



National Women's
Council of Ireland
Comhairle Náisiúnta
na mBan in Éirinn



CELEBRATING NEW VOICES FOR CHANGE

Annual Report 2019



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



2019 was an important year for women's equality in Ireland, and as Chairperson of the National Women's Council of Ireland, the leading feminist organisation in Ireland, I am so proud of what we have achieved with our members. Our women's movement is one of the most vibrant and thriving women's movements globally, and together, we will continue to campaign until we have full equality for women.

NWCI continues to thrive to increase engagement with all of our members. To this end we were delighted to introduce a more engaging format for our Annual General Meeting in 2019. This allowed greater time for discussion and sharing of information between members and we have received very positive feedback for our new format. We also started work on our new membership strategy. It will be finalised in 2020 and will support us in continuing to grow as a more inclusive and engaging organisation.

We were able to consolidate our funding from the Department of Justice and were delighted to secure additional funding to increase our staff in the areas of reproductive health rights and violence against women. NWCI also developed a new ambitious Income Generation Strategy that will support the organisation's financial growth and sustainability over the next three years.

I want to extend a warm welcome to our 19 new group members and the many individual members who joined NWCI in 2019. NWCI membership provides you with an opportunity to shape NWCI policy and most importantly, to campaign together for a more equal Ireland for women. I encourage you to participate and engage in our work as despite what some might say or think, we still have some way to go before we can say that we live in a society where equality is enjoyed by everyone.

I would like to sincerely thank the Board members, the Director and staff of NWCI for their commitment and support for the work of NWCI over the last year and going forward.

Ellen O'Malley Dunlop

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



2019 was an important year for women's equality in Ireland, and NWCI was the catalyst for the much-needed feminist change. One of the highlights was undoubtedly the ratification of the Istanbul Convention on Violence against Women on International Women's Day. The ratification came after many years of campaigning from women's groups, survivors and violence against women organisations. The Istanbul Convention provides the framework that we need to protect women and children and eliminate violence against women.

Women's leadership and advancing a women's agenda in politics was a key focus this year. For the European elections, we launched our Feminist Europe Manifesto containing ten key asks for candidates to progress if elected. We travelled the country and held hustings in the three European constituencies, where our members and supporters could question candidates on their feminist credentials. We also ran a local election campaign, 'Feminist Communities'. After the disappointing result of no significant increase of women being elected to local government, we renewed our call for gender quotas in local elections.

We know there is no shortage of women leaders in Ireland! We held #FemFest, our major conference for young women, by young women twice this year. January's #FemFest marked 100 years since the First Dáil, while November's #FemFest looked at themes such as period poverty, young women and work, and women's mental health. The young women participating in #FemFest are our next generation of role models, and together we can shape a new, feminist Ireland.

Women's health and mental health was another significant theme for NWCI this year. We ran a successful online campaign with the tagline, 'Women's inequality should come with a mental health warning.' The campaign highlighted the impact gender inequalities have on women's mental health and the need for increased recognition of the issue, supports and services.

An exciting new initiative for NWCI was the 4 Day week campaign that we launched alongside Forasa Trade Union, Friends of the Earth and ICE group. This campaign is starting an important conversation about why a new model of organising work would be better for women, workers and the environment.

Alongside this energy and activity to progress women's rights, Ireland remains deeply unequal for particular groups of women. NWCI was an active member in the Raise the Roof coalition and sought to bring a focus on women who are at the centre of our housing and homelessness crisis.

All this work would not be possible without our members and our very dedicated staff and board. I sincerely thank the membership, the NWCI team and our voluntary Board members for all their work and dedication throughout the year.

Orla O'Connor, *Director*

The National Women's Council of Ireland's (NWCI) mission is to lead and to be a catalyst in the achievement of equality for women. We are the leading national representative organisation for women and women's groups in Ireland. A non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation, founded in 1973, we seek to achieve equality for women. We represent and take our mandate from our over 190 member groups from across a diversity of backgrounds, sectors and geographical locations. We also have a growing number of individual members who support the campaign for women's equality in Ireland.

Our mandate is to take action to ensure that the voices of women in all their diversity are heard. Our vision is of an Ireland and of a world where women can achieve their full potential in a just and equal society.

NWCI's values and beliefs shape and inform all the work we do. They include:

- **Feminism**
NWCI is a feminist organisation. We work to change society so that women and men have an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives.
- **Solidarity**
between women in all their diversity, through empowerment, collaboration and participation of all women in Ireland and globally.
- **Collective action, collaboration and participation**
NWCI is committed to work, where possible, based on collective action, collaboration and through participation, as preferential ways to achieve an equal and inclusive society where there is equality for all women.
- **The recognition of care in our society and the redistribution of care work between women and men**
The recognition and valuing of affective care is fundamental to the achievement of equality for women.
- **Importance of human rights, global interdependence, justice and sustainability**
NWCI believes in the dignity and human rights of all human beings. These rights are universal, inalienable and indivisible.
- **Intersectionality**
NWCI acknowledges the intersectionality of women's lived experiences and in particular seeks to end discrimination on the grounds of gender, family status, religion, race, age, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, ethnicity or membership of the Travelling Community.
- **Protection and respect for the bodily integrity and security of women and girls**
NWCI believes that bodily integrity is a human right and the right to make one's own choices about one's body for oneself is a basic personal freedom.
- **Promote women and girls' leadership to achieve an equal society**
NWCI believes we must examine the role of women in leadership and promote women into decision making spaces at every level in order to promote solidarity amongst women and the generation of sustainable gender equal societies.
- **Right of women to economic independence**
NWCI believes that every woman has a right to economic independence and that such a right pertains to women in employment or receiving social welfare.
- **Committed to build a society based on equality, respect, dignity and inclusivity**
NWCI believes that women have the right to live in a society where equality principles rest on an understanding of respect, dignity and inclusivity for all women.

KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

#FemFest

In 2019, we held two flagship events for young women aged 16-25 in January and November.

#FemFest is a major conference for girls and young women discussing leadership, equality and planning for that feminist future. At #FemFest we want to raise awareness of the issues affecting girls and young women in Ireland today and empower them to use their own voice and agency to address these issues.

In January, #FemFest marked the Centenary of the first sitting of Dáil Éireann. Women in public life was a key theme of the event as well as issues such as consent, social media campaigning, activism and leadership. Women's health campaigner, Vicky Phelan, gave an inspiring keynote speech. Other speakers included, Martina Fitzgerald, author and journalist; Mary McAuliffe, historian; Ellie Kisyonbe, direct provision campaigner; Julia O'Leary, Local Election candidate; Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan; Aisling Cusack, USI Equality Officer; Sarah Harte, President of the Irish Secondary Student Union; Suzy Byrne, disability rights campaigner and Eboni Burke, activist. There was a performance on the day by the band, ELKIN.



KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

In November, #FemFest had a focus on health, with workshops on period poverty, consent and feminism. Opened by Derry Girls actor Siobhán McSweeney, other speakers included Roe McDermott, journalist; Louise O'Neill, author; and Ola Mustapha and Fathi Mohamed, direct provision campaigners, with a performance by Avoca Reaction.

Prior to #FemFest in November, NWCI conducted an online survey with 140 young women and held eight workshops across the country to find out about the most important issues affecting women. Young women cite mental health, reproductive health and sex education as their biggest feminist issues.

Both #FemFest events were funded by the Department of Heritage, Culture and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Justice and Equality.



KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

#FeministEurope - Our European Election Campaign

Ahead of the European Elections in 2019, NWCI developed our Feminist Manifesto for Europe which outlined key demands in relation to six core policy areas where the European Union has impact. These include women's leadership, violence against women, economic independence, care, equality at work and climate change.

We then called on all MEP candidates to pledge their support for this feminist vision on our website. In total, 28 candidates signed our manifesto.

We also encouraged people to use their vote in the European Elections. We held three public hustings with candidates in Dublin, Cork and Galway with 21 candidates. 250 people attended our European election events and over 150 people tuned in to watch the hustings online. Candidates were asked important questions from attendees on what they would do for women's equality if elected.

In the run up to the election, NWCI also ran a highly visible social media campaign which included NWCI members and supporters from all over the country speaking about what a #FeministEurope would look like and what issues they would like to see their MEPs work on.

We received funding from the European Parliament to run this campaign and we will be working with and holding our elected MEPs who signed up to our manifesto to account in order to continue to advance women's equality and advocate for our policies at a European level.





KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

#FeministCommunities – Our Local Election Campaign

Ahead of the Local Elections 2019, NWCI developed our Feminist Manifesto for Local Communities and called on all candidates to actively promote women's rights.

There was strong engagement online with our #FeministCommunities hashtag and positive feedback. We asked public representatives to commit to strengthening local communities, challenging sexism and racism, promoting equality and operating in a way that empowers and includes marginalised groups. We hosted a session with women in North Cork as part of our Women for Change project to discuss their issues of concern.

