

The background of the cover is a vibrant purple. Overlaid on this are large, expressive brushstrokes in shades of green and yellow. The green strokes form a large, sweeping shape that resembles a stylized 'W' or a protective shield. The yellow strokes are vertical, suggesting legs or pillars. The overall aesthetic is modern and energetic.

nwlc

National Women's Council

SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE

National Women's Council

Annual Report 2022



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Message from the Chairperson

In 2022 the National Women's Council continued our campaign for true equality for women in Ireland. Significant advances were made across a number of critical areas of our work, including the extension of free contraception, the recognition of prostitution as a form of violence against women, increased funding and support for public childcare as well as the support for a referendum to enshrine the value of care in our Constitution.

We were delighted to be able to recruit for several new positions in the organisation. This included a Head of Campaigns and Mobilisation who joined NWC's management team and a new membership team consisting of a Membership and Engagement Coordinator and Officer. This dedicated mobilisation team enables us to further improve our engagement with our members and supporters for our campaigns. And it increases our capacity to reach out to individual women in their diversity throughout the island of Ireland.

In addition, thanks to the support from Vodafone, NWC was able to recruit a Violence against Women Coordinator to strategically lead our work in ending sexual, domestic and gender-based violence.

Another significant milestone for the organisation was securing funding for our new feminist climate justice project in partnership with Community Work Ireland under the Government's Community Climate Action Fund. The project entitled *Feminist Communities for Climate Justice* will officially launch in 2023 and campaign for climate justice that reflects feminist and community work values. We will mobilise communities, ensuring social inclusion and equality are central to climate policies and programmes.

NWC was also able to progress the establishment of NWC's Youth Advisory Panel, thanks to the support of a new partnership with Aviva Ireland. The panel will bring together a diverse group of young women aged 18-25 from our members to input into the work of NWC from 2023 onwards.

In 2022 planning also started for our 50th anniversary with advanced planning on a number of activities and the development of a special logo and postmark that are being rolled out in 2023.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new group members and Feminist Changemakers in 2022. Thank you also to our existing members and supporters for your input and engagement with us throughout the year.

I would like to acknowledge the support of our funders and to sincerely thank the outgoing and current Board members, the Director Orla O'Connor and the NWC staff team for their commitment and support for the work of NWC over the last year and going forward.

Margaret Martin, Chairperson





Message from the Director

2022 was a significant year for tackling violence against women. In January, the horrendous killing of Ashling Murphy engendered a nationwide public call to end violence against women and in the outpouring of grief many women shared their experiences of sexual violence and harassment. NWC worked in partnership with the Department of Justice and Safe Ireland to develop the Third National Strategy on Domestic Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and welcomed its publication in June, as it not only commits to ending gender-based violence in all forms but is also groundbreaking in its recognition of prostitution as a form of gender-based violence. We are keen now to see action matching the ambitious words of this strategy.

One standout moment of the year was the increased funding for childcare to both pay the workforce the newly agreed Joint Labour Committee pay scales and to make childcare more affordable for parents in Budget 2023. The impact of quality, affordable, accessible childcare for women's equality is unsurpassable and achieving this has been a priority campaign for NWC over many years.

Another very positive moment came in September as the free contraception scheme commenced, with the rollout beginning in the 17-25 year age category. Of course, reproductive needs don't begin at 17 nor end at 25, and NWC is committed to continuing our campaign until every woman who needs it has access to contraception.

We were thrilled when, in December, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality recommended a referendum on Article 41.2 (on women in the home) that would enshrine the value of care in our Constitution. This is something we have campaigned for over many years and now look forward to a referendum in 2023.

As we emerged from the pandemic, we were faced with the twin emergencies of a cost-of-living crisis and war in Europe. NWC and our members tackled both. Together, we called for significant and ongoing supports for women on low incomes in Budget 2023, rather than one-off measures. We supported our members to welcome women and children from Ukraine and called on the Government to ensure women and girls fleeing conflict are safe from trafficking and sexual exploitation.

As we enter our 50th year, NWC is proud to have achieved so much for the women and girls of Ireland. All this work would not be possible without our members and our very dedicated staff and board. I sincerely thank the membership, the NWC team and our voluntary Board members for all their commitment, dedication, and passion. We look forward to another half century of progress.

Orla O'Connor, Director

Who we are

The National Women's Council is the leading national representative organisation for women and women's groups in Ireland, founded in 1973. We have over 190 member groups and a large and growing community of individual supporters.

The ambition of the National Women's Council is an Ireland where every woman enjoys true equality and no woman is left behind. This ambition shapes and informs our work, and, with our living values, how we work.

We are a movement-building organisation rooted in our membership, working on the whole island of Ireland. We are also part of the international movement to protect and advance women's and girls' rights.

Our purpose is to lead action for the achievement of women's and girls' equality through mobilising, influencing, and building solidarity.

Our living values guide us. They are given expression in our work, and in how we work, as an organisation.

We are committed to these living values:

Feminist: Feminism is a core and essential value of our organisation. This means we consistently act to achieve true equality for all women and girls.

Inclusive: We are active in ensuring that no woman is left behind in our journey to achieve true equality.

Fearless: Our ambition and purpose mean that we are fearless leaders for all women, actively challenging that which is in the way of the achievement of true equality.

Caring: We value care, including its full expression in how we act as an organisation.

Strategic: Being effective and successful in advancing our purpose requires us to be strategic; showing leadership and strength in collaborations with partners, prioritising our work and making choices that are achievable and future-oriented.

Diverse: The women of Ireland are a diverse group, and we are their voice, therefore we bring diversity to everything we do and how we operate as an organisation.



Key campaigns and events in 2022

– Ashling Murphy Vigil

With the outpouring of grief and anger following the killing of Ashling Murphy, the National Women's Council responded and immediately called for Ashling's murder to be a watershed moment in ending men's violence against women. To provide a public outlet and space for the sorrow felt right across society we held a vigil outside the Dáil at 4pm on 14th January 2022 to coincide with the time she had been killed two days earlier.

This vigil saw a very large turnout with many party leaders, TDs and Senators in attendance as well as then-Taoiseach Mícheál Martin.

NWC responded to the public outcry by leading the charge in the media calling for an immediate end to violence against women. Vigils were organised right across the island, which we shared across our social media platforms and in some cases attended. We demanded political leadership and the Government responded by announcing that the Department of Justice would take the lead in tackling gender-based violence.



No Woman Left Behind

- Celebrating International Women's Day

In 2021, the post-lockdown space, our members expressed a strong eagerness to return to traditional styles of demonstration and protest to reflect their frustration and anger on many issues of inequality. The outpouring of sorrow and anger surrounding the high-profile cases of violence against women, the increase in domestic violence, the expression of anger relating to the absence of support for both childcare and social care over the course of the pandemic demanded a central mobilising point to turn those feelings into empowered action.

The National Women's Council organised a protest rally for International Women's Day to bring together women from across Ireland and demand political response on the key issues facing women. The rally, entitled #NoWomanLeftBehind, took place outside the Dáil on 5 March.

We demanded change in four crucial areas that affect women. We want a healthcare system that has women at its centre – including access to abortion, ownership of the National Maternity Hospital, and free contraception. We want a zero-tolerance culture to end men's violence against women. We want women represented in all our diversity in all spaces where decisions are made affecting women's lives. And we want access to quality public services including childcare and housing, and a decent income on which we all can live.

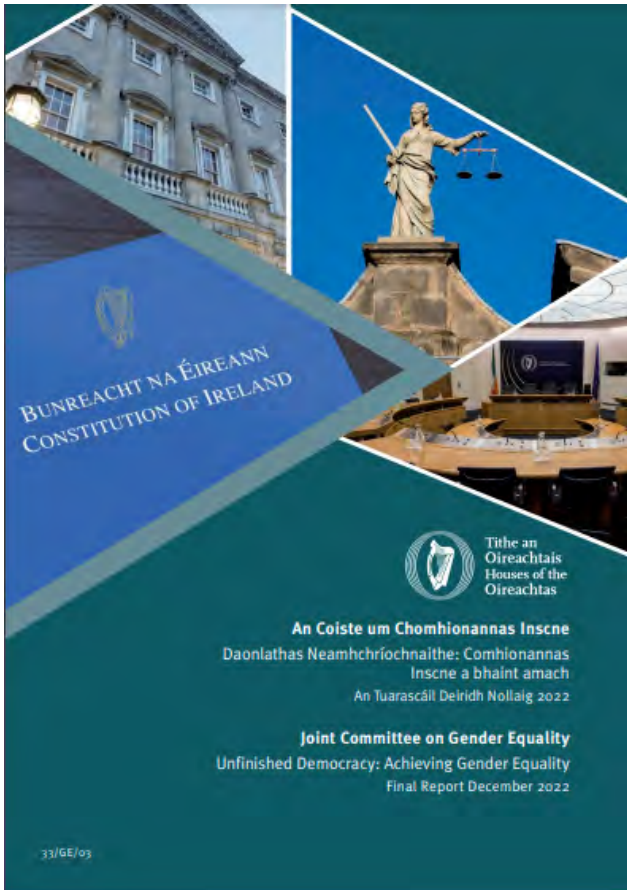
At the time of the Rally the invasion of Ukraine had started, and we held a minute's silence in solidarity with women and people in Ukraine and Ukrainians in Ireland.

In preparation for the rally, we held a number of mobilisation meetings with NWC members, campaign groups, political party youth wings, USI, and others.



Working Towards a Feminist Future

- the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly



Throughout 2022, we campaigned for government to implement the recommendations for women's equality set out by the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality, including the call for a referendum to enshrine the value of care in our Constitution.

In March, NWC addressed the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality, tasked with considering the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly. We told the Committee that the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly were ground-breaking, sending a strong and clear signal to Government and all decision makers that women's equality needs to be at the centre of our Constitution, our legislation, and our policies.

We also made a submission to the Committee setting out how the Citizens' Assembly's practical recommendations on care, workers' rights, income adequacy, violence against women, and women's leadership could be delivered by government.

In December, we attended the launch of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality's report *Unfinished Democracy: Achieving Gender Equality*. The report was comprehensive in setting a roadmap for significantly advancing women's equality and included a number of recommendations that were advocated by NWC, including constitutional change, a universal public childcare model, pension reform, and adequate social welfare payments. The report also includes a number of recommendations advocated by NWC as part of our collective work with the National One Parent Family Alliance, including equality in paid parents' leave for lone parents. We strongly welcomed the report, the work of the Committee and the in-depth consultation process of the Committee to reach these ambitious recommendations.

All-Island Women's Forum

- President Higgins meets Women Peacemakers

The NWC All-Island Women's Forum brings together a diversity of women's groups and individuals on a cross-border basis to examine issues and areas of commonality between Northern Ireland and the South. It is made up of 28 members, 14 from the North and 14 from the South.

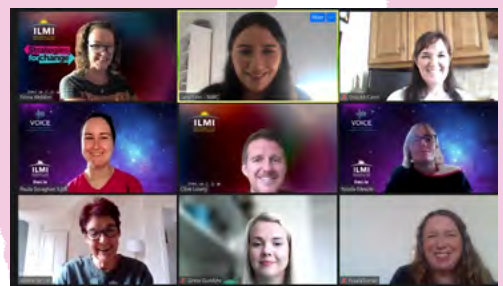
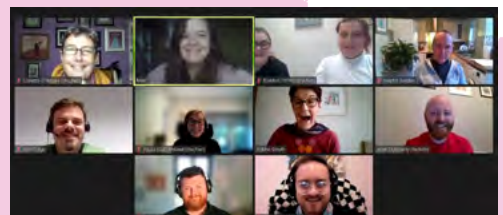
In February, we were thrilled that President Michael D. Higgins gave the keynote address at the first in-person meeting of the Forum on the theme of peacebuilding, speaking of the values that women bring to embedding cross-community participation in peacebuilding. The Forum also heard from Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense, Simon Coveney and from Melanne Verveer, former United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues.

