

AGREED
Department of Justice and Equality
National Women's Strategy 2017- 2020

Meeting of the Strategy Committee
26 September 2017, 12:00

The attendance list is appended.

1. Opening remarks and welcome

The Minister welcomed everyone to the meeting, expressed the Committee's appreciation to outgoing members and extended a welcome to new members.

A short extract of the BBC documentary "No more boys and girls" was played on video for the Committee.

2. Agenda

The agenda was adopted without amendment. Under AOB, the Secretariat requested to give an update on the application of lobbying regulations to the Committee's work.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 13 July 2017 were agreed, with a minor amendment to paragraph 3 on page 3, requested by the Department of Education & Skills.

4. Information item: presentation by the ESRI on research on Gender Balance in the Irish Civil Service

Professor Emer Smyth and Dr Helen Russell of the ESRI presented the results of two studies commissioned by the Departments of Public Expenditure and Reform and Justice and Equality on gender balance in the Civil Service. Having considered the findings, it was envisaged that follow-up action would be undertaken under Action 4.9 of the NSWG.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were raised:

- The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment asked whether the perceived work intensity results, which suggested men had lower work intensity than women, was due to men's expectations to work at high intensity.
- The NWCi asked whether the perception that senior positions were incompatible with flexible working was held by individuals or at an organisational level, and advised that the NWCi could provide good examples of successful flexible working at senior levels in the private sector. Dr Russell confirmed that the perception appeared to exist both among individuals and at an organisational level in some Departments, with certain kinds of worked associated with certain kinds of hours.
- DHealth asked if the same results would be obtained by eliminating gender and just focusing on those with childcare or eldercare responsibilities,

irrespective of gender. Dr Russell acknowledged that elder care as well as childcare did play a big part in individuals' decision-making, but there were other gender stereotypical ideas in assignment to roles.

- DHealth asked if bias was a big factor as the burden of caring, referring to a study by the SFI on bias in recruitment for research positions. Dr Russell said that there was a cumulative effect after recruitment. The absence of induction and handover was a greater deterrent for women than men. Some roles had greater visibility and were more easily packaged than others for the purpose of promotion. It was about making sure a developmental approach is taken.
- DAFM commented that the PMDS performance management system was focused on a person's current job, and asked how career planning could be supported. Professor Smyth observed that the study found good managerial support for staff going for promotion, but that PMDS was not used for this planning work.
- The HSE asked the ESRI for the draft extra questions to inform preparations for its own internal employee engagement survey. The NTWF suggested factoring in ethnic diversity would be useful, and asked if mentoring and coaching was considered to increase diversity in recruitment. Dr Russell observed that the human resource management system didn't collect this kind of information. The Department of Justice & Equality (Carol Baxter) observed that a 1% target had been introduced for ethnic minority staff in the Civil Service.
- Community Platform asked to what extent was there a focus on unconscious and conscious bias in the study, which could be the most difficult aspects to pin down and change.

The Minister concluded the discussion, noting that the study provided food for thought for future meetings.

5. Review of the Traffic light status report

The Minister thanked Departments for contributing status updates to the September traffic light report, with over 95% of actions which have begun now reported as broadly on track. He asked if remaining details could be submitted before the end of the week, so that a complete report could be made available to the Committee.

Responding to a request from Ibec on progress with the National STEM Education Policy under Action 1.8, the Department of Education and Skills advised that the consultation phase had been extended and pushed out the timelines for Actions 1.8 to 1.10. The Department was not expecting a significant delay with actions 1.9 and 1.10, but until new timelines had been agreed these actions were cautiously categorised as red.

The NTWF observed that a number of NSWG actions referenced the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy (NTRIS). She asked how NTRIS actions would be pulled out and fleshed out in the status reports on the NSWG, and suggested it would be useful to have similar ways of monitoring across the strategies. The NTWF also suggested that the rollout of actions which, for example, look to increase

employment, should show how the wider community benefits – taking account of ethnic and socio-economic status. The Department of Justice & Equality (Carol Baxter) responded that the Department would be looking at the set of strategies together (including also the migrant integration and disability strategies) and reviewing progress of one against the others, and would take these points consideration.

The Department of Finance advised that it did not have policy responsibility for actions 1.40 and 1.41, concerning pensions policy, and asked for this to be amended.

The Department of Justice & Equality (Marion Walsh) spoke on progress under actions 5.1 and 5.12. Concerning action 5.1, she explained that 4 of the 16 tasks leading to ratification of the Istanbul Convention were completed. The Victims Bill was progressing well and would be at Committee Stage this week. An issue had arisen with regard to the extra-territorial jurisdiction for some offences. Overall there may be a slippage by 1 Quarter on these actions. Issues raised at Committee level in respect of the Domestic Violence Bill were being addressed, and it was now expected the Bill would be enacted by end 2017.

The HSE briefed the Committee on progress with action 5.6, on the training of Community Healthcare Organisation staff in domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. To address the poor uptake of online training, due to staff limitations at CHO level, the HSE planned to take a different approach to training to increase numbers over the next year.

The NWCI proposed the setting up of a sub-committee on the gender pay gap. The NWCI also proposed that, as progress under the NSWG was very much affected by the Budget, the next meeting include a briefing from DPER and DFinance on the budget and social welfare rates for women, pensions and lone parents. The Department of Justice & Equality (Carol Baxter) advised that the relevant Departments would be asked to pull this information together for the next meeting.