After the elections, NWCI highlighted the missed opportunity to reach the critical mark of 30% women's representation at local level and the need to urgently introduce gender quotas ahead of the next local elections. While a record number of 566 women contested the elections in 2019, up from 440 in 2014, they only made up 29% of all of the candidates. Among these women, we saw greater diversity than ever before, something which is to be welcomed and supported further.



Women are leaders

Women are safe

**Women are economically
secure and supported**

Women are equal at work

Women are healthy

**Women are living in a just
and sustainable world**

KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

International Women's Day – Ireland ratifies the Istanbul Convention

After a long campaign led by women's groups and organisations working to end violence against women, the Irish Government ratified the Istanbul Convention on International Women's Day, 8th March 2019. NWCI and the Observatory on Violence against Women marked this landmark day for women in Ireland with a photo call with An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, and Cabinet Ministers after a special Cabinet meeting.

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, or Istanbul Convention, provides the framework that we need to protect women and children and to work towards eliminating violence against women. Importantly the Convention clearly states that it is the responsibility of the State to prevent violence against women. This means the State is responsible for tackling the root causes, and for the policies and measures that are required to bring about cultural change. Furthermore, the Convention states that the obligation is on the State to protect victims of violence against women, and to prosecute the perpetrators. In a country with over 1 in 5 women experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, the full implementation of the Convention will be critical for women in the years to come.



International Women's Day - #ItStopsNow European Conference

For International Women's Day, NWCI held a major European Conference on ending sexual harassment and violence in higher education institutes using the hashtag #ItStopsNow. The event was the final conference of our European ESHTe project and brought together more than 120 experts, students, higher education representatives and policy makers from across Europe in Dublin.

It called for higher education institutes to work together with women's organisations and other relevant bodies to tackle violence against women on campus. The EU ESHTe project had worked with 15 higher education institutes from across Europe over the course of the project and saw a growing awareness that in order to have equality on campuses, we must tackle sexual harassment and violence.



KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

International Women's Day

– NWCI at the Commission on the Status of Women in New York

The 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from the 11th to 22nd March 2019. Ethel Buckley, NWCI Board member and SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, and Jennifer McCarthy Flynn, Head of Policy represented the organisation as part of the Irish delegation during the first week of the CSW.

Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN, Geraldine Byrne Nason, continued as Chair of the 63rd session and the priority theme for 2019 focused on social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

We were very pleased to be a participant in Ireland's official side event 'Gender Budgeting: Re-shaping Financial Resources in support of Equality Goals'. NWCI highlighted our development of the gender budgeting model and our work with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

NWCI also spoke at the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform event 'No-one Left Behind-Women at the heart of Public Policy'.



Celebrating 120 Years of Women in Local Government

The elections held on April 6, 1899, following the passing of the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898, introduced democratic local government for the first time. One of the most revolutionary aspects of the elections of 1899 was that women over 30 years, who were householders or who rented a portion of a house had the right to vote for the first time and to stand for rural district councils.

Drawing on support from the archivists in local authorities, NWCI compiled and published a commemorative booklet highlighting this critical aspect of the history of women in public life. The booklet celebrates women councillors over the past 120 years of Local Government from twelve different councils. 500 copies were printed and distributed at our events, among families of women councillors and local authorities.

In addition, three local events took place; two in Monaghan and one in Donegal to celebrate women and reflect on what remains to be achieved for women full and equal participation in local government today.

In Monaghan, we worked with Monaghan County Museum and our members NCCWN/Blaney Blades and NCCWN/Dochas for Women.

Minister Heather Humphries TD was the keynote speaker and spoke about her own journey to the Cabinet from local government. Theresa Loftus from Monaghan County Museum reflected on the stories of pioneering women who had served as county councillors.

At the second event, we invited the newly elected councillors to meet with women working at a community level to discuss their priorities for their term and hear from the women about the issues affecting them.

In Donegal, in partnership with Donegal County Museum and our group member NCCWN/Donegal Women's Network, we organised a seminar to highlight the role of Donegal women in the past and also to celebrate the women who put themselves forward for the Local Elections and who were successful in getting elected. We had contributions from historians Dr Sinead McCoole and Dr Angela Byrne.

These initiatives were supported by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.



KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

Celebrating new Voices for Change – Our AGM Morning Event

More than 100 members and friends came together for our AGM morning event to celebrate women candidates in the Local Elections 2019. The event was part of our series of initiatives to mark 120 years of women in Local Government.

After a keynote address by Minister John Paul Phelan who has special responsibility for local government and electoral reform, the event heard from a diverse group of candidates and newly elected Councillors who discussed their leadership journeys, the barriers for women to enter into politics and their vision for a feminist future.

Speakers included Cllr Hazel Chu, Green Party, Dublin City Council; Catherine Coffey, Workers' Party, Cork; Cllr Annie Hoey, Labour Party, Meath County Council; Cllr Andrea Dalton, Fianna Fail, Carlow County Council; Cllr Punam Rane, Fine Gael, Fingal County Council; and Sharon Nolan, Social Democrats, Galway. The Chair for the morning was Dil Wickremasinghe, Journalist and Co-Founder of Insight Matters Mental Health services

The event was supported by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.



Campaign for Yes in the Divorce Referendum

NWCI campaigned for a Yes vote in the referendum on divorce to create a more compassionate divorce process for people who need it.

To raise awareness about the referendum and why we were supporting a yes vote, NWCI hosted a members meeting in early May. Speakers included Karen Kiernan, One Family; Louise Crowley, UCC and NWCI Chairperson Ellen O'Malley Dunlop who talked about the positive impact a yes vote would have on families going through the divorce process.

NWCI also collaborated with a number of civil society organisations. We issued a joint press release and held a joint photo call. We also prepared a leaflet with key arguments for a Yes vote which we distributed as part of a visibility canvassing initiative at local transport hubs in the days leading up to the vote.



KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

Women's Inequality should come with a Mental Health Warning – Our Mental Health Campaign

2019 marked NWCI's first digital campaign on women's mental health. In recent years, people across Ireland have participated in a much-needed conversation around mental health which has helped to dismantle longstanding stigmas around experiencing mental illness and distress.

Through our health work women have told us that their experiences of mental health difficulties are not often included in this national conversation with their issues not seen as a priority, especially for those from marginalised and ethnic minority communities. Women face many challenges and inequalities in their lives including body image pressures, sexual and domestic violence, trauma, financial stress and poverty, gender stereotypes, mental health difficulties during pregnancy (crisis pregnancy, perinatal mental health), menopause, racism and discrimination, dismissal of women's pain, the pressures of caring for their families and stigma. Women have told us that the diverse and intersecting experiences can put a serious strain on their mental health.

In our campaign we wanted to acknowledge and highlight the different experiences women have throughout their lives which can impact their mental health and wellbeing. We based the campaign on what women told us through our 'Out of Silence – women's mental health in their own words' project, as well as our work with young women through our annual #FemFest and the 'Through the Looking Glass' project.

The campaign highlighted the far-reaching impact of gender inequality on women's mental health and focused on women's caring roles, experiences of violence and abuse, and body image pressures, all of which can impact their mental health. The campaign ran on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with two messages: 'Women's inequality should come with a mental health warning' and 'We need to take women's mental health seriously'. The campaign reached over half a million people on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and received attention and support from stakeholder organisations like Pavee Point, Belong To, A Lust for Life, Samaritans, and prominent figures like Marian Keyes, Dil Wickremasinghe, Ailbhe Smyth, and Miriam O'Callaghan. NWCI's health work is supported by programme funding from the Health Service Executive.



Equality Now - Invest in Women: NWCI's Pre-Budget Submission

We launched our Pre-Budget Submission 2020 'Equality Now - Invest in Women' at a briefing in the Oireachtas on 3rd July 2019.

The Pre-Budget Submission brought together NWCI's key recommendations in core policy areas and covered the Gender Equality Framework, Economic Vulnerability and Poverty, Housing and Homelessness, Women's Health Services, Violence against Women, Care and Pension Reform.

We particularly highlighted the need to provide funding for the rollout of free contraception, investment in financial and other supports for lone parents, including the introduction of a Statutory Maintenance Agency, tackling the housing and homelessness crisis, investing in women's health and violence against women services and policies.

The event was well attended by TDs, Senators and parliamentary staff from across the different parties. Hosted by Catherine Martin, TD, speakers included Orla O'Connor, Director and Cliona Loughnane, Women's Health Coordinator from NWCI, as well as representatives from our member groups; Noeline Blackwell, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre; Ciara Fanning, President ISSU; Anne Genocky and Avril Hanafin, An Cosán.



KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

NWCI recognition as a Sustainable Development Goal Champion

NWCI was delighted to be recognised as one of the first Sustainable Development Goal champions by the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Richard Bruton TD at the Ploughing Championships, on 18th September. Together with 11 other organisations, NWCI was chosen to lead by example in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and highlight practical ways in which they can be achieved.