The forum examined women's voices in peacebuilding and the unfinished work of the peace process. It was joined by 100 women from diverse communities for a full session of the forum on North-South equivalence of rights, followed by two afternoon panels.

In September, we were delighted that the Taoiseach Micheál Martin launched the *NWC All-island Women's Forum Report 2021-2022*. This report showcases the ambitious efforts of the Forum to enable women to take their rightful place as leaders in our society and to amplify the voices of women on issues that affect us North and South.

We look forward to campaigning in 2023 on four key issues identified by the members: North South Relations; Women's Political Participation and Representation; Violence Against Women; and Media.

The NWC All-Island Women's Forum is a contribution to the Irish Government's Shared Island initiative in the Department of An Taoiseach, and offers an historic opportunity for NWC to develop our all-island work.



Reproductive Justice:

The Campaign for Access to Abortion

The Review of the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act continued to be a major focus for our team and members throughout 2022. With our Abortion Access campaign, we were calling for:

- Full decriminalisation of abortion in line with WHO guidance to remove the chilling effect on healthcare providers.
- Removal of the mandatory 3-day wait period to ensure timely access to abortion care.
- Removal of the 12-week gestational limit and enabling of abortion on request up to viability to ensure that no woman or pregnant person is forced to travel abroad for essential reproductive healthcare.

Over the past year, this campaign achieved many milestones. We ensured an independent Chair led the Review. NWC facilitated women and allies to submit to the public consultation by designing and delivering an accessible digital campaign explaining the barriers to abortion access. This was supported by a 'Quick Guide' and online workshops to boost engagement with the Review. We coordinated a joint submission from over 20 civil society organisations and healthcare providers to the Review and organised a high-profile press conference to raise awareness of our key asks.

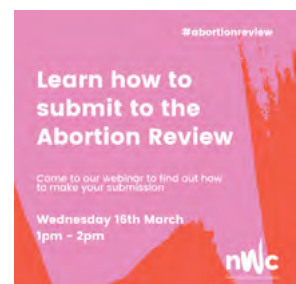
NWC presented our recommendations to the Oireachtas Health Committee and garnered significant media attention from this. We gained a public commitment that remote care consultations for abortion services, introduced during the pandemic, can continue. We raised awareness of ongoing barriers to accessing abortion by marking the Repeal Referendum anniversary with an *Unfinished Business* event in Dublin, and supporting activities around the country.

NWC supported Together for Safety's campaign for Safe Access Zones which led to the cross-party Bill passing all stages of the Seanad. Government-sponsored legislation was brought forward in Summer 2022 and we submitted evidence to the Health Committee to support scrutiny and oversight of this.

We coordinated the civil society action to highlight ongoing Irish travel to the UK for abortion (775 residents since 2019) through a public letter to all political leaders and the Minister for Health, and through associated media work on this. We secured meetings with politicians from all major political parties and built cross-party engagement with the need for evidence-led legislative reform.

We launched our *Every Woman* report which highlights how abortion access is just one element of reproductive rights, alongside comprehensive relationships and sex education, and universal free contraception.

The communications campaign performed exceptionally well, with a combined organic reach of 629,304 across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram for campaign duration; a total of 11,089 engagements across these platforms specifically for our Abortion Review content; consistently above average engagement rates across social platforms and Mailchimp for content relating to the Abortion Review; a total 1,688 clicks on our link directing people to the Public Consultation of the Abortion Review and 836 page visits to the NWC 'Abortion Access' webpage between 1 January and 31 March 2022.



Shifting the Narrative

– Moving to an Inclusive, Feminist Model of Care

In June, as part of our Annual General Meeting, NWC hosted a discussion on an inclusive, feminist model of care. Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Roderic O’Gorman TD opened the session via recorded video message. Internationally recognised expert on care, Prof Ursula Barry, delivered a keynote speech. The event was chaired by Journalist Alison O Connor.

Care is the very foundation of a functioning economy and society. Across the lifespan, we all both give and receive care, and this is a deeply fulfilling and necessary human experience. The event explored the problems with our current economic model and its impact on care. It looked at an intersectional, feminist model of care, exploring how we can collectively achieve a society and economy that values care.

We heard from Mariaam Bhatti from the Great Care Co-op, a cooperative project set up by care workers. We also heard from Margaret Turley and Derval McDonagh on the supports that women with intellectual disabilities need to live a good life, and from Senator Ivana Bacik, Chair of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality.

The event was well attended by our members and supporters who engaged in a lively discussion. Following the event NWC held its formal Annual General Meeting with our members.



Claiming our Space

- Women in Rural Communities



Women in rural areas face many additional difficulties in terms of violence, poverty, universal public services, and access to decision-making spaces. In October, to mark the International Day of Rural Women, women changemakers from across the island gathered in Monaghan to discuss these most pressing issues.

Supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development, the interactive and engaging conference enjoyed a keynote speech from Minister Heather Humphreys to the almost 100 women gathered. We heard from a range of speakers on the need to tackle violence against women in rural areas, and on campaigns for climate justice, LGBTQ+ rights, and Traveller inclusion. A range of organisations also showcased their work including Talamh Beo, Womens' Collective Ireland, Tearmann Domestic Violence Project, Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, and the Million Stars Project.

In preparation for the event, NWC organised eight focus groups (two in person) with a diverse range of women's groups to hear about and understand the issues that were important to them, informing the planning and delivery of the conference and supporting their participation and engagement at the event. In addition, NWC published an online survey. Over 800 women responded to the survey, sharing what life is like for them and what changes they would like to see to ensure equality for all women in rural areas.



The New Generation of Feminists

– FemFest

FemFest is an exciting and engaging space – designed for young women, by young women – and in 2022 it was back in person after a 3-year hiatus!

Young women's voices are crucial to the feminist movement and impart a unique perspective on the changes needed to transform our society. FemFest platforms the views and experiences of young women, and in turn informs our advocacy and campaigns. This year's FemFest facilitated a space for young women changemakers to challenge the misogynistic attitudes and cultural norms which support violence and abuse. Ultimately, we aimed to increase people's willingness to challenge these beliefs and promote zero tolerance.

In preparation for the big day, 12 workshops took place, attended by over 100 diverse young women. These women shared their experiences and ideas on feminism, leadership, sexual violence and harassment, and told NWC about the issues that mattered most to them.

Over 60 young women joined us for the Femfest conference in Dublin on 19 November with over 700 people tuning in to watch the live stream. Dil Wickremasinghe hosted panel events and roundtable discussions, exploring campaigns such as Bystander Intervention, We Consent, and White Ribbon Ireland.

Looking ahead to 2023, NWC is working to develop a Youth Advisory Panel so that young women from our membership can play a more active and engaged role in the organisation. This work was supported through a new partnership with Aviva Ireland.



Responding to the War in Ukraine



The National Women's Council stands in solidarity with women and all people in Ukraine and the thousands of refugees who have come to Ireland. Most of those who have arrived are women and children who have unique and specific needs that must be addressed to facilitate their integration in Ireland. That includes the provision of appropriate accommodation that both meets their needs and complies with safeguarding legislation for children and vulnerable adults. In April 2022, NWC, alongside a number of civil society organisations, working locally and nationally, co-signed a letter with detailed proposals to the Taoiseach. The letter and attached proposals expressed deep concerns about the overall lack of coordination and coherence of responses across the country, and outlined a number of approaches that need to be advanced. These approaches should be underpinned by human rights principles and a recognition of the urgent need for cross-sectoral national and local coordination.

In July, NWC created a space to support our members in sharing their experiences of working with Ukrainian Refugees. Community Work Ireland, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Women's Collective Ireland, and South Kerry and West Clare Family Resource Centre discussed the impact of the conflict on women and children, the fragmented responses from government, and the challenges faced by service providers and community organisations in providing wraparound supports for refugees. They called for a specialist, professional and coordinated response and for a gender lens to respond to the diversity of women and their vulnerabilities to exploitation.

Shaping Our Future: Tackling the cost-of- living crisis for women

Women on low incomes really felt the impact of rising costs in 2022. NWC's submission for Budget 2023 *Shaping Our Future: Tackling the cost of living for women in Budget 2023* focused on addressing this through investment in public services and income supports.

Our top 3 asks focused on reducing childcare fees, increasing social welfare payments and delivering free contraception. We engaged in extensive lobbying ahead of the Budget and met with a range of political parties. We spoke on our top 3 priorities at the National Economic Dialogue in June. We ran a social media campaign and spoke extensively in the media. Our opinion piece on the gendered impact of the rising cost of living and NWC's budget proposals to address cost of living through income adequacy and public services was published in the Irish Times.

We developed a members' social media campaign in the run up to Budget Day in September. A range of members and partners took part in the campaign, highlighting issues of low pay; equality proofing budget decisions for migrants, Travellers and disabled people; child maintenance; public childcare; housing; women's health; violence against women; funding for women's organisations; climate and energy poverty; and the need to increase payments for family leave.

The resulting investment in affordable childcare was a significant breakthrough for women, setting us on a clear path to achieve public childcare. Budget 2023 provided the largest investment yet to tackle affordability for parents. We also welcomed investments in women's health. While there was some progress on increasing incomes, increases failed to keep up with inflation and much work remains to ensure that every woman has an adequate income. NWC will continue to advocate for this throughout 2023.



Ensure every woman has an adequate income
#BUDGET2023

Address lone parent poverty
#BUDGET2023

Invest in public, affordable housing and accommodation
#BUDGET2023

Advocating for Women's Rights

– Political Party Conferences



NWC was back attending political party conferences in 2022 and staff attended the Sinn Féin, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Green Party Árd Fheiseanna throughout Autumn to highlight issues impacting women including:

- Lack of supports for women entering politics and the need for local level gender quotas
- Ongoing barriers to abortion access and the need for evidence-led legislative reform following the independent Abortion Review
- Gender-based violence and the benefits of an all-island approach based on the report of our All-Island Women's Forum

Engagement with TDs and Senators at these conferences was high and we were able to have constructive conversations on a diverse range of issues. Other political parties are due to hold party conferences in Spring of 2023 and we will also be attending these.

Ending Gender-Based Violence and Exploitation

New Government Strategy to end Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based violence

NWC, together with Safe Ireland and the Department of Justice, was part of the executive group that co-designed the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence which the Government launched in June 2022.

This Zero Tolerance Strategy is victim centred and covers every aspect of violence against women, ranging from domestic abuse to sexual violence, prostitution, and sexual exploitation. For the first time the Strategy recognises prostitution as a form of violence against women.

The Strategy places great emphasis on intersectional needs and experiences, including those of disabled women, Traveller and Roma women, migrant women, women in prostitution, victims of human trafficking, and members of the LGBTQI+ community. The strategy fully aligns with the Istanbul Convention – our blueprint for policies and actions on violence against women – and covers all four pillars of the Convention, including prevention, protection, prosecution, and infrastructure.



Beyond Exploitation welcomes recognition of prostitution as a form of violence against women

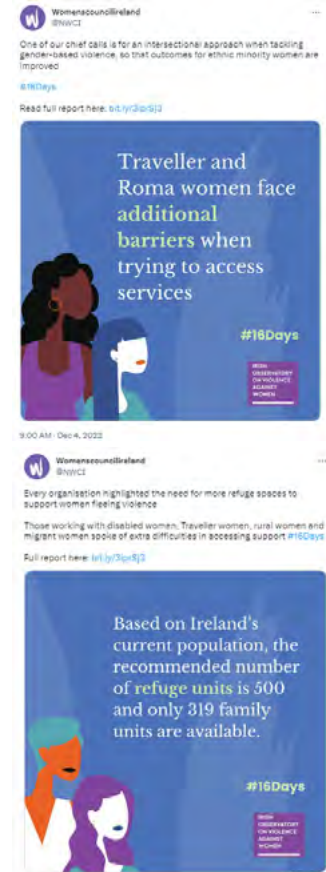
Published: Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Today (Tuesday, 28th June 2022), **Beyond Exploitation**, Ireland's civil society campaign to end sexual exploitation in Ireland, welcomed the ground-breaking recognition of prostitution and sexual exploitation as a form of violence against women in the newly published Third National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Strategy

The decision is a clear acknowledgement of the harms caused by commercial sexual exploitation, and builds upon Part IV of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 which shifted the burden of criminality onto the buyer of sexual exploitation.

