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# Budget 2014

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SUBMISSION BY THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S  
COUNCIL OF IRELAND  
AUGUST 2013

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# BUDGET 2014

## Submission by the National Women's Council of Ireland to the Irish Government 2013

### Introduction

Established in 1973, the National Women's Council of Ireland is the leading national women's membership organisation in Ireland. The NWCI seeks full equality between men and women. The NWCI represents and derives our mandate from our membership, which includes 165 member groups from a diversity of backgrounds, sectors and locations.

The NWCI welcomes the opportunity to make a Pre-Budget Submission to the Irish Government, the recommendations of which we hope will make a contribution to the design of Budget 2014 proposals.

The NWCI is acutely aware that Budget 2014 will be designed in the context of ongoing economic crisis. We are aware that an adjustment in public finances of up to €3.1bn is required, through a combination of tax revenues and expenditure reductions.

However, we are also aware that there are choices that can be made. The proportionality between taxes and cuts is a choice for government and the NWCI advocates for the burden of the proportionality to be assigned to an increase in taxes on the highest income earners. Cuts to public expenditure affect those on low and middle incomes most. They also affect women most. Therefore when it comes to making this choice the NWCI would urge the Irish government to examine the social consequences of the choices its makes.

The submission takes the opportunity to highlight that there are a number of international policies and targets to which Ireland, as an EU Member State, is

committed. These include *Europe 2020: the European Strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive society*, the *EU Women's Charter*, the *European Pact for Gender Equality* and the *EU Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015*. These policies and strategies highlight the need to increase the economic participation of women, and to establish strategies to address economic independence, equal pay and the representation of women in decision-making and positions of power.

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## Summary of Recommendations

### Priority 1 A different approach is needed

#### 1.1 Budgeting Process

- Gender and Equality proof all proposed measures by 2014;
- Put in place measures that address the disproportionate impact that previous Budgets have had on lone parents and others;
- Ensure that further negative effects are not placed on women, children and families.

#### 1.2 Austerity is not working

##### Income Tax

- Introduce a refundable tax credits system to ensure that all those in the tax system fully benefit from tax credits.

##### Taxing Wealth

- Introduce a third tax band for high earners (over €100,000 per annum).
- The cost of tax expenditures be reduced to the EU average over the medium-term – with the burden of that reduction to be borne by high income groups.
- All tax expenditures must be fully quantified and subject to a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis.

### Priority 2 Support women into employment

- Extend eligibility for labour market activation to all those currently jobless that wish to avail of them;
- Ensure the pre-requisite services are in place before those with care responsibilities, predominately women are activated;
- Young unemployed women need to be specifically targeted.

### Priority 3 Income adequacy

#### 3.1 In-work income adequacy

##### Rates of Pay

- Maintain the system of JLC and REA;
- Maintain pay rates of employment governed by JLCs and REAs at current levels;
- The Department of Social Protection recognise atypical work patterns by calculating unemployment on the basis of hours rather than days per week.
- Reverse the basis on which a working week is calculated from a five to a six day week.

##### In-work supports - FIS

- As a temporary provision, reduce the hour's threshold for FIS from 19 hours to 17.5 to support job retention during the recession.
- Increase the FIS thresholds, particularly for families with one and two children.
- Maintain FIS as an in-work support.
- Undertake a public awareness campaign on Family Income Supplement promoting it as an in-work support to low income families.

#### 3.2 Social Protection

- Maintain social protection payments at current levels
- Regard secondary benefits as important as primary benefits and maintain them at current rates.

#### 3.3 Pensions

- Maintain the rate of the Contributory and Non Contributory Pensions
- Introduce a universal pension for all, funded through the removal of tax reliefs for private pensions.
- Address the discrimination caused by the impact of the 'marriage bar' on women's pension entitlements.

## Priority 4 Children

### 4.1 Child Income Supports

- The universal element of the Child Benefit payment needs to be maintained at current levels;
- Top-up payments should be extended to those on low incomes, particularly those that are in receipt of the Family Income Supplement and/or a Medical or GP card;

### 4.2 Early Childhood Care & Education

- A multi-annual investment in the quality of provision of Early Childhood Care & Education in Ireland including a package to train and upskill staff and introduce pay scales;
- Increased investment in the quantity of ECCE including a 2nd free preschool year;
- A designated budget to subsidise out of school hour's childcare delivered through the primary school system that is accessible and affordable.

## Priority 5 Protecting vulnerable women

### 5.1 Lone Parents

- The effects of recent budgets on the income of lone parents must be taken into account and Budget 2014 must be assessed in order to ensure no further negative impact on lone parents;
- Levels of earnings disregard for the OPFP must be maintained at current levels;
- Labour market activation strategies that include lone parents must ensure that pre-requisite supports, including childcare and training are in place before they are transferred from the One Parent Family Payment.

### 5.2 Women with disabilities

- Government immediately reverse cuts to Homecare Packages and Home Help.
- Organisations supporting and advocating for the rights of people with disability be allocated with the necessary resources to function effectively.

### 5.3 Traveller and Roma Women

- Government centralise, ring-fence and protect the Traveller health budget.
- Maintain at least at existing levels funding of Traveller projects.
- The inclusion of a funding line within the Local & Community Development Programme budget for Traveller organisations to work with the Roma community.

### 5.4 Migration and Integration

- End the system of direct provision and provide for an amnesty for those currently living in the system.
- Increase the level of weekly payment to asylum seekers
- Ring fence funding for local organisations working to address racism, promote integration and address the needs of women from minority ethnic communities
- Allocate funding for the development of a comprehensive national framework for addressing racism in the Scheme of Grants to Support National Organisations

### 5.5 Habitual Residence Condition

- Abolish the HRC as a regressive policy.
- Remove the HRC as a condition for access to child benefit;
- Provide an exemption from the HRC for women who are experiencing domestic violence and for women who need to access health services on health grounds.
- Provide an exemption from the HRC for Traveller and Roma women in recognition of their nomadic tradition;
- Carry out a gender and equality impact assessment of the HRC.

## Priority 6 Women and Health

### 6.1 Gender Mainstreaming

- Establish a gender mainstreaming unit within the Department of Health as recommended by the National Women's Strategy
- Provide a specific budget line to implement the components of the HSE Gender Mainstreaming Framework

### 6.2 BreastCheck

- Deliver on commitments in the Programme for Government and extend the eligible age bracket for Breastcheck to cover women aged 65-69
- Awareness raising programmes amongst GPs and women for early detection of breast cancer particularly in the 40-49 age group
- Maintain supports for community based women organisations that are assisting the National Cancer Support Service in improving uptake rates in disadvantaged or isolated areas.

### 6.3 Women and Smoking

- Develop and resource community based smoking cessation services for women, with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities.
- Services should be designed to meet the specific health needs of each target group and take into account health literacy levels and attitudes towards smoking.

### 6.4 Women and Osteoporosis

- Initiate a publicly funded public awareness campaign on osteoporosis which is particularly targeted at pre and post-menopausal women that will alert all women to the urgent necessity for regular testing and supervision
- Make the DEXA scan widely available free of charge.