In particular, NWCI was recognised as a champion in relation to realising women's right to health and bodily integrity (SDG 3), ending violence against women (SDG 16), recognising and valuing women's care roles (SDG5), ensuring economic independence for women (SDG10) and promoting women's leadership and representation in decision-making (SDG16).



NWCI Director named as TIME magazine – 100 most Influential People for 2019

Orla O'Connor, NWCI's Director was named on Time magazine's list of 'Most Influential' people for 2019, alongside fellow Together for Yes Co-Directors.

Grainne Griffin of the Abortion Rights Campaign and Ailbhe Smyth of the Coalition to Repeal the Eighth, as well as Orla O'Connor were named in the 'Icons' section of the prestigious list. This was a massive accolade for the Co-Directors but also for everyone across the country who campaigned to repeal the Eighth Amendment, especially NWCI members who were at the heart of the campaign. It is evidence of the significant international impact of the Together for Yes campaign, in a world where we frequently see roll backs when it comes to hard fought reproductive health wins.

The referendum result in Ireland was a real boost for the morale of pro-choice campaigners throughout the world, and we hope it can be a beacon of light wherever and whenever abortion rights are denied, restricted or under severe threat.



KEY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS IN 2019

Highlighting UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in West Clare

Women from West Clare came together at a public gathering in Kilrush Library on the 15th October to call for better local services in the Kilrush area. The event was organised by NWCI and the West Clare Family Resource Centre to mark United National International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and the International Day of Rural Women.

There was music, food and sharing from the women involved. A local artist worked with the women to discuss their own experiences of living in West Clare and Poverty. The group have now formed the West Clare Women's Collective, which will be campaigning on issues such as access to healthcare and maternity care, childcare and local transport.

This initiative was supported by the Department of Employment and Social Protection.

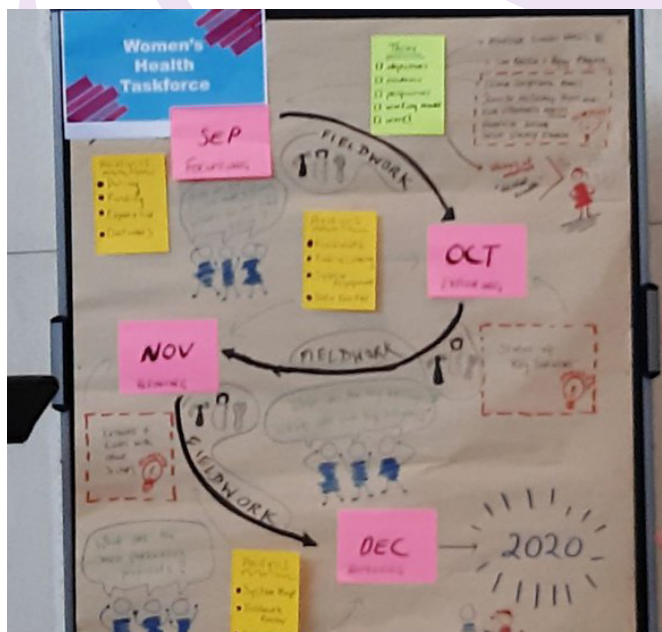


Women's Health Taskforce

September saw a great step forward for women's health in Ireland with the establishment of a Women's Health Taskforce by the Department of Health. The Taskforce represents significant progress in NWCI's advocacy for women's health to be prioritised across the health system. It also responds to Dr Gabriel Scally's recommendation, following his inquiry into CervicalCheck, that women's health be given committed attention in health policy.

As members of the Taskforce, NWCI is working to ensure the voices and experiences of women are at the centre of all work. The Taskforce is led by Secretary General Jim Breslin and Director General of the European Institute for Women's Health, Peggy Maguire, in partnership with NWCI. It will be crucial that the new taskforce shows the leadership on women's health that women in Ireland have been looking for.

The Women's Health Taskforce will tackle issues impacting women's health outcomes, including disadvantage, reproductive and maternal health and women's mental health. To coincide with the Taskforce launch NWCI, supported by the HSE and Department Health, published a report 'Women's Health in Ireland – an Evidence Base for the Development of a Women's Health Action Plan', as well as a 'Briefing on Women's Health'.



REALISING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO HEALTH

Women's Mental Health Network

The Women's Mental Health Network kept growing in 2019, continuing NWCI's partnership with St Patrick's Mental Health Service to promote women's mental health.

The Network was set up in 2018 as a forum for information-sharing and networking among interested parties, and to advance interdisciplinary and multi-agency collaboration to progress shared aims and goals in the promotion of women's mental health. We were delighted to welcome 152 new members to the Network in 2019. Members of the Network are very engaged, they share knowledge and resources, building connections with one another and ask questions at events.

The Network hosted three events throughout the year and sent out three newsletters which members of the Network fed into. The three events covered Perinatal Mental Health, Trauma Informed Care and Gender Based Violence.

We were delighted to welcome Dr Margo Wrigley, HSE National Clinical Lead for Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services and Eileen Ní Shuilleabháin, Principal Social Worker in Adult Mental Health Services in Galway City, to speak at the event on Perinatal Mental Health.

For the event on Trauma Informed Care we welcomed Dr Iseult Twamley, Senior Clinical Psychologist & Open Dialogue Clinical Lead with West Cork Mental Health Service, presented along with Anne Cronin, Head of Homelessness Services for national homeless and housing charity Novas, and Aoife Dermody, Co-founder of Quality Matters.

The third event of the year coincided with a NWCI members and friends meeting. This event entitled 'Gender Based Violence and Women's Mental Health' was organised in support of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign and featured a welcome address from NWCI Chair Ellen O'Malley Dunlop and presentations by Gillian Dennehy, Services Manager for Women's Aid, and Felicity Kennedy, Clinical Supervisor, psychotherapist and former CEO of the Women's Therapy Centre.

Each event sold out with over 200 people attending Women's Mental Health Network events in 2019.



Reproductive Rights and Campaigns

Abortion Working Group

In 2019, the Abortion Working Group, a collective of civil society organisations and healthcare providers working to ensure safe access to abortion in Ireland and chaired by NWCI was established. The purpose of the group is to engage in collective advocacy for the provision of safe and effective access to a high-quality and comprehensive abortion care service in Ireland.

The Group met four times throughout the year and has formed three sub-groups which are monitoring the continued roll out and strengthening of abortion care services; advocating where necessary for resources, changes and improvements and further service development; and working towards the 3-year review of Ireland's abortion legislation.

The Group worked collectively on a number of projects during the year, most notably press releases and political advocacy around the need for introduction of Safe Access Zones and the continuing issues in service provision 12 months after commencement of abortion services.

The members of the Abortion Working Group are: Abortion Rights Campaign; Abortion Support Network; Alliance for Choice; Amnesty Ireland; BelongTo; Cairde; Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment; Disabled Women Ireland; Doctors for Choice; Dublin Well Woman Centre; Gynaecology & Obstetrics Women's Network (GOWN); Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL); Inclusion Ireland; Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA); Lawyers for Choice; National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks (NCCWN); National Traveller Women's Forum; National Women's Council of Ireland; Start Group; Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI); Termination for Medical Reasons; Women's Aid; Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

Abortion in Northern Ireland

In December 2019, NWCI made a submission to the UK Government on a legal framework for abortion in Northern Ireland calling for woman-centred and inclusive legislation which facilitates universal access to safe, legal and local abortion care services.

Partnering with the Centre for Reproductive Rights (CRR)

Throughout 2019 we worked in partnership with the Centre for Reproductive Rights (CRR) to advance women's reproductive rights in Europe and globally. We worked in solidarity with civil society organisations to build on the experience in Ireland of repealing the Eighth Amendment and bring together women's and reproductive rights organisations in broad based campaigns across a diversity of societies and contexts. We participated in seminars and workshops in Germany and Bulgaria.



REALISING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO HEALTH

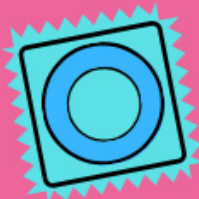
Free Contraception Campaign

In October 2019, NWCI made a submission to the Department of Health calling for the introduction of a scheme to provide the most effective and appropriate methods of contraception free-of-charge, provided across primary care, family planning clinics, pharmacy and hospitals. This scheme would give effect to the recommendations of both the Citizens' Assembly and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment. We also highlighted the need to deliver free contraception during Budget 2020.



"My contraceptive needs are unique
and may change throughout my life.

I need access to the full range of
contraceptive methods."



I'M
Every
WOMAN



Women for Change Project

In 2019 we ran our successful Women for Change project providing training to over 310 women across Ireland in peer support and advocacy for women's equality and social change at local level.

