



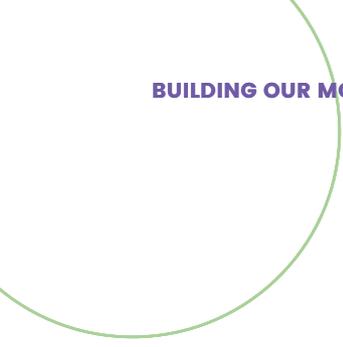
National Women's Council



# Building our Movement *for a* Feminist Future

NWC Annual Report 2024





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# Message from the Chairperson

2024 was a busy year for the National Women's Council, marked by numerous campaigns on key issues for women. We also witnessed the impact of a changing global context, including growing far right discourses and movements that risk threatening hard won rights for women and minorities.

Coinciding with the end of our Strategic Plan, we took 2024 as an opportunity to pause, reflect and plan for the future. At our Annual General Meeting in June 2024, we heard inputs from diverse member groups on what they see as the key challenges for women's rights and equality going forward. We discussed what solidarity looks like for members of NWC and how we can strengthen the feminist movement in Ireland.

In preparation for our new Strategic Plan 2025-2029, we also took stock of the achievements made for women over the past five years. These include an increase in public funding for childcare and the establishment of Cuan as a dedicated agency to tackle violence against women. We also kept women's reproductive health high on the agenda, resulting in the rollout of free contraception and a commitment to free HRT. These are just some of the examples, and many more are outlined in this Annual Report.

Despite these advancements, it is clear that we cannot take progress on women's rights for granted and that many new and ongoing barriers for women's rights and equality remain. We started consultations with our members and external stakeholders on our new Strategic Plan. This new plan launched in June 2025 provides a robust roadmap for NWC to continue to be the strong voice and advocate for women that we need and to drive forward the feminist agenda in Ireland.

We were delighted to see our membership grow in 2024. I would like to sincerely welcome the 18 new member groups who joined NWC in 2024. Thank you also to our existing members and supporters for your input and engagement and to the many Feminist Changemakers. Your support is invaluable to us as it allows us to run independent campaigns on the issues that matter most to women.

I would like to acknowledge the support of our funders and to sincerely thank all of the NWC Board members, the Director, Orla O'Connor, and the NWC staff team for their commitment and support for the work of NWC. I was honoured to be elected as Chairperson of this organisation and look forward to working with you in 2025 and beyond.

**Jennifer Okeke**, Chairperson



# Message from the Director

In 2024 NWC ran many successful campaigns on key issues for women's rights and equality. Building on decades of campaigning for improved access to childcare, we launched Together for Public, the alliance for a public system of early childhood education and care. The Alliance is led by NWC and brings together over 40 civil society organisations, trade unions, academics and childcare providers. After its launch in September, Together for Public ran a successful email campaign as part of the General Election, calling on all political party leaders to commit to the delivery of a public system of childcare in Ireland as a key priority. The campaign saw over 7000 emails sent to party leaders and resulted in childcare becoming a top issue during the election campaign.

NWC also used the various elections that took place in 2024 as an opportunity to highlight the lack of women's political representation at all levels. Supported by the Gender Quotas Alliance, we reiterated our call for the urgent introduction of gender quotas for local election candidates. Launching our research study, Women beyond the Dáil, we highlighted the additional barriers female Councillors face in politics and outlined recommendations for a more family-friendly Local Government.

Throughout the year, NWC launched a number of other groundbreaking reports that will inform our advocacy work over the next few years. Our research on 'Sex for Rent' exploitation put a much-needed spotlight on the devastating impact of this form of exploitation in particular on vulnerable women who are forced to decide between sexual exploitation and homelessness.

As part of an innovative all-island project with Women's Aid Northern Ireland, we published a new report which highlights the ongoing challenges posed by the border in accessing services, which particularly affects survivors of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

In April, Feminist Communities for Climate Justice, our joint project with Community Work Ireland, launched the first ever research into the impacts of climate policies on women and marginalised communities in Ireland. We also celebrated the graduation of the first ever Climate Justice Graduates with the Department of Applied Social Studies in Maynooth University.

In collaboration with TASC (Think Tank for Action on Social Change), we launched our Still Stuck in the Gap research report which highlights the inequalities faced by women in our pension system and warns that the Government's new Auto-enrolment Scheme will not address these and may even make them worse.

A particular focus in the area of women's health was on perinatal mental health. In partnership with the Trinity Centre for Maternity Care Research, we hosted a high-level conference and ran a social media campaign. We called for greater supports for women experiencing perinatal mental health difficulties and for increased investment, including the delivery of the Mother and Baby Unit.

As the Director of NWC, I am proud of everything we have achieved this year, but I am also acutely aware of the new and ongoing challenges that women's rights campaigners face.

I feel privileged to lead such a fantastic organisation and would like to sincerely thank our members, supporters, funders, staff and board for their ongoing commitment and support without which none of this work would be possible.

**Orla O'Connor**, Director, NWC

# Who we are

The National Women's Council (NWC) is the leading representative organisation working for women's rights and equality across the island of Ireland, founded in 1973.

We are rooted in our membership. We work together with our almost 200 member groups across the island of Ireland and a growing community of individual supporters to deliver on our purpose – to achieve women's rights and equality.

Our Vision is

A feminist Ireland that is just and caring, where everyone thrives.

Our Mission is

To lead transformative action to achieve women's rights and equality through mobilising, influencing and building solidarity.

Our Values guide us.

They are given expression in our work and in how we work, as an organisation.

## Feminist:

In all of our work, we acknowledge the unfair systems and barriers that all women face, no matter our differences.

We work together to empower women to lead the changes needed for women's rights and equality.

We focus on supporting women who have the least access to power.

## Courageous:

We stand firm on women's rights and equality and challenge those in positions of power who undermine or oppose our campaign for positive change.

We do not shy away from having tough conversations and speak up when it is needed.

We try out new ways of working, embrace mistakes as learning opportunities and nurture a culture of self-reflection.

## Strategic:

To be successful in achieving our goals, we are thoughtful and plan carefully.

This means showing leadership, working well with partners, and focusing on what matters most. It means making choices that are achievable/realistic and will help us in the future.

## Informed:

Our work is based on the lived experiences of women in their diversity, paying extra attention to the most marginalised women. This and other available accurate evidence and research inform all of our materials, events, publications and communications.

Our staff is highly professional with proven expertise in their areas of work.

## Inclusive:

We understand that women and girls are all different, and many will face different forms of discrimination at the same time, including but not limited to discrimination based on race, ability, sexual orientation, class, gender expression and ethnicity.

We pro-actively include women from diverse backgrounds and offer extra support to those who might face more challenges in getting involved in our work.

We are aware of potential bias and check our own institutional privilege and power.

## Caring:

We recognise care as essential to life, rooted in our interdependence with each other and the planet, and as a collective force that sustains people and communities.

We recognise and value care in all its forms.

We recognise the connections between gender, care, and the environment.

We advocate for policies that put care at the heart of economic, social, and environmental systems.

We foster an organisational culture that prioritises the well-being of staff and members; care starts within.

# Together for Public

## – Campaigning for a Public System of Early Childhood Education and Care

The lack of affordable, quality, accessible childcare continues to be one of the biggest barriers to women’s full participation in society. Despite increased investment in the childcare sector by Government in recent years, our current childcare system is not working.

The best way to ensure a place for every child, irrespective of their parents’ background, as well as better pay and working conditions for the mostly female early years educators, is a public system of early childhood education and care.

To campaign for a new Public System of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), NWC brought together the Together for Public Alliance, comprising over 40 diverse civil society organisations, trade unions, childcare providers and academics.

Together for Public officially launched in September with an event in Dublin. Following the national launch, NWC hosted an NWC Members’ Meeting and two Town Hall events in Galway and Waterford to promote the alliance and our call for a system of public childcare.

In the run up to the General Election 2024, we also ran an e-mail campaign targeting the leaders of political parties. This resulted in 7,000 emails being sent to urge every political party to commit to a public system of ECEC in their general election manifestos. As a result of Together for Public’s campaigning, childcare featured prominently during the General Election 2024.

Almost all political parties committed to some form of public provision of ECEC in their manifestos.

Before Christmas, as Programme for Government negotiations were ongoing, we held a memorable photocall outside Leinster House themed ‘All I Want for Christmas is Public Childcare’, keeping this issue on the political agenda in a fun and engaging way.

Our efforts have sparked incredible engagement from a diverse range of stakeholders—parents, educators, policymakers, and the general public. This broad support has been crucial in raising awareness and continuing the dialogue about the importance of universal, public, high-quality, accessible, and affordable early childhood education and care. Our campaign continues in 2025.



# My Voice, My Choice Campaign



From March – June 2024, NWC took part in the European Citizens' Initiative campaign My Voice, My Choice. The purpose of this campaign was to reach 1 million signatures to improve access to abortion in Europe. Specifically, the initiative asks the European Commission to submit a proposal for financial support to Member States that would be able to perform safe termination of pregnancies, in accordance with their domestic law, for anyone in Europe who still lacks access to safe and legal abortion.

NWC hosted several in-person signature collection events, capitalising on large crowds at football matches, concerts, and festivals. In addition to in-person events, NWC ran a dynamic digital campaign which included 137 posts across our five main social media platforms.

NWC's involvement in this campaign garnered national media attention and provided opportunities for NWC's health team to conduct radio interviews about the ongoing barriers to abortion in Ireland. Being part of a European-wide coalition enabled NWC to strengthen its relationships with other feminist organisations across Europe and build solidarity in our sexual health and reproductive rights work.