Speaking upon the publication of the Third National Strategy, Beyond Exploitation Coordinator, Mia de Faioite said:

First ever Irish report on Violence Against Women to the Council of Europe



In August, the Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women and Girls, which is chaired by the National Women’s Council, produced Ireland’s first shadow report to the Council of Europe’s GREVIO Committee, as part of Ireland’s review under the Istanbul Convention.

The report, supported by the Community Foundation for Ireland, highlights State obligations relating to issues raised by key service providers as part of the consultation process and includes a wide diversity of voices. It also shows the importance of encouraging and supporting, at all levels, the work of relevant NGOs in combating violence against women.

Both before and since the Istanbul Convention came into force, Ireland has adopted multiple policy and legal changes aligning with the Convention’s provision, such as the Third National Strategy (2022 - 2026). However, despite this progress women still face intersectional barriers to enjoying true equality.

The report was launched in December 2022, as part of the 16 Days of Action to End Violence Against Women. The Observatory was delighted to have Barry Andrews, MEP and substitute Member of the Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM), as keynote speaker.

The attendees also heard from Pavee Point’s Megan Berry and from Eliona Gjecaj, a disability advocate researching access to justice for disabled women. Justine McCarthy chaired a panel discussion with Oonagh McPhillips, Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Chief Superintendent Colm Noonan, author and activist Mia Döring, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre’s Sarah Monaghan, SiSi founder Mary-Louise Lynch, and Caroline Munyi of AkiDWA.

This event was carried out with the support of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland.

In addition, NWC’s violence against women work was supported by funding from Vodafone in 2022 and NWC was thus able to recruit Ivanna Youtchak as NWC’s new Violence against Women Coordinator.

It Stops Now: Ending Violence Against Women in Higher Education

Sexual harassment and violence on third level campuses is widespread and a regular experience for many students and staff. In 2021, as part of the Higher Education Authority (HEA) expert Advisory Group on Ending Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, NWC developed standardised national surveys to monitor student and staff experiences of sexual violence and sexual harassment. These were run in all publicly funded higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ireland.

In January 2022, the results were launched by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris T.D. Unfortunately, results corresponded to the findings of earlier research and programmes with students in this area. NWC was particularly concerned to learn of the high levels of sexual violence experienced by female students, with over 1,100 students disclosing experiences of rape. For the first time the survey also provided an insight into the widespread experiences of sexual harassment by staff, with 60% of respondents saying they had experienced sexist hostility.

NWC continued to convene the National Advisory Committee (NAC), which in January brought the Minister together with representatives from higher education institutions, the HEA, Students Unions and USI, sectoral bodies, sexual violence support services and An Garda Síochána to discuss the findings of the surveys. As requested by Minister Harris, the NAC made recommendations on how to respond to the surveys and also which key actions the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science should focus on for the Zero Tolerance Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence.

As a result of NWC advocacy, Minister Simon Harris launched the 2022-24 implementation plan to support a zero-tolerance approach to issues of sexual violence and harassment in our higher education institutions in October 2022. The Minister also announced 17 new sexual violence and harassment prevention and response managers who are tasked with promoting a zero-tolerance culture.

In October we held our final digital It Stops Now campaign in partnership with USI and over 20 student unions across the country. Our project worker Aoife Grimes also worked with the National Advisory Committee and its sub-committees to complete the Good Practice Guide to support staff and institutions working to implement the HEA plans. NWC's work in ending sexual violence and harassment in Higher Education Institutions is supported by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.



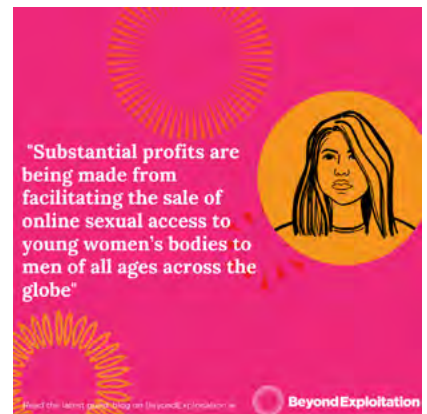
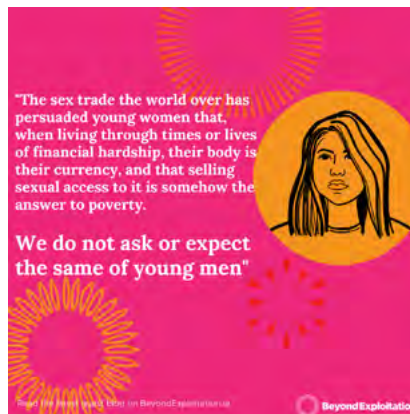
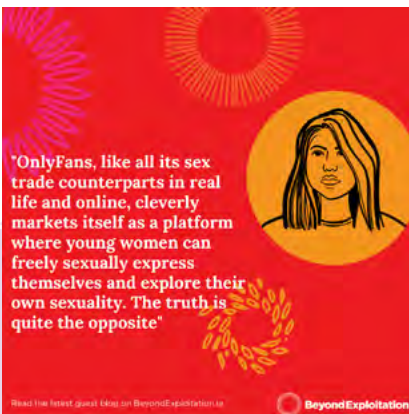
Beyond Exploitation: The campaign for freedom from sexual exploitation

Beyond Exploitation, Ireland's civil society campaign for equality and freedom from sexual exploitation, is led by NWC with partner organisations Ruhama and the Immigrant Council of Ireland. In 2022 we welcomed the ground-breaking recognition of prostitution and sexual exploitation as a form of violence against women in the newly published Third National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Strategy.

Prostitution was named as a form of violence against women and girls across all four pillars of the strategy which further reaffirms Ireland's commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Istanbul Convention.

This should pave the way for the full implementation of the Equality Model, which includes funded exit routes and wraparound supports for women to exit safely. It must also include specialised support systems informed by the women themselves and preventative measures to protect girls who may be at risk of the coercion, grooming and violent exploitation at the heart of the commercial sex trade.

In response to the war in Ukraine, Beyond Exploitation held an international webinar in May to call on the Government to protect women and children fleeing war from trafficking and exploitation. We heard powerful keynote speeches from Olena Zaitseva, a lawyer from the Centre for Democracy in Kyiv, and from Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, Vienna. Additional panel speakers included Diane Martin CBE, Vice Chair of the International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (ISTAC) and Chair of 'A Model for Scotland'; Jennifer Okeke, Anti-Trafficking Officer, Immigrant Council of Ireland; and Frances Fitzgerald MEP, Vice-Chair of the EPP Group, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.



Ireland

Irish escort site offers 'war-inspired fantasies' with Ukrainian women, webinar told

Risk of trafficking due to rise in searches for buying sex from refugees, campaigners say

Expand



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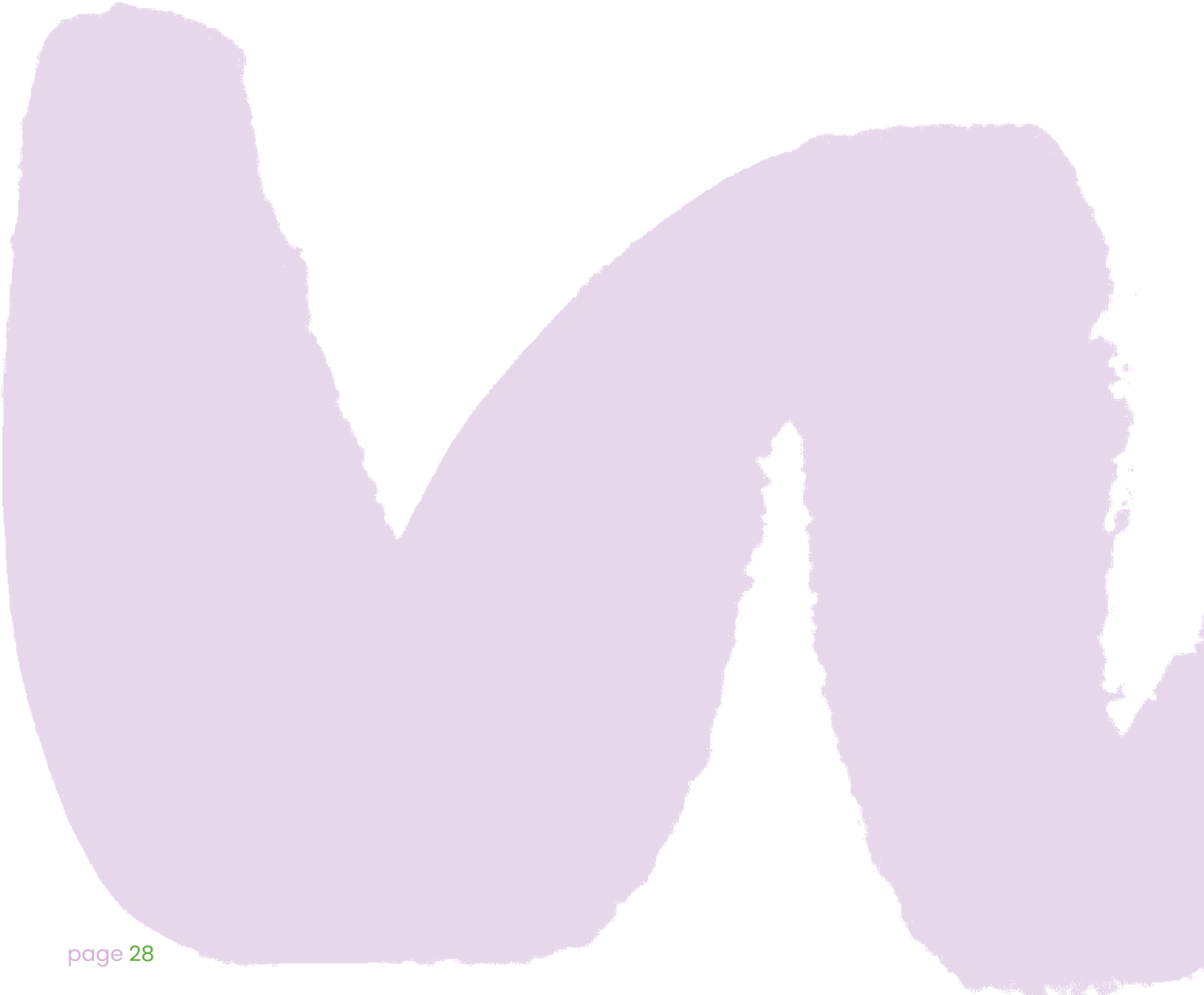
New Study on Attitudes to Sexual Exploitation of Women and Girls in the Commercial Sex Trade



In September 2022, NWC published the findings of a collaborative study between NWC and UCD's Sexual Exploitation Research Programme (SERP) which explores attitudes to the sexual exploitation of women and girls in the commercial sex trade in Ireland, and its impact on gender equality.

The research was co-designed and co-delivered by SERP's Lead Researcher Ruth Breslin and NWC's Beyond Exploitation Coordinator, Mia de Faoite, sex trade survivor and advocate.

The study consisted of focus groups with 22 of NWC's member organisations. The participants included NWC members working on domestic and gender-based violence, organisations supporting migrant and refugee women, and organisations working in broader sectors such as health and labour rights. The research was funded by the Irish Research Council. Speakers at the launch event included Ivana Bacik TD, NWC Director Orla O'Connor, Dr Marie Keenan of SERP, Dr Jennifer Okeke from the Immigrant Council of Ireland, Mia Döring, author and activist, as well as Danielle McLaughlin of Ruhama.



Achieving Women's Economic Equality



Campaigning on Childcare

Campaigning for a public model of childcare is a core part of NWC's work and featured prominently in many submissions, campaigns, events, meetings, and as part of our public commentary throughout the year.