The project targeted women who are involved or were interested in getting involved in representation and participation in their local communities. The programme was designed in the context of the need to resource spaces for women to strategise, support each other, build solidarity and exchange skills and experience.

A wide range of organisations collaborated with NWCI on the project, including Community Work Ireland, National Collective of Community Based Women's Network, IRD Duhallow/Duhallow Women's Forum, National Traveller Women's Forum, Longford Women's Link, Women4Women/Southside Partnership, Cultur Migrant Project and Carlow County Development Partnership.

Trainings took place across a number of locations, including Roscommon, Claremorris, Co. Mayo, Dublin, North Cork, Limerick, Carlow and Ennis, Co. Clare. Training topics included women's equality, social analysis, media skills, campaigning and influencing policy at local level.

A closing event of Women for Change took place in September. Tara Farrell, Deputy CEO of Longford Women's Link chaired the event and Suzanne Kyle from Aontas closed the event. Participants, facilitators and supporting organisations from across the country came together to share their experiences and learnings.

This project was supported through the Training Links Fund, administered by the Wheel for the Department of Education and Science.



PROMOTING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Women beyond the Dáil

– Research into Women’s Underrepresentation in Local Government

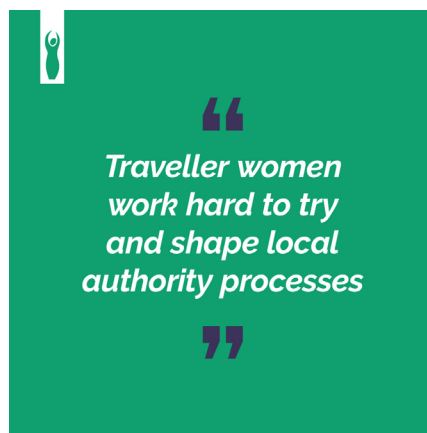
In November NWCI published new research ‘Women Beyond the Dáil: More Women in Local Government’ which explores women’s underrepresentation in Local Government and makes clear actionable recommendations to address this. This research was one of the first of its kind to be done in Ireland.

Dr Pauline Cullen and Claire McGing carried out the research. They designed and carried out an innovative survey inviting all city and county councillors to take part. This has the potential to be used in the future for comparative purposes as there is a gap in research into local government elections. They also interviewed a number of women who ran but did not get elected. They spoke to organisations who are engaging in supporting women and people from more diverse backgrounds to participate in public and political life.

The research was supported by an advisory group made up of our members and friends including the Association of Irish Local Government, Next Chapter, Longford Women’s Link, Women for Election, Immigrant Council of Ireland and Akidwa.

The research was launched on the 14th November 2019 in the Mansion House, Dublin. Minister of State John Paul Phelan responded to the findings of the research. Cllr Marie Sherlock, Labour Party; Salome Mbugua, Akidwa, Maria Joyce, National Traveller Women’s Forum and Cíairín de Buis, Women for Election participated in a panel discussion. Martina Fitzgerald, author and journalist, chaired the proceedings. A number of councillors, their representative bodies and local authorities attended the launch.

This work was kindly supported by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.



Establishing Local Caucus with Women Councillors

In December NWCI held an exploratory discussion with women Councillors and women's community groups on developing local caucuses. The Chairperson, Catherine Martin TD, and other members of the national Women's Parliamentary Caucus joined the discussion to share their insights of being part of the national caucus. NCCWN/ Limerick Women's Network and Limerick women Councillors shared their experience of setting up the first local caucus. Participants then had the opportunity to talk about the values and benefits of local caucuses and to think about how it might work locally. Researcher Claire McGing worked with NWCI to develop a short guide to support their establishment in different areas.

The establishment of such a caucus or network is one of the ways that could enable women to strengthen their impact and bring about equality between women and men in the daily work of local authorities. Local caucuses have the potential to build solidarity amongst women elected representatives, to rally support around common objectives and rising above political divisions to adopt a collaborative way of working.



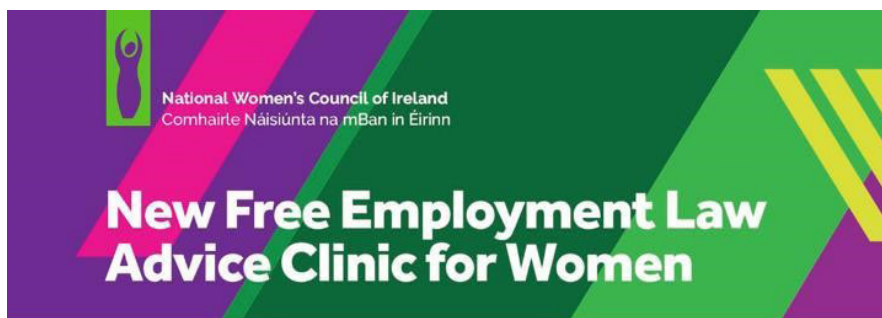
ENSURING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Workplace Equality - Decent Work Project

NWCI was a successful recipient of the Human Rights & Equality Grant Scheme 2019 under the theme 'Decent Work'. Our project focuses on workplace equality, economic security and decent work for all women aiming to strengthen and expand access to legal protections for women in the workplace.

The first aspect of this work led to the establishment of a legal clinic that focuses on the provision of employment advice for women. The clinic is held on a monthly basis by appointment and staffed by solicitors from Community Law & Mediation (CLM). It caters for women experiencing problems at work, such as unequal pay, discrimination or sexual harassment.

We know that the lack of legal aid for employment and equality cases before the Workplace Relations Commission is a major barrier to enforcing women's employment rights. When a woman makes the difficult decision of taking a legal case against her employer she may find that she has to do this alone. This clinic and the evidence it collects will contribute to legal, policy and organisational responses to effectively meet the needs of women. The issues raised at the clinics will feed in to the development of a Charter for Working Women which will be used as an advocacy and lobbying tool to strengthen safeguards for working women and to challenge discrimination in the workplace.



Challenging Discrimination Against Women in the Workplace

Experiencing difficulties at work? Need help?

The National Women's Council of Ireland and Community Law and Mediation are establishing a new free employment law advice clinic for women.

The Clinic's mission is centred on ensuring that every woman has the right to economic fairness, equal opportunity, and dignity in the workplace. The issues we can assist with are:

- Unequal pay
- Harassment, including sexual harassment
- Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
- Health and safety issues
- General employment law matters

If you believe that you are experiencing discrimination in the workplace contact us today! We aim to support you to make your own decisions about what is best for you and your family.

How it works

Our clinic operates by appointment only. If you are interested in meeting a solicitor at this clinic, or have a client you would like to refer to this clinic, please contact our Legal and Policy Officer, Denise Roche, at deniser@nwci.ie

The clinics will be held once a month at NWCI offices, North King Street, Smithfield, Dublin 7 starting in October 2019.

For more information see our website. www.nwci.ie



Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta
an Duine agus Comhionannas
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission



Community
Law & Mediation

www.nwci.ie
#working4equality



Campaigning for a Statutory Maintenance Agency

The establishment of a statutory maintenance agency was a key NWCI Budget recommendation. We believe that such an agency will ensure that women are no longer forced to secure child maintenance through the adversarial court system in an approach that is costly, complex and time consuming. We also believe that no woman should be forced to seek maintenance directly from an abusive former partner.

We therefore welcomed the announcement this year by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection to initiate research to examine best practice in relation to maintenance payments. NWCI continues to work to ensure that the establishment of any such agency is women centred, and that the experiences of lone parents, particularly those who have experienced domestic abuse, are at the centre of its work.

ENSURING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Courting Disaster – Campaign for a dedicated Family Law Court

In late 2019 NWCI joined the 'Courting Disaster' coalition which calls upon government to urgently allocate funding for a dedicated Family Law Court. We believe a properly functioning courts system is essential to providing access to justice. The archaic conditions in which family law and childcare cases are heard significantly increases stress and anxiety which can result in volatility and even violence in the course of family law litigation.

Within the campaign NWCI highlighted the need to ensure that the final plans concerning the new court must be fully gender proofed to ensure that any potential gender discriminatory effects arising from those plans have been avoided and that gender equality is promoted. We also stressed the need to facilitate safe spaces for women and families who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse situations.

Other members of the campaign include Aoibhneas, Children's Rights Alliance, Community Law and Mediation, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, Family Lawyers Association, FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres), One Family, Rape Crisis Network, SAFE Ireland, Sonas Domestic Violence Charity, The Bar of Ireland, The Law Society, Treoir and Women's Aid.



NWCI response to Budget 2020

Overall NWCI was deeply concerned by some of the choices made in Budget 2020. The Budget did not increase the national minimum wage nor did it make progress towards establishing the Living Wage as a basic standard for workers' wages.