On May 23rd, NWC organised a photocall outside the Dáil to mark the six-year anniversary of the successful Repeal campaign. Politicians from major political parties attended, alongside members of NWC's Abortion Working Group and other civil society groups. The purpose of this event was to urge politicians to implement the findings of the Independent Abortion Review and to highlight the My Voice, My Choice Campaign.

The campaign registered more than 12,000 signatures in Ireland and in early 2025, it surpassed the million signatures required.

# Campaigning in the Local and European Elections

The Local and European elections in 2024 provided a valuable opportunity to promote greater participation of women in politics. Despite making up more than half of the population, women remain significantly underrepresented at all levels of government, holding just 28% of seats in Local Government and 25% in the Dáil.

Incumbency, which disproportionately benefits men, remains a major barrier for women entering Local Government. In the 2024 Local Elections, 84% of outgoing Councillors sought re-election, and 86% were re-elected, leaving only 28% of seats available for non-incumbent candidates.

As a result, women's representation in Local Government has stagnated. Of the 949 total councillor seats, only 247 went to women following the 2024 Local Elections, just one more than the outgoing council (246).

To address this imbalance, we advocated for women-only shortlists when seats became available following the General Election in November 2024. As a result, several women were co-opted into vacant seats, increasing women's representation from 25% to 28% in Local Government.

In preparation for the European elections in June 2024, we partnered with Women for Election (WfE) and the European Women's Lobby (EWL) to host a series of hustings featuring female candidates across the three constituencies in Ireland (Dublin; Midlands-North-West and South). This was an opportunity for voters to hear directly from candidates, engage in discussions, and encourage commitments to the principles and actions outlined in the European Women's Lobby's Political Manifesto 2024. In addition, NWC ran a number of local radio ads encouraging women to get out and vote in the European Elections 2024. This project was supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs Communicating Europe initiative.



# NWC General Election 2024 Campaign

During the General Election in November 2024, NWC campaigned for a clear focus on women's rights and the advancement of gender equality over the course of the next five years. We engaged in ambitious, targeted campaigning to influence election candidates and their parties, and to mobilise public support on tackling issues that affect women – ensuring that issues like childcare were more prominent than ever during the election.

We published our Feminist Manifesto 2024 early in the election campaign, on 12th November, highlighting the 10 key areas that action is needed for women's rights and gender equality:

- Transform Women's Health
- Guarantee Reproductive Rights
- Deliver Public Childcare
- Deliver Care Services and Support
- Eliminate Poverty
- Provide Housing and Accommodation
- End Violence Against Women
- Advance Women's Leadership and Participation
- Put People and Planet First
- Create an Ireland for All



This broad campaigning was complemented by specific calls by the Together for Public Alliance for the move towards a Public System of Early Childhood Education and Care.

Following the General Election, we expressed our disappointment at the lack of a breakthrough in women's representation in the new Dáil. Even though more women than ever were elected, the overall percentage of women in the Dáil increased only marginally.



# Building the Feminist Movement – NWC’s Annual General Meeting



The political and social context of NWC’s work has changed since we launched our Strategic Plan 2021–2024. New challenges have emerged, and it has become clear that we cannot take progress for women’s rights for granted.

Our AGM 2024 in June was an opportunity to pause and reflect together with our members on new and ongoing barriers to advancing women’s rights and equality and to identify possible solutions.

The event started with a comprehensive presentation of the work that our Artist in Residency, Grace Dyas, had undertaken with our members as part of our 50th anniversary celebration in 2023. This was followed by a number of short inputs from our membership to encourage a discussion on the best ways to promote solidarity amongst our members and ensure ongoing ownership by members of NWC work. Our AGM was well attended representing the diversity of our membership, ensuring a thought provoking and engaging discussion.

Following the morning event, the formal part of our AGM took place in the afternoon. Members elected Jennifer Okeke as our new Chairperson and Shirley Scott as our Deputy Chairperson. Newly elected Board members also included Luzia Antonio Berechet, Norah Burns, Rebekah Connelly, Siobhán Fenton, Megan Giblin, Margaret Martin and Maeve McCafferty. In addition, members also passed 20 motions in relation to a wide range of topics related to the work of NWC.

# Family and Care Referendum 2024

Following the announcement of two referendums on care and family in November 2023, NWC expressed our disappointment that the wording on care differed significantly from the recommendations of the Citizens Assembly and Joint Oireachtas Report. This put the organisation in a difficult position. Our members wanted all families recognised, Art. 41.2 removed and the value of care recognised based on a broad and inclusive understanding of care. However, the Government made it very difficult with the restricted wording they chose and the absence of strong commitments on the significant issues, including rights of people with disabilities, that arose as part of the referendum campaign.

Ultimately, NWC decided to support a Yes vote in both referendums following consultation with our members as we felt it was progress for women that could be built on.

Together with our civil society partners, Family Carers Ireland, One Family and Treoir, we came together in the Yes Yes Campaign to advocate for a yes vote in both referendums. Both referendums were rejected by voters on 8th March 2024.

While we continue to believe that families should be recognised, that 41.2 is sexist and that much more needs to be done to recognise care, we could not communicate our broad and inclusive understanding of care and family. The referendum resulted in a divisive campaign and NWC sought to rebuild solidarity in its aftermath.

# Championing Feminist and Just Climate Action

## Launch of the Feminist Climate Justice Report

In April 2024, Feminist Communities for Climate Justice – a joint project between NWC and Community Work Ireland – launched the Feminist Climate Justice Report at the Banking Hall in Cork.

The report, authored by Dr Fiona Dukelow, Dr Catherine Forde and Edith Busteed, is the first of its kind in Ireland. It examines the impacts of climate policies on women and marginalised communities from the perspective of intersectional feminist climate justice.

The report explores six key pillars: energy and housing; transport; care; health; food, land use, agriculture and biodiversity; and just transition.

The report illustrates how climate change will hit already disadvantaged groups in our societies harder. It shows how the current approach to climate policy in Ireland worsens this disadvantage as it does not pay adequate attention to social justice. Domestic data gaps on how climate change and climate policies impact groups like women, Travellers, disabled people and people seeking asylum means that we lack the evidence to create climate policies which do not worsen social inequality.

The work in the report continues to inform the climate work of NWC and the Feminist Communities for Climate Justice project.



# Feminist Climate Justice Certificate Programme in Collaboration with Maynooth University

From January to July 2024, Feminist Communities for Climate Justice and Maynooth University's Department of Applied Social Studies ran a first of its kind certificate training programme, Community Work in a Changing Ireland: Feminist Climate Justice.

21 diverse participants from all over Ireland passionate about climate change engaged with their local communities, attended online and in-person sessions on Maynooth University campus, learning about community work and community development, feminism and climate justice.

The participants completed tasks such as reflective essays, examined the role of social inequalities in relation to climate change, and designed community work approaches to case studies of climate injustice happening in Ireland. They also carried out study visits, learning from workers in community spaces all over Ireland and the ways that climate change overlaps with their work.

Conferring day came in November 2024, bringing participants back together in cap and gown to celebrate their achievements. They continue to bring climate justice to their work and remain connected to the wider Feminist Communities for Climate Justice project. We wish our graduates the best of luck in their ongoing work!



# Feminist Communities for Climate Justice National Network

The Feminist Communities for Climate Justice National Network met for the first time in March 2024. Its membership has since grown to more than 130 community groups, women's organisations, climate justice and environmental groups, academics, campaign groups and individuals who are interested in creating a just and green future.

The network fosters connections of solidarity and understanding. It builds the collective analysis of its membership, working to raise the voice of communities in the climate debate by establishing, supporting and resourcing network members to campaign on key issues.

The Network has five working groups: Policy and Advocacy; Arts and Creative Approaches; Events and Outreach; Feminist Communities for Local Food, in collaboration with Talamh Beo Women; and Women in Nature Restoration in collaboration with Tóchar.

The network's working groups have helped to produce a successful webinar on the value of local and organic food. They also fed into the development of the Caring Climate Action: A Feminist Climate Justice Manifesto for the General Election 2024 and contributed to the wider project's policy submissions.



**Elena Manciu**  
Roma Climate Justice Peer Education Worker, Friends of the Earth & Cairde

**"The conclusion from 32 Roma respondents is clear, the Roma Community suffers many obstacles to inclusion in Ireland and energy costs are one of the main causes that plunge us into a vicious cycle of poverty"**



# Ending Gender Based Violence and Exploitation

## 'Sex for Rent' Exploitation Report Launch



In May 2024, NWC launched a new research report 'Sex for Rent' – Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment in the Rental Housing Market. The first of its kind in Ireland, the research puts a spotlight on the devastating impact of sex for rent exploitation on vulnerable women and the urgent need to criminalise this form of exploitation.

The report is based on Irish and International literature on sex for rent (SFR) exploitation, interviews with key experts and stakeholders, a review of policy and legislation in selected countries and the monitoring of specific online platforms to identify the nature and content of sex for rent advertisements.

Key recommendations focus on the importance of legislation in protecting women by specifically outlawing this kind of exploitation. In addition, the report calls for the protection of all renters and ensured access to secure, good quality and affordable housing for all members of society.

The launch event featured a presentation of the key findings of the report and its recommendations followed by a discussion with Dr Stephanie O'Keefe, CEO of Cuan and Denise Charlton, CEO of Community Foundation Ireland.

Following the launch, NWC had the opportunity to provide a briefing in Leinster House on the key findings of the report in October 2024. Speakers included Orla O'Connor, NWC Director, Feargha Ní Bhroin, NWC's Violence against Women Officer and Ann-Marie O'Reilly, National Advocacy Manager with Threshold.

The report was funded by the Community Foundation Ireland and the European Women's Lobby.

