services. The advice should include information on both state and non-state services.
303. The Garda policy on the investigation of sexual crimes was updated in March 2010. This policy is also available to the public on the Garda website. Other policy documents and information sheets are available on the Garda website, including comprehensive guidelines on sexual assault treatment services and investigation processes.
304. The Prosecution Policy Unit was formed within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) in 2008. Domestic, sexual and gender based violence have been identified as priority

areas of prosecution policy. The development of policy guidelines providing detailed advice to Prosecutors on how to implement legislation on violence against women is on-going.

305. The ODPP has appointed a solicitor within the District Court Section (where the majority of domestic violence cases are dealt with) to have special responsibility for all matters relating to domestic violence. The ODPP also publish a range of information including publications on attending court as a witness and the role of the ODPP.
306. Currently, the HSE funds through the community/voluntary sector 62 frontline services to victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence across Ireland as follows:
- 20 Crisis Refuges,
  - 26 Support Services
  - 16 Rape Crisis Centres

In addition, the HSE currently fund 2 indirect Service Providers. The total annual funding allocation from the HSE to the sector is some €20.5 million.

307. Additionally, the HSE through its primary care and hospital services manage the significant impact of domestic and/or sexual violence on the health and well-being of victims. HSE staff and allied health professionals e.g. primary care teams, practice nurses, general practitioners, family support workers, social workers, public health nurses, hospital doctors and nurses provide a range of services to women, men and children experiencing domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.
308. The Health Service Executive (HSE) has Designated Officers in each region to promote and coordinate services and training for Health Care Professionals in the area of violence against women. The HSE employs a training and development officer for the prevention of violence against women. This officer has developed and delivered workshops for health professionals on recognising and responding to violence against women. These officers also coordinate the work of the Regional Advisory Committees and liaise with the NGO support services in their region.
309. The HSE has also developed a policy on domestic and sexual violence which includes action on training, service standards and data collection. The policy actions have been fully incorporated into the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence.
310. The first dedicated Sexual Assault Treatment (SATU) service in Europe for men and women who had been subjected to sexual crime was set up at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin in 1985. There are now six Sexual Assault Treatment Units around the country. In addition to the Rotunda Unit, in Dublin, (there is a SATU in Cork (established 2001), Waterford (2004), Letterkenny (1998), and more recently Mullingar (established February 2009) and Galway (providing a service since September 2009). Staff of all units are trained and committed to the provision of holistic clinical, forensic, psychological and contraceptive care, 24 hours a day, seven days a week as required.
311. All units have a Medical Director, one to two Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialists (who have completed a Higher Diploma in Nursing-Sexual Assault Forensic Examination), a Clinical Nurse/Midwife Manager and administrative/support staff. Additionally all units, except Letterkenny at present, have a team of doctors and on-call assisting nurses who provide, for the most part, out-of-hours cover. Staff in the SATU work very closely with the Garda Síochána and with local Rape Crisis Centres, in order to ensure high quality care for victims of sexual assaults. Quarterly liaison meetings take place between the Unit Medical and Nursing staff, local Rape Crisis Service staff and members of the Garda Síochána.
312. The SATU can offer care for men and women who do not wish to report an incident of sexual assault to the Garda Síochána. This is a significant development, as it is recognised that early provision of medical care and psychological support may reduce the long-term health effects of an assault.

#### **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) delivery of services**

313. As was mentioned previously, the State provides in excess of €20m funding per annum to NGO support services through a number of state Departments and agencies. Core funding for domestic violence refuges and support services is provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE). In line with required cuts in expenditure being applied to all public services in the country, the HSE have applied a percentage cut to all voluntary/community sector funded services across all care groups, including domestic and sexual violence services. Unfortunately, no service has been exempted from these cuts, due to the severity of the financial problems. The HSE carried out a baseline analysis of funding in the domestic and sexual violence sector in 2009 which was repeated for 2010. This has enabled a clearer perspective on the percentage of cuts applied and the impact of same. The existing percentage cuts (in the region of 2.5%) are not intended to impact on service delivery, but rather on back-room costs.
314. Funding is also provided to domestic and sexual violence support services by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, the Department of Justice and Equality (through Cosc and the Victims of Crime Office) and by the Family Support Agency.
315. There is a wide range of domestic violence services available in Ireland and since 2000 the numbers of dedicated service providers offering these services has increased. As a consequence of this, the level of service density has also increased.
316. In 2007, a total of 49 domestic violence support services were available to those who have experienced domestic violence in Ireland<sup>36</sup>. This translates into 1 domestic violence service for every 36,259 women in Ireland. This represents an increase in service density level since 2000 when 31 domestic violence services were operating (1 service per 48,790 women in 2000). Since 2007, one additional refuge has opened in the Dublin area. Other accommodation services available to those who have experienced domestic violence include housing advocacy and transitional accommodation.
317. In 2007, a total of 17 sexual violence support services provided support, information and advocacy for both male and female victims of sexual violence in Ireland. This represents an increase of 1 sexual violence support service since 2000 or 1 sexual violence support service for every 102,380 women in Ireland in 2007 compared with 1 support service for every 94,530 women in 2000. Despite this additional support service, between 2000 and 2007 there was a decrease in the level of service density. This is mainly due to a large increase in population over the period.
318. The National Study of Domestic Abuse (NSDA) (Watson and Parsons, 2005) provides the most recent nationally representative picture of the nature, prevalence and impact of domestic abuse of women and men in Ireland. It is worth reiterating some of the findings of that study which made a distinction between those experiencing severe abuse and minor incidents of abuse. Severe domestic abuse is defined in the report as ‘... a pattern of physical, emotional or sexual behaviour between partners in an intimate relationship that causes, or risks causing, significant negative consequences for the person affected’.
319. The results showed that, in Ireland, 15 per cent of women and 6 per cent of men have experienced severely abusive behaviour of a physical, sexual or emotional nature from a partner at some time in their lives. Nine per cent of women experienced severe physical abuse, 8 per cent experienced severe sexual abuse and 8 per cent experienced severe emotional abuse.
320. The NSDA reports that of those who experienced severe domestic abuse, over two fifths (42 per cent) did not tell anyone until more than a year after the behaviour began. Over one in six of those affected by domestic abuse confided in a GP, with about one in 20 confiding in a nurse or a hospital doctor. Just over one in eight told a work colleague. A little under a quarter of those severely affected by abuse told the Gardai.

#### **Criminal and Civil Justice Responses**

321. The next tables review the number of orders made under the Domestic Violence Acts. The aim of these orders is to make the domestic violence perpetrator desist from specific actions which put the

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<sup>36</sup> Cosc (2011) “Domestic Violence Services in Ireland: Service Provision and Co-ordination” available here: <http://www.cosc.ie/en/COSC/Pages/WP08000151>

victim in fear. There are four types of domestic violence orders: protection orders, safety orders, interim barring orders and barring orders.

**Court Orders under the Domestic Violence Acts, 1996 and 2002 – Civil Proceedings  
(Includes Protection, Safety, Barring and Interim Barring Orders)**

<b>Domestic Violence Orders</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Applications for orders</b>	9,924	11,394	10,401	9,856	9,743	10,652
<b>Orders Granted</b>	5,967	6,797	6,158	5,763	5,624	6,210
<b>Orders Withdrawn / Struck Out</b>	3,636	3,737	2,719	3,712	3,774	n/a
<b>Orders Refused</b>	321	852	1,524	381	340	n/a

Source: Court Service Annual Reports. n/a – figures not available in the 2011 Annual Report

322. The next table contains information on prosecutions brought following breaches of the above-mentioned orders.

**Breach of Domestic Violence Order (Protection, Safety, Barring) – Criminal Proceedings**

<b>Breach of Domestic Violence Orders</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Recorded</b>	1,184	1,227	1,297	1,246	1,184
<b>Detected</b>	1,181	1,224	1,293	1,238	1,183
<b>With relevant proceedings</b>	1,060	1,091	1,114	1,068	1,027
<b>Conviction*</b>	397	405	363	337	317
<b>Pending (Incl. Appeals allowed)</b>	163	148	163	47	105
<b>Non-conviction</b>	403	464	520	606	592

323. Other information relating to domestic violence incidents is contained within crime statistics on offences against the person (e.g. assault, harassment) but cannot as yet be separately identified as offences relating to domestic violence.