NWCI welcomed the increases to crucial social welfare payments and supports for the most vulnerable women and their families. In particular, we welcomed the €15 restoration to the One Parent Family Payment income disregard. However, this will only bring the payment back to pre-Budget 2012 levels.

NWCI welcomed in the increased investment into Early Years Care and Education under the National Childcare Scheme. Minister Zappone's announcement of a fund to support the introduction of a sectorial employment order for childcare workers, who are predominately women, underpaid in precarious work was also a crucial intervention.

We also welcomed progress toward one of our key recommendations, the establishment of a Statutory Maintenance Agency. Minister Doherty's announcement of the establishment of a judge-led group to determine, based on best international practice, maintenance guidelines and regulations. It is crucial that this group leads to the establishment of a Statutory Maintenance Agency which has the potential to be a game changer for lone parents.

However, NWCI was disappointed to see that funding for frontline domestic and sexual violence services remained static given the increase in demand for these services. Ireland will be unable to meet its requirements under the Istanbul Convention unless there is a significant increase in investment across all State departments, particularly in refuge spaces, given our national housing crisis.



Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality

NWCI welcomed the establishment of a new Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality in June 2019. For nearly a year, NWCI had been calling on the Government to establish a Citizens' Assembly on care, before committing to a referendum on Article 41.2, women in the home.

NWCI had called for a Citizens' Assembly process to allow for a broad, public discussion on care and its role and value in society, on carers and those who receive care and the role of the Constitution in valuing care in all its forms. Through our engagement with the media NWCI highlighted that the Citizens' Assembly must lead to specific outcomes on care, including a commitment to hold a referendum on Article 41.2, women in the home, in 2020.

Following the appointment of Chairperson, Dr Catherine Day in October 2019, NWCI's Director, Orla O'Connor and Head of Policy, Jennifer McCarthy Flynn took part in roundtable discussions to help support the establishment of the Citizens' Assembly.





Gender Pay Gap Information Bill

The gender pay gap stands at 14.4%. It has serious implications for a woman's lifetime earnings, her life and career decisions and her ability to live in older years with a decent income.

To close the gap, NWCI has consistently advocated for greater transparency around pay so that we can remove the question of gender influenced pay. We have highlighted that legally requiring employers to be more open about their gender pay differences will force them to take action to close their gaps.

The Gender Pay Gap Information Bill is designed to make this a legal requirement for many employers in Ireland. While NWCI warmly welcomed its publication in 2019, we campaigned for amendments to strengthen its scope and reach.

During the pre-legislative scrutiny of the Bill, we joined forces with ICTU, SIPTU, and Fórsa to ask the Joint Committee on Justice and Equality to recommend amending the Bill to extend its scope, strengthen its enforcement powers and reporting obligations. Many of our joint recommendations featured in the Joint Committee's Report on the Scheme of the Bill. When the Bill was formally published on International Women's Day it contained two of the amendments that NWCI had strongly advocated for during the pre-legislative process; a requirement to provide a narrative to contextualise the statistics, alongside an Action Plan to eliminate the identified gaps.

As the Bill has yet to become law, NWCI continues to ensure it remains on the legislative agenda.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Four Day Week Ireland Campaign

NWCI joined with Fórsa, Friends of the Earth and ICE group to launch a new campaign called 'Four Day Week Ireland' that aims to start a public conversation on the case for reduced working hours. Part of an international movement, the campaign is advocating for a gradual, steady, managed transition to a shorter working week for all workers. Four Day Week Ireland aims to change the false narrative that working long hours is good for productivity.

The campaign officially launched in September at an event in the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. Orla O'Connor spoke on the benefits of a four day week for women and for gender equality, such as, allowing better distribution of caring responsibilities between mothers and fathers, removing barriers to women achieving senior positions in work, better work life balance, reduced commuting time and reduced childcare costs for women and families.

The launch also featured contributions from Ireland and New Zealand based employers who have successfully implemented four day working weeks in their businesses and was followed up with public meetings in Limerick and Galway in November 2019.



Tackling Women's Homelessness

Homelessness and the lack of affordable, adequate housing has become one of the biggest equality challenges in Ireland today. Ireland has the highest female homelessness rate in Europe, with particularly devastating impacts on lone-parent families, the majority of whom are headed by women.

Together with our partners in the 'Raise the Roof' campaign, NWCI called for action on rent controls, an end to forced evictions, more secure tenancies, and a legal right to housing. NWCI supported a rally in Dublin in May 2019 in which thousands of people took part to protest at the housing crisis and increasing homelessness.

Our pre-Budget submission to the Department of Finance called for the building of public and affordable housing, gender proofing of all homeless strategies, social housing strategies and budgets, tenant protection measures and the establishment of a statutory Traveller Agency with powers to approve and enforce Local Authority Traveller accommodation plans.



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence on Campus

It Stops Now Campaign and Toolkit

During 2019 NWCI continued to roll out our 'It Stops Now campaign' with great success. The campaign had been developed as part of our EU project 'ESHTe – Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Third Level Institutions', and highlights issues in relation to sexual harassment and violence that many women students face. We worked with USI and student unions across Ireland to disseminate the materials for the campaign, including posters and our campaign video.

We also provided a series of training modules on the issue and finalised the ESHTe toolkit which can be used by higher education institutes to lead on the important change process to effectively tackle sexual harassment and violence and ensure women's equality on campus. The toolkit emphasises the need to invest in comprehensive training for staff and to ensure strong collaborations with external partners. And it outlines the important role that student bodies have in reaching out to the student population.

Continuing the work of the 'ESHTe' project

As a result of our successful EU ESHTe project, which ended in March 2019, NWCI was asked by Minister for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O'Connor, to join the Department of Education and Skills Technical Group. The group developed Ireland's first national programme to end sexual violence and harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutes, the 'Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive' Framework.

NWCI received funding through this programme to continue the work of the ESHTe project for Ireland. This includes dissemination of the materials, such as the ESHTe toolkit, and continuing the work of the National Advisory Committee, a highly innovative collaboration that brings together NWCI, An Garda Síochána, sexual violence services, student bodies and higher education institutions (HEIs), and state representatives.





Domestic Homicide Reviews

For some years NWCI has been advocating for the introduction of domestic homicide reviews. These are systematic multi-agency reviews which are used to improve risk assessment and management and to identify gaps in policy and practice, following domestic homicides. We believe these reviews can provide families with answers and, crucially, assist in developing best practice responses to domestic violence, including risk assessment and risk management.

This year saw the emergence of a broad political consensus in favour of adopting this process. Government established an independent specialist in-depth research study on familicide and domestic homicide reviews led by Norah Gibbons and Grainne McMorow. The study will also consider how the media report on familicide and make recommendations on best practice, as well as how social media deals with such events.

NWCI made a submission containing a number of recommendations which centred on introducing these reviews on a statutory basis to protect women and children and save lives. NWCI along with members of the Observatory on Violence against Women met with the research team to further communicate our position on this matter. We await the publication of the conclusions of this research.

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Working together – the Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women

In existence since 2002, the Observatory is a broad coalition working together to press for real progress on eradicating all forms of violence against women in Ireland and worldwide. NWCI chairs and convenes the Observatory, which brings together the following organisations: Aoibhneas, Action Aid, Akidwa, Ascend, Cairde, Cork Sexual Violence Centre, Chrysalis Community Drug Project, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, Galway Rape Crisis Centre, Haven Horizons, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence, Longford Women's Link, Love and Care for People, National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks, National Women's Council of Ireland, Oxfam, Pavee Point, Ruhama, Sonas, North Tipperary Development Centre, Women's Aid Ireland, YWCA.

From Ratification to Implementation: Creating a safer Ireland for Women

The Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women marked this year's 16 Days of Action to End Violence Against Women with a seminar entitled: 'From Ratification to Implementation: Creating a safer Ireland for Women'. The event focused on two of the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention – Protections and Prevention.

The event centred on the prevention of, and protection from, intimate partner abuse, highlighting that a failure to protect results in severe harm to women and, at its most extreme, intimate partner homicide.

The event explored the law reforms that have arisen since the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017. Drawing particular attention to how the State, An Garda Síochána, and Civil Society can prevent and protect people experiencing intimate partner abuse.

NWCI was delighted to have Garda Commissioner Drew Harris and Norah Gibbons (Chair of the independent review into familicide and domestic homicide) give the keynote addresses followed by an excellent panel discussion that included Prof. Shane Kilcommins, Head of School of Law, UL; Jennifer McCarthy Flynn, Head of Policy, NWCI; Ciara Carberry, Department of Justice and Equality; Tessa Collins, Pavee Point; and Maria Dempsey, Survivor and Advocate. Opening address was by Frances Fitzgerald, MEP and closing was by Sarah Benson, CEO, Women's Aid. The event was chaired by NWCI's Chairperson, Ellen O'Malley Dunlop and panel chair was Ellen Coyne, Journalist.