# All-Island Violence against Women Report Launch

In November, NWC and Women's Aid Federation NI launched a new report on North South Co-operation to Tackle Violence Against Women.

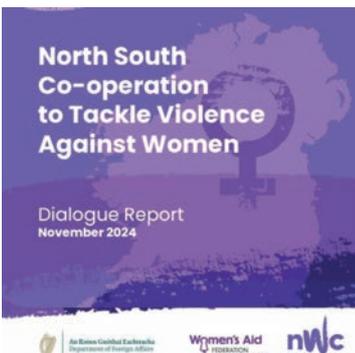
The report and launch were the culmination of a joint project by NWC and Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland in leading the All-Island Violence Against Women Working Group, supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs' Shared Island Civic Society Fund.

This initiative builds on years of collaborative work through NWC's All-Island Women's Forum, strengthening relationships between key organisations in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The working group brought together key organisations working at local, regional, and national levels, all of whom have extensive expertise in addressing male violence against women, with a specific focus on intimate partner violence.

The report launched in November contains several recommendations on fostering practical cooperation and implementing an all-island response ensuring that victim-survivors have the support they need, wherever they seek it, North and South of the border.

The report was officially launched at the Atrium, Department of Justice, with videos provided by Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin, and Minister of Justice in Northern Ireland, Naomi Long. Following a presentation of the key findings of the report, the launch also featured a panel with Emma Reidy, CEO, Aoibhneas; Salome Trauth, DSGBV Project Coordinator, AkiDWA; Eileen Murphy, CEO, Women's Aid Armagh Down and Noelle Collins, Senior Manager, Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid. The panel discussion was chaired by Kitty Holland, Irish Times.

Organisations involved in the working group include AkiDWA, Aoibhneas, Cavan Traveller Movement, Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (Sligo, Leitrim, West Cavan), Donegal Travellers Project, National Women's Council of Ireland, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, Survivors Informing Services and Institutions (SISI), Tearmann Domestic Abuse Services (Safe Ireland Cavan & Monaghan), Women's Aid Northern Ireland (Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey Women's Aid, Armagh Down Women's Aid, Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid, Causeway and Mid Ulster Women's Aid, Fermanagh Women's Aid, Foyle Women's Aid, North Down and Ards Women's Aid, Omagh Women's Aid, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland), and Women's Aid (Ireland).



# Establishing Cuan – a new statutory Agency to tackle Violence against Women

In 2024, Cuan, the new Statutory Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) Agency, under the remit of the Department of Justice, was established. This marked a milestone in the implementation of the Third National Strategy of DSGBV and the promotion of Zero Tolerance to violence against women in Ireland. NWC played a key role by being part of the Executive Group that developed the Strategy, together with representatives from the Department of Justice and Safe Ireland. The agency had been a key demand from civil society organisations for many years and was therefore welcomed by NWC and members of the Observatory on Violence against Women.

Cuan's ambition is to eliminate Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) in Ireland. Its current focus is on building nationwide collaboration and driving cohesive statutory action. Ireland has seen significant progress in policy and legislation related to tackling violence against women in recent years. However, figures from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in 2024 show that in Ireland 41% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15. This is 10 percentage points higher than the EU-27 average. It shows that a lot more work needs to be done for women to live a life free from male violence. NWC and the Observatory on Violence against Women look forward to working closely with Cuan over the coming years.



## Supporting Survivor Voices

2024 saw courageous survivors like Natasha O'Brien and Bláthnaid Raleigh speaking out about the harm done to them by male violence. Natasha's case in particular had a strong societal response following the initial suspended sentence received by the perpetrator which was later overturned. We saw a solidarity movement to support her against a justice system that exposed her to further unacceptable trauma. NWC supported Natasha's calls on media, social media and at a demonstration at Leinster House. We highlighted that for too long women have had to raise their voice and re-live their trauma in order to get the justice they deserve. Women should be able to rely on systems that do not condone violence against women in any way. Recommendations from NWC research on the Intersection of the Criminal Justice, Private Family Law and Public Law Child Care Processes in Relation to Domestic and Sexual Violence provide a vital roadmap to advance on this and avoid re-traumatisation.

For many years NWC and the Observatory on Violence against Women have advocated for survivors' voices and experiences, including those of minoritised and marginalised women, to be at the heart of policies and systems. We welcomed the 2024 Implementation Plan of the Third National Strategy on Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence. This plan instructs the newly established agency, Cuan, to work with partners to co-develop an engagement model that ensures a fully intersectional approach and places the voices of victims and survivors at the centre of its governance model. The implementation plan also includes NWC's research recommendations, that will be crucial to implement a survivor centred justice system. NWC will continue to work with Cuan to deliver survivor centred structures.



# The work of the Observatory on Violence against Women

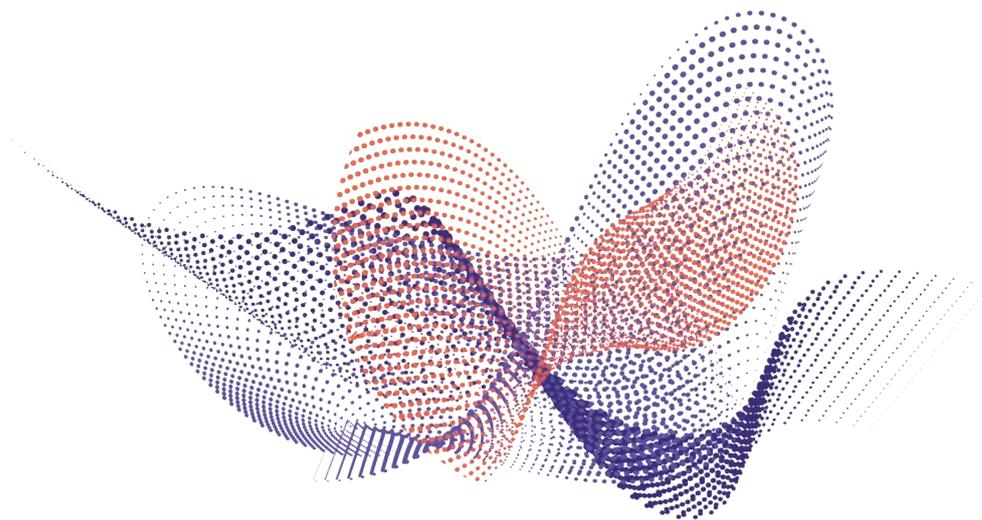
2024 was a busy year for the Observatory on Violence against Women, chaired by NWC. It increased its membership and diversity bringing the total number of members to over 33.

The Observatory is an independent network of grassroots and national organisations that come together quarterly to collaborate to progress a zero-tolerance approach to violence against women in Ireland.

One focus of the Observatory's work in 2024 was on survivor centred structures. The Observatory developed a literature review exploring international best practice and the importance of embedding lived experience of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence into policy, through a co-design process, and centring survivor voices in services and systems. This work was possible thanks to the support of Community Foundation Ireland.

The Observatory is uniquely positioned to drive change in relation to developing structures of engagement between government and survivors and act as a collective and inclusive space for dialogue. This work of the Observatory continues in 2025 with the support of Cuan.

Members of the Observatory include ActionAid, AkiDWA, AMAL Women's Association, Amber Women's Refuge, Aoibhneas, Ascend Domestic Abuse Service - North Tipperary, Cairde, Cope Galway Domestic Services, Domestic Violence Response Galway, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, Galway Rape Crisis Centre, Haven Horizons, Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Longford Women's Link, Love and Care for People, Men's Development Network, National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, Ruhama, Saoirse, SAOL project, SERP (Sexual Exploitation Research and Policy Institute), Sexual Violence Centre Cork, Sisi - Survivors Informing Services and Institutions, Sonas, Spunout, Tintean, Traveller in Prison Initiative, TU Shannon, Wexford Women's Refuge, Women's Aid, YWCA.



## Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women

# Achieving Women's Economic Equality

## Still Stuck in the Gap – Pension Auto-Enrolment from a Gender and Care Lens



In December 2024, NWC launched the report *Still Stuck in the Gap: Pensions Auto enrolment from a Gender and Care Lens*, a collaboration between NWC and TASC (Think Tank for Action on Social Change) authored by Oisín Gilmore.

The report highlights the inequalities faced by women in the pension system as a result of gender and care inequalities. It outlines the likely impacts that the Government's new Auto-enrolment Scheme will have on those inequalities, and practical policy recommendations to tackle these issues.

The report found that while the forthcoming Pension Auto-enrolment Scheme will increase pension coverage, it will not address the structural inequalities faced by women in our pension system and may even make them worse.

The report recommends moving towards a Universal State Pension system as the most effective way to tackle income adequacy and pension inequality for older women and provides a strong research and policy base for policymakers, politicians and wider society in tackling structural pension inequalities faced by women.

At a well-attended launch event in December 2024, we heard from experts in the area, policymakers, and women affected by pension inequality for a robust and constructive discussion on how to tackle gender inequality in the pension system.

# NWC's Budget 2025 Campaign

With a General Election on the horizon, NWC's Budget 2025 campaign called on Government to invest in a future for Ireland which is sustainable, just, caring and fair.

In advance of the Budget, NWC attended the National Economic Dialogue and the Department of Social Protection's Pre-Budget Forum, highlighting our vision for the upcoming budget focused on the delivery of public services that support women's equality.

We hosted a members' consultation event on our Budget asks to ensure we reflected our member organisations' key values and priorities. Based on this input we developed our comprehensive and visionary Pre-Budget Submission 2025.

NWC's Pre Budget Submission was launched at an online event in June 2024, with contributions from our members on our key asks. We engaged directly with policymakers to advocate for our Budget priorities in the run up to Budget Day.