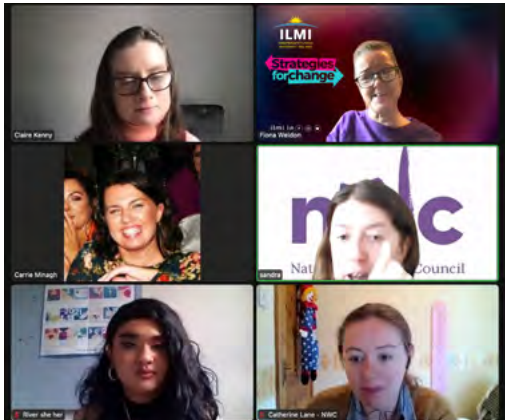
Delivering a universal, public childcare model to address affordability for low-income families was our number one priority in Budget 2023. We secured a landmark commitment to this on Budget Day. We spoke at member events, to politicians and in the media on the need for a universal, public model of childcare.

NWC partnered with Rethink Ireland on a study of the impact of childcare on women's economic mobility. The report focused on the projects funded under the Mná na hÉireann, Women of Ireland Empowerment Fund, and their experiences of inequalities for women. NWC provided the policy recommendations to address the issues raised by women in each of these projects. Our director is a member of the Advisory Group for the Mná na hÉireann fund.

We were delighted to recognise the power of collective bargaining and to welcome the pay deal for early years workers in September 2022. We celebrated with our members SIPTU and the Big Start campaign who had worked tirelessly over many years to set early years workers on this new pathway by joining in on the 'day of celebration' on 15 September, the day the pay deal became operational.



Making Changes for Lone Parents



We continued our work as part of the National One Parent Family Alliance (NOPFA), highlighting issues for lone parents, the vast majority of whom are women. In 2022, NOPFA's focus was on the disproportionate impact of the rising cost of living on lone parents and their families.

We set out NOPFA's *Budget 2023 Priorities* in July 2023 calling for targeted supports to prevent one parent families being pulled further into poverty as the cost of living rose.

We produced a *Budget 2023 Assessment* highlighting Government's failure to adequately address systemic poverty for lone parents in the Budget.

We met with Department of Social Protection officials to highlight systemic issues that continue to impact on lone parents. We wrote to government on the SUSI Grant Scheme, calling on government to rectify technical issues with the scheme that negatively impact on one-parent families.

Our collective action kept a spotlight on the needs of lone parents and the inequalities they experience throughout the year.



Achieving a Positive Transformation in Women's Health

Every Woman Report

2022 was an important time for advancements in reproductive rights in Ireland. To reflect this, NWC produced an update of our 2017 *Every Woman* report entitled *Every Woman: Towards Reproductive Health, Choice and Care for All*. This report outlined the importance of abortion, contraception and relationships and sexuality education for women's reproductive health and called for an integrated, holistic model of reproductive health in Ireland. It spotlighted recent advancements in these policy areas and was based in international best practice and data analysis.

The report was launched on 25 October in an event attended by political representatives as well as representatives from the Irish Pharmacists Union, the Irish College of General Practitioners, the Department of Health, the HSE and others. NWC Director Orla O'Connor moderated a fascinating panel discussion with expert speakers including Dr Catherine Conlon, principal investigator of the Unplanned Pregnancy and Abortion Care Study (UnPAC); Dr. Catherine (Kay) Maunsell, principal investigator on the TEACH-RSE Research Project on Teacher Professional Development and Relationships and Sexuality Education; Caitlin Faye Maniti, president of the Irish Second-Level Students Association; and Tonya Myles, general manager of Cairde.

We followed up the launch of this report with meetings with TDs to share the findings of the report and progress the recommendations. We also secured an opinion article in the Journal.



Achieving Free Contraception

2022 was an historic year for reproductive health as the free contraception scheme commenced for 17–25 year olds in September. NWC continued to highlight the importance of making universal free contraception available to all by expanding the age range and ensuring the scheme is accessible through measures such as pharmacist-prescribing and telemedicine. We did this by engaging with officials in the Department of Health as well as relevant stakeholders including the Irish Pharmacy Union and the Irish College of General Practitioners. The expansion of the age range for free contraception was a key budget ask for NWC in 2022 and we were delighted to see Budget 2023 allocate funding for the expansion of the age range from 17–25 to 16–30.

PROFESSIONAL Fay White, Women's Health Officer, National Women's Council

National Women's Council launch new report on reproductive health

The National Women's Council (NWC) has launched a new report on reproductive health which calls on the Government to adopt a holistic approach to women's needs across their lifespan. Among the recommendations in the report are to allow pharmacists to supply oral contraceptives without a prescription as part of the new Government scheme. In this article, the NWC's Women's Health Officer, Fay White, provides an overview of the Report.



All the launch of Every Woman – Helen Sheehan, Social Democrats, Paula O'Sullivan, Green Party, Dr Kay Munnell, ICG, Colleen O'Connell, Sinn Féin, Tonya Myles, Centre, Dina O'Connor, NWC, Vera Rank, Labour, Tracy O'Callaghan, Trinity College Dublin, and Dublin City University, ICG.

The past few years have been exceptionally challenging for women's health care. Abortifacient is now available here in Ireland. The free contraception scheme has commenced for 17 to 25-year-olds, and there are efforts underway to transform the sex education programme into a modern day curriculum, which responds to the challenges faced by young people.

While we have much to celebrate, we are in a crucial period to build on these achievements. NWC's new report, Every Woman: Towards Reproductive Health, Choice and Care for All, reflects on what has been achieved in these three policy areas and, using research and international evidence, provides a blueprint for what still needs to be done to achieve an integrated model for reproductive health,

which is grounded in bodily autonomy for all women and girls.

The report was launched on 25 October at an event attended by political representatives as well as representatives from the IPU, ICG, Department of Health, HSE and others. NWC Director Dina O'Connor moderated a two-hour panel discussion with expert speakers including:

- **Dr Catherine Condon**, Principal Investigator of the Unplanned Pregnancy and Abortion Care Study (UPRAC), the independent research project informing the service user experience strand of the ongoing Abortion Review, and Assistant Professor of Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin.
- **Dr Catherine Kay Munnell**, Principal Investigator on the FPICM RCT Research Project on Teacher Professional Development and Relationships and Sexuality Education and Associate Professor of Psychology, Women Development and Education in the School of Human Development, ICG and a former Senator.
- **Colleen Pave Munnell**, President, Irish Second Level Students Association, and
- **Tonya Myles**, General Manager, Centre – Centre is a community development organisation working to tackle health inequalities among ethnic minority communities by

improving ethnic minority access to health services, and ethnic minority participation in health planning and delivery.

Delivering universal free contraception

One of the most critical and personal decisions a woman will ever make is if, or when, to have children. The decision goes to the core of her autonomy and agency in her own life. It stands to reason that better access to contraception will mitigate the risk of an unwanted pregnancy.

It has been really positive to see the move towards universal free contraception, which includes the most effective forms such as the coil and implant. Access and equity need to be at the forefront of the rollout of the scheme to ensure it reaches as many women as possible, particularly marginalised women who may face additional barriers accessing services. Part of this will be extending the scheme so that women and girls of all ages can benefit. Crucially in Every Woman NWC recommends that the Government consider administrative and pharmaceutical prescribers as part of the rollout. The report highlights that pharmacist access is already a feature of women's contraceptive care in the United States and Canada and issues on the UK's recommendation to restrict contraceptive pills available without a prescription, provided there is appropriate pharmacist training and use of medical reviewing tools. To further support accessibility of the scheme, Every Woman recommends it is available to all majority ethnicities, not just GPs' surgeries, so that all women can access contraception as part of post-abortion or post-natal care.



Campaign for Inclusive and Objective Sex Education

As part of our integrated model for reproductive healthcare, NWC continued to advocate for inclusive and objective comprehensive relationships and sexuality education in schools. We made submissions to two public consultations from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on the draft Junior Cycle curriculum and on the background paper and brief for the redevelopment of the senior cycle curriculum.

Our submissions focused on the need for a curriculum underpinned by the goals of:

- Advancing gender equality
- Preventing violence against women and girls
- Public health promotion.

We attended NCCA stakeholder events on the curriculum redevelopment to provide our input and have consulted with our members to develop this work.



Responding to Women's Mental Health Needs

NWC is committed to ensuring that mental health policy and services meet the distinct needs of women and girls. In 2022, we played a central role in the implementation of Ireland's national mental health policy, *Sharing the Vision*, in a gender-sensitive way by sitting on the National Implementation and Monitoring Committee's Specialist Women's Mental Health Group. In 2022, we supported with drafting and peer reviewing recommendations for the group's final report *Embedding Women's Mental Health in Sharing the Vision*.

To further support the implementation of *Sharing the Vision* in a way that responds to the unique needs of women and girls, NWC commissioned research to look at how services in primary care and the community are catering to the needs of women and girls and to identify solutions to help them become more gender sensitive. The contract was awarded to Quality Matters, an independent research consultancy, and the report will be published in 2023.






The Growing Up in Ireland study's examination of 20-year olds in 2021 reported higher levels of stress amongst young women than young men

Womens Mental Health Network

Source - Growing Up in Ireland - National Longitudinal Study of Children (2021) 'The Lives of 20 year-olds: Making the transition to adulthood. Cohort '98'

Women's Mental Health Network

The Women's Mental Health Network (WMHN) is a network of people and organisations with a committed interest in women's mental health. It is co-convened by St Patrick's Mental Health Services and NWC. We continued to grow our membership in 2022 and numbers stood at just over 400 at the end of the year. In the Spring, we held an online networking session for members to get to know each other and learn more about others' areas of work in women's mental health. This event was very well received by those who attended. Our first event of the year, 'Recognising the mental health needs of LGBTQ+ women' took place in June to mark Pride month. Our second event took place in September on the topic of Migration, Mental Health, and Resilience. Both webinars were well attended, and members of the Network welcomed the opportunity to learn more about these areas of women's mental health and upskill.



Women's Health Taskforce

The launch of the *Women's Health Action Plan 2022–23* in March 2022 marked the culmination of almost two years of work by the Women's Health Taskforce which NWC is proud to be a member of. Inputting into the Taskforce, women and NWC members expressed clearly that we need a system transformation which recognises the diversity of needs and provides care which is human rights-based and person-centred.

With this Plan and its dedicated focus on women's health, we have a unique opportunity to progress this vision of an inclusive and enabling healthcare system. Since publication we have seen some significant progress: the introduction of universal free contraception for 17–26s, a national network of gynaecological clinics, establishment of regional menopause clinics and an associated public information campaign, and the landmark funding for public IVF.

In 2023 we will continue to support implementation and delivery. NWC will strive to ensure that inequalities between groups of women are recognised and addressed during the roll-out.



Women's Health Action Plan 2022—2023

Driving Women's and Girls' Leadership

Balance the Odds Campaign

In 2022, NWC made substantial progress with our #BalanceTheOdds campaign for the introduction of a gender quota to increase the number of women on corporate boards. This campaign is supported by Community Foundation Ireland.

On 27 May we held a packed event in the Irish Architectural Archive, in partnership with the Norwegian Embassy. Keynote speakers included Norwegian Ambassador Mari Skåre, gender quotas advocate Liv Monica Stubholt and Emer Higgins TD. A panel discussion was chaired by journalist Joyce Fegan with contributions from NWC, Senator Fiona O'Loughlin, and Sonya Lennon.

In addition, NWC supported the Private Members Bill on Gender Quotas on Boards by Emer Higgins TD and issued several supportive press releases.

We were delighted that the #BalanceTheOdds campaign video, produced by videographers The Reelists, was shortlisted as 'Best writing idea' by Shark Advertising Awards.