**Justice sector statistics on sexual offences**

324. There were 2,398 Sexual Offences recorded in 2010 representing an increase (62%) on the 1,471 recorded offences in 2009. Reported offences in this group have increased year on year between 2007 and 2010.
325. The majority of these offences were sexual assault (not aggravated) offences, with 1,554 recorded in 2010, an increase of 74% on 2009. Offences of this type increased consistently from 2007 to 2010, increasing over 92% in this time period.
326. However, it should be noted that the rise in the number of recorded Sexual offences in 2010 was mainly due to an on-going review of all cases involving alleged sexual offences reported to An Garda Síochána. Some of these offences will have occurred at some distance in the past but are represented on the date of reclassification. This review is being undertaken in conjunction with An Garda Síochána policy on the investigation of sexual crime which was introduced in April 2010. (Source: CSO, Recorded Crime Statistics 2011). The statistics are not broken down by gender of victim.
327. At the Central Criminal Court in 2010, there were 63 new rape and sexual assault cases received, an increase of 29% on the 49 cases received in 2009. Thirty five guilty pleas were entered with 38 cases going before a jury. In 5 cases defendants were convicted of rape, 32 were convicted of rape and other offences and 8 were convicted of other sexual offences. There were a total of 16 acquittals related to offences of rape and sexual assault. Two life sentences were imposed with 14 sentences of more than 12 years and 13 sentences of between 5 and 12 years.
328. At the Circuit Court in 2010, 505 sexual offences were disposed of. Eighty-four guilty pleas were entered with 80 going to trial. In terms of trial outcome, there were 14 convictions and 42 acquittals. One sentence of over 10 years was imposed with 6 sentences of over 5 to 10 years, 32 sentences of over 2 to 5 years and 19 sentences of over 2 years.

329. At the District Court in 2010, the number of cases disposed of relating to sexual offences was 1,815, an increase of 35% on the 1,352 cases disposed of in 2009. Of these offences, imprisonment was imposed in 76 cases.
330. It is not yet possible to accurately relate conviction rates in court to complaints and investigations as the court proceedings may relate to an assault in previous years. Court statistics do not refer to the year in which the assault took place but rather to the year of the court proceedings.

#### **Data Collection**

331. The National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010 – 2014 contains a specific action the aim of which is to improve data on domestic and sexual violence. A Data Committee has been established to progress this work and it comprises representatives of the Garda Síochána the Courts Service, the Health Service Executive, the Central Statistics Office and the Probation Service.
332. This work is already highlighting the importance of data across a wide range of activities relating to violence against women. It is intended that improvements in this area will lead to greater effectiveness of policy and service planning, in addition to informing the monitoring and reviews of the implementation of the strategy.

#### **Perpetrator Programmes:**

333. Cosc continues to monitor progress of, and contribute to, the work of a working group on the integrated management of high risk offenders. 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.
334. A particular focus of Cosc continued to be data collection practices by domestic violence perpetrator programmes. The programme reporting template designed by Cosc and issued to Perpetrator Programmes for completion and its analysis in Cosc informed a revised form to issue in 2012 as well as a form seeking data on partner contact work done with partners and ex-partners of programme participants.

#### **Awareness raising**

335. Ireland has run national campaigns every year from 2005 targeting both domestic and sexual violence, often run in conjunction with victim support services.
336. In January, 2009 Cosc began its national awareness campaign titled 'Your Silence Feeds the Violence'. The campaign strongly encourages the public to take an active role in supporting people who are experiencing domestic abuse. The campaign message illustrates that inaction in the face of domestic violence allows the abuse to continue. It challenges the public to understand, to be informed and to know where to go to get expert help. A comprehensive list of all domestic and sexual violence support services in Ireland is provided on the Cosc website ([www.cosc.ie](http://www.cosc.ie)). The campaign began with national coverage on television, radio, on-line and on billboards. It continues through the display of campaign advertisements in state offices, Garda stations, public offices and NGO services. Cosc, in consultation with NGO partners, also monitors the websites of relevant state organizations to ensure that the material provided is accurate, consistent and is sensitive to the needs of victims.
337. Cosc supports NGOs at local level in promoting their victim support services and in raising awareness of domestic and sexual violence every year by way of a grant scheme. The grant scheme has been overhauled and improved with the input of NGO partner organisations. To maximise a consistent message to the public, collaboration among NGO support services is encouraged. In addition, while all year round activities are supported, grants are awarded to promote activities around the UN 16 Days of Activism on Violence against Women.
338. Under the National Strategy, a five year information plan has been developed and is being implemented. This plan is strongly based on the advice and input of NGOs and those informed about reaching particular target audiences. Each year the general public, a particular high-risk



victim group and a professional group are targeted for enhanced knowledge of this violence and services available.

**NGO involvement in policy development**

339. A National Steering Committee (NSC) composed of representatives of state organisations and NGOs continues to work in partnership with Cosc to combat domestic and sexual abuse. The current remit of the NSC is to:

- advise on the development and implementation of policies and guidelines for action on domestic and sexual violence against women including those concerning services and supports, perpetrators, and State intervention;
- advise on research to be undertaken and needs assessments nationally;
- assist Cosc in the promotion of interagency co-operation and sharing of information;
- assist and advise Cosc in the development of codes of practice for collecting statistics and monitoring responses;
- assist and advise Cosc in promoting public awareness about the issues involved in violence against women;
- assist and advise Cosc in identification of legal issues affecting the prevention of, and action responding to, violence against women;
- share information on international developments in relation to the issue of violence against women.

340. All national NGOs dealing with violence against women are represented on the NSC which advises Cosc on issues around violence against women. In addition Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) comprising locally based government and non-government support services feed into the NSC. Both the RACs and the NSC input into the monitoring of the implementation of the National Strategy. Efforts are currently underway to strengthen the RAC administrative structures to enhance the effectiveness of interagency work on domestic and sexual violence at regional and local level.

**Recommendations**

*The recommendation from the NWS in relation to the establishment of an executive office to combat violence against women specifically differentiated between violence against women and domestic violence.*

*It is recommended that the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014 and its successor continue to be delivered and monitored in order to improve the systems of prevention and response to violence against women in Ireland.*

*International covenants including CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention specifically ask State Parties to address violence against women. As shown above, 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 is therefore strongly recommended that these statistics be gathered and published on a gender disaggregated basis forthwith. Action 19 of the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2010-2014 aims at improving data on domestic and sexual violence.*

**Objective 13 - To address the issue of trafficking of women and children**

ACTIONS
134. Continue to take a proactive approach to the prevention and detection of human trafficking and prosecution of offenders
135. Deprive perpetrators of trafficking of the proceeds of their criminal activities
136. Foster collaboration between Garda Síochána and NGOs in relation to “intelligence” on trafficking
137. Bring forward legislation to comply with EU Framework decision on combating trafficking in human beings

138. Put in place appropriate support mechanisms for victims of trafficking to enable them to re-establish their lives
139. Undertake media campaigns to promote awareness of trafficking in human beings and its linkages with the “sex industry”

341. Following the publication of the NWS and in light of increasing awareness of the issue of Trafficking, an Interdepartmental High Level Group was established by the Minister for Justice and Equality in late 2007 to recommend to him the most appropriate and effective responses to trafficking in human beings.

**Institutional Arrangements**

342. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) was established in the Department of Justice and Equality in February 2008 under the stewardship of an Executive Director. The Unit works to ensure that the Irish response to trafficking in human beings is coordinated, comprehensive and holistic. A key element of this strategy is the implementation of the *National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Ireland 2009 - 2012* which was published by the Minister for Justice and Equality in June 2009.. The Plan was developed under four main headings:

- (i) Prevention and Awareness Raising
- (ii) Prosecution of traffickers
- (iii) Protection of victims and
- (iv) Child trafficking

A review of that Plan is being finalised and a second National Action Plan is currently being drafted.

343. The Inter-Departmental High Level Group comprising senior representatives from the key Government Departments and Agencies continues to meet. Members from the Group engage with NGOs and International Organisations in the manner of a Roundtable Forum approximately three times per year. In addition, the Group approved the establishment of five interdisciplinary Working Groups chaired by the Anti Human Trafficking Unit and comprising representatives from the relevant Government Agencies, NGOs and International Organisations to progress matters at a practical ‘on the ground’ level and, in turn, report to the High Level Group. Each of the Working Groups meets regularly.

344. The Working Groups deal with the following issues:

- A. Development of a National Referral Mechanism
- B. Awareness Raising and Training
- C. Child trafficking
- D. Labour Exploitation Issues
- E. Sexual Exploitation issues

345. In total, over 70 different Governmental, Non-Governmental and International Organisations are involved with the AHTU in anti-trafficking initiatives.

**International Instruments**

346. Ireland ratified the *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings* and it came into effect for Ireland on 1 November 2010. Ireland also ratified the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (known as the Palermo Protocol) which came into effect for Ireland on 17 July 2010. The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 gives effect to these instruments and to the 2002 EU Framework Decision. Legislation is currently being reviewed following the adoption of the EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims in April 2011. Member States have two years in which to implement the provisions of the Directive.