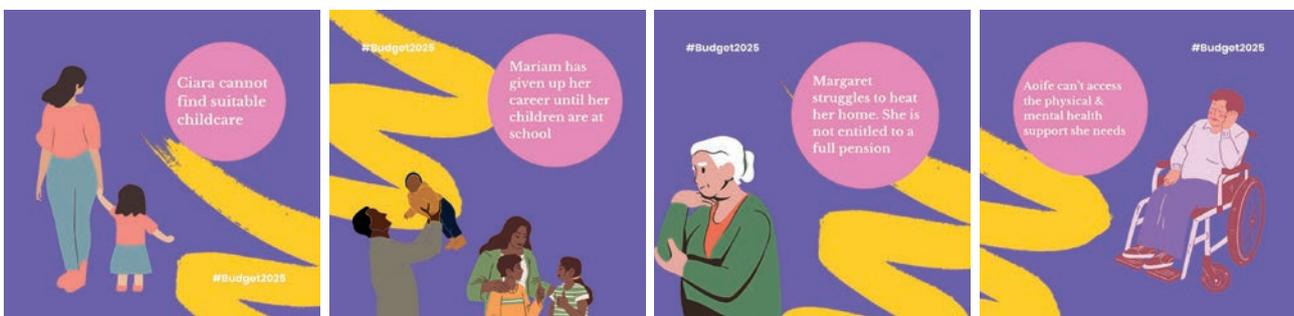
Our five key asks were:

- **Delivering a universal, accessible public system of Early Childhood Education and Care**
- **Ending women's homelessness and the housing and accommodation crisis**
- **Ensuring access to gender-sensitive healthcare services which meet women's needs**
- **Centering feminist climate justice in the transition to a caring, climate-friendly society**
- **Achieving an adequate level of income for all women**

Our direct advocacy work with politicians and civil servants was complemented by a social media campaign which highlighted key demands for women in Budget 2025.

In our response to Budget 2025, NWC welcomed a number of positive measures for women that we were able to secure, including increased investment in childcare, the commitment to free HRT and the increase in Maternity, Paternity, Parent's and Adoptive Benefit. However, NWC also highlighted the lack of investment in structural change and key public infrastructure as missed opportunities to tackle women's inequalities.

Shortly after the NWC published a detailed Feminist Budget Analysis 2025. We will continue to work on and advocate for the issues raised in our Pre-Budget Submission through 2025.



# Ensuring a Positive Transformation in Women's Health

## Report launch of Perinatal Mental Health: Listening to Women and Shaping the Road Ahead



NWC prepared a summary report Perinatal Mental Health: Listening to Women and Shaping the Road Ahead based on the exploratory roundtable event on perinatal mental health which had taken place in November 2023. The report includes recommendations to inform the next Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Model of Care, highlighting the urgent need for a Mother and Baby Unit and improvements for women accessing supports at primary care level and within community-based services.

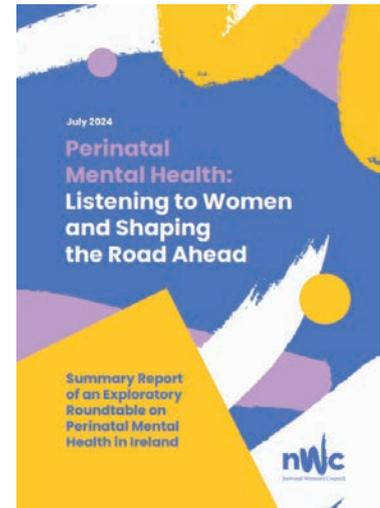
NWC successfully launched this report in July, coinciding with the Women's Mental Health Network's first in-person networking event for 2024. The event received excellent media coverage, including on national TV, and national and regional radio.

# Improving Perinatal Mental Health – Conference and Social Media Campaign

NWC successfully co-hosted a conference titled, From Research to Action: Improving Perinatal Mental Health for Women in Ireland, with Trinity Centre for Maternity Care Research in May 2024. This event featured prominent speakers ranging from academics, HSE colleagues, representatives from advocacy groups, and women with lived experience of perinatal mental health difficulties. The event was attended by +100 individuals.

The event was complemented by a week-long awareness raising campaign on NWC's social media platforms to promote resources and supports for perinatal mental health. The key messages of this campaign focused on destigmatising mental health difficulties, supporting women, the availability of supports, and policy asks like the Mother and Baby Unit and further investment in women's mental health.

A range of social media assets were developed by NWC. In addition to graphics, the NWC also created short videos of attendees from the conference sharing their insights. These featured women from the mental health sector and those with lived experience. Each post was accompanied by relevant text and linked to supports available for women experiencing mental health difficulties. The campaign reached approximately 18,000 social media users.



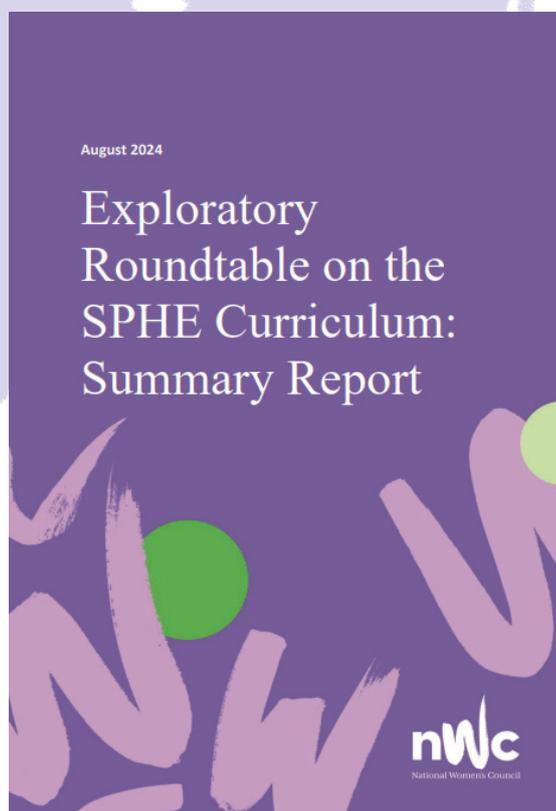
# Redeveloping Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

Since 2021, NWC has actively contributed to the redevelopment of the Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) curricula undertaken by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). Our submissions and inputs to the NCCA have provided a feminist and gender-sensitive lens to the redevelopment and implementation of the new SPHE curricula, aligning with our commitment to the prevention pillar of the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual, and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV). NWC advocates for the integration of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) into compulsory SPHE education to advance gender equality, promote public health, and prevent violence against women. The input and feedback from NWC's member organisations have been invaluable in this process.

In 2024, NWC submitted to the NCCA's public consultation for Primary School (four-12 years of age). NWC responses were underpinned by broad-based consultation with our nearly 200 member organisations. This allowed for engagement with organisations working directly with young people, victims and survivors of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, and advocacy organisations representing marginalised groups like Travellers and Roma, the LGBTQ+ community, and disabled people, ensuring our submissions reflected a diversity of perspectives.

In August 2024, to coincide with the return of schools after summer, NWC launched our summary report of an expert roundtable on SPHE that was hosted in 2023. This event brought together stakeholders and experts to explore opportunities and challenges, ensuring effective curriculum implementation and support for young people, teachers and schools.

NWC also launched two rapid evidence assessments that DCU conducted on behalf of NWC, exploring best practices for adopting a whole-school-approach to the integration of RSE into schools.

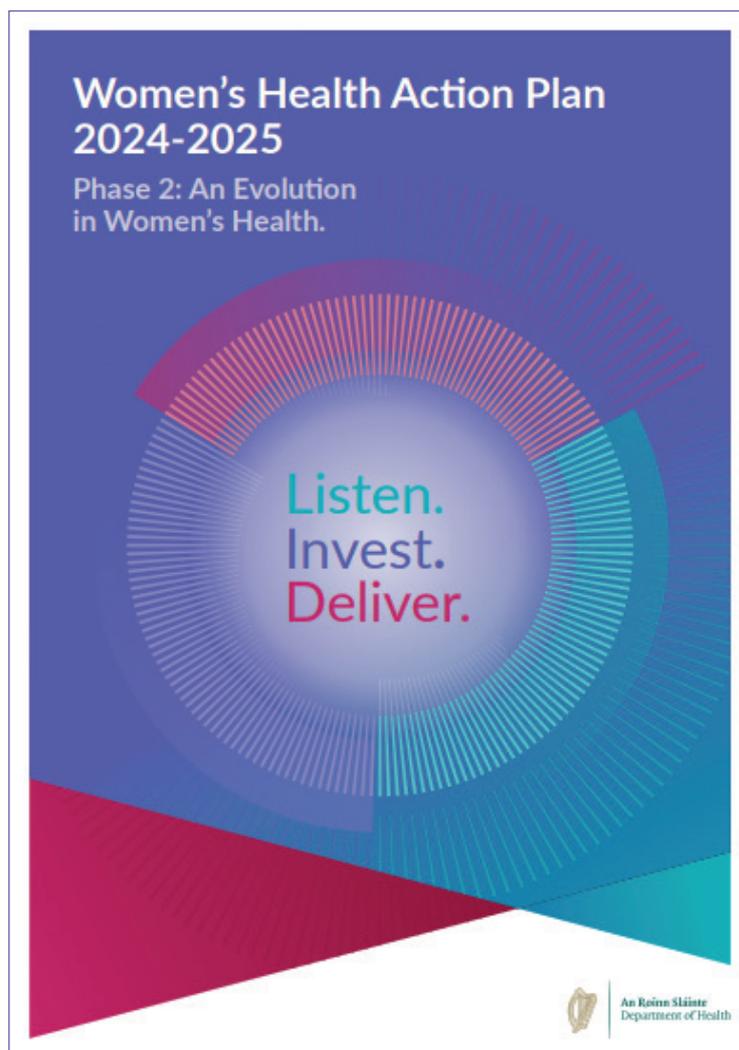


# The Women's Health Action Plan

In May 2024, the Department of Health launched the new Women's Health Action Plan, an update to the previous plan which aims to address the specific health needs of women across the country. The plan focuses on a broad range of issues, from reproductive health to mental health, and emphasises improving access to services and closing gaps in healthcare provision for women.