## Priority 7 Violence against Women

### 7.1 Domestic and sexual violence

- Increase funding to organisations providing front-line services and supports

to survivors of violence against women by 10% to offset recent budgets cuts.

- Increase funding to advocacy organisations working at a representative, policy and support level by 10% to offset budgets cuts in recent years.
- To ensure access to safe, emergency accommodation for women experiencing male violence, a target of at least 1 refuge place per 10,000 of population should be agreed and resources ring fenced to make progress towards that target
- Allocate resources to fund a SAVI 2 Report in relation to the nature and extent of sexual abuse and violence in Ireland and research into the economic cost of domestic violence in Ireland

### 7.2 Female genital mutilation

- Allocate resources for the establishment of an inter-departmental committee that would be tasked with the role of drawing up a National Action Plan to Combat FGM.
- Provide resources for a nationwide information awareness campaign on the Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012 and to put in place referral mechanisms to ensure victims can access the support they need

## Priority 8 Protecting the Voice of Women

- Ensure that there is no further degradation of funding for women's rights and gender equality work at national or local levels and allocate specific funding for gender equality work within the local government reform process.
- Increase funding to the NWCI by 10% to offset recent budget cuts
- Increase funding to the NCCWN through the Local and Community Development Programme by at least 10% in order to facilitate the NCCWN to maintain front line services throughout the country for disadvantaged women. (to offset recent budget cuts – to be distributed to the local women's organisations)

## Priority 1 A different approach is needed

### 1.1 Budgeting Process

The NWCI believes that budgeting processes are not gender neutral. Proposals contained in the Budget have differential impacts on women and men. A review of the past three budgets has shown that gender disparities are increasingly arising in the outcome of the budgetary process. Recent **ESRI** research<sup>1</sup> confirms that contrary to previous budgets (2008 to 2011), Budget 2012's combination of indirect tax increases and welfare cuts imposed greater percentage losses on those with low incomes. Research by **TASC**<sup>2</sup> suggests that women are concentrated in the lower income groups and consequently, changes to taxes and benefits that disproportionately impact on low-income groups can also be expected to disproportionately impact on women. The **Department of Social Protection's Social Impact Assessment** of the main welfare and direct tax measures in Budget 2013<sup>(iii)</sup> found that in terms of impact, employed lone parents are most affected, with non-earning lone parents also significantly affected. The fact that almost 87% of lone parents are women must be included in the analysis. Women are frequently disadvantaged by policies that do not recognise their different realities and experiences, including unequal pay, responsibilities at work and home, and gender-based violence<sup>3</sup>.

Equality Budgeting generally, and Gender Budgeting specifically, is an approach to economic policymaking and planning that places (gender) equality at the centre of decisions concerning public expenditure and income. The objective of Equality Budgeting lies in ensuring this information is used to reduce inequalities and to achieve the best

equality outcomes. NWCI recognises the work carried out by the Department of Social Protection in assessing the impact of Budget 2013. However an impact assessment is required before the proposals are included.

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

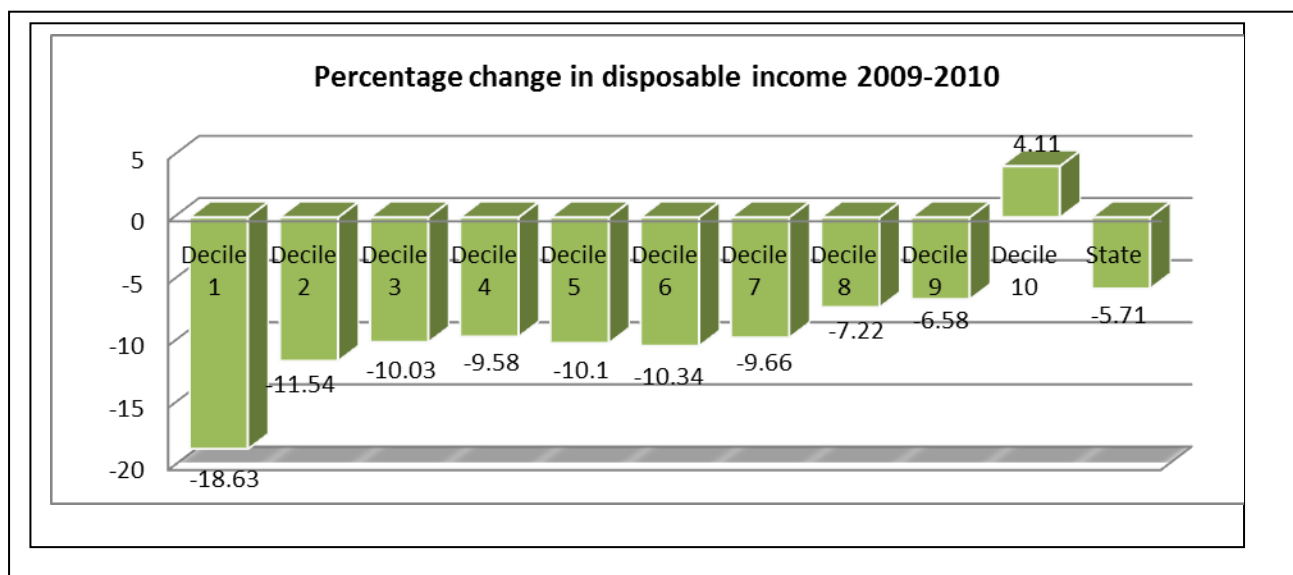
- Gender and Equality proof all measures proposed by 2014;
  - Put in place measures that address the disproportionate impact that previous Budgets have had on lone parents and others;
  - Ensure that further negative effects are not placed on women, children and families.
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### 1.2 Austerity is not working

Austerity is not working. Increasingly, research is highlighting the detrimental impact of sustained austerity. Using episodes of fiscal consolidation for a sample of 17 OECD countries (including Ireland) over the period 1978-2009, the recently published IMF Working Paper<sup>4</sup> on the Distributional Effects of Fiscal Consolidation shows that fiscal consolidation has typically led to a significant and persistent increase in inequality, declines in wage income and in the wage share of income, and increases in long-term unemployment. The evidence also shows that spending-based adjustments have had, on average, larger distributional effects than tax-based adjustments. According to many including for example, Social Justice Ireland, expenditure cuts impact most on those on low and middle incomes and this paper shows that these cuts impose medium and long-term distributional costs to those least capable of bearing it.

An analysis of income using the EU SILC data shows that far from protecting low and middle income earners, it is those in these categories that are suffering the biggest drop in income.

an estimated €1.5 billion a year. The NWCI as an active member of the Community Platform concurs with the recommendations of the report.



#### *EU SILC various years*

An alternative to this approach has been long advocated by the NWCI, the Community Platform, Social Justice Ireland, the Nevin Economic Research Institute, UNITE the Trade Union and others. A combination of tax increases focused in the highest income earners in addition to an increase in the incomes of the lowest paid would provide a significant economic stimulus. The combined impact of these two would reduce the deficit despite increased social protection spending.