NWCI welcomes the Commencement of the Sexual Violence Survey

After many years advocating for comprehensive, national data and research on the prevalence of sexual violence in Ireland, NWCI welcomed the launch of the new Sexual Violence Survey in Ireland. In particular, we strongly welcomed the announcement that the survey will be the responsibility of the Central Statistical Office (CSO).

However, NWCI continued to raise concerns about the length of time the survey will take as the proposed year of completion is not until 2023 at the earliest - 21 years after the first one in 2002.

We also raised concerns about the knock-on effect of the long timeline for the overall report on understanding sexual violence in relation to specific groups, including Travellers, migrant people, people from the LGBTQI community and women with disabilities, as it is proposed that these will be commenced after the full survey is published.

NWCI was invited to participate in the CSO Sexual Violence Survey Liaison Group to provide our perspective and expertise on the rollout of the survey.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER GROUPS



2019 has seen 19 new groups join NWCI.

221+ Patient Cervical Support Group was established in August 2018 to provide confidential advice and support to the women and families directly affected by failures of the Cervical Check screening programme. The group is governed by the Irish Cancer Society, the Marie Keating Foundation, and the Irish Patients Association. The wide-ranging needs of members are addressed through quarterly member meetings, specialised workshops, access to a private online member portal, representation on various government steering committees, and through advocacy efforts. <http://www.221plus.ie>

The Abortion Access Campaign West is a Galway based group initiative that has evolved out of the Local Together For Yes Group following repeal of the 8th Amendment. The group's purpose is to ensure that the best possible legislation is enacted to provide high quality abortion and reproductive healthcare; to ensure the dissemination of information of abortion services and affordable access to the services with particular reference to the West of Ireland. <https://aacwest.wordpress.com/>

Aitheantas - An Adoptee Identity Rights advocate for all adoptees affected by the coercive and forced adoption policies of the past. They also focus on the impact of this lack of information on female adoptees as regards their health and lack of identity information. <http://www.aitheantas.ie>

Amber Kilkenny Women's Refuge CLG provides many services helping women and children affected by domestic violence and abusive relationships. They aim to empower women and children, of all cultures and backgrounds, to achieve their rights to live abuse-free lives by providing a safe, secure, and supportive environment. <http://www.kilkennywomensrefuge.ie>

Barnardos helps transform children's lives with their services; support for parents; and challenging society where it fails our children. Barnardos vision is a country where no child has to suffer and every child is able to reach their full potential. <https://www.barnardos.ie>

Chrysalis is a community-based, harm reduction service that works with women living with problem substance use and homelessness in the Dublin 7 area. They provide a range of one-to-one and group supports including case management, keyworking, counselling and peer-led initiatives. <https://chrysalisproject.ie/>

Cork Simon Community works in solidarity with some of the most vulnerable women and men, young and old from all walks of life, who are homeless in Cork. They offer care, housing and support in people's journey back to independent or supported living. Cork Simon supports over 1,000 people annually - one fifth of whom are women are looking to improve services and supports for women turning to them for help. <http://www.corksion.ie>

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER GROUPS

Domestic Violence Support Service: Domestic Violence Response (DVR) is a stand-alone, community-led outreach service in Galway City and County. It responds to the needs of women and children impacted by domestic abuse and develops long-term responses to the issue. <http://www.domesticviolenceresponse.com/>

Haven Horizons, set up in 2015, focuses on the individual, family, community and societal changes necessary for the elimination of relationship abuse and the associated gender inequality. Key activities include research/supporting research; awareness, education and training; interagency and systems work, prevention strategies and piloting evidence-based models of good practice. <http://www.havenhorizons.com/>

The Kildare Feminist Network is a grassroots group working towards equality, autonomy, and choice for all people. Their feminism is radical, inclusive and intersectional and recognise that women at all levels of society struggle to be safe, to make themselves heard, and to be treated equally. They also understand that women of colour, LGBTQIA+ women, working class women and other women from minority backgrounds experience these inequalities differently and more intensely. <https://www.facebook.com/KildareFeministNetwork>

Lifeline (Inishowen) provides a professional and confidential community response which offers support to woman and children in Inishowen who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse, physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse. <https://www.ldvs.org/>

Merchant's Quay Ireland MQI provides homelessness support services so no-one has to face homelessness or addiction alone, and where everyone has the support they need to reduce the harm caused by homelessness and addiction and to build a better life; an inclusive society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. MQI wish to advocate and provide more services that are designed specifically towards women's needs. <http://www.mqi.ie>

Midwives Association of Ireland support women using evidence-based care. They promote, assist and provide access to further education for midwives through study days and conferences. They also advocate for the development of appropriate policies to enable midwives to provide individualised evidence-based care to all women. <https://www.facebook.com/midwivesireland>

M- Word directly educates and empowers women on menopause at home, in the workplace and for the younger generation. Other areas include supports within the workplace, enhanced education and support within the healthcare system and for GP's, educating the younger generation in relation to menopause. They hold an annual menopause summit.

www.themwordevent.com www.mysecondspring.ie www.wellnesswarrior.ie

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER GROUPS



Northern Ireland Women's European Platform NIWEP represents women's organisations in Northern Ireland in the European Women's Lobby, as part of the UK Joint Committee on Women. NIWEP also represents Northern Ireland at the United Nations, as an NGO with Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 1999. Within Northern Ireland, NIWEP's core objective is to build capacity and share international learning on women's rights and human rights with a view to strengthening women's effective participation in public life and policy making. It also creates a collective voice on specific issues of concern to women in Northern Ireland, designed to assist effective participation of the sector in policy making in order to ensure inclusion of women's rights in regional and local policy. <https://blog.niwep.org/>

Professional Women's Network PWN Dublin is a city network of PWN Global an inclusive global network working towards gender balanced leadership and career development. It is made up of 30 city networks with over 4000 members. PWN Dublin provides up to seven events per annum and also a dedicated platform for members to engage with worldwide audience to learn, share and connect. <https://pwndublin.net/>

The Sexual Exploitation Research Project (SERP) conducts independent feminist research on all forms of commercial sexual exploitation that creates useful knowledge for law and policy makers, practitioners, survivors, supporters and activists. Established in 2017 under the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice at UCD, SERP aims to strengthen the evidence based on current and emerging issues of sexual exploitation in Ireland, and beyond.

St Catherine's Community Services Centre is a registered charity and community and voluntary agency based in Carlow Town. The centre delivers a wide range of services to communities, groups and individuals on a local, countywide and regional basis that are responsive to identified needs. St. Catherine's use community development principles to build capacity within disadvantaged communities thereby empowering communities to identify and meet the needs in their areas and contribute to the development of policies locally and nationally to support this process. www.catherines.ie

Women in Research Ireland WIRI aims to generate an all equal platform where women can speak about their research and network with others in their field or similar. Since, throughout history women were not always given an equal platform to express and disseminate their knowledge and research, they aim to create and run an open and equal platform for all women* in research, both STEM and arts & humanities @WomenInResIE



HAVE YOUR SAY – DEVELOPMENT OF NWCI’S MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY

In November 2019, NWCI started working on a new membership strategy that will outline a vision and strategic framework for our membership going forward.

We recruited an independent consultant, Rachel Doyle, and set up a board and staff working group that developed a detailed plan for consultation with our members and other relevant stakeholders for the strategy. In 2019, this included a series of focus groups, including women with disabilities and migrant women. The work on the development of the strategy continues in 2020.

WORKING AT EU LEVEL - EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

NWCI is a board member of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the largest network of women's organisation in the EU, promoting women's rights and gender equality.

Our Chairperson, Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, attended the General Assembly in June 2019, discussing topics such as feminist economics, women and climate change and the Istanbul Convention. Our Legal and Policy Officer, Denise Roche, attended the Finnish Presidency Gender Equality Conference in October. NWCI staff members also engaged on EWL working groups, including Women in Politics and the Task Force on Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights.

NWCI also supported EWL's lobbying activities at EU level. This included the 50/50 #WomenForEurope project. We also welcomed the adoption of the new Directive for better Work Life Balance for Parents and Carers, which covers parental leave, paternity leave, carers' leave and the right to request flexible working arrangements for reasons related to care responsibilities.



- NWCI's Director and other policy team members appeared on national and local broadcast media throughout the year on topics such as a universal pension, gender quotas in local elections, sexual harassment on campus and the need for a Statutory Maintenance Agency.
- Four national opinion pieces in 2019 on issues such as violence against women, universal contraception and Nollaig na mBan
- Trending social media campaigns such as #Feminist Communities, #FeministEurope, #FemFest and #NewVoicesForChange
- Increased Twitter followers by almost 4,000 followers, meaning we now have over 32,000 followers and a consistent monthly reach of over 1 million
- Grew our Instagram from 2,800 to 4,500 and we have average views of 400-500 people per Instagram story
- Increased our Facebook likes by 1,800 to over 20,000
- Twitter account of our Director Orla O'Connor increased by over 1,500 followers, and can reach up to 800,000 people per month.
- Over 55,000 users of our website www.nwci.ie
- €5000 Twitter Ad Grant to promote #FemFest and our work with young women
- International Women's Day, #IWD2019 photo call with An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, Cabinet members and NWCI members following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention
- Prominent media coverage for our calls for safety zone legislation to prevent intimidation of women and healthcare providers when accessing abortion
- Major coverage of our key asks for Budget 2020
- Led an impactful social media campaign on women's mental health across all social media platforms, using paid Instagram advertising for the first time. The campaign reached 500,000 people across all social media platforms used.