NWC was tasked with leading Action 6D, which involves investigating the experiences of marginalised women in accessing the Free Contraception Scheme. This action aims to uncover any barriers faced by women from diverse backgrounds, ensuring that the scheme is equitable and reaches all those who need it. While work began in 2024 to select a suitable research team, the survey and focus groups will take place in 2025.

Additionally, NWC began working with the Department of Health to deliver on Action 1E, which commits to establishing a Women's Health Forum. This forum began in 2024, and by the end of the year NWC had conducted listening exercises with 30 women from various priority groups of women – including Roma women, women experiencing homelessness and addiction, migrant women, the LGBTQ+ community, and disabled women. These sessions will continue into 2025, with a report of the findings expected later that year.



# Women's Mental Health Network



NWC has co-hosted the Women's Mental Health Network (WMHN) with St Patrick's Mental Health Services since 2019. The WMHN facilitates information sharing and networking, with the goal of promoting interdisciplinary and multi-agency collaboration on women's mental health issues. Currently, the network includes over 450 mental health practitioners, researchers, and experts by experience.

In early 2024, NWC hosted an interactive online networking event for members. This provided an opportunity to reconnect with members and discuss ideas for future in-person events throughout the year.

In 2024, the WMHN newsletter remained a vital tool for keeping members informed and engaged, and quarterly newsletters were circulated throughout the year. These newsletters provided updates on women's mental health policy developments, relevant resources, details on upcoming consultations and events and a platform for network members to share content. The newsletters achieved strong engagement, with an average open rate of 58% and a click-through rate of 11%.

# The Abortion Working Group

Throughout 2024, NWC continued to lead and convene the Abortion Working Group (AWG), a coalition of over 20 healthcare providers and civil society organisations across the island of Ireland. The AWG functions as a vital mechanism to coordinate sexual health and reproductive rights advocacy amongst civil society groups in Ireland.

NWC facilitated the AWG to garner the views of a diverse range of stakeholders to inform engagement with key decision makers – this included Government representatives, senior civil servants across various departmental forums, and the Health Service Executive (HSE).

NWC, alongside AWG members, and well-known academics and healthcare providers, wrote an Open Letter to Government in April 2024 to demand improvements to our abortion provision. The letter stated that urgent action is needed to guarantee that the laws regulating abortion meet the needs of women and pregnant people. The letter outlined specific and prioritised steps to be taken to ensure the implementation of the Abortion Review's recommendations. The letter received attention online and in the media, and our key asks were reported by local and national news outlets. NWC coordinated the release of this letter to coincide with an investigative documentary into Ireland's abortion services since 2019, which was premiered by Ireland's national broadcaster. This media coverage helped inform a national conversation on the topic of abortion post-Repeal and build public support to enhance reproductive rights for all women.

Taoiseach, Minister Simon Harris, wrote to NWC to respond to this campaign. While there have been some positive developments since – including all 19 maternity hospitals now providing abortion services and the passing of Safe Access Zones legislation – there has been little progress with respect to other barriers like the mandatory three-day wait and ongoing criminalisation.

NWC joined with members of the AWG to mark Safe Abortion Day on September 28th 2024. Graphics were developed for social media which we shared alongside a press release and photos of our participation in a demonstration in Dublin. These activities provided a means to engage with politicians to highlight the remaining barriers to abortion access in Ireland.



# Driving Women's and Girls' Leadership

## Launch of Women Beyond the Dáil Report



As part of our ongoing efforts to highlight women's barriers to enter and remain in politics, NWC commissioned a follow-up report to our 2019 Women Beyond the Dáil research. This study gathered insights from outgoing female Councillors from the 2019–2024 cycle, exploring their experiences in politics and the key factors influencing their decision to run, or not to run, in the 2024 Local Elections. The report also includes a series of recommendations advocating for a more family-friendly Local Government.

The 2024 Women Beyond the Dáil report was launched in June in Dublin, featuring a keynote speech from Minister for Housing, Local Government, and Heritage, Alan Dillon TD, and a presentation of the key findings of the report by the two researchers, Claire McGing and Dr Pauline Cullen.

To further share the findings, we hosted a public webinar with over 60 participants. After a presentation of the report's key findings, we held a panel discussion featuring Cllr Cathy Bennett, Monaghan County Council, Darcy Lonergan, former Dublin City Councillor, and Local Election candidate, Esther Osayimwen. Panellists shared their personal political journeys, discussed the systemic barriers that hinder women's participation, and provided recommendations to improve women's representation in politics.

In November 2024, we hosted a Women Beyond the Dáil seminar at the Council Chamber in Cork City Hall, where female Councillors and General Election candidates reflected on their political experiences and the challenges they faced. The presentation of the key findings from the research was followed by a panel discussion with General Election candidate for Cork South Central, Laura Harmon, Green Party General Election candidate for Cork North West, Colette Finn, and the Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Dan Boyle.

# Launch of Gender Quotas Alliance

Led by the NWC, the Gender Quotas Alliance brings together leading academics and advocates for Traveller, migrant, and disabled women, calling for the introduction of legislative gender quotas in Local Elections.

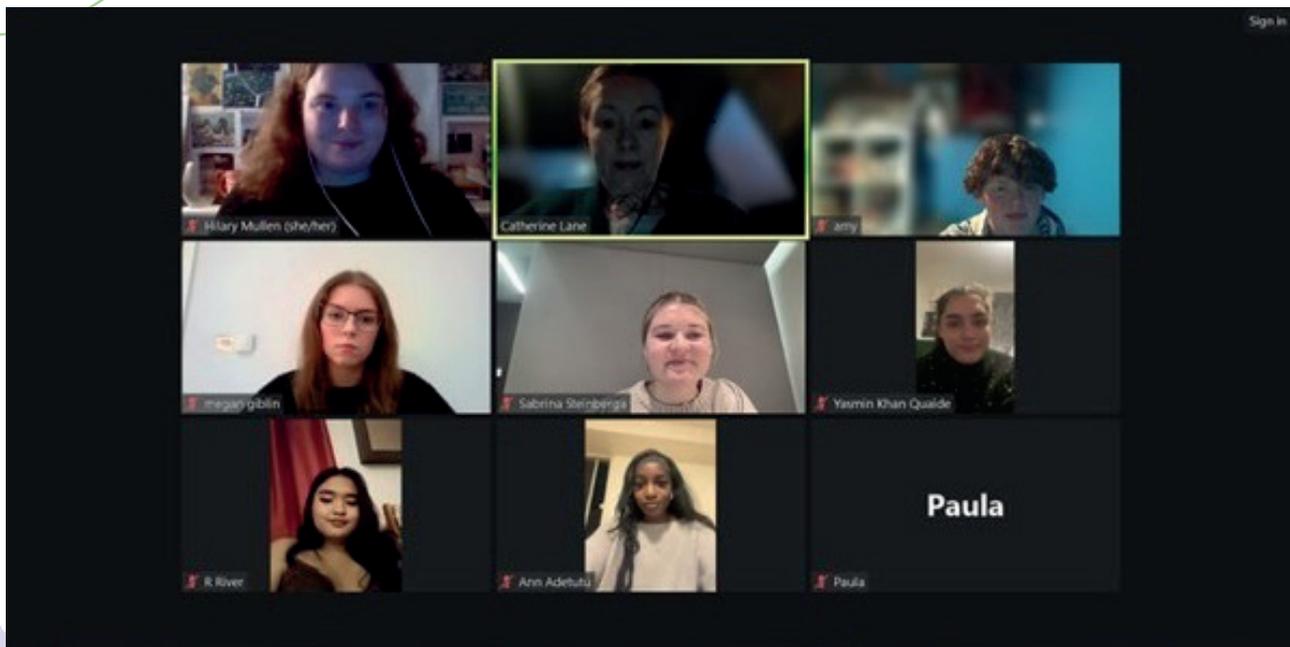
In September 2024, the Alliance launched its position paper at the AV Room in the Oireachtas. The event featured a keynote speech by Senator Fiona O'Loughlin, with NWC Director Orla O'Connor outlining the Alliance's key demands. A panel discussion followed, featuring Katie Deegan, Women for Election; Michelle Maher, See Her Elected; Maria Joyce, National Traveller Women's Forum; and Liliana Fernandez, NWC's Women in Leadership Officer. The event was attended by Senators, TDs, women Councillors and Alliance members.

Four political parties included a commitment to gender quotas in their 2024 General Election Political Manifestos. However, two of the main parties, Fianna Fáil (FF) and Fine Gael (FG), did not, resulting in the exclusion of gender quotas from the new Programme for Government.

The Alliance will continue to advocate for quotas to accelerate women's representation at all levels of government. The membership of the Alliance includes 50/50 Group; 50/50NI; Dr Pauline Cullen, NUI Maynooth; Shane Gough, NUI Maynooth; Dr Fiona Buckley, UCC; Women for Election; Dr Michelle Maher, See Her Elected; Independent Living Movement Ireland; Dr Sandra McAvoy; Dr Claire McGing; National Traveller Women's Forum; AkiDWA and Women's Collective Ireland – Limerick.