The NWCI has consistently advocated for a wider tax base so that a high level of public services can be delivered and maintained. In reforming the taxation system, basic principles of redistribution must apply where those who have the highest levels of income and accumulated wealth must contribute most to the state finances. The Community Platform paper<sup>5</sup> has demonstrated how, in contrast to these principles, the overwhelming majority of tax breaks benefit high income groups the current tax system<sup>6</sup>. It recommends a three to four year programme of phasing the number and cost of tax expenditures<sup>7</sup> down to EU levels would save

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

##### Income Tax

- Introduce a refundable tax credits system to ensure that all those in the tax system fully benefit from tax credits.

##### Taxing Wealth

- Introduce a third tax band for high earners (over €100,000 per annum).
  - The cost of tax expenditures be reduced to the EU average over the medium-term – with the burden of that reduction to be borne by high income groups.
  - All tax expenditures must be fully quantified and subject to a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis.
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## Priority 2 Support women into employment

Despite being more highly qualified than men<sup>8</sup>, women remain less likely to be employed, are more likely to be employed on a part-time basis and are still paid less, on average, than men. The most up-to-date figures available<sup>9</sup> show that the labour force participation rate is 59.5%, but there is a marked difference between men and women with 66.9% men active in the labour force compared to 52.4% of women. The employment rate is 59.3% but it is 63.5% for men and 55.1% for women.

Employment rates are beginning to grow and this is to be welcomed. The latest figures from the Quarterly National Household Survey<sup>10</sup>, for example, show that in the year to the end of Quarter 1 2013, employment increased by 20,5000. The employment rate is now 59.3% and the unemployment rate is 13.7%.

**However, an issue of significant concern for the NWCI is the fact female employment is recovering at a far slower rate than male employment.** In the year to the end of Quarter 1 2013, the employment rate for males increased by 1.6 points, but the rate for females increased by only 0.4 points. The Live Register confirms this trend. In the year to the end of April 2013, male unemployment fell by 12,391 whereas female unemployment fell by just 17. In the year to the end of May 2013, male unemployment fell by 11,842, whereas female unemployment increased by 672.

Unemployment rates amongst young women are of particular concern. The unemployment rate for young women (between the ages of 15 and 24) is 22.3% compared to 11% for women of all ages.<sup>11</sup>

Labour market activation strategies are crucial in the current economic context. However, they must acknowledge the different work patterns of women. In addition, Qualified Adults, the majority of whom are women, do

not automatically for labour market activation strategies. In this regard the NWCI would like to draw attention to the work carried out by the ESRI and Department of Social Protection research,<sup>12</sup> which states that there should be a focus on joblessness rather than on the Live Register, the inclusion of childcare in job search programmes and designing activation programmes so that **parents** can participate.

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### NWCI Budget 2014 Priorities

- Extend eligibility for labour market activation to all those currently jobless that wish to avail of them;
  - Ensure the pre-requisite services are in place *before* those with care responsibilities, predominately women, are activated;
  - Young unemployed women need to be specifically targeted.
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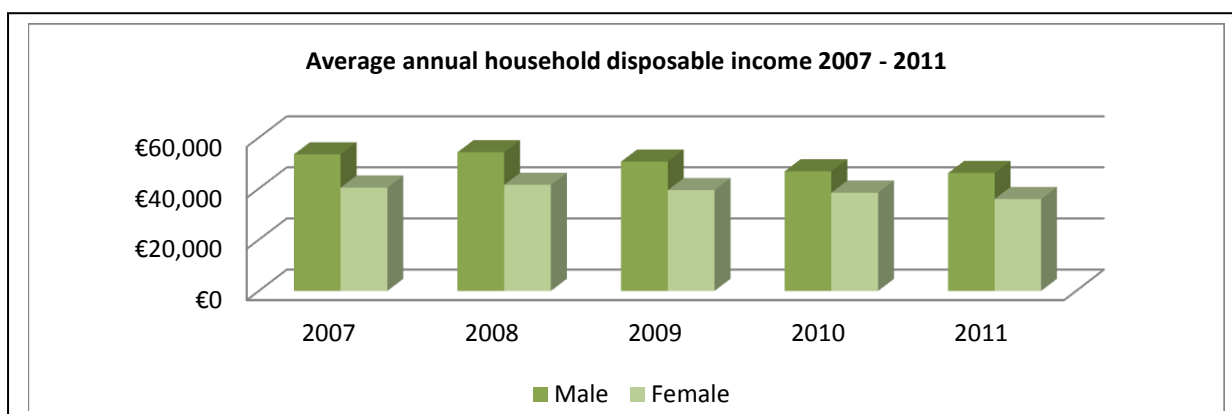


## Priority 3 Income adequacy

On average, the incomes of women continue to be significantly lower than the incomes of men.

uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker, as well as part-time and casual work that requires significant levels of flexibility.

- Women are paid less than men - the latest figures from the EU Commission show that women in Ireland are paid almost 14% less than men. In the Irish context, what is perhaps most



*EU SILC various years*

This is for a variety of reasons including:

- Women are disproportionately represented in the lowest paid sectors of the economy<sup>13</sup>. While over 70% of *manager, director and senior officials* are men, 84% of *caring, leisure and other services* and almost 80% *administrative and secretarial* are women. These are the areas of work are governed by either minimum wage legislation or Joint Labour Committee agreements, currently under review by the Labour Court.
- Where they are employed, women are far more likely to be employed on a part-time basis with almost 70% of part-time workers being women. Many women are engaged in shift work and atypical employment, and they are more likely to be low paid and on reduced hours. According to the QNHS Q1 2013, 68% of all part-time workers are women. The Mandate Trade Union report<sup>14</sup> demonstrates that women are over represented in what it terms precarious work – work that is

disturbing is the high cost of motherhood. Figures from the OECD show that in Ireland the Gender Pay Gap for women with no children is - 17% but this increases significantly to 14% for women with at least one child – a jump of 31 percentage points.

There are two aspects to income adequacy - in-work income adequacy and Social Protection

### 3.1 In-work income adequacy

Despite arguments to the contrary, Ireland is not a high wage economy. It is vital that workers see that work pays. The rates governed by the Joint Labour Committee agreements need to be at least maintained. This vital mechanism for protecting these rates of pay must also be protected.

The Irish social protection system is poorly equipped to address the challenges of current labour market conditions. The objective should be to support workers to maximise potential for employment without compromising their risk of poverty. The social welfare system needs to be adequately flexible to do this.

Family Income Supplement (FIS) plays an important role in supplementing the income of low paid workers. Almost 60% of FIS claimants in 2011 were women<sup>15</sup>, and over half of claimants are lone parents, a group with an exceptionally high poverty rate.

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

##### Rates of Pay

- Maintain the system of JLC and REA;
- Maintain pay rates of employment governed by JLCs and REAs at current levels;
- The Department of Social Protection recognise atypical work patterns by calculating unemployment on the basis of hours rather than days per week.
- Reverse the basis on which a working week is calculated from a five to a six day week.