347. The Palermo Protocol is the first International Treaty aimed at comprehensively defining and addressing the problem of human trafficking. Its purpose is threefold:

- To prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children;
- To protect and assist victims of trafficking; and
- To promote cooperation among State Parties in order to meet those objectives.

The *National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Ireland 2009-2012*, sets out the legislative and administrative structures to give effect to the Protocol.

#### **Scale of the problem of trafficking**

348. An Annual Report published by the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit includes data collected to establish a better informed view of trafficking in Ireland. The most recent Report, which refers to 2011, shows that 57 alleged victims reported to the Garda Síochána in 2011. A total of 27 were referred or encountered by one of the four NGOs active in the sector. All of those in contact with the NGOs were women, while 48 of the 57 in contact with the Garda Síochána were women. In 2010, 69 investigations into human trafficking involving 78 alleged victims were initiated by An Garda Síochána. 36 alleged victims of trafficking were encountered by or referred to NGOs in 2010. In 2009, 68 incidents of human trafficking involving a total of 66 cases of potential and suspected trafficking in human beings came to the attention of the Garda Síochána. These persons were encountered by GNIB directly or were referred by organisations such as state service providers and or NGOs.

#### **New Legislation (Human Trafficking)**

349. The Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 was enacted on 7 June 2008. This legislation creates an offence of recruiting, transporting, transferring to another person, harbouring or causing the entry into, travel within or departure from the State of a person or providing the person with accommodation or employment for the specific purpose of the trafficked person's sexual or labour exploitation or removal of his or her organs. It provides for penalties up to life imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine for persons who traffic or attempt to traffic other persons for the purposes of labour or sexual exploitation or for the removal of a person's organs.

350. 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 also apply in respect of these offences.

351. It is also 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.

352. The 2008 Act builds on the Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998. The Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill provides for a period of recovery and reflection of 60 days in the State for suspected victims of trafficking and also, in circumstances where the person trafficked wishes to assist the Garda Síochána or other relevant authorities in any investigation or prosecution in relation to the alleged trafficking, a further six months period of residence, renewable, to enable him or her to do so. The Bill also provides that the Minister may make regulations prescribing a Recovery and Reflection Period exceeding 60 days where a person is under the age of 18 years.

353. An administrative framework, broadly reflecting the provisions in the Bill, was introduced on 7 June 2008 to provide for the period of recovery, reflection and residency in the State pending enactment of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill. Further amendments to that Scheme have been made to include:

- Clarification on the scope of application of the Arrangements.
- Application of the Arrangements to those under 18 years of age.
- Clarification in relation to family reunification.

- Clarification as to the process to be undertaken where a person to whom the arrangements apply is refused a refugee declaration.
- New provision allowing for an application for a change from a temporary residence period to a more durable residency status to be made.

### **Supports for Victims**

354. In addition to the AHTU, there are three other dedicated units in State Agencies dealing with this issue, the Human Trafficking Investigation and Co-ordination Unit in the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), the Anti-Human Trafficking Team in the Health Service Executive (HSE) and a specialised Human Trafficking legal team in the Legal Aid Board (LAB). These units have been set up as a response to Ireland's international obligations to provide services to victims of the trafficking of human beings. Dedicated personnel are also assigned to deal with prosecution of cases in the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Office and in the New Communities and Asylum Seekers Unit in the Department of Social Protection..
355. In 2011, the Garda Síochána in their Annual Policing Plan identify trafficking in human beings as one of the priorities with increased priority given to prevention and detection of human trafficking. It was also identified as a policing priority in 2010. The Commissioner of the Garda Síochána established a *Human Trafficking Investigation and Co-ordination Unit* within the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) in 2009. The remit of the Unit is to provide a lead role on policy issues in the field of human trafficking. The Unit acts as a centre of excellence for the organisation and oversees all investigations where there is an element of human trafficking and provides advice, guidance and operational support for investigations.
356. The DPP has nominated particular prosecutors to deal with cases of human trafficking and issued them with guidelines. Their purpose is to guide prosecutors in examining which factors are to be considered in assessing whether to commence or continue with a prosecution including a consideration as to whether the public interest is served by a prosecution of a victim of human trafficking who has been compelled to commit offences (e.g. immigration or sexual offences) as a result of being trafficked.

### **National Referral Mechanism**

357. The National Referral Mechanism is the term used to describe:
- (i) The process by which a suspected victim of human trafficking is identified;
  - (ii) The range of assistance and support services available to potential and suspected victims of human trafficking;
  - (iii) How potential and suspected victims are referred or can apply to access each of those services.
358. The range of assistance and support services which are required to be made available to victims of trafficking under the international obligations to which Ireland is party are:
- i. Accommodation
  - ii. Medical care / care planning
  - iii. Psychological assistance
  - iv. Material assistance e.g. Supplementary Welfare Allowance, Rent Supplement
  - v. Legal aid and advice
  - vi. Access to the labour market, vocational training and education (for those not in the asylum system)
  - vii. Police services
  - viii. Community-based services provided by NGOs
  - ix. Repatriation
  - x. Compensation
  - xi. Permission to be in the State and/or non-removal pending a determination of an allegation of trafficking, and a Temporary Residence Permission if assisting with an investigation or prosecution
  - xii. Asylum services
  - xiii. Translation and interpretation when appropriate
  - xiv. Access to education for children.

359. If the person wishes to avail of State services the person will be referred, with their consent, by the Garda National Immigration Bureau to:

- (a) The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) for accommodation pending a decision as to whether s/he is to be granted a 60 day Recovery and Reflection Period and during that period if/when it is granted.
- (b) The HSE for individualised care planning. The HSE will offer services to potential and/or suspected victims of trafficking in human beings who have been notified to them by An Garda Síochána if requested to do so by the person. The individual care plan covers:
  - General medical/sexual health
  - Mental and psychological health
  - Relationship and family
  - Accommodation<sup>37</sup>
  - Education, training and employment<sup>38</sup>
  - Financial management<sup>39</sup>
  - Social and spiritual needs
  - Legal and immigration<sup>40</sup>
  - Criminal investigation<sup>41</sup>

The aim is to enable the person concerned to gain independence thus empowering him/her to make decisions in a safe and supportive environment whilst guiding him/her through all the stages of the trafficking process. Information will be shared on a need to know basis with other organisations in the field and only with the written consent of the client.

- (c) A specialist unit of the Legal Aid Board for legal aid and advice (if s/he wishes to avail of this service).

#### **Awareness Raising and Training**

360. A number of awareness raising and training initiatives have taken place since the establishment of the Anti Human Trafficking Unit in 2008. This includes a mix of national campaigns and campaigns where there was collaboration with other EU Member States. A wide range of media and events are used creatively to maximize the impact of these campaigns. Full details of the awareness raising work undertaken to date can be seen on [www.blueblindfold.gov.ie](http://www.blueblindfold.gov.ie).

361. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) secured a contract in 2009 to develop, design and deliver a 'Train the Trainers' programme on behalf of the AHTU, which was subsequently rolled out to personnel in Government agencies likely to encounter victims of trafficking. The idea of the programme is that participants on the course will train others in their organisations on the issues associated with human trafficking. Three 'Train the Trainer' courses have been completed with 40 participants from 13 different organisations. The roll-out of this training is being monitored by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). In 2012, the IOM also developed shorter training plans in one-hour and three-hour formats for Trainers to encourage them to roll out human trafficking training within their organisation in a short period of time.

362. Almost 150 people participated in basic awareness training which has been provided by the IOM with input from NGOs, the Garda National Immigration Bureau and the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit. Course participants included representatives of a wide range of State Agencies.

363. The Garda Síochána has placed particular importance on ensuring that its members receive training which will equip them to tackle the phenomenon of human trafficking. A continuous professional

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<sup>37</sup>This applies to persons other than those in the asylum process.

<sup>38</sup> This applies to persons other than those in the asylum process.

<sup>39</sup> This does not apply to person residing in accommodation provided by RIA who receive 'direct provision' cash allowance as well as Exceptional Needs Payments.

<sup>40</sup> This applies to referrals to services provided by the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána and the Legal Aid Board.

<sup>41</sup> This applies to accompanying a client to interviews if requested to do so by the client and if acceptable to An Garda Síochána.

development training course entitled ‘*Tackling Trafficking in Human Beings: Prevention, Protection and Prosecution*’ has been designed by the Garda Síochána. The IOM, the UKHTC, AHTU and the Health Services Executive (HSE) together with NGOs such as Ruhama, Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) and the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) are assisting in delivering training in recognition and investigation of trafficking in persons to front line Garda and PSNI Officers in joint training courses in the Garda Training College.