# NWC's Youth Advisory Panel



NWC's Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) brings together young women from across our membership. In 2024 the YAP continued to grow and develop.

Members took part in an online training with Women on Air to enhance their media skills. In addition, we held four meetings throughout the year that offered an opportunity to get to know NWC staff and their respective areas of work. At an in-person event in April, the YAP was delighted to welcome activist and PR professional, Síona Cahill, who shared her leadership journey and activism tips.

YAP members also supported NWC's signature collecting for the My Voice, My Choice EU wide campaign on abortion access and participated in a number of other events. These included a youth consultation by the Department of Foreign Affairs on Women, Peace and Security and a session as part of the DRCC 'We Consent' Ambassador Programme which will continue in 2025. We were delighted to see one of the YAP members elected to the Board of NWC in June 2025.

# Broadening and diversifying a nationwide membership



## Membership Mapping

We continued to hold one-on-one meetings with our members throughout the year. The meetings are an important opportunity to learn more about each member organisation and learn how we can better support engagement and participation in our campaigns and policy work.



# Membership Survey

Our Annual Membership Survey was distributed to all members in early 2024. 46 members completed the membership survey which informed our membership engagement throughout the year.

Here are some of the comments on the value of being a member of NWC.

“Being able to hear, contribute, discuss the key initiatives we can focus on to empower women in Ireland and continue to improve the quality of their lives.”

“We value the campaigns and projects, the information given about events and support systems, and highlighting for us issues at the national level. Also, as a smaller women’s organisation, it’s good to know we are part of a bigger movement.”

Based on the feedback from the survey we continued to provide member only newsletters and member only informal spaces at our virtual coffee mornings.

We held a number of members meetings to support the development of our Pre-Budget Submission, General Election Manifesto, our submission on the development of the new National Strategy for Women and Girls and to mobilise our members on the Together for Public Campaign.

We also held an online briefing to support our members to submit motions for our AGM and to consider putting forward nominations for Board elections.



# Welcome to our new Group Members

In 2024, NWC was delighted to welcome 18 new groups:

- Access IT
- Alcohol Action Ireland
- Coolock Development Council
- Disability Action Northern Ireland
- Donegal Intercultural Platform
- Donegal Travellers Project
- Friends of the Earth
- Future Stars Parent Group
- Hyperemesis Ireland
- Inclusion Ireland
- Irish Pharmacy Union
- Meath Women's Refuge
- Oxfam Ireland
- Roscommon Women's Network
- Tintean Housing
- TU Shannon
- West Cork Counselling and Support Services
- Women's Intercultural Network

# Developing All-Island Partnerships for Women's Equality

## NWC's All-Island Women's Forum



NWC's All-Island Women's Forum unites women's groups and activists from across Ireland to explore shared challenges and opportunities for women's equality on an all-island basis. The Forum works to empower marginalised groups to engage in cross-border structures and initiatives, encourage all-island partnerships and foster greater cooperation between North and South.

Despite a lack of funding in 2024, the group remained active, continuing to meet online to share insights on the Local and European elections and discuss the rise of the far right and its impact on women's rights. One of the key sessions featured an in-depth presentation by Niamh McDonald from the Hope and Courage Collective.

# Women's Assembly

The Women's Assembly - A Feminist Shared Future was convened by NWC to challenge the historical exclusion of women from political and constitutional discussions, creating a space where women can take the lead in shaping Ireland's future.

Chaired by former president Mary McAleese, the Women's Assembly brought together 50 women from diverse backgrounds from across the island of Ireland. The Assembly was held over two days, with each day serving a distinct but interconnected purpose. The first day took place in November and focused on building connections and exploring the realities of living on a divided island. The second day took place in early 2025 and shifted the focus towards imagining a feminist shared future. Each session was structured to try and balance formal presentations, panel discussions, and breakout group discussions to foster as much dialogue and sharing of ideas as possible. The report of the Women's Assembly was launched in 2025.



# Vindicating Women's Rights as Human Rights

## Influencing the next National Strategy for Women and Girls



NWC actively engaged in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's consultation on the next National Strategy for Women and Girls (NSWG). Our submission was underpinned by consultation with our diverse membership, including a dedicated members' meeting in September, and by promoting the consultation process across our networks.

This engagement provided an important space for members to reflect on progress under the current NSWG, identify ongoing and emerging challenges, and shape priorities for the next strategy. Key issues raised included leadership, economic equality, visibility and participation, healthcare, and gender mainstreaming, alongside critical gaps in areas such as housing, homelessness, poverty, and violence against women.

Through our submission, NWC emphasised the need for an ambitious, intersectional strategy that addresses the lived realities of women and girls in all their diversity. We highlighted the need for targeted action to tackle systemic inequalities and improve outcomes, particularly for marginalised groups including migrant women, disabled women, LGBTQI+ individuals, and women experiencing poverty or homelessness.

NWC also participated in the in-person IPSOS consultation events and actively promoted these sessions among our membership to ensure broad engagement. In addition, we contributed as guest speakers to the preparatory session for the Youth Assembly on the NSWG, supporting the inclusion of young women's voices.

The publication of the next NSWG will take place in 2025.

# Solidarity and Struggle: Affirming Equality, Civic Society and Democracy

In partnership with Department of Sociology in Maynooth University, Professor Dr Mary Murphy and the Burren Law School, we developed a one-day conference titled Solidarity and Struggle: Affirming Equality, Civic Society and Democracy. The conference took place in Maynooth University on 11th September 2024. The purpose of the conference was to provide a space for reflection and discussion on the challenges faced by civil society and in the aftermath of the referendum campaign and the local elections in 2024.

The conference was supported by St Stephen's Green Trust and Community Foundation Ireland. 145 participants from a diverse range of sectors across civil society and academia participated. The conference achieved all its objectives. There was an extensive participative discussion on the current context and challenges for civil society—crises of inequality, climate chaos, and the rise in racist and misogynistic politics. The conference responded to a need articulated in civil society for an opportunity for reflection as part of a wider process towards impactful, collective action.

The focus of the discussion was on identifying the progressive values held across civil society and on approaches to achieve change, based on principles of plurality and diversity.

# International Solidarity

## Calling for a Ceasefire in Gaza



NWC continued to show solidarity and support to Palestinian people as the atrocities in Gaza continued throughout the year. NWC formally endorsed and participated in marches organised by the Irish Palestinian Solidarity Campaign calling for an end to the genocidal campaign by the Israeli government in Gaza, access to humanitarian aid and an immediate ceasefire.

Our calls were reiterated in a motion adopted by NWC members at our AGM in June 2024 which called on NWC to highlight the very particular ways in which Israeli terror effects the lives and health of Palestinian women and children. The motion further calls on NWC to amplify the voices of all Palestinian women, ensuring their rights are recognised and respected, including their fundamental right to self-determination and an end to the occupation of Palestine.

At European level, supported by sister organisations from Finland, Greece, Iceland and Slovenia, NWC submitted a motion calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza which was passed at the European Women's Lobby (EWL) AGM in spring 2024.

The motion highlights the devastating impact of the war in Gaza on women and children, in particular in terms of access to healthcare and maternity care. It demands an immediate cessation of hostilities, unimpeded entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and the release of hostages in order to protect women and civilians and to build a lasting peace which includes the voices of women as a priority. The motion calls on EWL to write to relevant authorities at EU level to demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

# Growing and promoting a diverse and inclusive Feminism

## Dublin Arts and Human Rights Festival



As part of the Dublin Arts and Human Rights Festival NWC organised an online discussion to explore women's activism today. Women have always been at the forefront of organising, campaigning and agitating for change across many crucial issues. This online discussion captured how and where women are leading in the current struggles for housing, workers' rights, anti-racism and reproductive rights on the island and globally.

The panel was made up of incredible women activists who shared their experiences, including Vivienne Glanville, Women's Collective Ireland; Louise O'Hara, Forsá; Maria Elena Costa Sa, Irish Network Against Racism; Aoife McCrory, Mothers Against Genocide; Marta Lampart, Polish Women's Strike.

# NWC in the Media and on Social Media

From public childcare, to ending violence against women, to campaigning in the local, EU, and general elections, NWC's commented extensively in the media and on social media on the key issues for women in 2024.



## NWC in the media

- As part of the Together for Public campaign for public childcare, we provided training to a number of parents whose personal stories about the childcare crisis featured prominently in various print newspapers and on Ireland AM.
- We placed six opinion pieces this year, in The Irish Times, The Irish Independent, The Irish Examiner and thejournal.ie. The topics reflected our key campaigns, including Budget 2025, gender quotas, care, public childcare, and the General Election.
- NWC was mentioned over 100 times in national print and online news, including the Irish Times, the Irish Independent, the Irish Examiner, The Journal.ie, RTE.ie, The Sunday Independent, The Times-Ireland, The Sunday Business Post, the Irish Mirror, the Sunday World and the Farmers Journal.
- NWC featured four times on RTÉ Six One News and on the 9 o'clock news.
- NWC spoke on various flagship radio programmes including RTE's Morning Ireland, RTE's Drivetime, Newstalk Breakfast, the Pat Kenny Show and the Hard Shoulder on topics such as violence against women, Sex For Rent exploitation, our call for public childcare and Budget 2025.
- NWC featured regularly on numerous regional radio programmes throughout the year talking about all core issues of our work. Radio stations included Highland FM, LFM, East Coast FM, Midlands 103, South East FM, Cork 102, Limerick FM and Red FM and various smaller community radio stations.

