

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

Meeting of the Strategy Committee
13 June 2018, 15:00

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, and to guest speaker Dr Cliona Loughnane.

2. Agenda

The agenda was adopted without amendment. No items added under AOB.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 25 January 2018 were agreed.

Ms O'Connor (NWCI) referred to her request at the Committee's September 2017 meeting for a presentation by Departments on the impact of the Budget on their implementation of the Strategy, and expressed regret that this had not been addressed in the meeting Agenda. She asked if either the Department of Finance or the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform could address the Committee in the context of the Budget. The Minister said this would be noted for the next meeting after the budget.

Ms O'Connor also noted that the matters arising in the minutes of the January meeting indicated that stakeholders would be updated on the Gender Pay Gap, and asked for information on the plan to be developed on the wider issues. Mr Hurley advised that the Department of Justice and Equality had met with the NWCI, Ibec and ICTU and was shortly going to Government with a legislative proposal under which employers would report on their gender pay gaps. He advised the Bill would take the form of an enabling provision under which regulations would be developed. Further to this, NSWG Action 1.22 envisages a form of information provision and discussion needs to take place. The Department was certainly open to considering wider issues and there were other practical issues that must be addressed before the legislation was implemented.

Dr Baxter advised that the proposal for a Commission on the Status of Women was still in development and the Department hoped to have information for the next meeting.

In response to a request from Ms Holt for circulation of documents for the meetings 3 weeks in advance, in order to facilitate consultation within representative groups, the Minister stated the Secretariat would do its best.

4. Information item

The Committee was briefed by Fergal Fox, HSE and Dr Cliona Loughnane, NWCI, on progress to date on partnership work between the HSE and the National Women's Council of Ireland in identifying and implementing key actions to address the particular physical and mental health needs of women and girls (action 2.1), and how this might be progressed further (*presentation attached*). Mr Fox noted that the men's health strategy focused on promotion and included gender training around masculinity in some programmes. It was noted that the HSE does not yet have a programme on the public sector duty under s.43 of the IHREC Act 2014.

Ms O'Connor (NWCI), expressing her appreciation to the HSE, stated resourcing and driving forward the programme would be the real challenge and that she was looking to indicators and how the programme would progress. She felt it would be helpful if the Committee could prioritise this action.

Ms Doyle felt the presentation was timely and women's health needed to be recognised as had been done with the men's health action plan. She noted that the Women's Health Council was no longer in operation, and advised that young women's organisations be included among civil society groups consulted.

Ms Joyce asked that Traveller, Roma and marginalised women be core to the approach, and that the National Traveller Health Strategy be included in the policy references. Echoing the call for resources, she noted the Traveller health area had no increase since 2008.

Reflecting on the next steps, Mr Fox said he had submitted a proposal for the initial scoping research, while looking this year to engage with the various Departments in the HSE to consider what inequalities should be their focus, and increase engagement with the Department of Health. Dr Loughnane stated that, while some scoping research could be done by themselves, the NWCI had also put in an application for National Lottery funding for a researcher. Dr Mansergh said the Department of Health had scheduled a meeting with the NWCI and would support the process in any way they can.

The Minister thanked Mr Fox and Dr Loughnane for their presentation, and stated that the Secretariat would keep the Committee informed of developments in this space.

5. Review of progress

May 2018 Traffic light status report

The Minister thanked Departments for contributing status updates to the May traffic light report, and asked that updates on outstanding actions be provided by the end of the week. The Minister advised that work had begun on all but 17 of the 139 actions, with an additional 3 actions reported as complete since January. 94 actions were on

track, minor delivery issues reported in respect of 4 actions, and more significant delivery issues in respect of a further 10 actions.

The Minister invited relevant Departments to brief the Committee on recently-completed actions:

- Action 3.7: Mr O'Reilly noted that designation of the Ladies Football and Camogie Finals as events of major importance was secured as an outcome of a lot of work. The record attendance at the 2017 Ladies Football final was also noted by the Committee.
- Action 4.9: Ms O'Neill (DPER) advised the follow up to the ESRI report included preparation of guidance on maternity leave and flexible working for officers at higher grades.
- Action 5.12: Ms Walsh (DJE) advised that, following enactment of the Domestic Violence Act, work was in progress to draft legislation to provide for extra-territorial offences. The Oireachtas had advised that pre-legislative scrutiny was not required and it was envisaged the legislation would be published and enacted by year end. It was hoped to be in a position to ratify the Istanbul Convention in Q1 2019 (action 5.1 refers).

In response to a query from Ms O'Connor (NWCI) about plans to inform the public of the introduction of new offences in the recent Domestic Violence Act, Ms Walsh (DJE) advised the current focus was on staff training and IT enhancements in the Courts Service and Garda Síochána with a view to commencement of the legislation by Q4 2018. The Judiciary was also very conscious to prepare for the legislation. Ms Walsh would speak with the NWCI about public awareness issues.

The Minister invited observations on the actions reported as having minor or significant delivery issues.