Womenscouncilireland @NWCI

Legislative gender quotas for Boards will encourage companies to ensure fair recruitment processes and promote women at all levels. It's time to #BalanceTheOdds and ensure that every woman has equal opportunity to reach their full potential. #WomenOnBoards

Women in Ireland occupy only:
According to CDO Quarterly Bulletin (June 2021)

- 28% of Senior Executive positions
- 12% of CEO positions
- 20% of Board Membership
- 7% of Board Chairpersons

#WomenOnBoards

Anne O'Leary and 7 others

2:59 PM · Jun 25, 2021

View Tweet analytics

9 Retweets 27 Likes

Womenscouncilireland @NWCI

Great to see @AineKerr in such strong support of our #BalanceTheOdds campaign for gender quotas on corporate Boards. We are sharing her brilliant contribution today in support of Deputy @EmerHigginsTD who is tabling her Private Members Bill 2021 on Gender Quotas this afternoon.

2:16 4,934 views

10:53 AM · Oct 6, 2021

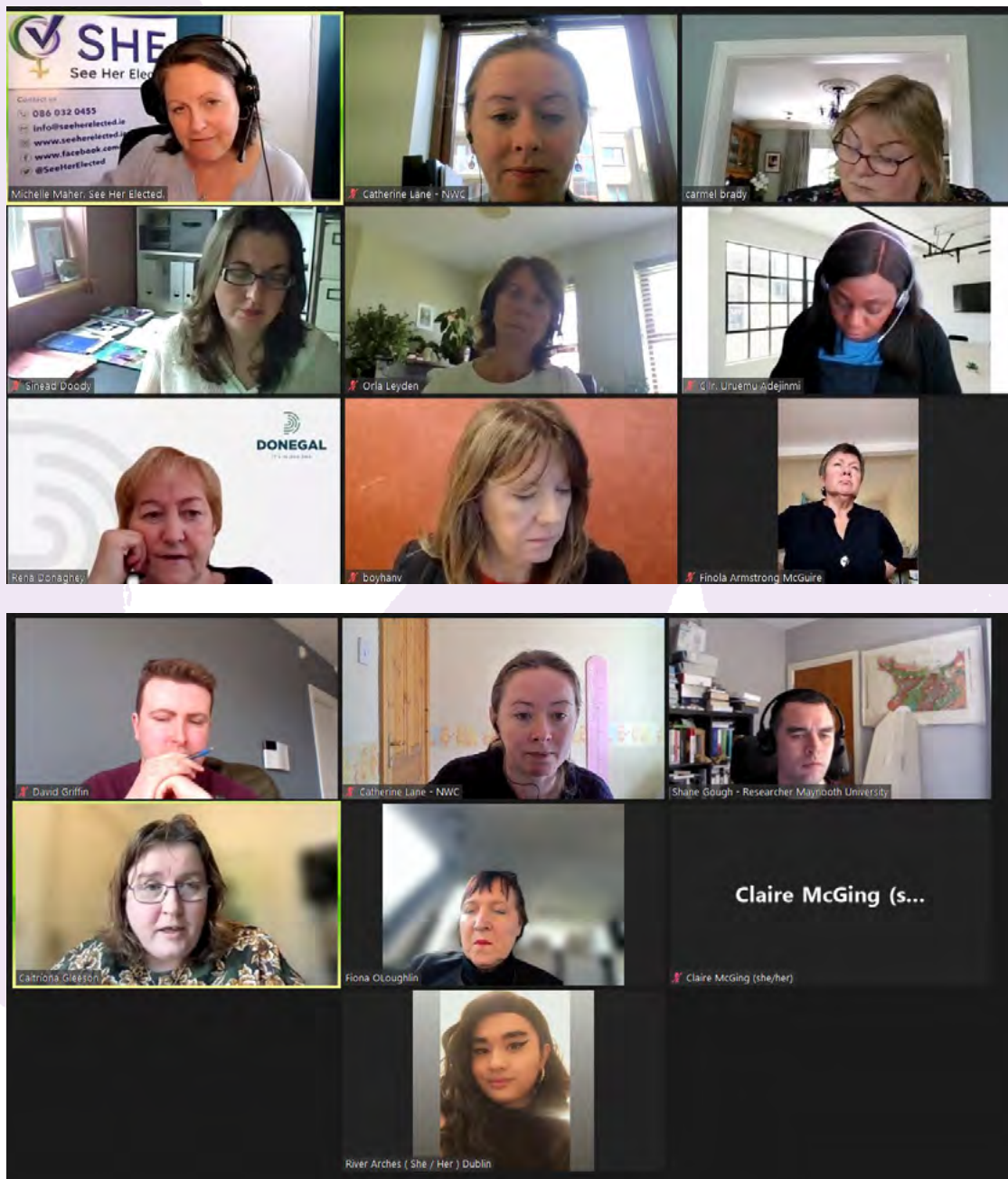
View Tweet analytics

13 Retweets 6 Quotes 42 Likes

Alliance for Gender Quotas at Local Level

In 2021, in partnership with our allies for greater women's participation and leadership, NWC convened and chaired the alliance for gender quotas at local level. This alliance continued into 2022 with a series of meetings. The alliance is a collective of civil society organisations, local and national, and academics working in political representation, to advocate for legislative candidate gender quotas within political parties for the local elections to increase women's representation in Local Government.

The purpose and goal of the alliance is that a candidate selection gender quota of 40% for Local Government in advance of Local Elections 2024 is introduced. This group continues its work and will publish its position paper in 2023.



Encounters Programme

By facilitating an introduction, a space of learning and understanding, or simply a re-introduction, *Encounters'* primary aim was to nurture a working relationship between organisations North and South. Facilitated by Ailbhe Smyth, Encounters operated in tandem with the NWC All-Island Women's Forum. 2022 was the concluding year of the programme.

The objectives involved identifying organisations North and South, including at local, regional, and national levels, to facilitate information sharing between organisations working in areas of commonality. The programme facilitated ten monthly meetings between various participating organisations. The level of enthusiasm from all groups invited to participate in the programme was incredibly encouraging and the commitment to engaging in the planning sessions and in the Encounters themselves signified a strong interest in the programme overall.

Groups that participated in the Encounters programme include:

- Women's Collective Ireland (WCI)
- Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network
- The Rainbow Project
- LGBT Ireland
- HERe NI
- Women's Collective Ireland Monaghan
- Women's Collective Ireland North Leitrim
- Herstory – Women in Loyalism
- Corrymeela Community
- Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation
- Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland (HAPANI)
- AkiDWA
- 50:50 NI
- Women for Election
- Women's Aid Federation NI
- Women's Aid Ireland
- Shankill Women's Centre
- Falls Women Centre
- Women's Collective Ireland – Rowanstown
- Disability Action NI
- Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI)



The Encounters programme is very thankful to all those who participated.

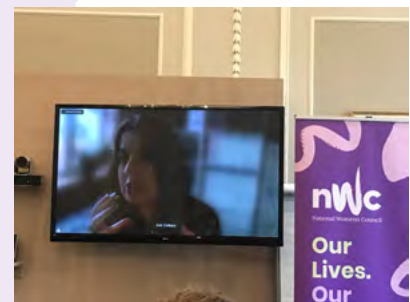
Family Friendly Toolkit for Local Government

Local government can be a leader in promoting an environment that is attractive and can accommodate the diversity of families that exist in Irish society today. In 2022, women should no longer have to choose between their career in public office and their family commitments. Yet caring responsibilities are a key barrier to women putting themselves forward for election and remaining in political life. 1 in 4 councillors since the 2019 Local Elections who have 'stood down' or resigned their seats for personal or career purposes were younger, first-time women councillors.

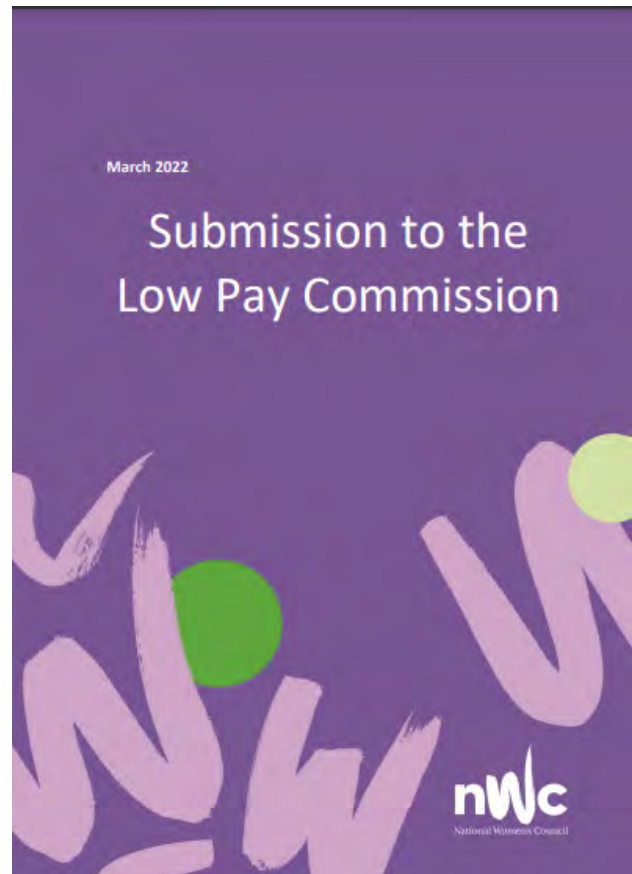
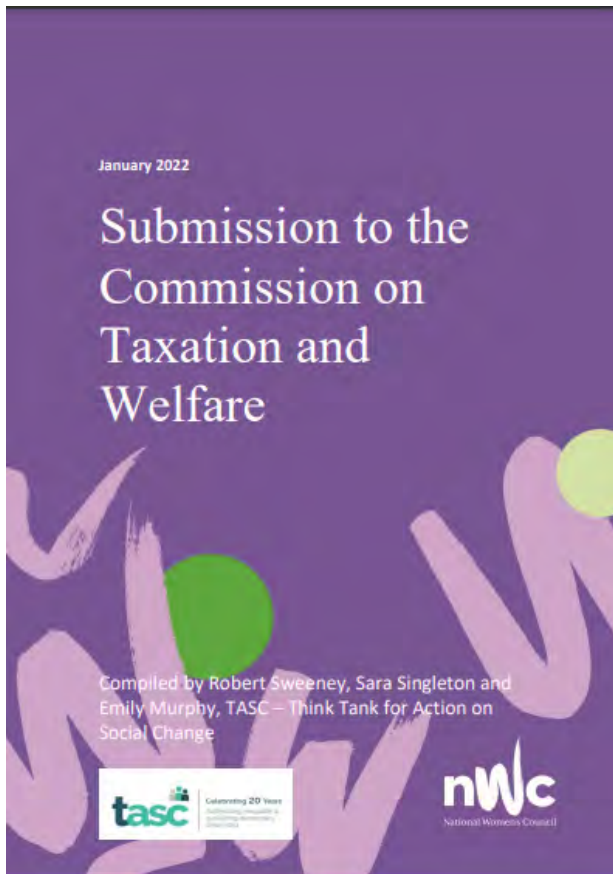
With support from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, research was carried out to examine the current issues for councillors with caring and family responsibilities and to inform practical recommendations and guidance on how to address these barriers in a toolkit. The research invited the views of local councillors, local authorities, and other relevant stakeholders to identify what supports and measures need to be put in place to ensure entering and remaining in local political life is a realistic, accessible option for women in all their diversity.

The toolkit challenges local authorities to strengthen their efforts to help make local political representation more attractive and accessible to women, men and all those with caring responsibilities. The toolkit was launched at the Custom House in September by Minister of State Peter Burke. As part of our pre-budget submission we included a call to make care an eligible expense for councillors.

NWC welcomed the long overdue introduction of maternity leave for women councillors, one of our key recommendations from Women Beyond the Dáil. This is another welcome step in the ongoing work to transform, modernise and increase flexibility across the culture of local government.



Working against poverty and austerity policies



Supporting community workers' pay struggles

For many workers, the cost of living has gone up but pay has stayed the same. Collective bargaining is one of the most effective ways to create more equal redistribution of wealth, reduce inequality, and address low pay.

NWC supported the National Day of Protest on Tuesday 3 May, organised by SIPTU, FORSA and the INMO. We called on all our members, but particularly our members in the Community and Voluntary Sector, to join the protest and call for fairness and better pay.