364. A comprehensive programme of training in the area of human trafficking has been undertaken within An Garda Síochána. In total over 600 Gardaí have now completed the intensive three day training course entitled “*Trafficking in Human Beings: Prevention, Protection, Partnership and Prosecution*”. In addition, a further 3,500 members of An Garda Síochána have received awareness raising training relating to human trafficking. The overriding aim of the training is to provide members of An Garda Síochána with knowledge of indicators of human trafficking where to look and how to identify victims of human trafficking. In addition, an on-line portal is available to all Garda personnel on PULSE - the Garda Síochána computer system. This allows Garda personnel to access information in relation to human trafficking issues.
365. A specialised training course was held in September 2009 for staff of the Legal Aid Board who are providing legal aid and advice to potential and suspected victims of trafficking in human beings. A training course was also made available to Members of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

#### **Prostitution**

366. Ireland’s legislation on prostitution is being reviewed. As part of the review, the Minister for Justice and Equality published a discussion document on the future direction of prostitution legislation in June, 2012. The purpose of the document is to facilitate a public consultation process. The discussion document has been referred to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality. The Committee has invited written submissions and will arrange whatever hearings it considers necessary. The Joint Committee has been asked to report back to the Minister by the end of November, 2012. Also, the Department of Justice and Equality is hosting a conference in October, 2012 to discuss the document.

#### **Recommendations**

*The issue of trafficking has gained further prominence in Ireland and demands the active response which has been made to date. In approaching the issue of prostitution, the matter should be dealt with in a sensitive manner, taking account of the fact that some of the sex workers are young women coming from deprived backgrounds who are vulnerable to exploitation.*

*It is worth mentioning that the recently published Department of Justice and Equality Discussion Document on Future Direction of Prostitution Legislation states:*

*“In devising policy responses, including legislative and enforcement measures, it is also crucial to clearly distinguish between human trafficking for sexual exploitation on the one hand, and prostitution on the other. While the two can sometimes overlap, human trafficking and prostitution are different phenomena requiring distinct policy responses, if each is to be targeted effectively, efficiently and in a manner which reflects the relative gravity of different types of criminal activity”.*

## CHAPTER 5

### Theme 3 Engaging Women as Equal and Active Citizens

#### Introduction

367. This theme of the NWS is wide-ranging and addresses issues as diverse as women's role in decision-making and the inclusion of a gender equality perspective in Ireland's Development Aid Programme.
368. As this chapter will show, there has been considerable activity on this Theme since the NWS was published in 2007. That said, women's participation as equal and active citizens can only take place when women are actively supported in the family and in the sharing of caring responsibilities and/or where there are adequate childcare services to support women. Accordingly, the objectives of this Theme link closely with the attainment of other key objectives within the Strategy.

#### WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT AS EQUAL AND ACTIVE CITIZENS – SOME HEADLINE STATISTICS 2006 AND 2012

	Percentage who are women in Ireland	
	2006	2012
Percentage of Cabinet Ministers who are women	20	13.3
Percentage of Dáil Deputies who are women	14	15.0
Percentage of senior Civil Servants who are women	11	19.0
Percentage of Chief Executives of "top 500" companies who are women	4	5.0

369. As the table above shows, there has been some improvement in the representation of women in the Dáil; in the senior Civil Service and among the CEOs of top companies since the NWS was published. However, in all instances, the levels are still very far below the critical mass level of 30 per cent identified by the UN and the CoE.

#### Objective 14 - To increase the number of women in decision-making positions in Ireland

ACTIONS
140. Political parties should develop action plans to increase number of female candidates in General Elections
141. Political parties should publish gender disaggregated statistics on participation and representation
142. Government/Ministers will appoint members to State Boards in line with the gender targets set by Government
143. Other nominating bodies will nominate male and female representatives to State Boards to enable Government/Ministers to make selection to ensure gender balance on Boards
144. Develop a database of women who might be considered for appointment to State Boards
145. Develop training programmes to prepare suitably qualified women to participate in the work of State Boards
146. Develop a database of women who might be considered for appointment to the boards of private sector companies
147. Develop training programmes to prepare suitably qualified women to participate in the work of private sector boards
148. Review Civil Service Gender Equality Policy
149. Develop new Civil Service Gender Equality Strategy based on Review
150. Develop Gender Equality Strategy for the Public Service modelled on Civil Service Strategy through establishment of working group
151. Continue to monitor target of 33.3 per cent for female Assistant Principal Officers within Civil Service
152. Set target of 27 per cent for female Principal Officers within Civil Service by Government decision and incorporate target in Departmental Strategy Statements and Annual Reports to reflect these commitments

370. This is a far reaching objective, impacting on a range of sectors and different roles for both men and women. It includes roles to which men and women are elected, roles for which they are selected and roles in management to which they can aspire and for which they can prepare as part of their career. A significant role is played by women's groups in the community and voluntary

sector and by representative organisations in fostering the advancement of women into leadership roles, both within the sector and among women who interact with the sector.

371. The National Women's Strategy (NWS) recognises the low numbers of women in decision-making positions in Ireland as a democratic deficit which has economic, social and cultural impacts. Increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions is also a key objective of the European Union and is included as a priority area for action in its key policy documents in relation to gender equality including the new *European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020* and the EU Commission's *Women's Charter* and the *Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015*.
372. Addressing equal participation in decision-making is recognition of the right of both women and men to participate and to have a voice in plans, strategies and decisions affecting their future. Such participation is broadly understood to include social, political and economic participation and requires an active role by all citizens of society, including women, to shape their futures.
373. This topic of "Women and Decision-making" was selected as a high priority by the NWS Monitoring Committee in 2010, as a result of which a special Sub-Committee was chaired by the two successive Ministers of State. The terms of reference of this Sub-Committee encompassed five decision-making roles: Management; Politics; State Boards; Corporate Boards; the Diplomatic Service and the Judiciary. These roles were chosen as they are also priorities, identified and monitored by the European Commission.
374. Following extensive research and consultations, a report and recommendations based on the work of the Sub-Committee has now been finalised and it is expected that it will be submitted to Government in Autumn 2012.

#### **Women and Politics**

375. The NWS recognises the central role which the political parties themselves can play in increasing female representation in politics as the gatekeepers to the nomination of female candidates for election.
376. Since the publication of the NWS in 2007, two Oireachtas Committees have also sought to address the under-representation of women in Irish politics. A Sub-Committee of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights published a report on '*Women's Participation in Politics*' in September 2009. Based on the research conducted by the Rapporteur to the Sub-Committee, Senator Ivana Bacik, and on the evidence heard by the Sub-Committee in the course of its deliberations, including from a number of former female T.D.s, the Report of the Sub-Committee has identified the main barriers to women's increased participation in Irish politics and has grouped these barriers under the five 'Cs':
- **Childcare** – women are more likely to have this responsibility;
  - **Cash** – women have less access to resources than men;
  - **Confidence** – women are less likely to go forward for selection;
  - **Culture** – a gendered culture is prevalent in parties of all persuasions; and
  - **Candidate Selection Procedures** – the processes by which political parties select candidates has been identified as posing a significant obstacle to women's political participation.
377. In 2009/2010 the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Constitution was asked to carry out a review of Article 16 of the Constitution. Its subsequent report '*Review of the Electoral System for the Election of Members to Dáil Éireann*' was published in July 2010. The Report made a number of recommendations for increasing the representation of women in Irish politics, including that:
- political parties pursue positive action measures to promote gender equality in its membership, including in the selection of candidates for election; and
  - political parties be required, as one of the conditions for public funding, to submit an annual statement to the new Electoral Commission, for publication, setting out in detail the policies and actions being pursued by them to promote gender equality in their electoral candidates and parliamentary representation.



378. During 2010, the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality held two meetings with the General Secretaries of the main political parties and with female members of both the Dáil and the Seanad drawn from all parties and nominated by the Whips to discuss how the situation of women's representation in politics might be improved.
379. Despite the commitment of all parties present to address the under-representation of women in Irish politics, the results of the next election showed only a slight increase in the percentage of women elected to Dáil Éireann at 15 per cent from a pre-election figure of 13.4 per cent.

**PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE CANDIDATES BY POLITICAL PARTY  
IN THE 2011 GENERAL ELECTION**

<b>Political Party</b>	<b>Female Candidates (%)</b>	<b>Male Candidates (%)</b>
Fianna Fail	14.7	85.3
Fine Gael	15.4	84.6
Labour	26.5	73.5
Green Party	18.6	81.4
Sinn Fein	19.5	80.5
Independents	10.6	89.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	15.2	84.6
<b>n=</b>	86	480

380. As the table above shows, women also represented just 15 per cent of the candidates. However, the underlying statistics also show that there was no female candidate in a number of constituencies and not only in rural areas. The internationally accepted figure for women to have influence in political decision-making is a minimum of 30 per cent and Ireland is currently only at half that level. The results of the 2011 Seanad Election were more positive with a return of 30 per cent female Senators, largely boosted by the appointment of seven women from among the eleven nominees of the Taoiseach.
381. The Programme for the Government of National Recovery published in March 2011 included a commitment to take steps to increase the presence of women in politics. It intended that the Commission on the Constitution would address this matter and bring forward recommendations within 12 months of the appointment of the Commission.
382. The newly appointed Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People had been actively involved in the discussions launched by her predecessor, and she decided that it would be appropriate to organise a conference on the topic. This event, which was potentially oversubscribed, brought together an audience of some 300 to hear the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, political and administrative leaders and elected representatives of all the key parties, together with speakers from France, the United Kingdom and the OSCE. The event got considerable media coverage and was a dynamic and well received event.
383. The conference was fortuitous in that it coincided with the publication of new legislation by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government entitled the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Bill 2011. This legislation includes a provision that political parties will lose half of their public funding if they do not put forward at least 30 per cent male and 30 per cent female candidates at the next general election. Seven years from the general election where this provision first applies, this will rise to 40 per cent commencing at the general election held next after that. In announcing these electoral reforms, the Minister said
- “This initiative is a groundbreaking political opportunity to incentivise a shift towards gender balance in Irish politics. Women make up 50% of our population and they are significantly underrepresented in our political institutions. This will have a positive impact on women’s participation in local elections also.”*
384. The Bill passed all stages of the Dáil on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012 and was enacted on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2012 as the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act, 2012.

385. It is expected that the Local and European elections, due to be held in 2014, will provide an opportunity for political parties to bring forward increased numbers of female candidates in advance of the next General Election, when the candidate quota of 30 per cent will apply.
386. It is clear that a number of challenges remain which impede women's entry into politics. As mentioned previously, these include the Five 'Cs' identified in the report by the Oireachtas Sub-Committee on *'Women's Participation in Politics'*: childcare, cash, confidence, culture and candidate selection procedures. A 2011 study commissioned by the OSCE<sup>42</sup> Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) entitled *'Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six Point Action Plan'* has identified six strategic interventions which can contribute towards the attainment of gender equality in elected office, namely:
- Legal quotas;
  - Party rules;
  - Capacity development; and
  - Gender-sensitive rules and procedures in elected office.
387. Political will is needed to effect change and the political parties themselves now have a very specific role to play in encouraging and facilitating more women to put themselves forward as candidates and in selecting more women to run for election.

#### **Women and State Boards**

388. In 1993, following the publication of the second report of the Commission on the Status of Women, the then Government decided to set a target of 40 per cent for the representation of women on State Boards. Ministers were asked to consider gender when making appointments to State Boards. Since 2001, this data has been monitored and reported annually to Government. The most recently published statistics relate to 2011 and show that women occupy approximately 34.5 per cent of State Board posts and just below 20 per cent of the posts of Chair. These statistics have remained fairly static over the last number of years despite the commitments of Ministers to achieve change.
389. However these data mask significant variation between Government Departments. Women are largely under-represented on boards which deal with economic issues and over represented on boards dealing with social policy issues, particularly health and education. As a result neither group of boards is adequately receiving the combined experience of both genders and the benefits of more balanced decision-making. This topic of balanced decision-making has gained some prominence in the period since the collapse of some financial institutions and the publication of research material on the impact of women on corporate boards coming from both France and the USA.
390. The Programme for Government, published in March 2011, states that the newly appointed Government "*will take steps to ensure that all State Boards have at least 40 per cent of each gender*". This Government commitment was strengthened in April 2011 with an announcement by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform that the Government had approved a proposal to allow all future vacancies on State Boards to be advertised on the website of the relevant Department. These public advertisements will contain the following line "*In considering applications due regard will be given to Government policy on gender balance on State Boards*".
391. A review of the policy on gender balance on State Boards is currently ongoing in the Department of Justice and Equality with a view to improving the representation of women on State Boards. Among the options being considered is the development and maintenance of a Database or Talent Bank of women suitable for consideration for appointment to State Boards. Similar databases have been used to great effect in New Zealand and in Denmark.

#### **Private Sector Boards**

392. A report published by the European Commission in 2011 *'Report on Equality between Women and Men in 2010'* noted that in 2010 just 8 per cent of members of the highest decision-making body of the largest publicly quoted companies (also known as blue-chip companies) in Ireland were

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<sup>42</sup> The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Ireland is a participating OSCE State.

female. This compares with an EU27 average figure of 12 per cent. Just six of the twenty-seven EU Member States recorded a lower percentage than Ireland. At European level, only 3 per cent of the largest publicly quoted companies have a woman chairing the highest decision-making body. Ireland ranks slightly higher, but at just 5 per cent this figure is still disappointingly low.

393. The share of female board members in the EU had increased by just over half a percentage point per year over the last seven years. If the pace of change were to continue at this slow rate it is estimated that it would take approximately fifty years before there would be 40 per cent of each gender on corporate boards throughout Europe.
394. In 2011, to address the under-representation of women on corporate boards, EU Vice-President and Justice Commissioner, Ms. Viviane Reding, called on all publicly listed companies in the EU to take voluntary steps to increase women's participation on corporate boards to 30 per cent by 2015 and to 40 per cent by 2020. Commission VP Reding had indicated that she will review the situation in March 2012 and to facilitate this review, a policy discussion by Gender Equality Ministers took place at the February 2012 meeting of the EPSCO Council in Brussels. The Commission has now concluded a public consultation on the issue and is likely to bring forward proposals in Autumn 2012. As part of the process, Commission VP Reding has also invited all publicly listed companies in Europe to sign up on a voluntary basis to the '**Women on the Board Pledge for Europe**' and, in so doing, to commit to achieve the VP's targets.
395. Gender quotas for appointments to corporate boards have been used with great success and in a relatively short timeframe in Norway. A specific target of 40 per cent participation by women was set through the introduction of a legal requirement with strict penalties for non-compliance, including the possible winding-up of a company. The success of the Norwegian quota can be partly attributed to the good family supports available in Norway including readily accessible childcare, paternity leave and legislation which actively promotes the sharing of care responsibilities between women and men. There was also broad political support for the introduction of the quota.
396. Following the Norwegian model, binding quotas have been introduced in a number of EU Member States<sup>43</sup> – notably France, Italy and Belgium which have enacted legislation which includes sanctions. The Netherlands and Spain have passed softer law, which does not include sanctions. This information comes from a report prepared by the Commission to inform its policy development process. The Danish Presidency chaired a session of the EPSCO Council for Gender Equality Ministers on the issue in February 2012 and the CION VP has launched a public consultation before deciding the next steps to take.
397. It is worth considering the conclusions from this Commission Report which notes that while the best progress on this issue in many years took place in the period from late 2010 to January 2012, prompted initially by the public debate,

*...the EU cannot afford to permit systematic gender imbalance at the top level of economic decision-making any longer. Gender diversity on boards contributes to improving corporate governance and companies with a higher share of women in senior decision-making positions have been shown to consistently outperform their competitors without that asset. Moreover, women represent a qualified talent pool and persistent failure to encourage and enable women to make full use of their professional skills undermines EU economic performance.*

398. The European Commission tabled a proposal to the Council and the European Parliament in November 2012, for a Directive which would require Member States to take steps to ensure that Stock Exchange listed companies would take proactive steps to achieve a goal of 40 per cent of women on their Boards by 2020. The proposal has been discussed at length at a Working Group of the Council but Member States are split on the proposal at time of writing, although the European Parliament was supportive of the Directive at its first Reading.
399. This issue of women's representation on Corporate Boards has also been addressed in the Report on Decision-making prepared by a Sub-Committee of the NWS Monitoring Committee and which

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<sup>43</sup> European Commission: Women in Economic Decision-making in the EU: Progress Report

is expected to be published shortly. It is anticipated that there will be recommendations in relation to the development of a data base of suitable candidates and the provision of training in order to achieve the objectives identified in the NWS. A small amount of funding from the ESF supported Equality for Women Measure 2008 – 2013 may be used to support some targeted initiatives in this regard.