##### In-work supports - FIS

- As a temporary provision, reduce the hour's threshold for FIS from 19 hours to 17.5 to support job retention during the recession.
  - Increase the FIS thresholds, particularly for families with one and two children.
  - Maintain FIS as an in-work support.
  - Undertake a public awareness campaign on Family Income Supplement promoting it as an in-work support to low income families.
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## 3.2 Social Protection

The Social Protection system is of crucial importance to women vulnerable to, or living in, poverty. The ESRI report, *Work and Work and Poverty in Ireland, 2004-2010* highlights the vital role played by welfare payments and other social transfers in lifting jobless households out of financial poverty. The majority of social welfare claimants are women, and women have a greater reliance on means-tested payments than men.

The NWCI is aware of the efforts by the Department of Social Protection to maintain primary social welfare rates. However in so doing, secondary benefits are increasingly being targeted to save costs. This includes reductions in rates, as well as restrictions to eligibility. It is crucial that these cuts, the cumulative effects of which are profound on many women, particularly those that are already vulnerable to or living in poverty, are stopped. Social protection rates must be maintained at current levels. The cuts to secondary benefits must be stopped or there is a real danger of families falling into debt crisis.

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Maintain social protection payments at current levels
  - Regard secondary benefits as important as primary benefits and maintain them at current rates.
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### 3.3 Pensions

Older people have the lowest levels of disposable income and are heavily reliant on social transfers to keep them out of poverty. Women's work patterns have significant implications for their pension entitlements in their later years<sup>16</sup> and are far less likely to have a private or to a State Contributory Pension.<sup>17</sup> The impact of the 'marriage bar' under which many women were forced to give up jobs in the public service until 1973 is continuing to have an impact on many women's entitlement to pensions and is clearly an issue to be addressed by the State.

The thrust of Government policy regarding pensions has been to encourage people to invest in private pensions and the state has supported people to take out pensions by providing tax reliefs of €2.9 billion per annum. The near collapse of the private pension system raises considerable questions about this policy direction and means that there will be an increase in the reliance on the state pension for all people in their older years. This makes the need for reform of the state system more urgent. Clearly a new direction is urgently required to ensure that all people have a decent standard of living in their older years. The NWCI has documented the discrimination against women in the state system and has developed a women friendly model of pensions in *Pensions: What Women Want – a model of pensions that guarantees independence*, (NWCI 2008).

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Maintain the rate of the Contributory and Non Contributory Pensions
  - Introduce a universal pension for all, funded through the removal of tax reliefs for private pensions.
  - Address the discrimination caused by the impact of the 'marriage bar' on women's pension entitlements.
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## Priority 4 Children

### 4.1 Child Income Supports

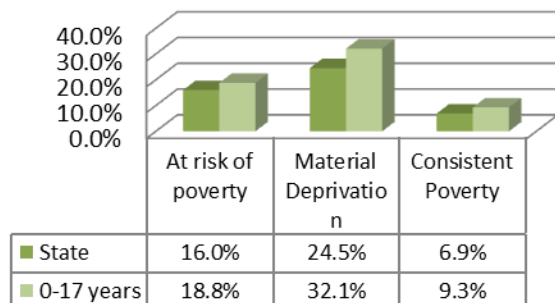
For families, particularly women and children, Child Income Supports, including Child Benefit, are important features of the Irish economic landscape. Child Benefit is a universal payment that is paid directly to all mothers, unless otherwise stipulated. The universality of child benefit is based on an understanding that those with children have higher costs than those without and therefore income is distributed from those who do not have children to those who do. It acknowledges that children are key to society and necessary economically and will be the ones to pay for the pensions of those now paying their Child Benefit.

Child Benefit recognises the role that is played by women as care givers and that fact that income may not be distributed equally within the home. Research<sup>18</sup> shows that the vast majority of child benefit is spent either directly (on childcare, clothing, nappies, etc) or indirectly (on household bills that support the household in which the child lives) on children. In the Irish context, child benefit is also seen and used as a key mechanism to counteract the lack of investment and availability of affordable childcare where costs for full-time care for one child can be as much as €220 per week<sup>19</sup>, a fact acknowledged by the Government when they introduced the series of increases to the Child Benefit payment to account for 'increasing childcare costs'.

Child Benefit is also part of an overall package of Child Income Supports that target child-related assistance to families who are at risk of poverty<sup>20</sup>. Child poverty remains a consistent challenge in Ireland. The latest figures available<sup>21</sup> show that children (0-17) make up 27% of the total population but 36.2% of the population in consistent poverty. They remain the most exposed age group with

a consistent poverty rate of 9.3% in 2011, compared to the State average of 6.9%.

## EU SILC 2011



Child Benefit has been consistently reduced in recent budgets. Significant savings have already accrued as a result of these and other cuts. Expenditure on child benefit was just under €2.1 billion in 2011, a reduction of €400 million since 2009. In 2011, total spending on children was just over €2.4 billion in 2011, a reduction of 4% on the 2010 spend.<sup>22</sup>

The NWCI estimates that families with 4 children have already seen a cumulative loss of €2,616 per annum. It is acknowledged that compensatory increases have been made in the rate of social welfare payable for dependent children. However, these compensatory payments were limited to those on social welfare and were not extended to others on low incomes, and it is the experience of the NWCI and its members, that families on low and middle incomes are struggling to pay for essential household items. It is also the experience of the NWCI that many parents use child income support payments, particularly child benefit, to pay for childcare to enable them to work outside the home. While these families may not qualify for the second-tier payment any reduction to the current universal rate would put them under unsustainable financial pressure and may result in a number not being able to afford to maintain employment and/or falling into debt and poverty.

The universality of Child Benefit has been coming under increasing attack. Arguments

against universality focus on the fact that some higher income families may not need Child Benefit payments and it should become part of the system that targets lower income families. The NWCI welcomes the unanimity of the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare in its view that there continues to be a role for universality within the system of child income support and its statement that the State should provide some income support for all children. The position of the NWCI is that the universal element of child benefit should be reduced no further and the ratio of universal should be at least maintained at current levels.

### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- The universal element of the Child Benefit payment needs to be maintained at current levels;
- Top-up payments should be extended to those on low incomes, particularly those that are in receipt of the Family Income Supplement and/or a Medical or GP card;

## 4.2 Early Childhood Care & Education

*Tensions between work and family life are at the heart of the employment puzzle when it comes to gender. Families with young children need affordable childcare if parents are to work. If childcare eats up one wage so that there is little or no financial gain from going out to work, parents (most often mothers) are less likely to seek a job (OECD (2012) Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, p. 5)*

There are a range of international reports from the EU and the OECD that recommend investment in early childhood care and education for two reasons: it is crucial for the future development of children but is also a key economic consideration because it facilitates parents, particularly mothers, to remain in and take up paid employment<sup>23</sup>. Currently no matter which measure you use Ireland is generally at the bottom for the provision of high quality, accessible early

childhood services. Public spending on childcare and early education in Ireland as a percentage of GDP is amongst the lowest in the OECD<sup>24</sup>. Consequently, childcare costs in Ireland are amongst the most expensive anywhere<sup>25</sup>. It is clear that current provision in Ireland is not working to facilitate parents, particularly women, to combine work and family life.<sup>26</sup>

The NWCI welcomed the introduction of a year's free childcare for pre-school children. The introduction of the ECCE pre-school year is critical. However, it is insufficient – both the perspective of a child's developmental needs and from the perspective of a working parent in need of affordable childcare.