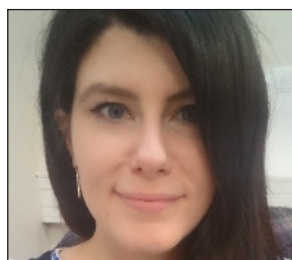
Sockies 2019 – Best NGO Video #ItStopsNow

NWCI was delighted to win a Sockies social media award for the fourth year in a row. This year, we picked up an award for Best NGO Video 2019 for our It Stops Now video.

The 'It Stops Now' campaign highlights the need to effectively tackle sexual violence and harassment at third level. Students have the right to study and live in a safe and respectful environment. This campaign was about building a culture of zero tolerance which prevents and combats sexual harassment and violence, both on and off campus. The award-winning video was central, and had an immediate positive impact as students engaged with the mural, the messages on posters acting as a natural conversation starter for students.



OUR TEAM IN 2019



Tara Brown,
EU Project Coordinator
(until 15th August 2019)



Sarah Clarkin,
Communications
and Social Media Officer



Emma Foley,
Reproductive Health Rights
Officer (from July 2019)



Anne Gibney,
Head of Finance
and Operations



Orlaith Grehan,
EU Project Officer
(until 30th March 2019)



Laura Harmon,
Women in Leadership
Coordinator



Mary Hayes,
Women's Health Officer
(from June 2019)



Sarah Henry,
EU Project Officer
(until 3rd April 2019)



Catherine Lane,
Women in Local, Community
and Rural Development Officer



Cliona Loughnane,
Women's Health Coordinator



Jennifer McCarthy Flynn,
Head of Policy



Susan McCormack,
Administration Officer



Sandra McCullough,
Women's Economic
Equality Coordinator
(from October 2019)



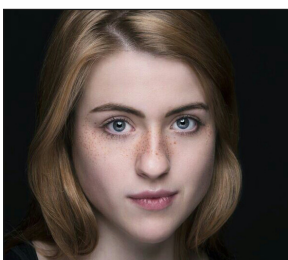
Helen Mullarkey,
Membership Liaison Officer



Hayley Mulligan,
Violence Against Women
Officer



Eilís Ní Chaithnía,
Policy and Campaigns
Coordinator
(until 31st August 2019)



Cáit Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh,
Receptionist
(until 12th July 2019)



Orla O'Connor,
Director



Silke Paasche,
Head of Communications
and Membership



Denise Roche,
Legal and Policy Officer

Grainne McDermott,
Receptionist
(from July 2019)

Louise Hennessy,
Receptionist
(from October 2019)



PEOPLE WE WORKED WITH IN 2019

We sincerely thank the people who worked with us
and supported our campaigns in 2019.

- James Byrne
- Sandra Conway
- Louise Crowley
- Dr Pauline Cullen
- Rachel Doyle
- Sheena Frost
- Saoirse Gibney
- Margaret Gray
- Martina Hynes
- James Kane
- Anne Kuyt
- Fred Logue
- Marie Lynch
- Emma Maher
- Adam May and the team in Language
- Brian Murray
- Claire McGing
- Maura McLoughlin
- Ellie McMahon
- Ciara O'Leary
- Caitriona O'Sullivan
- Rachel Power
- Aida Rinkeviciene
- Amy Ryan

OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD



ELLEN O'MALLEY - DUNLOP, CHAIRPERSON

Ellen is Adjunct Professor to the School of Law at the University of Limerick. She was the CEO of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre for 10 years, 2006-2016. Previously she worked as a Psychotherapist for 24 years and was the first female Chairperson of the Irish Council for Psychotherapy. For over 25 years she has been Director of the Annual Bard Summer School Clare Island, Co. Mayo. Ellen is a member of the Legal Aid Board and a Fine Gael Candidate for Dublin South West in the next General Election.



SARAH BENSON, DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Sarah is the current CEO of Women's Aid, a leading national frontline and advocacy organisation working to end domestic violence and abuse in Ireland. Previously Sarah was the CEO of Ruhama, the NGO working nationally with women affected by prostitution including victims of sex trafficking, and before this she was the Manager of the National Domestic Violence Helpline. Sarah has extensive additional experience of work in the community and voluntary sector both in Ireland and abroad.



CATRÍONA GRAHAM

Catríona is Policy and Campaigns Officer with the European Women's Lobby where she works on women's sexuality, health, wellbeing and rights, including leading campaigning efforts on combatting commercial sexual exploitation. She also works to promote intersectional values, including promoting migrant women's rights and girls' rights. Catríona is an active musician and formerly sat on the Board of Co-Orch Dublin. She has worked at the Immigrant Council of Ireland and the Children's Rights Alliance and volunteered with Ruhama and for repeal of the 8th Amendment.



VIVIENNE GLANVILLE

Vivienne has over 18 years' experience working in the area of women's human rights in the community sector in a voluntary and professional capacity. Vivienne is passionate about community initiatives which support the development of women and women's engagement in civil society. She is an NCCWN (National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks) local Coordinator in Ronanstown, Clondalkin.

OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD



SINEAD KEANE

Sinead has a decade's experience in the fields of communications, fundraising and social justice. Having worked with non-profit organisations like Amnesty International Ireland and Women's Aid, she is now Communications Manager at BelonG To Youth Services. She has extensive experience in the community and voluntary sector including Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, Gay Switchboard Ireland, Foroige, and a sex work outreach project with Chrysalis, Dublin. Sinead has a BA in Communications Studies from Dublin City University, and is currently undertaking a M.Sc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy at University College Cork.



LOUISE LOVETT

Louise is the CEO of Longford Women's Link (LWL), a substantial rural women's NGO that advocates on the issues that impact women and their families. Louise was recognised for her work by being awarded the Image Magazine Social Entrepreneur Business Woman of the Year 2017. Prior to working in the community and voluntary sector, Louise gained extensive management and strategic planning experience working in the corporate sector for over 27 years. Louise is Chairperson of Longford County Childcare Committee (LCCC), a member of the Longford LCDC, the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Housing Forum (MRJHCF), the Longford Westmeath Children & Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) and of Longford County Council's Socio Economic Strategic Policy Committee.



ROSALEEN MCDONAGH

Rosaleen is a long time human rights activist particularly on issues affecting Travellers, Roma, women and people with disabilities. Rosaleen has built her feminist analysis and career from her subjective experiences as a Traveller woman and a woman with a disability. She has worked in Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre for ten years where she jointly managed the Violence against Women programme. She is a playwright and a regular contributor to The Irish Times writing from the perspective of a Traveller feminist. She holds a PhD from Northumbria University.



ASHIMEDUA OKONKWO

Ashimedua is a solicitor in Ireland for five years and a New York State Attorney at Law for seven years. Ashimedua is passionate about gender equality and is the Chairperson of a migrant organisation that has operated in Ireland for 17 years.

OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD



NUALA RYAN

Nuala, a dedicated feminist and a long-standing member of NWCI, represented the Irish Federation of University Women for a number of years. 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, she is Chairperson of a Prison Visiting Committee. Nuala's work reflects her concerns regarding women's social exclusion and her commitment to the importance of education.



INI USANGA

Ini is the Manager of Love and Care for People, an organisation that provides a free confidential and supportive service for women and young people who are survivors of family violence and social exclusion. Ini is a Philanthropist, Family Violence Expert, Social Entrepreneur and human rights advocate. Ini is passionate about issues of social justice, reproductive rights, equality and fairness. She is an International multi award winning activist and seats on the Social Inclusion committee of Cork County Council.



ETHEL BUCKLEY, CO-OPTED MEMBER

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 MARION DYER, CO-OPTED MEMBER

After completing medical school in 1985, Marion worked in a variety of disciplines in Irish hospitals and completed General Practice Training at the Wessex Deanery UK in 1993. She worked as a GP and was appointed as a Senior Lecturer at the medical school at the University of Southampton until she returned to Ireland in 1999, and set up her practice in Blanchardstown, West Dublin. Marion is particularly interested in women's health, violence against women, and child protection. She is an Assistant Professor at the medical school in Trinity College Dublin, and a Committee Member of Doctors for Choice since 2012.