**Irish Civil Service**

- 400. The Public Sector has traditionally been a key employer of women in Ireland. The CSO *Women and Men in Ireland* report for 2010 notes that in 2009, the health and education sectors employed more than a third (33.5 per cent) of all female employees in Ireland, compared with an EU average of 28.8 per cent. Historically, the Irish Civil Service has also been an employer of choice for women in Ireland. Statistics for mid-2011 show that 63 per cent of staff in the general service grades in the Civil Service are women. Women also accounted for 43 per cent of staff in the professional and technical grades in the Civil Service.
- 401. There has been a shift in gender equality policy in the Irish Civil Service over the last decade. In 2001, gender equality policy had focused on equality of opportunity between women and men working in the Civil Service. In 2011, in addition to the equal opportunities policy, gender policy is also about setting strategic objectives at Department level. Human Resources Management (HRM) policy areas are asked to incorporate gender equality into their strategies. Guidance material has also been produced on affirmative action *‘Making Gender Equality Happen: Guidance on Affirmative Action in Gender Equality’*. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is monitoring performance and is considering introducing greater accountability. The action previously undertaken in relation to disability is being used as good practice. In addition, *‘A Positive Working Environment’*, which focuses on bullying and harassment, has been agreed with the Unions.
- 402. The Programme for Government for National Recovery 2011-2016 contains a commitment that “requires all public bodies to take due note of equality and human rights in carrying out their functions”. This is being operationalised with the establishment of the new Human Rights and Equality Commission. The General Scheme of the Bill to establish the new Commission was published by the Minister for Justice and Equality in June 2012. The Bill has been referred to the Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality for consideration.

**Recommendation**

*As the engagement of women in decision-making roles is one of the real gender equality deficits in Ireland, steps should be taken at every level to ensure that women gain more prominence in decision-making and that the contribution they can make is maximised in order to ensure democratic and balanced decision-making.*

*Accordingly it is recommended that the work of the Sub-Committee of the Monitoring Committee be implemented in full.*

*It is recommended that the Human Rights and Equality Commission, when established, monitors the implementation of the commitment in the Programme for Government that will require “all public bodies to take due note of equality and human rights in carrying out their functions”, paying particular attention to the implementation of a gender equality perspective in this regard.*

**Objective 15: To increase the number of women engaged in the Arts in Ireland**

ACTIONS
153. Offer leadership in the area of governance, through the publication of policy and resource documents
154. Establish a forum for women working in the arts which will explore common issues facing them and develop a working agenda to address these issues
155. Publish guidelines on equality specific to the arts
156. Offer leadership in the area of equality, through the publication of policy and resource documents
157. Provide advice and leadership in the area of equality and the arts
158. Arts Council will undertake comprehensive survey including people’s experiences of the arts in 2006 and 2007

159. Arts Council survey will include measurement of women's active participation in the arts
160. Collect data regarding the number of women currently studying to become arts practitioners or facilitators
161. Provide advice to women who participate, or would like to participate, in the arts.
162. Offer leadership in the area of governance, through the publication of policy and resource documents

403. Apart from the supply of some material in 2009 which showed that

- there was a balanced distribution of management positions between women and men among organisations funded by the Arts Council; and that
- more than half of the arts officer posts in local authorities were held by women,

there has been no engagement on the part of the Arts Council in reporting progress towards the goals of the NWS.

404. A number of recent progress reports on the NWS have offered material which suggests that the Arts Council grant scheme for individual artists may favour men, both in terms of grant recipients and in the value of the individual awards.

#### Arts Council Grants to Artists by Size of Grant 2010

Size of grant	Number of recipients		Average grant per recipient		Total cost by gender and category		Funding to women as % of total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
< 5000	120	153	1,801.0	1,723.0	216,120.0	263,619.0	55.0
5K to 10 K	69	63	6,762.0	6,653.0	466,578.0	419,139.0	47.3
10k to 15K	40	38	11,529.0	11,226.0	461,160.0	426,588.0	48.1
Over 15 K	119	78	18,707.0	22,084.0	2,226,133.0	1,722,552.0	43.6
TOTAL	348	332	9,683.9	8,529.8	3,369,991.0	2,831,898.0	45.7

Source: CSO; Derived from Women and Men in Ireland 2011

405. As the Table above shows, women only receive 45 per cent in value terms of the individual grants awarded by the Arts Council. In the absence of any dialogue or engagement with the Arts Council or its parent Department, it is not possible to determine whether this results from women being less engaged in the arts or less likely to seek funding.

406. A survey<sup>44</sup> conducted in 2010 on the *Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland* illustrated that just over half of the professional artists surveyed (52 per cent) are women. The gender gap is largest in the visual arts group where more than three out of five artists are women. Men constitute narrower majorities of artists in the performing arts and film and in relation to the writers group.

407. According to the survey, the average (mean) income of professional artists in the Republic of Ireland from their work as artists was under €15,000 in 2008, with fifty per cent of artists earning €8,000 or less from their work as artists. When income from all sources (including social welfare) is taken into account, the average (mean) income for a Republic of Ireland artist in 2008 was just over €25,000, with fifty per cent of artists earning €19,832 or less. Income from working as an artist is considerably higher (more than double) for male than for female artists. The table overleaf, taken from the Report, illustrates these statistics.

<sup>44</sup> *Survey on the Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: Republic of Ireland version, 2010*, Clare McAndrew and Cathie McKimm, Hibernian Consulting and Insight Statistical Consulting, the Arts Council/Arts Council of Northern Ireland, 2010

### ROI Artist Incomes by Gender, 2008

	Male Artists		Female Artists	
	Average (Mean) €	Median €	Average (Mean) €	Median €
Income from work as an artist	20,501	11,148	9,789	5,952
Income from work and other sources	10,213	N/A	10,634	N/A
Total Personal Income	30,715	23,473	20,423	17,000
Total Household Income	48,559	39,000	46,452	35,963
N = 325 (males) and 375 (females). N (household income) = 266 (males) and 289 (females)				
Note: Figures relate to income after allowable deductible expenses and before tax.				

### Recommendation

**Steps should be taken to ensure that the Arts Council engages more robustly in the issue of gender equality and the Arts.**

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

ACTIONS
163. Develop voluntary regulatory mechanisms to promote balanced and diverse portrayals of women in the media
164. Establish professional guidelines and codes of conduct concerning women in the media
165. Ensure that professionals working in media are aware of the impact of gender stereotyping on the role of women within society
166. Promote women's participation in the media at all levels
167. Ensure that professionals working in media are aware of the contribution they can make to the achievement of true gender equality through their portrayal of women
168. Make support available for the development of awareness raising on the issue of gender stereotyping and the positive portrayal of women
169. Increase the number of media programmes made for and by women

408. This is another objective for which progress has been mixed. As mentioned in Progress Reports, RTE has signalled an awareness of its responsibilities in this regard, while the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland and the Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland both provide guidance for their respective sectors. One particular advertising campaign involving a food item and scantily clad female prompted the highest ever number of complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority but was re-run in a similar format the following year.

409. Since the publication of the NWS in 2007, RTE has revised its *Programme Standards and Guidelines*, which now state:

*“Programme-makers should familiarise themselves with relevant legislation on this area such as the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Disability Act 2005 (both accessible at [www.irishstatutebook.ie](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie)). The nine stated grounds whereby discrimination is illegal are gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community”.*

410. The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland reflects, in its own Strategic Plan, the need for “diversity of content”, “fairness and balance in all processes, procedures and decisions” and, ultimately ensuring plurality by “ensuring different perspectives and different viewpoints...which is vital for the health of Irish democracy...[ensuring] the Irish population has confidence and trust in...news and information services”.

411. In the context of its Presidency of the European Union in 2013, Ireland is addressing the issue of “women and the media” as an area of concern identified under the Beijing Platform for Action. This is a continuation of a programme of work undertaken by the European Commission’s High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming, which brings together the EU officials with responsibility for Gender Equality in order to advance the achievement of the EU and UN goals for gender equality.

412. The work being developed under the auspices of the Irish Presidency will concentrate on the role of women in decision-making positions in the media. It will try to establish linkages between their presence and the programming content/editorial material in the broadcast media and the press. In undertaking this work it is essential to respect the principles of press freedom. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has commissioned a study on these topics. Gender Equality Division officials are participating in the oversight of the project. It is intended that this research will result in the presentation of recommendations on gender balance in decision-making roles in the media for agreement at EU Ministerial level in June 2013.
413. It is understood that the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) will undertake additional research on this topic which is likely to be published before the end of 2013.

#### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the material being prepared for the Irish Presidency of the EU and subsequent work by the European Institute for Gender Equality be used to spearhead greater activity on the part of the media in Ireland in relation to the portrayal of women and their involvement in decision-making in the sector.*

#### **Objective 17 – A : To foster the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals through Irish Aid**

<b>ACTIONS</b>
170. Mainstream gender considerations in all development co-operation activities
171. Undertake specific actions to improve the position and status of women
172. Increase funding to women's organizations to ensure that women's needs and interests remain on the development and human rights agenda
173. Promote economic empowerment of women, create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income, ensure greater access to quality education for both boys and girls and support community-based health programmes that enable women's access to reproductive and other health services
174. Work against gender based violence with national and international partners (See Objective 17 – C)
175. Support legislative changes that increase women's right to property and other resources
176. Encourage investment in infrastructure that reduces women's unpaid work burden and thereby enables greater access for women to economic opportunity and decision-making
177. Continue investment in primary education with emphasis on girls' education and eliminate gender disparity in primary education
178. Ensure that HIV remains on the agenda through development of new gender specific HIV/AIDS policy and strategy based on 2005 evaluation
179. Ensure that gender specific HIV/AIDS programming is resourced and improve gender specific HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services
180. Advocate for further investment in microbicides internationally and maintain or increase current annual investment in the development of microbicides at €3 million

#### **Objective 17 – B : To use multi-lateral aid and development policy to promote the role of women and gender equality in developing countries**

<b>ACTIONS</b>
181. Promote gender equality proposals in European Union external relations for a
182. Ensure that input into trade agreements takes into consideration the differential impact of trade policy on women and men
183. Promote the provision of untied aid by other Member States
184. Promote actions in multi-lateral development aid which foster the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those which impact upon women
185. Strengthen analytical capacity at Partner Government level to mainstream gender effectively across government policy and programmes

**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**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
186.	Support policies and operational programmes of EU, UN and Council of Europe on Gender Based Violence
187.	Support the ongoing activity of the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence
188.	Continue to advocate internationally for greater attention and resources to be devoted to the prevention of gender-based violence
189.	Pursue the inclusion of gender-related measures in the mandates of peacekeeping operations; provision of resources for gender advisers / units in peacekeeping operations; and awareness and enforcement of codes of conduct for peacekeepers
190.	Work to ensure that women are involved at every stage of peace negotiations in the planning, decision-making and implementation at all levels
191.	Press for an increased number of women sent by troop-contributing countries to UN peace missions, and for women to hold 50% of the UNSG Special Representative and Special Envoy positions
192.	Pursue the inclusion of gender-based violence in the statutes of any future ad hoc international tribunals established by the Security Council
193.	Support the exclusion of impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, including gender-based crimes, from post-conflict amnesty provisions

**Objective 17 – D**

**To ensure the integration of gender perspectives into all parts of the United Nations System**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
194.	Support for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the United Nations

414. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade provides a detailed report of its activities each year on the achievement of the comprehensive list of actions it included in the NWS. This includes the mainstreaming of gender equality in all Irish Aid initiatives, including in programmes on health, education, hunger, nutrition and social protection. Specific interventions on gender equality are also supported through Ireland’s overseas aid programmes including capacity building support to women’s ministries, support to NGOs working on gender equality and supporting projects and programmes on economic and political empowerment.
415. Working to combat gender-based violence is a particular priority. Irish Aid has worked with partner country governments, NGOs and multi-laterals on this issue including supporting the development and roll out of legislation on gender-based violence in a number of Irish Aid partner countries.
416. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade are also very active in the field of conflict resolution, and 2011 saw the launch of Ireland’s National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The development of this plan was informed by an extensive consultative process and by an innovative ‘Cross-learning’ initiative between women affected by conflict in Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland and Timor Leste.
417. Ireland played a prominent role in the restructuring of the United Nations which led to the establishment of UN-Women and has established a strong working relation with its first Executive Director, Under Secretary General Michelle Bachelet.

**Recommendations**

*The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade should continue its programme of activities to address all aspects of gender equality in its programme countries and should continue to exploit its high reputation to ensure appropriate programmes continue at the United Nations and its agencies.*



## Chapter 6

### Progress on the Implementation of the National Women's Strategy and Broader Gender Equality Initiatives

418. Overarching responsibility for the implementation of the NWS 2007 – 2016 rests with the Department of Justice and Equality but the delivery of the individual objectives and actions falls to a wide range of Government Departments, State Agencies and other key players.
419. The Strategy was published at a time of optimism for Ireland. It had been included as part of a package of interventions to address Gender Equality in the 2007 – 2013 National Development Plan. It would be complemented by a programme of positive actions, being supported under the Equality for Women Measure (EWM) and by a gender mainstreaming initiative to be spearheaded by the Gender Equality Division in the Department of Justice and Equality. It had been agreed that the EWM would receive a mix of European Social Funds (ESF) and Exchequer match-funding from the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007 - 2013.
420. Within a year or so, concerns began to rise about the sustainability of tax revenue, high levels of public expenditure and the overheating of the economy. In a further short period, the banking crisis and the employment crisis began to emerge and to challenge all economic preconceptions and public sector activity.
421. While the detailed impact of the economic downturn will be discussed in more detail later in this Chapter, the reader will by now be aware from the earlier parts of this Review that there has been significant progress with regard to many of the objectives and actions identified in relation to the Strategy. In some instances, it has been necessary to find alternative ways of achieving or fostering the goal of gender equality or innovative ways to promote the topic. It has also on occasion been necessary to find creative ways to achieve the betterment of services for women, although in many instances, including in cancer screening, violence against women and a range of other crucial issues, the compelling case for addressing a service need has led to the advances which have been reported previously both in this Review and in the Annual Reports.
422. The remainder of this Chapter looks at the challenges which were addressed to advance the objectives associated with the implementation of the Strategy over the past five years, including the period of the economic downturn.

#### **Objective 18 : To implement gender mainstreaming as the principal instrument for the achievement of gender equality in Ireland**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	
195.	Re-establish NDP Gender Equality Unit as Central Gender Mainstreaming Unit by end 2007
196.	Establish formal Gender Mainstreaming Supports in Government Departments by end 2008
197.	Central Gender Mainstreaming Unit to provide training and support to other Departments
198.	Departmental Strategy Statements to include linkages with National Women's Strategy as a cross-Departmental Initiative.
199.	Prepare and circulate detailed guidance to all Government Departments in relation to the provision in the Cabinet Procedures that Memoranda for Government require an assessment of gender impacts
200.	Training on gender mainstreaming to be included as an intrinsic part of training programmes
201.	Consider evidence for the introduction of gender budgeting with a view to its introduction if the case in its favour proves positive

423. The achievement of Objective 18 was predicated on a number of actions, including the re-establishment of the former NDP Gender Equality Division within the mainstream Gender Equality Division of the Department of Justice and Equality (GED/DJE). While this was agreed administratively, and an officer was appointed to take charge of the first steps of the project which would develop a gender mainstreaming framework for the Irish administration, on an interim basis, challenges to the public sector has led to a more measured approach to the introduction of the envisaged new structure for gender mainstreaming, at least on a temporary basis.

424. Funding from the EU PROGRESS Fund<sup>45</sup> was made available to Ireland by the European Commission to enable the GED/DJE to look at good practice in relation to gender mainstreaming in a number of countries, including Denmark, the Netherlands and to develop a framework for the implementation of gender mainstreaming, firstly on a pilot basis and then across the whole central Government administration. This task was completed at the end of 2009. Unfortunately, this timeframe coincided with a requirement that all Government Departments restructure and prioritise. Following consultation, it was decided that it would not be productive to add a new layer of administration to the public administration structures at that time. It is envisaged that the gender mainstreaming project will be reactivated in the future.
425. However, GDE/DJE continues to work actively to ensure that all relevant Memoranda to Government (the proposals by Ministers for new or amended policies on which Government decisions are taken) continue to include a short analysis of the impact of the individual proposals on women. The Division has also provided guidance to Departments on the formulation of their new Strategy Statements and has used this process to promote awareness of good practice and policies from the European Union.
426. The Division is also active in a number of key national policy formulation fora, including in both the economic and social sectors. It continues to foster a gender equality perspective and seeks to ensure that the interests of women are appropriately reflected in national policies. The Division plays a similar role in the formulation of EU and Council of Europe policies through the European Commission's High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming, the European Commission's Advisory Committee on Equality between Women and Men and the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Commission<sup>46</sup>.

#### **Gender Budgeting**

427. In relation to gender budgeting, there have been some developments internationally since the publication of the NWS. The Council of Europe, long a proponent of the concept, organised a conference on the topic in Greece in May 2009 entitled '*State Budgets: a key factor in real equality between women and men*'. Gender Budgeting is defined by the Council of Europe as:

*"...an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means 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"...*

A handbook<sup>47</sup> on the practical implementation of gender budgeting was produced for the conference. The handbook suggests that gender budgeting can be broken down into three stages:

- Stage 1: Analysis of the budget from a gender perspective;
- Stage 2: Restructuring of the budget based on gender analysis; and
- Stage 3: Mainstreaming gender as a category of analysis in the budgetary process.

428. An Opinion prepared by the EU Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in 2009, entitled 'The gender perspective on the response to the economic and financial crisis' makes a number of recommendations to Member States and to the European Commission, including the following in relation to gender budgeting:

- All proposed policies should be subject routinely to gender impact assessment; and
- Member States should consider gender budgeting, in particular in respect of national budgets.