Recent media coverage of the quality of childcare facilities in Ireland must be given serious consideration. The inadequacies highlighted by Prime Time programme, *A Breach of Trust*, are systemic and a result of underinvestment in ECCE. The announcement of the Preschool Quality Agenda is to be welcomed but they must be regarded as only the first steps in a reform programme that should seek to provide the best quality childcare facilities that are accessible and affordable to all. It is acknowledged that this will take considerable investment but the cost/benefit associated with this investment will repay itself in terms of increased economic activity by parents, particularly women and enhanced opportunities and outcomes for children.

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#### NWCI Priorities for Budget 2014

- A multi-annual investment in the quality of provision of Early Childhood Care & Education in Ireland including a package to train and upskill staff and introduce improved pay scales;
  - Increased investment in the quantity of ECCE including a 2nd free preschool year;
  - A designated budget to subsidise out of school hour's childcare delivered through the primary school system that is accessible and affordable.
- 

## Priority 5 Protecting vulnerable women

Despite ongoing commitments that the most vulnerable would be protected from the effects of the recession, increasing evidence is emerging that the recession is having a significant impact on women in vulnerable situations.

### 5.1 Lone Parents

According to the results of the Census 2011, there were 215,300 families headed by lone parents with children, 87 per cent of which were lone mothers<sup>27</sup>. Households headed by a lone parent are significantly more likely to be living in poverty and with deprivation than other households. In 2011, for example, 16.4% of households headed by a lone parent were living in consistent poverty compared to 6.9% of the general population, and 56% were living with material deprivation more than double the average for the State.

The One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) is a means-tested payment those bringing children up without the support of a partner. In 2011, 90,307 people received the One Parent Family Payment. Of these, 88,161 or almost 98% were women<sup>28</sup>.

In recent years, reforms of eligibility for the OFP, including changes to the upper age limit of children, lowering the threshold of earnings disregards, and changes for those on Community Employment, have resulted in increased hardship for many lone parents. As outlined above, lone parents have been particularly effected by budgetary over the past number of years. They remain the group most likely to be in poverty.

	Average annual household disposable income	At risk of poverty	Material Deprivation	Consistent Poverty
<b>State</b>	€41,819	16.0	24.5	6.9
<b>Men</b>	€46,096	16.3	23.0	6.9
<b>Women</b>	€35,936	15.6	26.0	6.9
<b>Households headed by a lone parent</b>	€24,934	28.4	56.0	16.4
<b>0-17 years</b>	n/a	18.8	32.1	9.3

*EU SILC 2011*

In May 2013, the Minister announced her intention to introduce the Jobseeker's Transition scheme. The key element of Jobseeker's Transition is that recipients will be able to seek work on a part-time rather than a full-time basis if this is better suited to their family requirements. While the NWCI accepts in principle that employment is the best way to ensure that lone parents are supported out of poverty, we continue to have concerns that the current model of activation will not meet the particular needs of lone parents. It is vital that lone parents, already a very vulnerable group of mainly women, are constructively supported to enter or re-enter training and/or employment.

#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- The effects of recent budgets on the income of lone parents must be taken into account and Budget 2014 must be assessed in order to ensure no further negative impact on lone parents;
- Levels of earnings disregard for the OPFP must be maintained at current levels;
- Labour market activation strategies that include lone parents must ensure that the pre-requisite supports are in place before they are transferred from the One Parent Family Payment.

## 5.2 Women with disabilities

According to Census 2011, 13% of the population has one or more disabilities and according to the CSO special disability survey, 18.5% of the population has one or more disabilities<sup>29</sup>. Since 2008 people with disabilities have been suffering cumulative reductions in essential income and service supports. The disability-specific services they need have been reduced and freezes imposed that ignore the ever-increasing demand that comes with an ageing population.

At the same time, generally available or universal services, such as social housing, health services, leisure and dental services, which disabled people also use, have been eroded. Legislative entitlements in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, the Disability Act 2005 and the Citizens Information Act 2007 have been stalled. Huge cutbacks have been announced in capital funds for social housing appropriate to people with special needs and funds for housing adaptation grants have been reduced. Recent job creation and training initiatives have done little to enable access for people with disabilities who seek work<sup>30</sup>.

Cuts of up to €1.7million in funding of Home Care Packages and €10.5 million to Home Help will have a severe impact on the quality of life of people with disabilities and directly affect their ability to live independently.

Little attention however, has been paid to the specific experiences and needs of women with disabilities in Ireland. There is an

unspoken assumption that policies and practices towards people with disabilities are gender neutral and a lack of understanding of the ways in which gender and disability issues interact. In practice, gender inequalities that permeate the structures of our society combine with disadvantages experienced by disabled women to create particular forms of exclusion and discrimination<sup>31</sup>.

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Government immediately reverse cuts to Homecare Packages and Home Help.
  - Organisations supporting and advocating for the rights of people with disability be allocated with the necessary resources to function effectively.
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### 5.3 Traveller and Roma Women

The situation of the Traveller Community in Ireland remains characterised by profound disadvantage. The economic downturn, austerity measures and cut backs in essential services and in positive actions measures to promote equality, have had a particular impact on Traveller women who persistently experience deeply rooted levels of oppression, discrimination and social exclusion. Findings from the recent Traveller Health study, *Our Geels*<sup>32</sup>, reveal startling statistics and the persistently poor health status of Traveller women.

The gap between life expectancy for Traveller women and settled women is 11 years and Traveller women have three times the mortality rate of the general population

Published in 2010, the *All Ireland Traveller Health Study* paints a grim picture of the reality of Traveller's lives. According to the survey, Traveller infant mortality (12 per 1,000) remains almost four times that of the general population<sup>33</sup>, while Traveller women's life expectancy is equivalent to the life expectancy of the general population in the early 1960s and is 11.5 years less than that of settled women<sup>34</sup>. The survey shows that in the Republic 62% of Travellers experienced discrimination, 55% of Travellers

experienced discrimination in getting work, 61% of Travellers experienced discrimination in shops, pubs and restaurants, and 52% of Travellers experienced discrimination in dealing with police and the courts system. For Traveller women, it is often argued the experience of discrimination is more severe.

Cut backs in the Back to Education Initiative and in FAS supports are significantly impacting on the ability of Traveller women to access programmes. Traveller organisations state that approximately 50% of the budget allocated to implement the National Traveller Health Strategy has been cut or reallocated. On the other hand, there is clear evidence of the value of Primary Health Care for Traveller projects, with proportionally more Traveller women than settled women accessing breast screening and smear tests. In line with the general trend in immigration which characterised Ireland's years of prosperity, there has been an increase in the number of Roma women migrating to Ireland. Roma women experience many of the issues and difficulties faced by Traveller women. The Commissioner for Human Rights for the Council of Europe, Thomas Hammarberg, has stated that "*Europe has a shameful history of discrimination and severe repression of the Roma. There are still widespread prejudices against them in country after country on our continent*"<sup>35</sup>. The European Union Fundamental Rights Agency documented the experience of minorities in an EU wide survey in 2008. They found that "on average – every second Roma respondent was discriminated against at least once in the previous 12 months"<sup>36</sup>. In the Irish case Roma women and the particular issues that they face have largely been excluded from policy developments in relation to migration, women and social exclusion.

