



Strategic Plan  
2022-25

**WOMEN'S  
PLATFORM**

# Who We Are

Women's Platform works to give women and girls in Northern Ireland a voice, locally, nationally and internationally, to create opportunities for women and girls to build national and international networks and to embed principles of international human standards in local policy and practice, through:

## 1.

The advancement of equality and human rights for women and girls (as set out in the **United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and subsequent United Nations and European conventions and declarations**), in political, economic, social, cultural, civic and any other fields, for women in Northern Ireland, by all or any of the following means:

- (i) educating the public about human rights and gender inequality issues;
- (ii) promoting respect for human rights and gender equality among individuals, governments, corporations and other institutions;
- (iii) promoting public support for the protection of human rights;
- (iv) commenting on proposed gender discrimination legislation and providing technical and policy advice to statutory bodies and other agencies, organisations and institutions;
- (v) contributing to the sound administration of human rights law;
- (vi) promoting enforcement of domestic human rights law by the state and its institutions;
- (vii) international advocacy of human rights;
- (viii) research into human rights issues

## 2.

The promotion of equality, diversity and community development by all or any of the following means:

- (i) provide and maintain a Forum where women's organisations can join together to exchange views, share common issues and information and create a collective voice on specific issues of concern to women in Northern Ireland;
- (ii) provide strategic and practical support to women's organisations operating in Northern Ireland;
- (iii) design, promote, implement and evaluate strategies and develop and carry through action plans concerned with improving the economic, social, cultural, health and civic lives of women in Northern Ireland;
- (iv) promote study and research, set priorities and develop and influence policy and practice in the fields of gender equality, diversity and community development.



## Our vision is

a Northern Ireland where substantive equality has been achieved and society is based on human rights, international solidarity and celebration of diversity.

## Our values

Women's Platform is a feminist organisation that strives for a gender equal Northern Ireland with gender parity the norm in all areas of life. Our aim is a society where policies, infrastructure and services support and enable women to participate fully in society and strengthen women's agency. We endorse the right of all women and girls to self determine their identity, and have their unique voice heard.

We believe patriarchal norms and structures are harmful and seek culture change based on feminist principles. Our work is based on respect for human rights, intersectional practice, international solidarity and a commitment to diversity.

## Outcomes

**By the end of 2025, we will have contributed to:**

- Ensuring gender equality is an integral element of policy making in Northern Ireland, demonstrated through implementation of CEDAW recommendations and effective engagement mechanisms for women and girls
- Increasing priority to gender parity in public life and secured an increase in women's representation in public life to at least one third on all public bodies
- Strengthening commitment to a new Northern Ireland through strengthened implementation of the women, peace and security agenda
- Strengthening use of international human rights standards in advocacy for women's rights through effective and inclusive capacity building within the sector
- Increasing diversity within Women's Platform with at least one third of Committee representatives from minoritised and racialised groups and implemented an intersectional approach to all our work





## Priority 1:

### Create a platform for diverse women and voices

Northern Ireland is now a more diverse society than ever, and it is vital that women and girls of all backgrounds can contribute to policy making.

Women's Platform recognises the lack of diversity and representation of many women in public, and also the discrimination that women and girls from minoritised communities, as well as disabled women, young women and LGBTQ women and girls as well as non binary people continue to experience in public and everyday life.

Women's Platform commits to playing its part in strengthening diversity in the women's sector and achieving equality for all women and girls, including giving women from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas a voice.

#### We will:

- Create a platform that both gives a voice to and reflects the full diversity of women and girls in Northern Ireland
- Embed an intersectional approach to all our work
- Strengthen engagement with and support for women from Black and racialised backgrounds, women and people from LGBTQ+ backgrounds, and disabled women, but also building a strengthened focus on rural women and women from marginalised communities.

#### Our actions will focus on:

- Prioritising diversity through direct engagement with minoritised and racialised women and girls
- Building platforms for young women of all backgrounds. Developing platforms that effectively support and enable women from BME backgrounds, young women, disabled women and grassroots women to engage in policy making and in international networks

#### Targets:

By the end of 2025 we will have

- Ensured gender equality is an integral element of policy making in Northern Ireland, demonstrated through implementation of CEDAW recommendations and effective engagement mechanisms for women and girls
- Increased diversity within Women's Platform with at least one third of Committee representatives from minoritised and racialised groups and clear platforms for all women and girls created



## Priority 2:

### Build a platform for stronger capacity

Women's leadership and effective advocacy for gender equality requires a strong capacity and skills base within the women's sector and beyond.

Skills and capacity are important to enable individual women to engage in public life, and underpin effective advocacy and policy making that is vital to achieving the wider aim of substantive equality and gender parity in policy making.