In respect to NSWG Action 1.11, the NTWF asked whether it was intended to have a public consultation as part of the review on pathways to apprenticeships, noting that they were trying to get women from the Traveller and Roma communities into employment and apprenticeships provided one such route. The Department of Education & Skills stated they would look into this and respond directly.

6. Indicators and Targets

The Minister called on the Secretariat to give an update on progress made in identifying appropriate indicators and targets for the Strategy. The Secretariat explained that observations were received from most Departments and from Ibec, the NWCI, Community Platform and the NTWF. Any members who had yet to provide comments were invited to do so by the end of the week. ICTU advised that they would provide comments this week on the preliminary draft.

The Secretariat would work bilaterally with Departments to prepare a revised draft, with a view to circulating this to the Committee membership by 6 November, for feedback. The Department of Justice & Equality (Carol Baxter) observed that a list of 10 high value indicators might have more impact than a larger number of indicators.

A note setting out the next steps and incorporating the observations from Ibec, the NWCI, Community Platform and the NTWF was circulated at the meeting.

7. Communications

The Minister observed that, at a recent meeting he had attended with business leaders, they were not aware of the National Strategy for Women and Girls. He invited the Committee's views on approaches to communications on matters related to the Strategy.

The Secretariat observed that, by getting more people talking about gender, the National Strategy for Women and Girls had the potential to have an impact greater than the sum of its individual actions. The Secretariat noted that it was important to raise awareness of the Strategy among civil and public servants, as well as among members of the public.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment advised that it had developed inhouse guidance on stakeholder engagement for its staff, and offered to share this with the Committee.

The HSE felt its networks could be used more effectively, such as its quarterly newsletter for staff. There were opportunities for co-messaging, such as it did recently with Healthy Ireland and the "Community for Life" strategy. The HSE also felt it could do more to make its internal engagement with staff more consistent.

Community Platform suggested the Strategy could be used to generate awareness and discussion about equality and inequality. For example, one of their members sitting on a local authority committee had succeeded in naming women's equality as a concern for that committee. She felt there was a job of work to be done in this regard, and suggested that having user-friendly brochures on the Strategy available could be helpful.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine suggested exploring opportunities for partnership on issues such as the gender pay gap with like-minded organisations, which could help in getting the message out. She suggested considering an App for employers on the gender pay gap. The Secretariat noted that a public consultation on the gender pay gap was currently underway but with only 2 submissions received to date, and that there were number of applications in this area.

The NWCI felt a communication plan would be helpful, and should be clear about the impact of certain actions. She suggested identifying key moments in the Strategy's

implementation, such as during the annual Budget, when the overall message could also be promoted. The Minister advised that with so much going on already around the Budget announcement, additional messages could be lost, and suggested a later date.

Referring to the use of logos in the EU-funded PEIL programme, the Department of Justice & Equality asked if a 'NSWG logo' could also be attached to PEIL actions under the NSWG, as these were very visible to women on the ground.

ICTU suggested that copies of the NSWG could be disseminated at events, and observed that its recent equality seminar in Portlaoise was a missed opportunity in that regard.

The NTWF said it was important to ensure that communications should reach all strands from the national to the local level. She felt there were huge issues when people were sitting down to address policy formation at local level, to ensure they were kept up to date on progress at the national level and how they fed into it.

The Department of Finance observed that most Departments had state agencies and suggested this could easily be raised as part of their general discussion, such as by a request from the Secretary General.

8. AOB

The Secretariat advised that the issue of the application of the lobbying regulation to the range of activities of the Strategy Committee was raised with the Standards in Public Office (SIPO) for clarification. The options open to the Department in respect of the Committee included applying the Transparency Code and publishing the membership list, agendas and minutes. It was hoped to have an early response from SIPO, following which the Secretariat would plan the best way forward.

9. Next meeting

The Minister announced that the next Strategy Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 25 January 2017, from 09:30-11:30am in 51 St Stephen's Green.

Attendance

Minister David Stanton TD, Chair

Organisations

Paula Barry-Walsh, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Carol Baxter, Assistant Secretary, Department of Justice and Equality
Nina Brennan, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
Anna Donegan, Department of Finance

Rachel Doyle, The Community Platform
Stephen Fadian, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
Fergal Fox, HSE
Deirdre Garvey, The Wheel
Suzanne Griffin, SIPTU
Nichola Harkin, Ibec
Miriam Holt, NCCWN
Ann Howard, Department of Defence
Walter Jayawardene, IHREC
David Joyce, ICTU
Maria Joyce, National Traveller Women's Forum (NTWF)
Dr Fiona Mansergh, Department of Health
Sean McNamara, Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Rebecca Minch, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
Gráinne Morrissey, Department of Education & Skills
Annmarie O'Connor, Department of Employment and Social Protection
Orla O'Connor, National Women's Council of Ireland
Margaret O'Gorman, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Eoghan Richardson, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
Abby Ryan, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade
Marion Walsh, Department of Justice & Equality
Olive Walsh, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Apologies

Síona Cahill, Union of Students in Ireland
Sarita Johnston, Enterprise Ireland
Lisa Keyes, Public Appointments Service
Paul Lemass, Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government
Dr Kara McGann, Ibec
Moira Murrell, Chief Executive, Kerry County Council, City and County Management Association
Geraldine O'Sullivan, Irish Farmer's Association

Department of Justice and Equality – Gender Equality Division (Secretariat)

John Hurley, Deirdre Ní Néill, Eileen Fitzgerald, Terence O'Hagan