

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

03/03/2022

Fears that Garda Violence Against Women will be Overlooked in Ireland's New DSGBV Strategy

There is growing concern amongst those who are extremely vulnerable to police violence that Ireland's Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV), expected to be published within weeks, will fail to address the problem of garda violence against women.

This incredibly important Strategy will guide a cross government response to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence from 2022 – 2026 under the four pillars of prevention, protection, prosecution and policy co-ordination.

Work began on the Strategy in April 2021, led by an Executive Group made up of the Department of Justice and two NGOs, the National Women's Council of Ireland and Safe Ireland. The development of the Strategy was then overseen by a Monitoring Committee of 31 representatives. This Monitoring Committee was made up of 16 persons (52%) who are representatives of NGOs, 12 persons (39%) who are representatives of Government bodies and 3 persons (5%) who are representatives of professional associations.

A summary draft strategy recently published says these NGO members will hold the Government to account. But will they? Drilling down on the finances of the NGOs in question they are on average 75% Government funded.

Lucy Smyth, Director of UglyMugs.ie, the Irish sex worker safety scheme says Garda violence against women, especially sexual violence, is a major problem in the community she works with of sex workers and victims of sex trafficking, many of whom are also migrants and trans people. *"Every week, we are having deeply troubling conversations within our community about the Garda violence so many of us have experienced and continue to face. It is very concerning to us that the serious and urgent issue of police violence against women could be simply swept under the carpet in Ireland's Third DSGBV strategy."*

An additional concern is that the draft summary draft Third DSGBV strategy specifically identifies one of the pillars of prosecution as being increasing law enforcement actions in regard to reducing demand for prostitution. A wealth of evidence has shown such police action has the impact of increasing violence against people in sex work. Ugly Mugs stats show that violent crime increased by 92% following the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 which has drastically changed the policing of sex work. Most recently an Amnesty International Ireland report has shown how the 2017 Act has facilitated the targeting and abuse of sex workers, the state is failing to protect them from violence and they now have a profound lack of trust in the Gardaí.

The Department of Justice has recently launched a public consultation survey on the Third National Strategy on DSGBV, but as this survey asks no questions about Garda violence against women and doesn't even include a free text area where participants could write in themselves that this is a concern to them, it is clearly not going to highlight Garda violence against women as a problem.

Police violence against women has become a high profile public issue in the UK in recent years, following a series of incidents such as the rape and murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Metropolitan Police officer in 2021.

Lucy Smyth says "Ireland really needs up its game in terms of dealing with Garda violence against women. The lives of people in sex work and victims of trafficking matter. The Government and NGOs heavily funded by the government cannot continue to not take Garda violence against women seriously because it doesn't fit comfortably within their agendas. We know Garda violence against women in sex work is a problem. We have brought to public attention cases showing this. If the new DSGBV does not address the problem of Garda violence against women, more women will surely suffer. It is not too late for the DSGBV Strategy to include garda violence and this needs to happen."

ENDS

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Ugly Mugs is a volunteer-run not-for-profit technology initiative that runs a safety scheme for sex workers in Ireland. Please see <https://uglymugs.ie/> for further details

FURTHER DETAILS

Documents referred to:

Amnesty International (2022) Ireland: "We live within a violent system." Structural violence against sex workers in Ireland.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur29/5156/2022/en/>

Campbell, R., Smith, L., Leacy, B., Ryan, M. and Stoica, B. (2020) Not Collateral Damage: Trends in Violence and Hate Crimes Experienced by Sex Workers in the Republic of Ireland. Irish Journal of Sociology.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0791603520939794>

Cusack, J. (2015) Garda accused of rape says he arrested prostitute - then later returned to 'brothel' to have sex with her. Belfast Telegraph. 13 July.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/garda-accused-of-rape-says-he-arrested-prostitute-then-later-returned-to-brothel-to-have-sex-with-her-31373259.html>

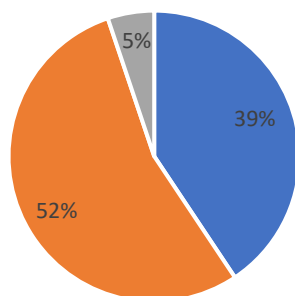
Department of Justice (2021) Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence: An Audit of Structures.

https://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/DSGBV_Audit_Report.pdf/Files/DSGBV_Audit_Report.pdf

Department of Justice (2022) Draft National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence 2022-26 Summary Report. <https://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/DSGBV-Summary-Document.pdf/Files/DSGBV-Summary-Document.pdf>