## NWC on social media

- The big success story this year was LinkedIn. We organised training for staff on how to use LinkedIn to the best effect, and we focused our efforts on the platform on advocacy and influencing. Our efforts paid off, with 2024 seeing our following more than doubling from 5k to almost 11k.
- Instagram is now our most important platform, and continues to grow apace. Our following is near 30k and we frequently have a reach of over 50k on our posts. Our reach for the year on this platform is over 800k.
- As Twitter/X became less relevant and more toxic, NWC established a presence on the platforms that looked likely to replace it. As we closed out 2024, we were very active on Bluesky and gaining followers at a rapid pace.
- Our top performing posts across platforms tend to be about violence against women, for example our support for Natasha O'Brien, or our response to the Conor McGregor verdict. The response to these posts underlines how crucial this issue is for women.



# People we worked with in 2024

Thank you to the following people who worked with us and supported our campaigns in 2024.

- Marianne O'Shea
- Helen Lowry
- V'cenza Cirefice
- Muireann Ni Sheanlaoich
- Kim Knowles
- Dr Fiona Dukelow
- Dr Catherine Forde
- Edith Busteed
- Amy Berry
- Síona Cahill
- Kathleen O'Meara
- Dr Leigh-Ann Sweeney
- Dr Susan Flynn
- Karl Hayden

# Our Team



**Anne Gibney**



**Aoife O'Donoghue**  
(Started Oct. 2024)



**Catherine Lane**



**Catherine Hearn**  
(Finished June 2024)



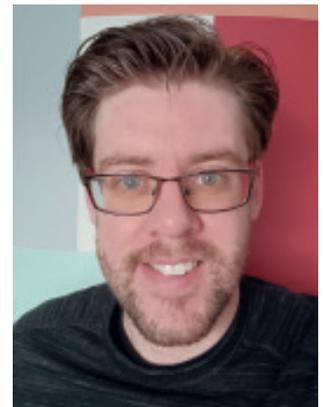
**Ciara McHugh**  
(Finished Feb. 2024)



**Collette McEntee**



**Doireann Crosson**



**Donal Swan**



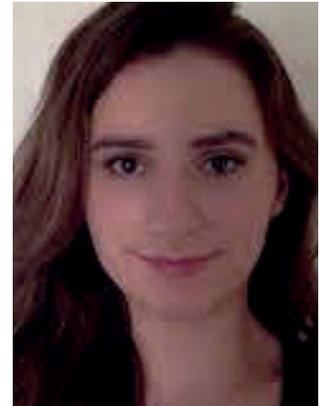
**Eilish Balfe**



**Feargha Ní Broin**



**Ivanna Youtchak**



**Jane Finn**

# Our Team



**Kate Mitchell**



**Liliana Fernandez**  
(Started May 2024)



**Orla O'Connor**



**Poushali Kundu**



**Rachel Coyle**



**Roisin Lambe**



**Sinead Nolan**



**Silke Paasche**



**Steph Mullins**



**Susan McCormack**



**Vanessa Conroy**



**Vicky Masterson**

# Our Executive Board



## **Dr Jennifer Okeke, Chairperson**

Jennifer is the 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 member 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).



## **Shirley Scott, Deputy Chairperson**

Shirley is NWC's Deputy Chairperson and the policy manager at Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, where she has worked since 2004, holding a number of different positions within the organisation. Actively involved in voluntary work for much of her adult life, she recently concluded a nine-year term on the board of Bethany, the National Bereavement Support Group for Adults. Shirley holds a Bachelor of Business Studies from Dublin City University, a BA in Humanities and an MA in Human Development from St Patrick's College (DCU) along with an Advanced Diploma in Data Protection Law from the Honourable Society of King's Inn.



## **Luzia Antonia Berechet**

Luzia, born in Angola, has lived in Ireland since 1996. A passionate advocate for women's rights and equality, she speaks three languages, helping her navigate diverse cultures. She serves on the board of AkiDWA and is also the Founder of MyT.T.Talk, Chair of AWDI, and holds key roles in various organisations, including Shining Light Galway, Special Olympics Ireland, and CCAI - Angolan Community. Her expertise lies in HR, administration, and communication.



### 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 and 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.



### Rebekah Connolly

Rebekah is Head of the Content Information team at spunout, Ireland's Youth Information and Support Platform. She is also the Gender, Sexuality & Relationships Editor for spunout. She has a BA in Modern Irish and Politics from UCD and an MA in Journalism and PR from Griffith College Dublin. Rebekah joined the National Women's Council in 2022 as the representative for spunout and is also a member of the Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women.



### Siobhán Fenton

Siobhán is a writer and feminist activist from Belfast. From 2020 to 2024, she served as Board Chair of 50:50NI. She holds a BA in English Literature from the University of Oxford, MA in Journalism from City University London and MPhil in Gender Studies from the University of Cambridge; where she researched sexual violence prevalence and prevention



## **Megan Giblin**

Megan holds a BCL in Social Justice from UCD, where she focused on gender and LGBTQ+ issues. In 2023, she attended Fordham University's Summer School on human rights and international conflict resolution. She sits on Youth Advisory Panels for the National Women's Council of Ireland and Plan International Ireland. Passionate about education access and diversity in law, Megan is pursuing a Master's in Public Policy at King's College London, specialising in education and technology policy through a social justice lens. She is also working toward solicitor qualifications in Ireland and England & Wales.



## **Rosemarie Hayden**

Rosemarie is a solicitor on the Rolls in Ireland, England and Wales, working in Refugee support in Irish Red Cross. Having served on the Standing Committee of the Irish Women Lawyers Association (IWLA) since 2018 in a variety of roles, most recently a 3-year term as Vice-Chair, she has been elected as Chair of IWLA in July 2024. Rosemarie has served on a number of Boards across the corporate and NGO landscape in Ireland and across the EU, including a previous 4-year term on the Board of Irish Red Cross, and currently serves on the Registration Committee of the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council.



## **Margaret Martin**

Most of Margaret's working life centred on women's issues, particularly violence against women, and community education. In 2019 Margaret 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.



## Maeve McCafferty

Maeve, formerly a primary school teacher, now works as a Senior Official and Equality Officer with the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO). Maeve acts as secretary to the INTO National Equality Committee. She is actively involved on a number of national and international groups including the NCCA Primary Curriculum Development Groups, ETUCE Standing Committee on Equality and ICTU Women's Committee. Maeve has recently completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Equality, Inclusion and Diversity at the University of Limerick.



## Amina Moustafa

Amina is the Programme Manager of the Women's Leadership Programme at the Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation supporting women who have been affected by political and violent conflict from across the island of Ireland and women who have fled conflict zones and are now resident in Ireland, through an All-Island Women's Peacebuilding Network to connect, have their voices heard and build their capacity as leaders in their communities. She holds a BA in Neuroscience and a Level 8 Special Award in Global Youth Work and Development Education. Amina is a trained mediator and hosts an online mediation practice series for women new to mediation. She is on the Board of Sport Against Racism Ireland and supports the development and roll-out of educational workshops using sport as a non-formal learning tool to address all forms of discrimination. Amina sits on Sport Ireland's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group.

# Submissions and Publications

## February

- Care Section of the Baseline Research – Feminist Communities for Climate Justice project, February 2024
- A Feminist Vision of Care and Equality, Action Aid and NWC Joint Report, February 2024
- NWC Submission on reform of means-testing and Increase for a Qualified Adult, JOC on Social Protection, February 2024

## March

- Submission to the Consultation on the Leaving Certificate: Climate Action and Sustainable Development, March 2025
- NWC Submission on the European Semester and Ireland's National Reform Programme 2024, March 2024

## April

- Feminist Communities for Climate Justice Submission on the Climate Action Plan 2024, April 2024
- Feminist Climate Justice – Report, April 2024
- Feminist Climate Justice – Summary Report, April 2024

## May

- Feminist Communities for Climate Justice Submission to the Consultation on the Revised Energy Poverty Action Plan, May 2024
- 'Sex for Rent': NWC Report on Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment in the Rental Housing Market, May 2025

## June

- Feminist Communities for Climate Justice response to the National Energy and Climate Plan in collaboration with Environmental Justice Network Ireland, June 2024
- NWC Submission on the Draft Primary Curriculum Specification, June 2024
- Women Beyond the Dáil: Access, Representation and Retention in Irish Local Government, June 2025

## July

- NWC Pre-Budget Submission 2025 Summary Document, July 2025
- NWC Pre-Budget Submission 2025, July 2024
- Perinatal Mental Health: Listening to Women and Shaping the Road Ahead, July 2024

## August

- Feminist Communities for Climate Justice Submission to Moving Together Strategy, August 2024

## September

- Alliance for Gender Quotas at Local Level – Position Paper, September 2024

## October

- A Feminist Analysis of Budget 2025, October 2024

## November

- NWC Submission on the development of the next National Strategy for Women and Girls, November 2024
- North South Co-operation to Tackle Violence Against Women Dialogue Report, November 2024
- National Women's Council General Election Manifesto 2024: One Pager, November 2024
- National Women's Council General Election Manifesto Supporting Document, November 2024
- Caring Climate Action: A Feminist Climate Justice Manifesto, Feminist Communities for Climate Action, November 2024
- NWC Submission to the Commission on Care for Older People, November 2024

## December

- Programme for Government – NWC Recommendations, December 2024
- Still stuck in the Gap: Pension Auto-Enrolment from a gender and care lens, December 2024