In every town in Ireland, women are working in vital community services. It's time these women were recognised and properly rewarded for their work.

Feminist Economic Policy

As a feminist organisation, NWC recognises that a more equitable collection and distribution of public resources is required to advance gender equality. Throughout 2022, we continued to bring feminist economic principles into economic decision-making spaces.

NWC made a Submission to the Commission on Taxation and Welfare, supported by TASC. We also took part in the Commission on Taxation and Welfare Stakeholder Engagement, speaking about key work and welfare issues for women's equality.

NWC took part in an EU wide study commissioned by the European Institute for Gender Equality, on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in COVID-19 recovery plans. We highlighted the lack of attention to gender equality in Ireland's plan.

On foot of an invitation from the Department of the Taoiseach, NWC made a submission on the EU Semester and Ireland's National Reform Programme. We met with the EU commission as part of their engagement with the EU Semester Recovery and Resilience Plan and highlighted the lack of investment in the care economy in these EU economic instruments.

Three days after Budget Day, NWC published a comprehensive Gender Analysis of Budget 2023. The analysis found that there were many positive developments for women including commitments to childcare and healthcare and one-off financial supports but long-term, Budget 2023 will not protect women from poverty and income inequality.

Celebrating Women Workers

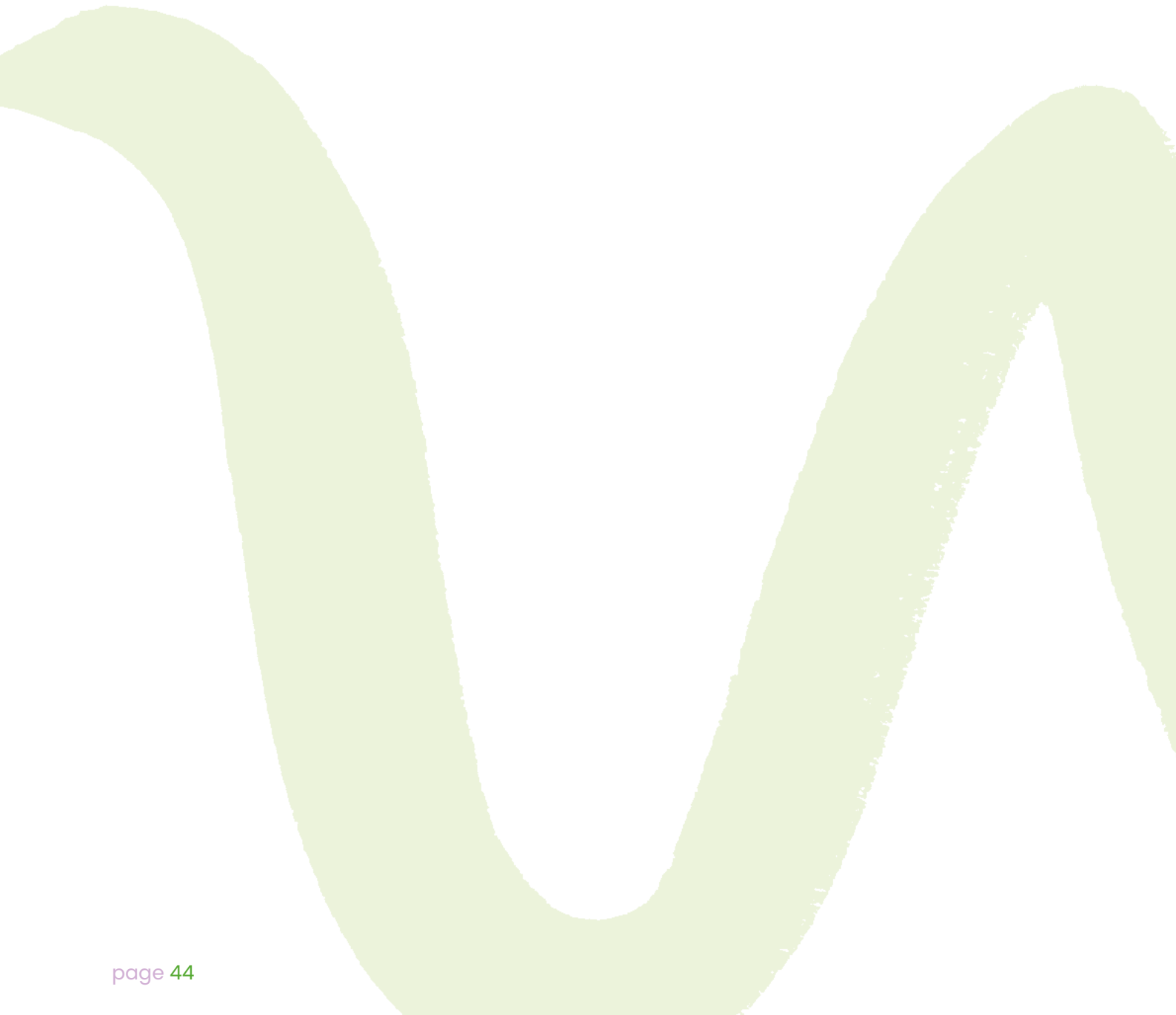
NWC hosted a May Day event in Liberty Hall to celebrate women workers and highlight their struggles. The event heard from women involved in trade union campaigns in retail, early years education and care, and school secretaries, and marks the beginning of further engagement with women leading labour struggles in their sectors.

NWC also made a submission to the Low Pay Commission and to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on low pay and the living wage. NWC's submissions recommended a clear pathway to delivering a living wage, legislation on collective bargaining rights, recognition of care as a key driver of women's over-representation in low paid work, investment in a public care infrastructure (including better pay and working conditions for the many young, migrant women workers in those sectors) and the need to abolish lower minimum wage rates that currently apply to young people.

Championing Feminist and Just Climate Action

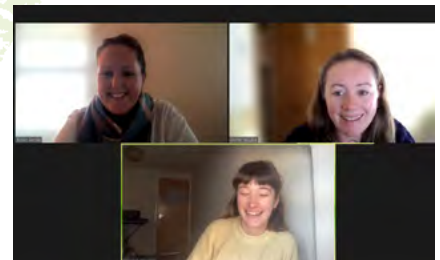
In 2022, in partnership with Community Work Ireland, NWC successfully applied to the Community Climate Action Fund, managed through Pobal under the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication, for a 3-year project on a just transition. The *Building a Feminist Community Work Approach to Climate Action* project will improve climate action policies, reflecting women's equality and community work values.

The project will amplify the voices of women and marginalised communities most impacted by climate change. It will build momentum in the community and women's equality sector to better understand, engage with and influence climate action policies from a feminist and community work perspective. It will do this by developing an accredited training programme for the community and women's equality sector and through public campaign actions on climate justice.



Broadening and diversifying a nationwide membership

In 2022 we strengthened and expanded our membership team. Catherine Lane as the Membership and Engagement Coordinator is now working alongside Róisín Lambe as the Membership and Engagement officer. The team is working to increase the ways our members can engage with our work. They reviewed our communication materials, engaged with the NWC team on their work with members and are meeting directly with members to hear their experiences. We identified areas for recruitment that will enhance our representation of women in rural areas, Northern Ireland, and with marginalised women. We carried out research with youth-led organisations to inform the development of our Youth Advisory Panel. We collaborated with our youth member groups to deliver on the motion from the AGM to increase the participation and representation of young women in our work.



Welcome to our new members who joined in 2022!

Certified Proud

Certified Proud advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and inclusion, including the rights of the trans community and especially trans women who are experiencing increased levels of transphobia and violence. They aim to empower organisations across Ireland to become truly LGBTQ+ inclusive through the provision of training, consultancy and best practice sharing. Additionally, 40% of each membership fee is donated to LGBTQ+ charities and non-profit organisations to ensure support for vulnerable members of the community.

Galway Civic Trust

Galway Civic Trust is a heritage charity committed to protecting and enhancing Galway's natural, built and cultural heritage for the benefit of all. The Trust adopts a hands-on approach which includes supporting a number of other non-profit and charity organisations and undertaking improvement, conservation and education projects in support of its mission. Established in 1992, they have completed over 50 projects, ranging from the erection of historic wall plaques to the refurbishment of Rusheen Bay Bird Sanctuary and restoration of the Fishery Watch Tower at Wolfe Tone Bridge.

HSE Anti Human Trafficking Team (AHTT) Women's Health Service (WHS)

The aim of WHS is to provide a health service to support and promote health and wellbeing of women and trans women involved in prostitution and affected by sexual violence through prostitution. The AHTT's responsibility is to support the recovery and integration of victims of human trafficking for all forms of exploitation identified in the state.

Spunout

Established in 2005, Spunout's vision is to help create an Ireland where young people aged between 16 and 25 are empowered with the information they need to live active, happy, and healthy lives.

They aim to educate and inform readers about the importance of holistic wellbeing and how good health can be maintained, both physically and mentally. Spunout believes everyone should have easy access to relevant, reliable, and non-judgemental information and they are proud to provide readers with a dynamic, responsive website full of up-to-date, factual information, free of any shame or bias.

Growing and promoting a diverse and inclusive feminism

Work with the Disabled Women's Group

NWC is fully committed to building on and supporting our engagement with disabled women. We facilitated members of the disabled women's group to meet with Care Visions Research in UCC. Some members also took part in the report to the Council of Europe on Ireland's evaluation under the Istanbul Convention on Violence Against Women.

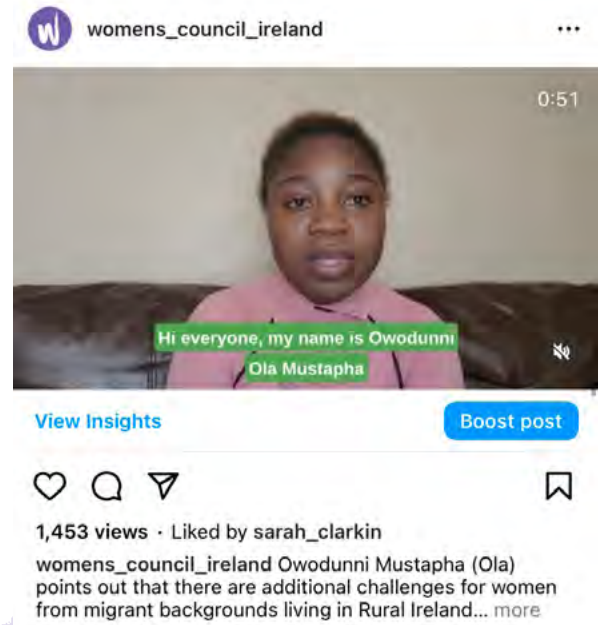
We held a session, independently facilitated by Dr. Ursula Barry, with the disabled women's group to discuss the future of the group. The disabled women's group have made a huge contribution of their time and expertise to NWC in so many ways and we look forward to continuing to engage disabled women in policy and campaigns work particularly on violence against women, the care referendum, and women's leadership. We will also continue to engage with our existing group members that represent disabled women including ILMI, Mental Health Reform, and Irish Deaf Women.



Working against discrimination and racism

NWC is an active member of the Irish Network against Racism. As part of our preparation for the Women in Rural Communities conference in Monaghan, we held an online workshop with a migrant women's group in Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan and another workshop with Traveller women from the Donegal Travellers Project. We also invited women to record videos sharing issues that were important to them. Owodunni Mustapha (Ola) from Ballyhaunis Inclusion Project pointed out that there are additional challenges for women from migrant backgrounds living in rural Ireland, particularly for those living in the Direct Provision system, or who experience domestic violence.

We were successful in supporting an IHREC funded project with Longford Women's Link. This project aims to capture the lived experiences of migrant women in rural communities at risk of economic inequalities. The project will work individually and collectively to build the capacity of women to engage and self-advocate on the issues that are impacting them and consequently advocate on behalf of their communities. It will provide practical measures to facilitate inclusion and contribute through policy recommendations to the active participation of migrant women in the workforce and the wider promotion of equality for migrant women.