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Government centralise, ring-fence and protect the Traveller health budget.
  - Maintain at least at existing levels funding of Traveller projects.
  - The inclusion of a funding line within the Local & Community Development Programme budget for Traveller organisations to work with Roma
-

## 5.4 Migration and Integration

Ireland has become an increasingly diverse country. According to Census 2011, almost 17% of the population were born outside of Ireland and there were 544,400 non-Irish nationals representing 196 different nationalities living in Ireland. Among the total non-Irish community the number of women increased by 76,500 or 39% between 2006 and 2011. This compares with an increase of 48,200 or 21.5% in non-Irish men<sup>37</sup>. The number of Polish women increased by 36,200 between 2006 and 2011, accounting for nearly half (47.3 per cent) of the total increase in non-Irish women.

Racial discrimination, both in terms of everyday abuse and discrimination and exclusion within Irish institutions, continues to persist. A report by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency found that Ireland was among the top five countries in the EU when it came to racial discrimination and abuse. 73% of those surveyed from Sub-Saharan Africa stated they had experienced racism in Ireland, as did 25% of those from Central and Eastern Europe.

Exploitation of migrant workers in the workplace is another core issue of concern. This includes the exploitation of domestic workers the vast majority of whom are women working in the private home experiencing excessive working hours, pay below the minimum wage, intimidation, disrespect and illegal deductions being taken from their pay.<sup>38</sup> The Irish Government has not, as yet, ratified the ILO Convention no.189 on decent work for domestic workers.

The current long term system of direct provision for asylum seekers is inhumane and intolerable. Levels of depression and ill health are widespread. A recent report by the Ombudsman Emily O' Reilly described the significant cost in terms of impact on physical and mental health, family relationships and ability to participate in society. Calls for reform and abolition of the system of direct

provision have been made by a variety of organisations and individuals including FLAC and the retired Supreme Court judge Catherine McGuinness.

Those in direct provision receive an allowance of €19.10 per week. An allowance for children is €9.60 per week. These amounts have not been increased for many years.

***“Living in direct provision puts us at a mental health risk... we feel isolated, depressed and sad”<sup>39</sup>.***

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### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- End the system of direct provision and provide for an amnesty for those currently living in the system.
  - Increase the level of weekly payment to asylum seekers
  - Ring fence funding for local organisations working to address racism, promote integration and address the needs of women from minority ethnic communities
  - Allocate funding for the development of a comprehensive national framework for addressing racism in the Scheme of Grants to Support National Organisations
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## 5.5 Habitual Residence Condition

Habitual residence is a condition (HRC) which must be satisfied in order to qualify for some social welfare assistance payments. It was introduced on 1st May 2004 and affects all applicants regardless of nationality. To demonstrate that you are 'habitually resident' in Ireland, you must have a proven close link to Ireland or other parts of the Common Travel area.

Pavee Point, the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland and other organisations have highlighted the difficulties faced by nomadic Travellers, Roma, migrant workers and asylum seekers in relation to the HRC. These communities can face restrictions to social welfare, health and other services if they do



not satisfy the HRC. In particular, women from these communities who experience domestic violence and who fail to satisfy the HRC have experienced difficulties in accessing supports.

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Abolish the HRC as a regressive policy.
  - Remove the HRC as a condition for access to child benefit;
  - Provide an exemption from the HRC for women who are experiencing domestic violence and for women who need to access health services on health grounds.
  - Provide an exemption from the HRC for Traveller and Roma women in recognition of their nomadic tradition;
  - Carry out a gender and equality impact assessment of the HRC;
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## Priority 6 Women and Health

### Health Service Reform

NWCI has welcomed the government's plans for a radical reform of our health services which includes the introduction of universal health insurance and a new governance and organisational structure. However NWCI is concerned how reforms to improve access to healthcare can be introduced in the light of growing deficits and cuts in services. An inequitable two-tier and gender blind healthcare system coupled with draconian funding cuts are already resulting in wider health inequalities and poorer access to essential services. This is particularly affecting women living in poverty and disadvantaged communities, lone parents, older women, women with disabilities and people living in rural and isolated communities. Further cuts to our health services will have a detrimental impact on essential frontline services and seriously undermine the possibility of the reform programme being implemented in the foreseeable future. While the necessary

resources need to be ring fenced to achieve the reform goals government has set for itself, NWCI makes four recommendations on health services in the context of Budget 2014.

### 6.1 Gender Mainstreaming

Gender is a key determinant of health. Gender Mainstreaming is a globally recognised approach for achieving gender equality which can be implemented through an assessment of gender inequalities and by integrating a gender sensitive approach into health care policy planning and service delivery. The Irish government has made firm commitments both nationally and internationally to integrate a gender perspective into the planning, delivery, implementation and monitoring of health care.<sup>40</sup>

A Gender Mainstreaming Framework, *Equal but Different*, was published in November 2012 which provides a strategic and operational plan for uncovering and tackling entrenched gender inequalities and gender differences in health and addresses the complex interaction between gender and other social determinants of health for example socio-economic status, poverty, ethnicity, disability and age.<sup>41</sup> Budget 2014 represents an opportunity to provide the required resources to ensure the implementation of this Framework so that gender is integrated across the full complement of health services.

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Establish a gender mainstreaming unit within the Department of Health as recommended by the National Women's Strategy
  - Provide a specific budget line to implement the components of the HSE Gender Mainstreaming Framework
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## 6.2 BreastCheck

NWCI welcomes the national roll-out of BreastCheck, and notes that the National Cancer Screening Service (NCSS) has committed to addressing anomalies in access to services. To bring the BreastCheck service into line with international best practice, the NCSS proposal to extend the age bracket to 69 years should be implemented as a matter of priority. Ireland has an aging female population and the over 64 age group has the second highest incidence rate of breast cancer in Ireland. The Government has also committed in its Programme to extend screening to women aged 69yrs.

Raising awareness among GPs and women of breast cancer risk for women up to age 50yrs is also an important part of encouraging early detection amongst younger women.

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### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Deliver on commitments in the Programme for Government and extend the eligible age bracket for Breastcheck to cover women aged 65-69
  - Awareness raising programmes amongst GPs and women for early detection of breast cancer particularly in the 40-49 age group
  - Maintain supports for community based women organisations that are assisting the National Cancer Support Service in improving uptake rates in disadvantaged or isolated areas.
- 

## 6.3 Women and Smoking

Lung Cancer has now become the main cause of cancer death in women, outnumbering breast cancer deaths. Lung Cancer is the biggest cancer killer in Ireland for both men and women with 1,882 people dying in 2011 (1,110 men and 722 women). New cases of lung cancer in women have increased by 17.6 percent in 2010 whereas breast cancer cases are increasing at a much lower rate<sup>42</sup>.