- DES: (N. Kenny)
 - Work on actions 1.9 and 1.10 had been delayed by the National STEM Education Policy Statement (action 1.8). Action 1.9 would now be completed at end June, and action 1.10 would follow.
 - All seven universities had now received an Athena SWAN award (action 6.12 refers).
- DCYA (D.O'Sullivan):
 - Action 1.4: It is hoped to enact the Childcare Support Bill by end June. It will be underpinned by secondary legislation and formal policy guidelines. Work is ongoing on these within the Department, and on the preparation of regulations to provide for the registration of school age childcare services by the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.
 - Action 5.7: Tusla was provided with dedicated additional funding in 2017 and 2018 to support the development of services - €1.5m additional in 2017 and €1.8m in 2018. This funding is being used to ~~increase~~ improve the geographical spread of services.
- DHealth (F. Mansergh)
 - Action 2.7: This action, while behind schedule, is substantially completed and the draft National Intercultural Health Strategy is with

HSE management for signoff. In response to a query from Ms Joyce, Dr Mansergh thought the Traveller community was named in the draft Strategy.

- Action 2.25: Pre-legislative scrutiny of the general scheme of the Assisted Human Reproduction Bill is in progress, having commenced in January, and a model of care is being developed.
- Action 5.6: There is a cross-agency focus on this action and the training programme is now accredited. In response to a query from Ms Joyce on the extent of consultation with diverse groups on the development of culturally appropriate toolkits and guidance, Dr Mansergh is to ask the relevant division and respond.
- DJE (D. Ní Néill and M. Walsh):
 - Action 2.13: While funding had been secured for 2018 for the step down facility from prison for female offenders, the project was delayed to finalise the specification and address compliance with fire and planning issues. Subject to any unanticipated delay, it was intended to publish the request for tender by end June and have the facility in place by end 2018.
 - Action 2.18: This commitment is being considered in the context of wider discussion on an inter-departmental level and having regard to proposals on family leave and work-life balance being developed at EU level. It is expected to be in a position to report with more detail in the autumn.
 - Actions 5.8 & 5.13: Several sections of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 relate to the law on incest and cannot be commenced as amendments to that law are being brought forward in the General Scheme of a Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2018. This Bill is expected to be published by the end of the Dáil term and is a priority area of legislation for the Government. It is possible that enactment may take place before end 2018.
 - Action 5.14: While it was intended that legislation would be brought forward in 2017 to provide for offences relating to harmful communications, progress was not as rapid as anticipated due to competing legislative priorities. The Government has decided to discontinue work on the Government Bill and to support a Private Member's Bill introduced by Deputy Brendan Howlin, to ensure that legislation in this area can be enacted as swiftly as possible. Officials will be meeting with the Deputy in the coming weeks with the intention of bringing forward Government amendments to ensure the Bill can be safely enacted, and it is hoped the Bill can be enacted by the end of the year.
- DRCD on action 6.9: Ms Dowd advised that discussion on indicators for the Action Plan for Rural Development was ongoing and a report was due in 2019.

Discussion of other actions:

- Action 2.9: Ms Joyce asked if some detail on the actions for Traveller women and girls could be included in reporting on Action 2.9. She noted that there had

been no increase in funding since 2008 in the Traveller Health Programme and most women working in the programme were on minimum wage. The Minister asked the Department of Health and the HSE to engage directly with Ms Joyce on this matter.

- Action 2.26: Ms Doyle asked if there was information on the current HPV immunisation vaccine update. Dr Mansergh understood the takeup had increased in 2017, but that figures may not be published yet by the National Immunisation Office, and noted the contribution by civil society groups to the campaign to increase takeup of the vaccine. Ms Doyle asked for views from Cosc on the UN's recommendation that Ireland develop a strategy on child sexual violence which Community Partnership members felt could fill some gaps. Ms Walsh advised that a recent Garda inspectorate report had also considered these issues, that the DCYA was involved and this might take a similar path. Mr O'Sullivan undertook to investigate and respond with more information.
- Actions 3.3 & 4.14: In response to questions from Ms Doyle and Ms Holt, D. Ní Néill (DJE) explained that these actions had not yet commenced as staff resources were fully committed this year.
- Action 5.3: Ms Walsh (DJE) advised that consultation on the awareness-raising campaign on sexual violence had paused but a package was being finalised for discussion with the campaign advisory group and consultations would resume in about a week's time.
- Actions 1.40 and 1.41: Ms Donegan advised that DPER rather than the Department of Finance was working on pension matters. She would confirm this with DPER and DEASP.
- Action 4.5: Ms Doyle noted the progress on this action and asked for information on the process under which funding was recently granted. Mr Kennedy (DHPLG) advised that Women for Election had approached the Department in November with a proposal, and the Department subsequently awarded a grant.

The Minister advised that the suggestions and other points raised would be noted in the minutes, and observed that solid progress had been made in the first year of the Strategy.

Progress with Indicators and Targets

The Minister called on the Secretariat to present progress since the last meeting on identifying indicators for the Strategy.

