

Annual Impact Report 2024

Wednesday 25th June 2025 | 11am - 1pm
Wood Quay Venue, Dublin 8

Launch Programme: Progressing Action Towards an Equal Ireland with Zero Tolerance of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

11am Welcome by Ailbhe Smyth, Chairperson of Women's Aid.

11.05am Address by Jim O'Callaghan, T.D., Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

11.15am Presentation by Sarah Benson, CEO of Women's Aid: *2024 in review - Women's Aid record breaking frontline activities and organisational achievements in its 50th year of operation.*

Spotlighting challenges and opportunities under the Four Pillars of the Istanbul Convention and the Third National Strategy on DSGBV.

11.30am **Co-ordinated Policy**

Dr. Stephanie O'Keeffe, CEO of Cuan, the National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency: *Progress and developments to co-ordinate the whole of Government response to DSGBV.*

11.45am **Protection**

Nem Kearns, Co-Director of Disabled Women Ireland: *An intersectional view on the challenges and requirements to deliver effective responses for Disabled women subject to violence and abuse.*

12 noon **Prevention**

Gemma Kelly, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, CEASE: *Strategies and opportunities to tackle the harms of pornography as a cornerstone for primary prevention and to reduce gender-based violence.*

12.15pm **Prosecution/Access to Justice**

Professor Stephanie Holt, Department of Social Work and Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin: *Evidence based requirements to achieve a domestic abuse responsive, and child centred family justice system in Guardianship, Custody & Access Proceedings.*

12.30pm **Question and Answers**

12.45pm **Closing remarks** by Ailbhe Smyth followed by light lunch and networking.

#ZeroTolerance #WomensAid2024 Wifi Code: W34r3woodQu4y322!



Ailbhe Smyth

Ailbhe Smyth is the Chairperson of Women's Aid and a long-time campaigner on feminist, LGBT and other social issues. Most recently, she played a leading role in the marriage equality referendum campaign

in 2015 and was Co-Director of the Together for Yes campaign to repeal the 8th Amendment. She was the founding head of Women's Studies at UCD where she lectured for many years.



Jim O'Callaghan T.D.

Jim O'Callaghan, T.D., is the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. He was elected to Dáil Éireann for the constituency of Dublin Bay South in the general elections of 2016, 2020 and 2024. Previously,

he had been a councillor on Dublin City Council. He has served as a member and Chairman of the Oireachtas Committee on Justice and was also a member of the Oireachtas Finance and Education Committees. He has been the Fianna Fáil spokesperson on Justice since 2016.



Sarah Benson

Sarah Benson is the Chief Executive Officer of Women's Aid since 2019. For nine years prior to this role, Sarah was the CEO of Ruhama, an Irish NGO working nationally with women and people affected by prostitution

including victims of sex trafficking. In addition, Sarah has previous experience as Manager of the National Domestic Violence Helpline and extensive work in the community and voluntary sector both in Ireland and abroad, working particularly with marginalised ethnic minority women and youth. Sarah is a Ministerial Appointee to the Boards of The Irish Courts Service and CUAN, the National DSGBV Agency.



Dr Stephanie O'Keeffe

Dr. Stephanie O'Keeffe was appointed as the first CEO of Cuan in February 2024. Cuan is a new Statutory Agency, established under the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency Act 2023. Cuan is an Agency

under the aegis of the Department of Justice. Dr O'Keeffe previously worked in the Health Service Executive (HSE) as the National Director of Health and Wellbeing and more recently National Director of Operations Planning.



Nem Kearns

Nem is a gender, LGBTQIA+ and disability justice advocate, with a particular passion for grassroots community building within these intersections, who works with legislators, Civil Society Organisations and State bodies to create effective

policy solutions to address structural inequalities. Nem currently serves as Co-Director of Disabled Women Ireland, the all-island Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO) representing Disabled people also marginalised by gender, and, as part of the Disabled Gender-Based Violence Taskforce, participated on the Advisory Group for this year's research study "Disabled women's experience of intimate partner abuse in Ireland", co-created with Women's Aid and Trinity College Dublin.



Gemma Kelly

Gemma Kelly is the Head of Policy and Public Affairs at CEASE, the Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation. Based in the United Kingdom, CEASE's mission is to expose and dismantle the cultural and commercial drivers of sexual

exploitation with a particular focus on the pornography industry. Gemma has worked in political advocacy and campaigning for over a decade, and holds an MA in Human Trafficking, Migration and Organised Crime and an MA in Equality Studies.



Professor Stephanie Holt

Stephanie Holt is Professor in Social Work in the School of Social Work & Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin where she has worked since 2000. Stephanie has researched and published internationally in the areas of child welfare and domestic violence

and abuse (DVA) and was Principal Investigator on the recent Women's Aid commissioned research on how adult and child victim-survivors of domestic violence and abuse experience navigating the Irish Family Law system in custody and access proceedings.



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