Women's Platform commit to building on the foundation set by NIWEP in building capacity on international human rights standards and mechanisms for gender equality, including CEDAW and UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The focus will be on accessible, inclusive and varied programmes and resources tailored to the needs of members and stakeholders, including policy and decision makers.

#### **We will:**

- Focus on capacity building and information sharing
- Widen access and create resources tailored to the needs of women and girls in Northern Ireland
- Strengthen advocacy for and analysis of implementation of international human rights obligations
- Create platforms that enable women and girls in all our diversity to share views and priorities in policy making and to strengthen women's leadership, gender parity and commitment to gender equality in policy making and public life

#### **By the end of 2025, we will have:**

- Ensured gender equality is an integral element of policy making in Northern Ireland, demonstrated through implementation of CEDAW recommendations and effective engagement mechanisms for women and girls
- Increased priority to gender parity in public life and secured an increase in women's representation in public life to at least one third on all public bodies
- Strengthened commitment to a new Northern Ireland through strengthened implementation of the women, peace and security agenda
- Strengthened use of international human rights standards in advocacy for women's rights through effective and inclusive capacity building within the sector

#### **Our actions will focus on:**

- Capacity building to members and stakeholders on issues including CEDAW, CSW and women, peace and security, with at least 100 women reached per year
- Working with members to develop and deliver effective information sharing mechanisms to support advocacy capacity across the sector
- Coordinating an inclusive and diverse civil society response to international human rights mechanisms, in particular CEDAW
- Advocating for implementation of the women, peace and security agenda and building networks with women across post conflict regions to share learning and experiences

## Priority 3:

### Strengthen the international platform for women in Northern Ireland

International solidarity, collaboration and information sharing has been a cornerstone of the women's movement, and is now more important than ever.

Across the world, the human rights of women, girls and LGBTQI+ people are being challenged, and solidarity movements sharing evidence and good practice are vital to uphold these rights.

Women's Platform commits to strengthening access to international networks for women and girls in Northern Ireland, and amplifying the voice of women and girls in Northern Ireland internationally.

#### We will:

- Open up access to UN mechanisms such as the Commission on the Status of Women
- Engage members, stakeholders and policy and decision makers in CEDAW monitoring
- Engage in international, European and UK and Ireland wide networks to represent women and girls in Northern Ireland
- Build platforms for new groups of women and girls to share experiences and engage internationally

#### By the end of 2025, we will have:

- Ensured gender equality is an integral element of policy making in Northern Ireland, demonstrated through implementation of CEDAW recommendations and effective engagement mechanisms for women and girls
- Secured an increase in women's representation in public life to at least one third on all public bodies and strengthened commitment to the women, peace and security agenda
- Strengthened use of international human rights standards in advocacy for women's rights through effective and inclusive capacity building within the sector

#### Our actions will focus on:

- Developing a user led approach to capacity building
- Strengthening access to and influence within national and international networks for gender equality
- Creating opportunities for women and girls of all backgrounds to engage in international networks, supported through effective capacity building and information sharing
- Acting as an effective voice for women and girls in Northern Ireland in the European Women's Lobby



## Priority 4:

### Building a sustainable, inclusive and innovative platform for the future

Civil society has played a vital role in advocating for human rights and equality both in Northern Ireland and beyond, and in supporting communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A strong, diverse and inclusive sector with well governed organisations is vital for a sustainable and equitable future. Women's Platform commits to supporting the sector as an effective source of expertise and information on international human rights mechanisms, and an organisation focused on amplifying the voice of women in Northern Ireland at national and international level. In the increasingly challenging context within these islands and beyond, to ensure equality and rights based policy making can guide policy making as well as service delivery.

#### **We will:**

- Focus on embedding an intersectional and intergenerational approach to governance structures and policies, as well as operational delivery.
- Ensure meaningful representation of women and girls of all backgrounds on the Women's Platform Committee, as the organisation's governing body
- Strengthen membership engagement and services
- Ensure a financially sustainable, legally compliant and robust organisation

#### **By the end of 2025, we will have:**

- Strengthened use of international human rights standards in advocacy for women's rights through effective and inclusive capacity building within the sector
- Increased diversity within Women's Platform with at least one third of Committee representatives from minoritised and racialised groups and implemented an intersectional approach to all our work

#### **Our actions will focus on:**

- Implementing principles of intersectionality, diversity, anti racism and inclusivity
- Engaging members and policy makers to create platforms sensitive to the needs of all women and girls
- Ongoing organisational review and development, including Committee development and training implementing and sharing international good practice on governance

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