429. A number of EU Member States have also introduced initiatives. The most comprehensive has been undertaken by Austria which is the first State to introduce a gender budgeting perspective for

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<sup>45</sup> PROGRESS is a special EU support fund which covers special initiatives by administrations etc. in relation to employment, social inclusion, discrimination and gender equality.

<sup>46</sup> The GEC is a new 16 Member State Commission (of officials) has just been elected at the Council of Europe to replace the former 47 – member Steering Committee on Gender Equality. Ireland was elected to the first GEC.

<sup>47</sup> Gender Budgeting: Practical Implementation Handbook., Council of Europe, April 2009.

its federal (national) budget. The outcomes will be monitored over time to determine whether a similar approach merits consideration in Ireland.

## Recommendations

*Work on the mainstreaming of gender equality should continue, particularly as a priority following the completion of the Irish Presidency Programme on gender equality.*

*A review of the experience of other countries in relation to gender budgeting would also provide insights into the merits of introducing a gender analysis of the Budget in Ireland.*

## Objective 19: To provide financial support to implement the National Women’s Strategy

ACTIONS	
202.	Build upon the initiatives promoting gender equality and the advancement of women which were funded under National Development Plan 2000 – 2006
203.	Create a new fund which will be available to undertake positive actions aimed at fostering better gender equality and the achievement of the objectives of this Strategy
204.	Undertake awareness raising programmes to foster understanding of gender equality

430. The National Development Plan 2007 – 2013 included a number of funding commitments to help achieve gender equality. This included a significant further commitment of ESF and Exchequer match funds under the ESF Equality for Women Measure 2007 – 2013 and a funding stream for the implementation of aspects of this Strategy. The National Development Plan was based on an assumption of annual real economic growth of 4 to 4.5 per cent per annum.

### Equality for Women Measure 2008 - 2013

431. The economic downturn has already been discussed and the reduction in tax revenues and the burden of supporting the banking sector have impacted on public expenditure at all levels, as early as Summer 2008. This impacted particularly on the Equality for Women Measure 2007 – 2013, which had originally had a budget of €31.75 million, including €15.875 million of ESF funding under the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007 – 2013. As a result of the scarcity of Exchequer match funding, the budget for the Measure was reduced to €11.75 million for the whole period.

432. The first Strand of the new Measure had been launched in May 2008 and it attracted 180 funding applications, seeking over €85 million in funding support. This Strand was aimed at the labour market activation of women currently outside the labour market. The project proposals were appraised by Pobal but at that stage the prospect of the economic downturn forced the Department to take the difficult decision to restrict the Measure to offers of just €30,000 to the top 38 projects. This funding was extended for a further period of a year. During this period, over 4,800 women availed of training and personal development initiatives with over 1,000 progressing to employment or mainstream education.

433. This Strand on “Access to Employment” and two new Strands on “Women and Entrepreneurship” and “Women and Management” were advertised in 2010, with a new maximum allocation of €50,000. Again there was considerable interest and 38 projects were selected. The response on “Women and Management” was particularly poor and only one project was selected under that Strand. However, the other strands were much more highly subscribed with over 200 applications in all. By the end of 2011, a further 2,142 women underwent training and development courses under the Access to Employment Strand with over 660 progressing to work or further education. The entrepreneurship Strand has also been very successful, with over 1,000 women participating in a range of initiatives. Strand 3 on management roles for women catered for 196 participants during the last year.

434. Over 3,500 beneficiaries of the Equality for Women Measure to date are unemployed, with nearly 2,300 being long-term unemployed. A further 2,500 were inactive and, as mentioned previously, this is a group which it is essential to target if we are to achieve the Europe 2020 targets. Over 2,800 of the participants to date were early school leavers, and women from minority groups are

well represented. The statistics show the participation of 197 women from the Travelling Community, 1,027 migrant women and 622 women with a disability in the period to end 2011.

435. While the cuts in funding were of course disappointing if unavoidable, the outputs to date are quite beneficial. The second phase of funding has now been rolled over for a third time to end 2012 and decisions will be taken shortly about the next phase of the Measure.
436. The National Development Plan had also included an amount of funding for other initiatives under this Strategy. No allocation had been made for this purpose at the time of the economic downturn. However, while there had been a strong expectation of a dedicated fund to implement the Strategy among the women's sector, no provision had been made in the Estimates process for such a dedicated fund. The delivery of the actions incorporated in the NWS requires the concerted efforts of a wide range of Government Departments. These Departments each have their own funding stream from the Exchequer and have used those resources, to the greatest extent possible, to advance the actions contained in the Strategy.
437. While the availability of additional funding would have facilitated a number of additional initiatives to foster awareness of gender equality issues, many of the challenges associated with the achievement of de facto or true gender equality require changes in thinking and approaches rather than costly initiatives. This includes thinking in relation to issues as diverse as educational choices made by girls and the attitudes of board members to the inclusion of women among their number.
438. It can be argued that awareness raising campaigns can help to change such mindsets and it may be worth considering the funding of campaigns on such issues in the future.
439. There are of course other barriers to the achievement of true gender equality such as the availability of affordable childcare to support working parents who have comparatively low incomes. However these goals overlap with those related to the achievement of the aims of Europe 2020 in relation to the economic engagement of men and women and the aim to increase the productive capacity of our workforce. The funding for such initiatives must come from the central funding stream to the relevant Departments rather than from any short term fund.
440. In discussing funding for positive actions, mention must also be made of the significant work undertaken by hundreds of community groups and women's groups throughout Ireland and of the work of the National Women's Council of Ireland. All of these groups have experienced cuts in their funding since the economic downturn. This has forced difficult decisions to reduce the levels of service provided and in many instances staff have shown their commitment to the achievement of gender equality and enhanced life chances for their client groups by accepting reduced levels of pay.
441. The National Women's Council Of Ireland experienced a significant cut in its core funding from the Department of Justice and Equality in Budget 2012, having had smaller cuts in the previous two years. Although the Council has benefited from very generous funding for projects, largely from two philanthropic bodies, Atlantic Philanthropies and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the most recent cut in core funding has presented a challenge to the Council. Staff in the Council have taken a cut in salary and the Council is currently looking at its Strategic Plan with a view to identifying its key priorities for the coming years.

## **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that cognisance be taken of the recommendations of the EU with regard to the funding of gender equality initiatives to stimulate economic growth and competitiveness.*

## Objective 20: To ensure that the National Women's Strategy is fully implemented

ACTIONS	
205.	Prepare reports on progress on implementation of National Women's Strategy
206.	Continue to convene Inter-Departmental Committee and establish wide reaching Co-ordinating Committee to review implementation of the Strategy and discuss issues of interest to women in Ireland
207.	Publish periodic reports on implementation of Strategy on Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform website and otherwise
208.	Social Partnership agreements to include a commitment to implement the Strategy and to include monitoring of implementation of Strategy as part of monitoring of agreement
209.	Departmental Data Strategies to reflect the need to gather gender disaggregated data generally, and in particular, to ensure that the data needed to support the implementation of this Strategy is available
210.	Undertake Interim Review of Strategy every three years
211.	Organise seminars to review implementation of Strategy involving interested parties, including NGOs
212.	Monitor progress on addressing inequalities and advise on how to address any barriers encountered

442. The National Women's Strategy Monitoring Committee has met regularly and at least once per year since the Strategy was published in 2007. The Committee brings together the relevant Government Departments, State Agencies and social partners under the Chairmanship of the Minister of State with responsibility for Gender Equality.
443. The Gender Equality Division in the Department of Justice and Equality has provided secretarial support for the Monitoring Committee. It has also prepared the Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the Strategy, which has also been submitted to the Government for information. The Annual Reports are also available on the Department's website.
444. The present report is a Mid-Term Evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy and, at time of writing, it is envisaged that this will be sent to Government.
445. Government Departments and Agencies have made efforts to ensure that statistical material produced is available disaggregated by sex. This facilitates the comparison and analysis of data on the basis of gender.
446. When the Strategy was first in preparation, there was some pressure to incorporate specific indicators. In preparing the Annual Reports on the implementation of the Strategy and this Mid-Term Evaluation, Gender Equality Division in the Department of Justice and Equality has endeavoured to find statistics which explain the situation of women in Ireland over a time period. Sources include the excellent report on Equality between Women and Men prepared by the European Commission and the similar report prepared by the Central Statistics Office. The topic of de facto gender equality is complex with a plurality of causal factors in many of what are regarded as key indicators. Accordingly the Department continues to hold the view that a pragmatic approach to indicators is more pertinent to measure advances in gender equality which may also be achievements under the Strategy.

### Recommendation

*It is recommended that the National Women's Strategy continue to be delivered and monitored as before, given its close linkages with many of the key themes in the Programme for Government.*

*Steps should be taken to proactively promote the understanding of the need for gender disaggregated data among both Government Departments and Agencies and in the Central Statistics Office.*