NWCI Submissions

- NWCI submission on the review of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, January 2019
- Pre-legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme of the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill, January 2019
- NWCI Submission: National Plan on Business and Human Rights, February 2019
- NWCI Submission: Development of a Long-Term Strategy for the Courts Service, February 2019
- Response to Mid-term Review Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, March 2019
- It Stops Now – Toolkit, March 2019
- Vote Yes – Create greater Certainty and Clarity for Families going through Divorce, May 2019
- Feminist Manifesto for the European Elections 2019, May 2019
- Feminist Manifesto for the Local Elections 2019, May 2019
- The Gender Pay Gap Information Bill - NWCI's Recommended Amendments, May 2019
- Celebrating the role of Women over 120 years of Local Government, May 2019
- NWCI Submission to the Seanad Public Consultation Committee on Travellers, June 2019
- Response to Study on Familicide and Domestic Homicide Reviews, July 2019
- NWCI's Pre-Budget Submission - Department of Employment and Social Protection 2020, July 2019
- Equality Now, Invest in Women - NWCI's Pre-Budget Submission 2020, July 2019
- NWCI Submission on Access to Contraception, August 2019
- Women's Health in Ireland – an Evidence Base for the Development of a Women's Health Action Plan, September 2019
- A Briefing on Women's Health in Ireland, September 2019
- Online harassment, Harmful Communication and Related Offences - NWCI Submission, September 2019
- Women for Change - A resource for women and women's Group working for equality and social change – Plain English, October 2019
- Women Beyond the Dáil: More Women in Local Government, November 2019
- Women for Change Evaluation Report, October 2019
- NWCI Submission on a Legal Framework for Abortion in Northern Ireland, December 2019

COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIP

NWCI is a Board Member of

- European Women's Lobby
- Community Work Ireland

NWCI is a member of the following Committees, Campaigns and Groups

- Alcohol Health Alliance
- Business and Human Rights Implementation Group
- Business and Human Rights Subgroup Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights
- CervicalCheck Public Patient Involvement Panel
- Community Platform
- Community and Voluntary Pillar
- Community Work Ireland Mental Health Network
- Better Europe Alliance
- Courting Disaster Coalition
- CSO Sexual Violence Survey Liaison Group
- Department of Education and Skills – Technical Group to develop Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive - Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade NGO Standing Committee on Human Rights
- 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
- Health Reform Alliance
- Home Care Coalition
- HPV Vaccination Alliance
- HSE Tobacco Control Partners Group
- HSE Patient Forum
- Irish Cancer Society Trial Steering 'We Can Quit' Committee
- Irish Observatory on Violence Against Women
- 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 Steering Committee on FGM



COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIP

- Public Participation Network National Advisory Group
- Raise the Roof Coalition
- Turn Off the Red Light Campaign
- The Tusla Strategic Review of Domestic Violence Accommodation Group
- Women's Mental Health Network

NWCI is a member of the following Organisations

- Age Action
- Barnardos
- European Anti-Poverty Network
- INOU - Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed
- Irish Network against Racism
- NALA – the National Adult Literacy Agency
- Smashing Times Theatre and Film Company



Board Members 2019

Ellen O'Malley Dunlop (Chairperson)
Sarah Benson (Deputy Chairperson)
Sinead Keane
Catriona Graham
Rosaleen McDonagh
Ini Usanga
Nuala Ryan
Vivienne Glanville
Louise Lovett
Ashimedua Okonkwo

Co-opted members

Ethel Buckley
Dr Marion Dwyer

Company secretary

Registered office

Auditor

Bankers

Solicitors

Anne Gibney

100 North King Street
Dublin 7

Browne Murphy & Hughes
Chartered & Certified Accountants
28 Upper Fitzwilliam Street
Dublin 2

Bank of Ireland
Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2

Gartlan Furey Solicitors
20 Fitzwilliam Square
Dublin 2





BOARD MEETINGS & SUBCOMMITTEES

Board Meetings & Subcommittees

There were 7 Board meetings during 2019

Attendance at meetings

Ellen O'Malley Dunlop	7 Meetings
Sarah Benson	4 Meetings
Louise Lovett	4 Meetings
Rosaleen McDonagh	5 Meetings
Nuala Ryan	5 Meetings
Catriona Graham	5 Meetings
Sinead Keane	4 Meetings
Ini Usanga	5 Meetings
Vivienne Glanville	4 Meetings
Ashimedu Okonkwo	5 Meetings
Ethel Buckley	2 Meeting
Dr Marion Dwyer	4 Meetings



SUBCOMMITTEES

Governance Subcommittee

Members of subcommittee

Catriona Graham (Chair), Sarah Benson, Sinead Keane, Louise Lovett and Anne Gibney

Subcommittee met five times during 2019

Anne Gibney	5 meetings
Catriona Graham	4 meetings
Sarah Benson	4 meetings
Sinead Keane	4 meetings
Louise Lovett	3 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 principles in the code was conducted July 2019. 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 need to be addressed.

Employment Subcommittee

Members of subcommittee

Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, Orla O'Connor, Marion Dyer, Louise Lovett, Anne Gibney.

Finance Subcommittee

Members of subcommittee

Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, Sarah Benson, Sheena Frost, Ini Usanga, Anne Gibney & Vivienne Glanville.

Subcommittee met 4 times during 2019

Ellen O'Malley Dunlop	4 meetings
Sarah Benson	4 meetings
Sheena Frost	4 meetings
Anne Gibney	4 meetings
Vivienne Glanville	3 meetings

Guiding Principles for Fundraising

NWCI is committed to following the guidelines as outlined in the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising. This statement exists to improve fundraising practice, promote high levels of accountability and transparency by organisations fundraising from the public and to provide clarity and assurances to donors and prospective donors about the organisations they support.

The main work and activities of NWCI for 2019 were in line with our strategic plan 2016-2020.

Income & Expenditures

INCOME

Department of Justice & Equality	530,977
Pobal -SSNO	80,822
Group membership	21,196
Individual membership sub	10,346
HSE	150,000
Donations	5,136
DCGRA - Social partnership	18,840
Miscellaneous income	44,090
Rental income	10,560
IHREC	8,000
EU Communications	27,602
Daphne EU project	40,443
Community Foundation of Ireland	57,500
Department of Education	60,000
Department of Culture	29,928
Department of Housing	28,798
Centre for Reproductive Rights	15,000
	<hr/>
	€1,139,239

EXPENDITURE

Staff costs	708,268
Office running costs	33,052
Rent, cleaning	97,252
Communication & information	23,802
Governance and Statutory costs	25,606
Professional Fees	8,754
Programme Activities	157,899
	<hr/>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	€1,054,633



Financial Results

The financial results for the financial year ended 31st December 2019 show a net surplus of €84,606 (2018: net deficit €151,765).

Income

National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi) raised total income of €1,139,239 for the financial year ended 31st December 2019 (2018: €794,938).

Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year at €1,054,633 some of which relates to income received in previous years for programmes of work which were carried out in 2019.

The balance sheet is showing reserves of €171,476 in restricted funds and €62,766 in unrestricted funds. This increase in the balance sheet position is reflected mainly in restricted reserves being brought forward to 2020 to use for the purpose they were received. 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 NWCi'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.

NWCi's ability to deliver quality, value for money programmes has ensured strong positive relationships continue with Government Departments, Trusts and Philanthropic organisations. NWCi wishes 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 2019

	Restricted	Unrestricted		
	Funds	Funds	Total	Total
	2019	2019	2019	2018
	€	€	€	€
€				
Incoming Resources				
Donations	-	36,678	36,678	55,480
Charitable Activities	1,047,911	54,650	1,102,561	739,458
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Incoming Resources	1,047,911	91,328	1,139,239	794,938
Resources Expended				
Raising Funds	(7,052)	(2,196)	(9,248)	(6,993)
Charitable Activities	(974,310)	(71,075)	(1,045,385)	(939,710)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Resources Expended	(981,362)	(73,271)	(1,054,633)	(946,703)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net (Deficit)/Surplus for the Financial Year	66,549	18,057	84,606	(151,765)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

These financial statements were approved by the directors on 29th April 2020 and are signed on their behalf by Sarah Benson, Acting Chairperson and Vivienne Glanville, Director.



National Women's Council of Ireland – Amalgamated

Statement Of Financial Position As At 31 December 2019

	2019 €	2018 €
Current assets		
Debtors	12,618	10,337
Cash at Bank and in Hand	319,335	177,152
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	331,953 (97,711)	187,489 (37,853)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Current Assets	234,242	149,636
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Reserves		
Restricted Funds	171,476	104,927
Unrestricted Funds	62,766	44,709
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Members' funds	234,242	149,636

These financial statements were approved by the directors on 29th April 2020 and are signed on their behalf by Sarah Benson, Acting Chairperson and Vivienne Glanville, 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 of Ireland
100 North King Street
Dublin 7
www.nwci.ie

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