Developing a Trans-inclusive Feminism

NWC recognises that anti-LGBTQI movements seek to divide us and weaken our shared fight for a just and inclusive world. Inevitably anti-LGBTQI forces are revealed to be anti-women and girls' equality too, particularly in relation to our right to full control of our bodies. We wanted to build on the joint advocacy we had already undertaken with TENI to ensure properly inclusive language in public engagement documents, and our advocacy with BeLoNG To and TENI to the Department of Foreign Affairs on recent anti- LGBTI+ developments in Hungary and Poland.

With this in mind, in January, NWC commenced our project to develop a shared understanding within NWC's board, staff and membership of a feminist trans-inclusive ethos and approach. We wanted to create new conversations amongst women's organisations, and to develop supportive information and tools on how to hold inclusive and positive conversations within civil society. We established a Trans Inclusive Working Group, which included NWC members TENI, BeLoNG To, and An Cosán. We also held a facilitated session with the NWC board and a separate session with staff.

In June 2022 NWC were proud to join Trans Equality Together, the coalition spearheaded by TENI, BeLoNG To and LGBT Ireland working to create an Ireland where trans and non-binary people are equal, safe and valued. We will work with TET in 2023 to continue our project together.

Engaging with our Supporters

We continued to engage regularly and meaningfully with our supporters via our weekly supporter emails and our monthly newsflash. We sent on average 5 supporter emails per month. The mails that received the most engagement were job vacancies, newsflashes and the rural women's survey.

We also engaged with our supporters across our social media channels and in-person at the many events, webinars and protest actions throughout the year.

Digital Fundraising

We built on the previous year's fundraising achievements with a great start to 2022 through the Nollaig na mBan campaign in early January and around International Women's Day in March.

In August, we ramped up our recruitment campaign for Feminist Changemakers through a combination of supporter emails and social media and continued that throughout the Autumn.

Beginning on 15 December, we launched a Festive Fundraising Appeal which ran through the Christmas and New Year period. We used a combination of social media posts and targeted email marketing, appealing for both one-off donations and promoting our Feminist Changemaker programme.

We'd like to sincerely thank all of our donors and Feminist Changemakers for their ongoing support.



Hi << Test First Name >>

Happy International Women's Day!

I've got something to ask you today. But first: do you believe women in Ireland deserve a fearless and independent voice?

We are living with an epidemic of male violence against women. We still don't have the access to abortion we voted for. Our childcare costs are among the highest in Europe. And we are still not properly represented where decisions are made affecting women's lives... in the Dáil, on local authorities and at board level.

Change and action is needed now, and we will keep campaigning, keep speaking up, and keep holding the Government to account (whoever that Government is) as long as women are denied their rights and opportunities and regardless of what some politicians say.

And I need your help today to do that.

[I support a strong voice for women](#)

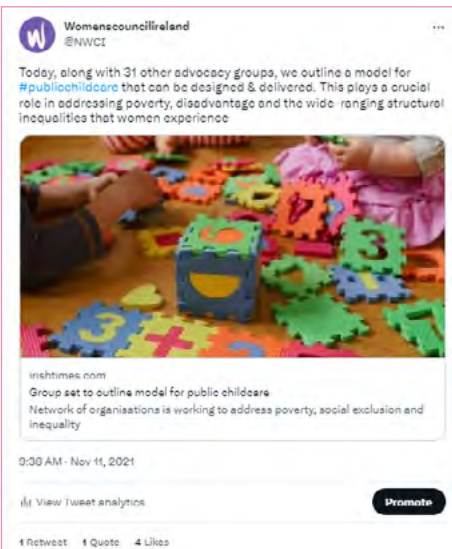
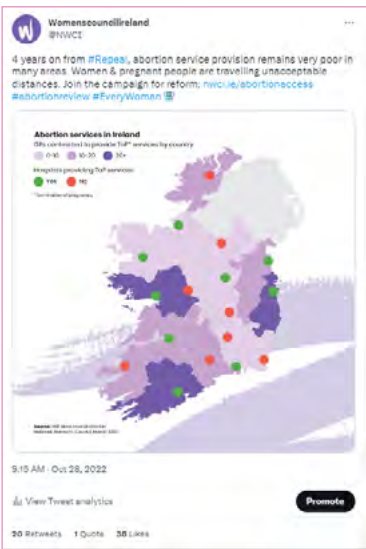


NWC in the Media and on Social Media

- NWC's Director and other team members appeared on national and local broadcast media throughout the year on topics such as the killing of Ashling Murph; our abortion access campaign; our calls for better representation of women in politics and on boards; the work of NWC's All-Island Women's Forum; the significant win in gaining free contraception; and our calls for a referendum on Article 41.2. on enshrining the value of care in our Constitution.
- We saw significant press coverage and online engagement in the weeks leading up to and after International Women's Day on 8 March. We also marked the fourth anniversary of the Repeal referendum win by raising awareness of women who are still travelling for care. In August and September, we focused on our calls for Budget 2023 to work much harder for women and saw significant media coverage – including on RTE's rolling coverage – as a result, particularly with the twin announcements of a new childcare scheme and the widening of the free contraception scheme.
- We marked the ten-year anniversary of Savita Hallappanavar's death, remembered Vicky Phelan on her tragic passing, and called for an end to violence against women during the 16 Days of Activism campaign.



- We had several opinion pieces placed in national newspapers, including on the Care Referendum, the importance of holistic reproductive healthcare, the cost-of-living crisis, and the need for public, affordable childcare.
- We had a total of 1202 recorded press and Dáil mentions between March 2022 and March 2023.
- We continued to see growth across all of our social media channels in 2022, with our Instagram following almost doubling to just under 20,000. Our reach on Instagram is excellent, with stories averaging a reach of approximately 1,000 accounts and posts between 3,000 and 4,000. We have increased our presence on LinkedIn, joined Mastodon, and are preparing to join TikTok in 2023.



People we worked with in 2022

NWC would like to thank the following people who worked with us and supported our campaigns and work in 2022.

- Adam May
- Amy Collins
- Amy Ryan
- Ann Irwin
- Aoife Grimes
- Beth O'Malley
- Caroline Gardner
- Claire McGing
- Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop
- Emma Hurley
- Jacinta Clarke
- Judit Villena Rodó
- Katy Finnegan
- Professor Louise Crowley
- Maëlle Noir
- Dr Marianne O'Shea
- Marie Lynch
- Mia Döring
- Nuala Egan
- Rachel Doyle
- River Arches
- Ruth Breslin
- Sheena Frost
- Sinead Doody
- Suzanne Walker
- Dr Valesca Lima



Our Team in 2022



Alana Ryan,
Women's Health
Coordinator



Anne Gibney,
Head of Finance and
Operations



Catherine Lane,
Membership and
Engagement
Coordinator



Catherine Hearn,
Digital
Communications and
Fundraising Officer
(from June 2022)



Emma DeSouza,
Women's Leadership
Coordinator (finished
November 2022)



Fay White,
Women's Health
Officer



**Jennifer McCarthy
Flynn**
(finished November
2022)



Ivanna Youtchak,
Violence against
Women Coordinator
(from June 2022)



Jane Finn,
Policy Administrator
(from February 2022)



Laura Pakenham,
Digital Communications
& Fundraising Officer
(finished January 2022)



Mia de Faoite,
Beyond Exploitation
Campaign
Coordinator (finished
September 2022)



Orla O'Connor,
Director

Our Team in 2022



Rachel Coyle,
Head of Campaigns
and Mobilisation



Róisín Lambe,
Membership and
Engagement Support
Officer (from May
2022)



Sandra McCullagh,
Women's Economic
Equality Coordinator



Sarah Clarkin,
Communications
and Social Media
Coordinator (finished
March 2022)



Sinéad Nolan,
Communications
and Social Media
Coordinator (from
July 2022)



Silke Paasche,
Head of
Communications and
Membership



Steph Mullins,
Finance Officer



Susan McCormack,
Administrator



Vicky Masterson,
Digital Campaigns
and Communications
Officer

Our Executive Board



Margaret Martin, Chairperson

Most of Margaret's working life centred on women's issues, particularly violence against women, and community education. Recently retired from her role as Director of Women's Aid other key posts included: Women's Education Officer and Deputy Director at AONTAS; Coordinator with POWER Partnership (NWC, WERRC, UCD, Women's Support Network, Belfast and University of Ulster); and Projects Manager in NWC.



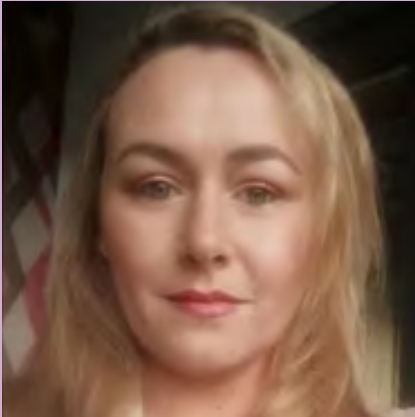
Dr Jennifer Okeke, Vice Chairperson

Jennifer is the Vice Chairperson of NWC and the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator with the Immigrant Council of Ireland. She is a community activist and former chairperson of a migrant women's organisation based in Ireland. Jennifer is on the board of the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW) and has extensive knowledge and expertise on issues of GBV, anti-trafficking, human rights and migration (refugees, asylum seekers, direct provision). She has a proven history of supporting local migrant communities in the promotion of integration.



Ethel Buckley

Ethel was elected Deputy General Secretary of Ireland's largest trade union in 2017. As SIPTU Deputy General Secretary for Organising and Membership Development she is responsible for the union's organising, campaigning, education and learning, communications, equality and a network of District Councils. She has led high profile campaigns such as the Justice for Clerys Workers Campaign and Fair Play campaign for union recognition for the Republic of Ireland's international women's football team. She is a member of the Executive Council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.



Dr Norah Burns

Norah is a law lecturer and specialises in human rights, clinical legal education and women and the law. She holds a Bachelor of Laws in Law and European Studies, a Masters in Human Rights in Criminal Justice from the University of Limerick and a PhD in Law from Trinity College Dublin. In 2018 she was chosen by the Asia-Europe Foundation as a future young ethical leader in Europe. In 2021 she was awarded a national teaching award by the Union of Students in Ireland and The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.



Sarah Monaghan

Sarah is Consent Project Manager at Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. She has previously worked as Campaigns Manager for The Wheel, The National Association of Charities, Community and Voluntary Organisations and Social Enterprises. Sarah has been involved in the Abortion Rights Campaign since 2014 and has acted as Campaign Co-Convener as well as serving on the Board. She was a founding member of Together for Yes where she sat on the National Executive while also acting as a Campaign Spokesperson and Head of Campaign Outputs. She was Director of Logistics on the Campaign to Re-Elect Michael D Higgins in 2018. She has a BA in Psychology and English Literature from NUIG as well as an MA in Comparative Literature from DCU and an MA in American Literature from UCD.



Amina Moustafa

Amina is Programme Manager of the Women's Leadership Programme at the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, supporting women who have been affected by political and violent conflict to become active leaders in their communities. She holds a BA in Neuroscience from Trinity College Dublin and is completing a PhD exploring the contentiousness of Muslim women's involvement in sport considering themes such as identity, belonging and anti-Muslim racism within the Irish context. Amina is on the Board of Sport Against Racism Ireland and recently joined the Board of the National Women's Council of Ireland.



Collette O'Regan

Collette has been working with LGBT Ireland since 2017. As Senior Training & Advocacy Coordinator she is responsible for internal training (helpline volunteers, peer support group facilitators) and external training (delivering LGBT Awareness training to various service providers). Strong priorities in Collette's advocacy role are peer support to and advocacy on LGBTI+ asylum seekers living in Direct Provision; visibility and inclusion of LGBTI+ Travellers & Roma in key support services; and older LGBT+ people's visibility/inclusion through the LGBT Champions Programme. Before LGBT Ireland, Collette worked for 8 years in human rights and advocacy in Cambodia, where she also co-founded Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK) in 2009, Cambodia's first and (since 2014) legally registered LGBT+ NGO. Collette's professional background is community development, community & adult education and grassroots advocacy. For a period of 10 years 1997-2007 Collette worked in community development and leadership in the border counties and in Northern Ireland using the Training for Transformation methodologies. Collette holds an MSc in Equality Studies from the School of Social Justice, UCD.