Department of Justice (2022) Public Consultation on the Third National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Strategy. <https://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/DSGBV-Public-Consultation>

Third National DSGBV Strategy Monitoring Committee Members by Type

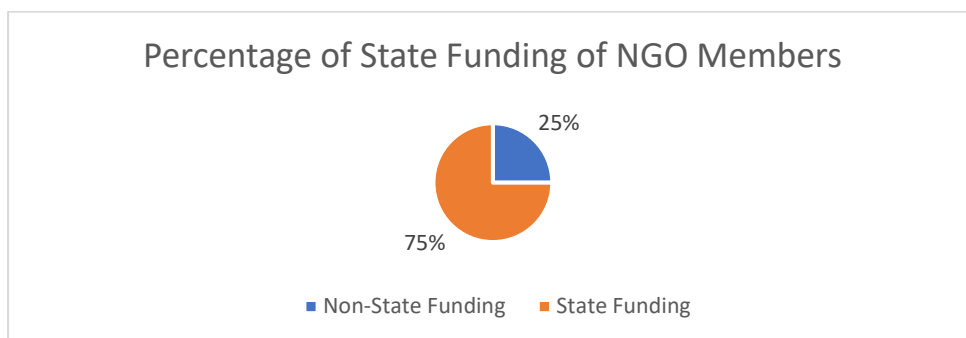


■ Government ■ NGO ■ Professional Association

Members of the Monitoring Committee of the Third National DSGBV Strategy

Organisation	Representative	Org Type
Akidwa	Salome Uibuga	NGO
Bar of Ireland	Aoife McNickle	Professional Association
Bar of Ireland	Philip McCormack	Professional Association
Courts Services	Kevin Fidgeon	Government
Courts Services	Elaine Kenny ,	Government
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth	John Lohan	Government
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth	Ruth Doggett	Government
Department of Education and Skills	Stephen Beamish	Government
Department of Health	Fiona Conroy	Government
Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage	Graham Hopkins	Government
Department of Justice	Deaglán Ó Briain	Government
Department of Justice	Ross Wynne	Government
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre	Noeline Blackwell	NGO
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre	Shirley Scott	NGO
Galway Rape Crisis Centre	Cathy Connelly	NGO
HSE	Joe Doyle	Government

Law Society	Joan O'Mahony	Professional Association
Move Ireland	Owen O'Neill	NGO
National Women's Council of Ireland	Orla O'Connor	NGO
Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre	Laura Pohjolainch	NGO
Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre	Tessa Collins	NGO
Probation and Welfare Service	Carmel Donnelly	Government
Rape Crisis Network Ireland	Clíona Saidléar	NGO
Rape Crisis Network Ireland	Caroline Counihan	NGO
Ruhama	Barbara Condon	NGO
Ruhama	Aimee Millar	NGO
SAFE Ireland	Mary McDermot	NGO
SAFE Ireland	Lisa Marmion	NGO
SONAS	Tod Prevost	NGO
Tusla	Joan Mullan	Government
Women's Aid	Sarah Benson	NGO



Percentage of State Funding of NGO Members

NGO	Annual Report End	Gross Income	From central government or local authorities	From other public bodies	Total State Funding	Percentage of Total Funding that is State Funding
Akidwa	31-Dec-20	€328,519	€295,000		€295,000	90%
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre	31-Dec-20	€2,511,718	€1,426,486	€133,510	€1,559,996	62%
Galway Rape Crisis Centre	31-Dec-20	€780,940	€507,421	€40,132	€547,553	70%
Move Ireland	31-Dec-20	€596,232	€596,232		€596,232	100%

National Women's Council of Ireland	31-Dec-20	€874,098	€828,607	€10,921	€839,528	96%
Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre	31-Dec-20	€1,855,432	€1,568,877	€102,414	€1,671,291	90%
Rape Crisis Network Ireland	31-Dec-20	€399,802	€285,000		€285,000	71%
Ruhama	31-Dec-20	€966,923	€818,104		€818,104	85%
SAFE Ireland	31-Dec-20	€1,991,547	€789,078	€202,591	€991,669	50%
SONAS	31-Dec-20	€2,617,564	€2,194,604	€68,283	€2,262,887	86%
Women's Aid	31-Dec-20	€3,542,887	€216,870	€744,114	€960,984	27%
Average Percentage of Total Funding that is State Funding:						75%

All the above financial data was sourced from the Charities Regulator (<https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/>) and the Companies Registration Office (<https://www.cro.ie/>).