Smoking is the principal cause of lung cancer with 9 in 10 lung cancer cases attributable to

smoking. In Ireland, women in the lower socioeconomic groups have a higher rate of smoking (1.7 times<sup>43</sup>) than the rest of the population and are less likely to try to quit<sup>44</sup>. Graham et al, 2005 found that early motherhood, non-cohabitation, and lone motherhood increased the odds of smoking<sup>45</sup>.

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### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Develop and resource community based smoking cessation services for women, with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities.
  - Services should be designed to meet the specific health needs of each target group and take into account health literacy levels and attitudes towards smoking.
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## 6.4 Women and Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis affects children, women and men but generally more women especially women over 50 as they can lose up to 30% of their overall bone density while going through the menopause. 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over 50 years will break a bone due to osteoporosis. This is a silent killer disease with no signs or symptoms unless you have a DEXA scan of spine and hips. Prevention, early diagnosis and access to screening is vital. Osteoporosis is a preventable and treatable disease in the majority of cases but early diagnosis is essential for the best prognosis.

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### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Initiate a publicly funded public awareness campaign on osteoporosis which is particularly targeted at pre and post-menopausal women that will alert all women to the urgent necessity for regular testing and supervision
  - Make the DEXA scan widely available free of charge.
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## Priority 7 Violence against Women

### 7.1 Domestic and sexual violence

Domestic and sexual violence is a serious and pervasive issue in Irish society. Addressing domestic and sexual violence in terms of prevention and ensuring an appropriate response for survivors involves many different agencies, statutory and non-statutory, playing their part in a co-ordinated way to ensure effective responses to the complexity of issues involved. NWCI acknowledges that COSC the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence has been in place since 2007 and a National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2010-2014 is being implemented. However progress is very slow.

NGOs providing services to women experiencing domestic and sexual violence continue to witness an unprecedented growth in demand for their services. At the same time, funding for services has been drastically cut. This situation has reached crisis point.

The National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2010-2014 describes how the economic cost of domestic violence to the Irish economy is estimated to be in the region of 2.2 billion annually when based on studies in other countries. Cuts to preventative and crisis support programmes, such as domestic violence support services, is a false economy.

NWCI welcomes the recent public awareness campaigns on the issue of sexual and domestic violence. However NWCI notes that the baseline prevalence study on sexual violence, the Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) Report was published in 2002 and though has since acted as a key informant of Irish policy in relation to sexual violence, it is considerably out of date. In order to develop clear comparative analysis a SAVI II

Report is required to evaluate changes over the past decade and provide an evidence base to inform responses to the issue of sexual violence. NWCI calls for this research to be commissioned and resourced.

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Increase funding to organisations providing front-line services and supports to survivors of violence against women by 10% to offset budgets cuts in recent years.
  - Increase funding to advocacy organisations working at a representative, policy and support level by 10% to offset budgets cuts in recent years.
  - To ensure access to safe, emergency accommodation for women experiencing male violence, a target of at least 1 refuge place per 10,000 of population should be agreed and resources ring fenced to make progress towards that target
  - Allocate resources to fund a SAVI 2 Report in relation to the nature and extent of sexual abuse and violence in Ireland and research into the economic cost of domestic violence in Ireland
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## 7.2 Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a harmful practice that violates the human rights of women and girls, in particular the right to the highest attainable standard of health, the right to be free from all forms of gender discrimination, the right to life, the right to bodily integrity and children's rights to special protections. The practice perpetuates negative gender based stereotypes and has serious social, health and psychological consequences. FGM continues to affect the lives of many women in Ireland. Akidwa estimates that 3,170 women living in Ireland have undergone FGM although actual number may be higher.

NWCI acknowledges and welcomes the passing of the Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012 that explicitly prohibits the practice of FGM in Ireland. NWCI, however, does not consider that legislation by itself is sufficient to prevent FGM. Immediate inter agency action is required in implementing this legislation, to take place as a matter of priority.

### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Allocate resources for the establishment of an inter-departmental committee on FGM who would be tasked with the role of drawing up a National Action Plan to Combat FGM.
- Provide resources for a nationwide information awareness campaign on the Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012 and to put in place referral mechanisms to ensure victims can access the support they need

## Priority 8 Protecting the Voice of Women

Equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of the European Union. Despite advances, full equality in Ireland remains an aspiration. The recently published Gender Equality Index placed Ireland ninth overall but only 19th in relation to power. This domain included the share of ministers, the share of members of parliament, the share of members of regional assemblies, the share of women on boards and the share of members in all key-decision-making bodies in Central Bank. The European average for the power domain was 38. The best performing country, Sweden, was 74.3. In Ireland it was 26.5.

Europe is currently experiencing one of the worst economic crises in its history. One of the key instigators of the economic crisis, the banking crisis, has exposed problems in corporate governance across all levels of economic decision-making. Citizens in every EU member state have been directly affected by the crisis.

The lack of diversity on key economic decision-making institutions has been identified as a key cause of the corporate governance crisis across the EU. The European Commission's *More Women in Senior Position: Key to economic stability and growth* (2010) highlights the banking and finance crisis as a 'very male crisis'. It highlights *inter alia* the absence of women at decision-making levels in the financial sectors and the need to improve the gender balance in senior positions that exist as a result of outdated perceptions of the difference roles of men and women in life and work. The report looks at how role models, mentors and networks can be used to promote the advancement of women, as well as the use of quotas and other means of improving the gender balance on company boards.

Women's NGOs are the foundation blocks of participatory democracy. Yet, at European and national level, we witness how the crisis is

used to cut funding for women's rights and gender equality-related activities and institutions and how these issues are losing visibility and focus. These cuts also threaten the very existence of women's organisations<sup>46</sup>. In Ireland, cuts to the National Women's Strategy, cuts to the NWCI of Ireland of 35%, and cuts of up to 34% to grass roots women's groups working to provide education, training, childcare, a range of services and a voice to women who are most marginalised, all echo this European trend.

The economic crisis, and the severe impact of this crisis on women, is leading to increasing demands on women's organisations at grass roots and national levels to respond to the immediately pressing needs and concerns of women. At this time, in particular, it is crucial that the voice of women is represented and their experience reflected in the development of policies that affect their lives. Funding cuts serve to reduce the capacity of women's organisations to effectively represent the voice of women.

Local women's networks and organisations are specialised in dealing with the complexity of issues facing disadvantaged women and are outreaching to those most in need that statutory agencies do not reach. At this time the work of the local women's projects is in demand more than ever, with supports for women and children constantly being eroded and statutory agencies referring more and more women to local projects. NCCWN women's projects and other women's groups operating throughout the country needs to at least sustain what they have in order to continue to work with some of the most disadvantaged women in the country at a low cost.

Women's NGOs are needed for the development of quality democracy, growth and welfare. This trend not only risks jeopardising recent progress; it also risks creating serious backlashes regarding for example the support and prevention of violence against women, the promotion of

women's economic independence or fighting against negative gender stereotypes<sup>47</sup>.