# Committees, Campaigns and Groups

## NWC is a Board Member of

- European Women's Lobby

## NWC is a member of

- Advisory Group on Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions of the Higher Education Authority
- 'Always Here' and 'Let's have the consent conversation' Campaign
- Advisory Group of the Third National Strategy
- Alcohol and Gender-Based Violence
- Better Europe Alliance
- Big Start
- Campaign for an All-Ireland National Health Service
- Children Living with Domestic and Sexual Abuse
- Climate & Health Alliance Ireland
- Coalition 2030
- Coalition Against Hate Crime
- Combatting the Harms of Pornography Group
- Commission on Care for Older People - Reference Group
- 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 Children, Equality, Integration and Youth ELC Stakeholder Forum
- Department of Children, Equality, Integration and Youth ELC Advisory Group for Admin and Regulatory Simplification
- 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
- Family Justice Development Forum
- Four Day Week Ireland Campaign
- HEA Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment Working Group
- Health and Climate Alliance
- Home Care Coalition
- Home For Good
- HSE Patient Forum
- Interdepartmental forum on the monitoring of the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence
- Irish Network Against Racism
- Irish Network for Gynaecological Oncology
- Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women and Girls
- Le Chéile
- National Women and Infant Health Programme Public Patient Partnership
- National One Parent Family Alliance
- National Steering Committee on FGM
- New Deal for Early Years Campaign
- Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education – Steering Group
- Pension Promise Campaign
- Public Participation Network National Advisory Group
- Raise the Roof 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
- Together for Public Alliance for a Public System of Early Childhood Education and Care
- Trans Equality Together
- We Consent Advisory Group of Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
- Women’s Mental Health Network

# Legal and Administrative Information

## National Women's Council of Ireland Company Information

### Directors

Margaret Martin  
Nuala Ryan (End of term, 13th June 2024)  
Ethel Buckley (End if term, 13th June 2024)  
Jennifer Okeke  
Shirley Scott  
Sarah Monaghan (End of term, 13th June 2024)  
Sara Phillips (End of term, 13th June 2024)  
Norah Burns  
Amina Moustafa (Co-opted, 16th October 2024)  
Collette O'Regan (End of term ,13th June 2024)  
Luzia Antonia Berechet (Elected, 13th June 2024)  
Rebekah Connolly (Elected, 13th June 2024)  
Siobhan Fenton (Elected, 13th June 2024)  
Megan Giblin (Elected, 13th June 2024)  
Maeve McClafferty (Elected, 13th June 2024)  
Rosemarie Hayden (Co-opted, 16th October 2024)

### 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

Gartlan Furey Solicitors  
20 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2

# Board Meetings & Subcommittees

There were 7 Board meetings during 2024

## Attendance at meetings

Margaret Martin	7 meetings
Shirley Scott	6 meetings
Jennifer Okeke	7 meetings
Norah Burns	5 meetings
Nuala Ryan (End of term, 13th June 2024)	2 meetings
Ethel Buckley (End of term, 13th June 2024)	3 meetings
Sarah Monaghan (End of term, 13th June 2024)	4 meetings
Sara Phillips (End of term, 13th June 2024)	3 meetings
Collette O' Regan (End of term, 13th June 2024)	4 meetings
Siobhan Fenton (Elected, 13th June 2024)	3 meetings
Megan Giblin (Elected, 13th June 2024)	3 meetings
Rebekah Connolly (Elected, 13th June 2024)	2 meetings
Maeve McCafferty (Elected, 13th June 2024)	2 meetings
Luiza Antonia Berechet (Elected, 13th June 2024)	3 meetings
Rosemarie Hayden (Co-opted, 17th Sept 2024)	2 meetings
Amina Moustafa (Co-opted, 17th Sept 2024)	2 meetings

## Governance Subcommittee

Norah Burns, Margaret Martin, Amina Moustafa, Collette O'Regan (to June 2024)  
Norah Burns, Amina Moustafa, Maeve McCafferty, Megan Giblin (from Sept 2024)  
Subcommittee met 3 times during 2024.

Norah Burns	3 meetings
Margaret Martin	1 meeting
Amina Moustafa	2 meetings
Collette O'Regan	1 meeting
Maeve McCafferty	2 meetings
Megan Giblin	2 meetings

We comply with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and charitable organisations in Ireland. We confirm that a review of our organisation's compliance with the principals in the code was conducted in September 2024. 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 (to June 2024)

Margaret Martin, Siobhan Fenton, Rebekah Connolly (from Sept 2024)

Committee did not meet in 2024.

### Finance Subcommittee

Nuala Ryan, Sheena Frost (co-opted member), Margaret Martin,  
Jennifer Okeke, Shirley Scott (to June 2024)

Shirley Scott, Sheena Frost (co-opted member), Rosemarie Hayden,  
Luzia Antonia Berechet (from Sept 2024)

Committee met 4 times during 2024.

### Attendance at meetings

Nuala Ryan	2 meetings
Sheena Frost	4 meetings
Margaret Martin	1 meeting
Jennifer Okeke	1 meeting
Shirley Scott	4 meetings
Luzia Antonia Berechet	1 meeting
Rosemarie Hayden	2 meetings

# Financial Report

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

## Income & Expenditure

### INCOME

Department of Justice	48,251
Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth	680,850
SSNO – Dept. of Rural and Community Development	91,689
Membership Fees	42,471
HSE	118,000
Donations	25,402
IHREC	5,000
Dept. of Rural & Community Development (Social Partnership)	18,840
Miscellaneous grants	57,645
Rental income	2,400
Centre for Reproductive Rights	35,000
Community Foundation of Ireland	5,000
Miscellaneous Grants	40,683
Pobal – Dept. of Environment, Climate & Communication	124,876
Department of Foreign Affairs – Shared Island Civil Society Fund	10,000

### TOTAL INCOME

-----  
**€1,306,106**

### EXPENDITURE

Staff Costs	968,780
Administration Costs	37,379
Office & Premises	97,604
Communication	30,709
Governance & Statutory costs	19,628
Professional Fees	17,316
Auditors Remuneration	7,500
Programme Activities	189,313

### TOTAL EXPENDITURE

-----  
**€1,368,229**

# FINANCIAL RESULTS

The financial results for the financial year ended 31st December 2024 show a net deficit of (€62,123) (2023: net surplus (€104,621)).

## INCOME

National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) raised total income of for the financial year ended 31st December 2024 €1,306,106 (2023: €1,358,010).

## EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure for the year at €1,368,229 some of which relates to income received in previous years for programmes of work which were carried out in 2024.

The balance sheet is showing reserves of €73,495 in restricted funds and €336,195 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 2024

	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Total 2024 €	Total 2023 €
<b>Incoming Resources</b>				
Donations	11,515	79,002	90,517	48,473
Activities	1,176,189	39,400	1,215,589	1,309,536
	-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>Total Incoming resources</b>	<b>1,187,704</b>	<b>118,402</b>	<b>1,306,106</b>	<b>1,358,009</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>				
Raising funds	(9,023)	(3,389)	(12,412)	(12,274)
Activities	(1,309,732)	(46,085)	(1,355,817)	(1,241,115)
	-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>(1,318,755)</b>	<b>(49,474)</b>	<b>(1,368,229)</b>	<b>(1,253,389)</b>
<b>Net (deficit)/surplus for the financial year</b>	<b>(131,051)</b>	<b>68,928</b>	<b>(62,123)</b>	<b>104,620</b>

These financial statements were approved by the directors on 14th May 2025 and are signed on their behalf by Jennifer Okeke (Chairperson) and Margaret Martin, Director.

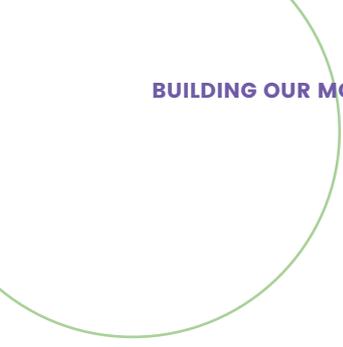
# NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF IRELAND

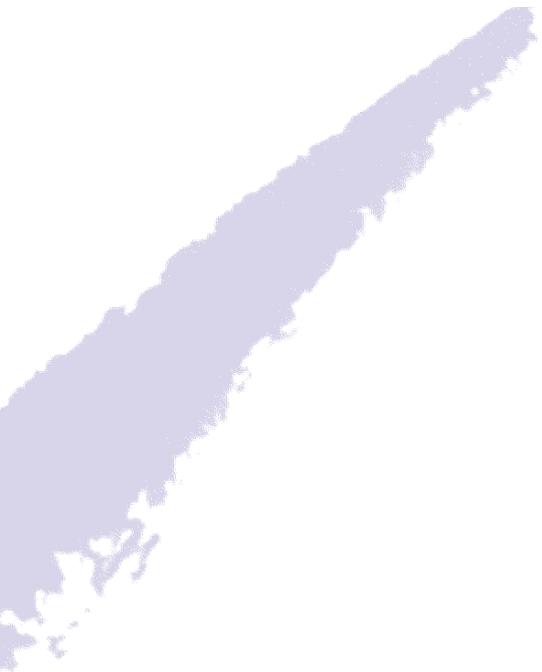
## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024		2023
	€	€	€
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	13,582		8,212
Cast at bank and in hand	512,557		522,943
	-----		-----
	526,139		531,155
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within One year</b>	<b>(116,449)</b>		<b>(59,342)</b>
	-----		-----
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>409,690</b>		<b>471,813</b>
	=====		=====
<b>Reserves</b>			
Restricted Funds	73,495		204,546
Unrestricted Funds	336,195		267,267
	-----		-----
<b>Members' Funds</b>	<b>409,690</b>		<b>471,813</b>

These financial statements were approved by the directors on 14th May 2025 and are signed on their behalf by Jennifer Okeke, Chairperson and Margaret Martin, 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](http://www.nwci.ie)).







National Women's Council

National Women's Council  
100 North King Street  
Dublin 7

[www.nwci.ie](http://www.nwci.ie)

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