Sara R Phillips

Sara is a trans activist working globally. She has been involved with human rights activism for over 40 years. She is currently in her 9th year (third 3-year term) as Chair of the Board of Directors of Ireland's national trans organisation, Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI). Sara is also the treasurer of the International Trans Fund in New York, and a board member of Transgender Europe. Sara is an experienced senior manager and consultant across many industries including the construction industry. Sara is currently the National Manager in Ireland for multinational construction materials manufacturer CPG-Europe.



Nuala Ryan

Nuala is a dedicated feminist and a long-standing member of NWC, representing the Irish Federation of University Women for twelve years. As a mature student Nuala graduated from UCD with a BA in history and politics and M Litt in politics. She strongly advocates for access to education in its broadest forms for all women at every level and stage of their lives. She has a special interest in European affairs and has been the Irish representative on the European Network of Women (ENOW) and the board of the European Women's Lobby in Brussels. Currently Nuala is Chairperson of a Prison Visiting Committee. Her work reflects her commitment to the importance of education and training in building economic independence, equality, and social inclusion for women



Shirley Scott

Shirley is the policy manager for the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. She has been employed there since 2004 where she has held a number of positions within that organisation. She has been involved in voluntary work for much of her adult life and currently serves on the board of Bethany, the National Bereavement Support Group for Adults. She has a Bachelor of Business Studies from Dublin City University as well as a BA (Humanities) and MA (Human Development) from St Patrick's College (DCU).

Committees, Campaigns and Groups

NWCI is a Board Member of

- Community Work Ireland (Until June 2022)
- European Women's Lobby
- Survivors Informing Services and Institutions (SiSi)

NWC is a member of

- Alcohol and Gender-Based Violence
- Better Europe Alliance
- Beyond Exploitation
- Big Start
- Campaign for an All-Ireland National Health Service
- Children Living with Domestic and Sexual Abuse
- Coalition 2030
- Coalition Against Hate Crime
- Community and Voluntary Pillar
- Community Platform
- Community Work Ireland Mental Health Network
- COP26 Coalition Ireland
- Courting Disaster Coalition
- CSO Sexual Violence Survey Liaison Group
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade NGO Standing Committee on Human Rights
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government – Gender Diversity Network
- Department of Justice and Equality – Strategy Committee for the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020
- Department of Public Expenditure & Reform – Equality Budgeting Expert Advisory Group
- Four Day Week Ireland Campaign
- HEA Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment Working Group
- Home Care Coalition
- HSE Patient Forum
- Irish Network for Gynaecological Oncology
- Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women and Girls
- Le Chéile

- Monitoring Committee of the Second National Strategy on Domestic Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
- National Advisory Committee to End Sexual Harassment and Violence in Third Level Education
- National One Parent Family Alliance
- National Steering Committee on FGM
- New Deal for Early Years Campaign
- Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education – Steering Group
- Public Participation Network National Advisory Group
- Raise the Roof Coalition
- ‘Still Here’ and ‘No More Excuses’ Campaign Advisory Group
- Stop 67 Coalition
- Stop Climate Chaos
- Survivors Informing Services and Institutions SiSi – Advisory Group
- The Irish Coalition for Business and Human Rights
- The Tusla Strategic Review of Domestic Violence Accommodation Group
- Trans Equality Together
- Victims’ Rights Alliance
- Women’s Mental Health Network

Submissions and Publications

January

- NWC submission to the Commission on Taxation and Welfare
- National One Parent Family Alliance joint submission to the Commission on Taxation and Welfare

February

- NWC submission on the EU semester and Ireland's National Reform Programme

March

- NWC submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality on the Recommendations of the Citizens Assembly
- NWC statement to the Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality regarding recommendations 1-3 of the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality
- NWC submission to the Low Pay Commission
- Abortion Working Group Joint Submission to the Public Consultation on the Review of the Operation of the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018

April

- A Toolkit on Social Media Policies for Political Parties

May

- NWC submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Children, Disability, and Integration on the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2022

June

- NWC submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage on the Electoral Commission
- Shaping our Future: Tackling the cost of living for women in Budget 2023

July

- NWC Pre-Budget submission to the Department of Social Protection
- NWC submission to Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment on the Phasing-in of a Living Wage

August

- Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women Shadow Report to GREVIO in respect of Ireland
- NWC submission to the Housing Commission on a Referendum on Housing in Ireland

September

- NWC submission to the Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media on the delivery of a safe and respectful working environment in the arts
- A Toolkit for Local Authorities on Supporting Family-Friendly Local Government
- NWC Gender Analysis of Budget 2023
- NWC All-Island Women's Forum Report 2021-2022

October

- NWC submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the Draft Junior Certificate SPHE Curriculum
- Every Woman: Towards Reproductive Health, Choice and Care for All

December

- NWC submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the Senior Cycle SPHE Curriculum Redevelopment
- NWC Correspondence with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Legal and Administrative Information

National Women's Council of Ireland Company Information

Directors	Margaret Martin Nuala Ryan Ethel Buckley Jennifer Okeke Shirley Scott Sarah Monaghan Sara Phillips Norah Burns Amina Moustafa (Appointed 19th Oct 2022) Collette O'Regan (Appointed 19th Oct 2022)
Company secretary	Anne Gibney
Company number	241868
Registered office	100 North King Street Dublin 7
Auditor	Browne Murphy & Hughes Chartered & Certified Accountants 28 Upper Fitzwilliam Street Dublin 2
Bankers	Bank of Ireland Lower Baggot Street Dublin 2
Solicitors	Garlan Furey Solicitors 20 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2



Board Meetings & Subcommittees

There were 9 Board meetings during 2022

Attendance at meetings

Louise Lovett (Resigned 9th July 2022)	5 meetings
Margaret Martin	9 meetings
Nuala Ryan	9 meetings
Vivienne Glanville (Resigned 9th July 2022)	3 meetings
Emilia Marchelewska (Resigned 9th July 2022)	2 meetings
Ethel Buckley	5 meetings
Jennifer Okeke	7 meetings
Shirley Scott	9 meetings
Sarah Monaghan	6 meetings
Sara Phillips	7 meetings
Norah Burns	8 meetings
Amina Moustafa (Appointed 19th Oct 2022)	2 meetings
Collette O' Regan (Appointed 19th Oct 2022)	1 meeting

Governance Subcommittee

Shirley Scott, Jennifer Okeke, Norah Burns, Emilia Marchelewska, and Louise Lovett Subcommittee met 3 times during 2022. The Subcommittee members changed in October to - Norah Burns, Collette O' Regan and Amina Moustafa

Shirley Scott	2 meetings
Jennifer Okeke	0 meetings
Norah Burns	3 meetings
Emilia Marchelewska	1 meeting
Louise Lovett	2 meetings
Collette O'Regan	1 meeting
Amina Moustafa	1 meeting

We comply with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and charitable organisations in Ireland. We confirm that a review of our organisations' compliance with the principals in the code was conducted in July 2022. This review was based on an assessment of our organisational practice against the recommended actions for each principle. The review sets out actions and completion dates for any issues that the assessment identifies needs to be addressed.

Employment Subcommittee

Margaret Martin, Sarah Monaghan, Sara Phillips and Louise Lovett
Committee met 5 times during 2022

Attendance at meetings

Louise Lovett	2 meetings
Margaret Martin	5 meetings
Sarah Monaghan	5 meetings
Sara Phillips	4 meetings

Finance Subcommittee

Vivienne Glanville, Louise Lovett, Nuala Ryan, Sheena Frost (Co-opted member)
Committee met 3 times during 2022. The Subcommittee members changed in October to -
Nuala Ryan, Jennifer Okeke, Shirley Scott

Attendance at meetings

Vivienne Glanville	1 meeting
Louise Lovett	1 meeting
Nuala Ryan	3 meetings
Jennifer Okeke	0 meetings
Shirley Scott	1 meeting
Sheena Frost	3 meetings

Financial Report

The main work and activities of NWC for 2022 were in line with our Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024

Income & Expenditure

INCOME

Dept. of Children, Equality Disability Integration & Youth	611,000
SSNO – Dept. of Rural and Community Development	88,869
HSE	108,544
Membership Fees	36,131
Donations	23,405
Department of Foreign Affairs – Reconciliation Fund	55,000
Community Foundation of Ireland	20,694
Dept. of Rural & Community Development (Social Partnership)	18,840
Centre for Reproductive Rights	30,000
Novo Tides	27,647
Department of Justice	33,830
Dept of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science	19,183
Department of Rural & Community Development	10,000
Miscellaneous income	49,996

TOTAL INCOME	€1,133,139

EXPENDITURE

Staff Costs	816,558
Office running costs	37,848
Rent, Cleaning	98,168
Communication & Information	27,717
Governance & Statutory costs	26,706
Professional Fees	3,761
Programme Activities	141,247

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	€1,152,005

FINANCIAL RESULTS

The financial results for the financial year ended 31st December 2022 shows a net deficit of (€18,866) (2021: net surplus €140,637).

INCOME

National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) raised total income of €1,133,139 for the financial year ended 31st December 2022 (2021: €1,139,544).

EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure for the year at €1,152,005 some of which relates to income received in previous years for programmes of work which were carried out in 2022.

The balance sheet is showing reserves of €177,452 in restricted funds and €189,740 in unrestricted funds. The directors regard this level of unrestricted funds as inadequate for contingency purposes and have resolved to try to increase the level of unrestricted reserves in the future.

Reserves to be maintained at a level which ensures that NWC's core activity could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty. It takes into account risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted, planned activity level and the organisations commitments.

NWC's ability to deliver quality, value for money programmes has ensured strong positive relationships continue with Government Departments, Trusts and Philanthropic organisations. NWC wish to increase the grants received from membership and non-statutory organisations.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF IRELAND

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2022

	Restricted Funds 2022 €	Unrestricted Funds 2022 €	Total 2022 €	Total 2021 €
Incoming Resources				
Donations	-	59,536	59,536	54,170
Charitable Activities	1,023,607	49,996	1,073,603	1,085,374
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Incoming resources	1,023,607	109,532	1,133,139	1,139,544
Resources Expended				
Raising funds	(9,039)	(2,714)	(11,753)	(11,691)
Charitable Activities	(1,105,190)	(35,062)	(1,140,252)	(987,216)
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Resources Expended	(1,114,229)	(37,776)	(1,152,005)	(998,907)
Net (deficit)/surplus for the financial year	(90,622)	71,756	(18,866)	140,637

These financial statements were approved by the directors on 19th April 2023 and are signed on their behalf by Margaret Martin, Chairperson and Nuala Ryan, Director.



NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF IRELAND

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2022		2021
	€	€	€
<hr/>			
Current assets			
Debtors	51,195	9,322	
Cast at bank and in hand	361,839	424,610	
	-----	-----	
	413,034	433,932	
Creditors: amounts falling due within One year	(45,842)	(47,874)	
	-----	-----	
Net current assets	367,192		386,058
	=====		=====
<hr/>			
Reserves			
Restricted Funds	177,452	268,074	
Unrestricted Funds	189,740	117,984	
	-----	-----	
Members' Funds	367,192		386,058

These financial statements were approved by the directors on 19th April 2023 and are signed on their behalf by Margaret Martin, Chairperson and Nuala Ryan, Director.

These summary accounts have been extracted from the statutory financial statements of the National Women's Council of Ireland. Those statutory financial statements, on which the Auditors (Browne Murphy & Hughes) expressed an unqualified audit opinion, will be filed with the Registrar of Companies following the Annual General Meeting. Copies of the full audited financial statements have been sent to members and are available on the NWCi Website (www.nwci.ie).







National Women's Council

National Women's Council
100 North King Street
Dublin 7

www.nwci.ie

Follow us