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#### NWCI PRIORITIES FOR BUDGET 2014

- Ensure that there is no further degradation of funding for women's rights and gender equality at national or local levels and allocate specific funding for gender equality work within the local government reform process.
  - Increase funding to the NWCI by 10% to offset recent budget cuts
  - Increase funding to the National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks through the Local and Community Development Programme by at least 10% in order to facilitate the NCCWN to maintain front line services throughout the country for disadvantaged women. (to offset recent budget cuts – to be distributed to the local women's organisations)
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<sup>1</sup> ESRI (2012). *Distributional Impact of Tax, Welfare and Public Sector Pay Policies: 2009-2012*

<sup>2</sup> Winners & Losers: equality lessons for 2012 Budget

<sup>[iii]</sup> [https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/2013-03\\_SIABudget2013\\_Final.pdf](https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/2013-03_SIABudget2013_Final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.swbg.org.uk/gia.html>

<sup>4</sup> Laurence Ball, Davide Furceri, Daniel Leigh, and Prakash Loungani, *The Distributional Effects of Fiscal Consolidation*, Working Paper, June 2013 IMF

<sup>5</sup> Community Platform (2011), *Paying Our Way: Progressive proposals for reforming the Irish tax system*

<sup>6</sup> It quotes an ESRI study, for example, that showed that 80% of the benefit of pension contributions goes to the top 20% of earners, while the Commission on Taxation found that these same earners benefitted by nearly €300 million a year in mortgage interest relief.

<sup>7</sup> The NWCI **does not** include Child Benefit in its understanding of tax expenditures to be reformed or abolished.

<sup>8</sup> CSO, 2012, Women and Men in Ireland 2011

<sup>9</sup> QNHS, May 2013, Quarter 1 2013

<sup>10</sup> CSO May 2013, Quarterly National Household Survey, Quarter 1 2013

<sup>11</sup> QNHS Q1 2013

<sup>12</sup> Work and Poverty in Ireland, 2004-2010

<sup>13</sup> National Employment Survey 2009

<sup>14</sup> *Decent Work? The Impact of the Recession on Low Paid Workers*

<sup>15</sup> Department of Social Protection, Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2011

<sup>16</sup> The OECD report on gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship<sup>16</sup> stated that though part-time or temporary work may sound attractive in the short-term to help juggle work and family commitments, it this can be a costly long-term choice for women in terms, not just of salary, but also pension entitlements and savings and job security (p. 5).

<sup>17</sup> While over 80% of male pensioners are entitled to a State Contributory Pension based on their social insurance entitlements, less than 60% of female pensioners qualify for this payment. Women significantly rely on the state pension system as a result of not being in a financial position to invest in a private pension. Even amongst women in employment, in 2009 51% of women had no pension provision (neither

occupational nor personal) (CSO (2012) Women and Men in Ireland 2011).

<sup>18</sup> See for example the Child Poverty Action Group research, *Save Child Benefit: CPAG policy briefing: March 2012* available at <http://www.savechildbenefit.org.uk/images/public/pdf/SaveChildBenefit.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> The National Consumer Agency (2011) *Childcare Price Survey*

<sup>20</sup> Government of Ireland (2010). *A Policy and Value for Money Review of Child Income Support and Associated Spending Programmes*, November 2010 available at

[http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Policy/CorporatePublications/Finance/exp\\_rev/Documents/CISReviewFinal.pdf](http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Policy/CorporatePublications/Finance/exp_rev/Documents/CISReviewFinal.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> CSO 2012, EU SILC 2011

<sup>22</sup> Figures taken from Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2011

<sup>23</sup> According to the OECD (OECD (2011), *Doing Better for Families*, Paris: OECD), for example, childcare supports are a key factor in the determination of maternal employment behaviour during the early years (p. 141). In its report *Going for Growth: Economic Policy Reforms*, the OECD highlights the fact that, in Ireland, women's labour market participation rates are well below those of best-performing OECD economies, especially for mothers, and high childcare costs and limited supply are major obstacles to participation. The European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020 reaffirms the importance of integrating a gender perspective into all policies and particularly urges member states to improve the supply of affordable and high-quality childcare services and promote flexible working arrangements

<sup>24</sup> The average is approximately 0.7% with some countries, such as Iceland, Denmark and Sweden, as high as 1.4%. In Ireland we spend approximately 0.4% (OECD Family database [www.oecd.org/social/family/database](http://www.oecd.org/social/family/database), updated 18/10/2012. PF3.1: Public spending on childcare and early education)

<sup>25</sup> In their Gender Brief (OECD Gender Brief. Prepared by the OECD Social Policy Division [www.oecd.org/els/social](http://www.oecd.org/els/social) Version: March 2010), the OECD estimate the childcare cost in Ireland is 29% of family net income, more than double the OECD average of 13% and the third most expensive behind the UK and Switzerland. The National Consumer Agency nationwide survey of childcare facilities found that the average cost of full-time care for one child was €181 per week

<sup>26</sup> According to the EU, in 2011, the employment rate for women was 85.7% for a woman with a husband or partner but no children. It fell to 51.5%

for women whose youngest child was aged between 4-5 years. OECD figures suggest that employment rates for women in Ireland with three children are as low as 42.3%.

<sup>27</sup> CSO 2012, *This is Ireland*

<sup>28</sup> Department of Social Protection, Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2011

<sup>29</sup> CSO (2008) National Disability Survey 2006 – First Results, page 20.

<sup>30</sup> Disability Federation of Ireland Submission on Ireland's Austerity Budgets 2012 to 2016

<sup>31</sup> Disability and Women in Ireland 'Building Solidarity and Inclusion' NWCI of Ireland 2008

<sup>32</sup> *All Ireland Traveller Health Study: Our Geels* was published in September 2010 and is available at [http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010\\_SUMMARY\\_LR\\_All.pdf](http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf).

<sup>33</sup>

<http://www.ucd.ie/news/2011/10OCT11/031011-Traveller-infant-mortality-still-higher-than-the-general-population.html>

<sup>34</sup> All Ireland Traveller Health Study 2010

<sup>35</sup> Hammarberg, Thomas. "Forced Evictions of Roma families must stop". *Council of Europe* available at [http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Viewpoints/060904\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Viewpoints/060904_en.asp)

<sup>36</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. EU-Midis: European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey. Main Results Report. [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/eu\\_midis\\_mainreport\\_conference-edition\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/eu_midis_mainreport_conference-edition_en.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> CSO (2012). *This is Ireland*

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.mrci.ie/Domestic-Workers/>

<sup>39</sup> AkiDWA (2010) *Am only saying it now: Experiences of women seeking asylum in Ireland*

<sup>40</sup> See for example the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016

<sup>41</sup> Health Service Executive / NWCI: Equal but Different: A Framework for Integrating Gender Equality in Health Service Executive Policy Planning and Service Delivery. November 2012. Available at [www.nwci.ie](http://www.nwci.ie)

<sup>42</sup> Lung Cancer data 2009 & 2010 – National Cancer Registry of Ireland

<sup>43</sup> NCRI, Annual Report 2011

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2006;60:228-233 doi:10.1136/jech.2005.039784 Research report Socioeconomic lifecourse influences on women's smoking status in early adulthood

<sup>46</sup> European Women's Lobby Priorities for the Danish Presidency of the European Union, January – June 2012, Brussels November 2011

<sup>47</sup> Ibid