The Secretariat (D. Ní Néill) stated that two levels of indicators were being presented. A high level set of indicators was included in the draft annual progress report, pitched at overall Strategy level. These drew on Eurostat indicators and would provide a means of international comparison. That set was complemented by a more detailed set of indicators at the action level, with project managers of the actions and the Strategy Committee in mind as the main users. The Secretariat did not propose to include these action level indicators in the annual report, which would have a more

general audience. The revised draft set of actions circulated for comments included basic indicators for reports, reviews and legislation to be produced by Strategy actions, most of which have target dates for delivery. Some quantitative indicators are suggested where relevant data appears to be currently available, and where these were capable of further disaggregation, this was strongly encouraged by the Secretariat. Comments on the suggested indicators were requested by 29 June. Departments were also asked to fill in the data for the indicators on the statistical table provided, with any targets. The Secretariat intended to respond to suggestions with a further draft by the second week in July, and to seek agreement by written procedure. It was proposed that the indicator listing and statistical annex would be provided with the traffic light reports to the Committee for reference at its future meetings.

Ms Joyce asked, in the context of Action 4.5, whether the participation of specific groups of women could be monitored. For example, in some SICAP programmes, there are targets specific to Traveller women. She supported the disaggregation of data where possible.

The Minister stated that the Secretariat would take that away and seek what could be done. He stated work would proceed along the lines outlined, with a view to agreement by written procedure by end July.

Draft of first annual progress report (2017/2018)

The Minister called on the Secretariat to explain the steps to be completed to produce the first annual progress report on the Strategy.

The Secretariat (D. Ní Néill) presented the draft report, which was slightly changed from the template circulated in January. It was proposed the report would include a snapshot of women's situation in Ireland and an introduction to the Strategy and the Strategy Committee, followed by an overview of the work carried out since May 2017 explaining the traffic light progress monitoring tool. A summary would be given of actions completed, significant progress on other actions still underway, and reflecting on actions that are reported with delivery issues. A set of high-level indicators would be included in the Appendix to the report, along with the terms of reference and membership of the Committee, and the complete list of actions with a progress narrative for each action. It was proposed that recommendations from the Committee could be referred to in Section 4 of the report which would look forward to 2018/2019. Photographs and graphics illustrating actions advanced during the year would be welcome, and the Committee's comments and suggestions on the draft were invited by 29 June. It was proposed to respond with a further draft by the second week of July, with a view to agreement by written procedure by end July. The Progress Report would be presented to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform before publication on the Department of Justice and Equality's genderequality.ie website. It was not proposed to produce hardcopies of the report.

The Minister asked for outstanding progress narratives and photographs from Departments and Agencies, and comments from Committee members on the draft, to be submitted by 29 June. A revised draft would then be circulated by the Secretariat with a view to agreement by written procedure.

6. AOB

The Minister advised that work was on hands on extending unpaid parental leave. He also advised that work on Corporate Boards gender balance issues would be kicked off later that week.

7. Next meeting

The Minister thanked the Committee for their contributions and announced that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 19 September 2018, from 09:30-11:30am in 51 St Stephen's Green.

Attendance

Minister David Stanton TD, Chair

Anna Donegan, Department of Finance

Dr Carol Baxter, Assistant Secretary, Department of Justice & Equality

Síona Cahill, Union of Students in Ireland (USI)

Sandra Cairns, Public Appointments Service (PAS)

Aisling Cusack, Union of Students in Ireland (USI)

Rachel Doyle, Community Platform

Paula Dowd, Department of Rural & Community Development

Fergal Fox, HSE

Deirdre Garvey, CEO, The Wheel

Alison Geraghty, Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs

Nichola Harkin, Ibec

Miriam Holt, National Collective of Community-based Women's Networks (NCCWN)

Walter Jayawardene, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)

Maria Joyce, National Traveller Women's Forum, representing Traveller and Roma women

Michael Keenan, Department of Children & Youth Affairs

Jason Kennedy, Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government

Neville Kenny, Department of Education & Skills

Dr Clíona Loughnane, National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI)

Dr Fiona Mansergh, Department of Health

Jennifer McCarthy Flynn, National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI)

Dr Kara McGann, Ibec

Annmarie O'Connor, Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection

Orla O'Connor, Director, National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI)

Deirdre O'Neill, Department of Public Expenditure & Reform

Brendan O'Reilly, Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment

Denis O’Sullivan, Department of Children & Youth Affairs
Eoghan Richardson, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
Marion Walsh, Department of Justice and Equality
Olive Walsh, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Apologies

Paula Barry-Walsh, Nina Brennan, Valerie Byrne, Ann Howard, Sarita Johnston, David Joyce, Rebecca Minch, Moira Murrell, Emer O’Brien, Karen O’Loughlin, Geraldine O’Sullivan, and Tanya Ward.

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

John Hurley, Deirdre Ní Néill, Eileen Fitzgerald, Caroline Spring.