



These are the values we want a future Northern Ireland to build from:

**A society of freedom,** equality and respect: Women and girls are equal members of society with men and boys, and can freely make choices about their own lives. There is support to achieve equality of outcome.

**An inclusive, accountable society:** Women have an equal role in all policy and decision making, and women's priorities are acted upon. Policy makers are accountable for their decisions.

**A caring, just and connected society:** Care is a core value in all policy and decision making. Connectedness and community is valued above competition, and society is open, accepting and inclusive of all. Leadership builds on empathy, the willingness to walk in another's shoes.

Women and girls in Northern Ireland have waited too long to get a seat at the tables where Northern Ireland is shaped. This is our notice that change must happen, and our plan for achieving it.



An Roinn  
Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of  
Foreign Affairs  
**RECONCILIATION  
FUND**



[womensplatform.org](http://womensplatform.org)

Women's Platform



**WE WOMEN WANT,  
AND DEMAND:  
A FUTURE THAT  
WORKS FOR WOMEN**

**A safe society:** Women are safe, and feel safe, in their own homes as well as in public and private spaces outside the home. Safety means feeling confident and accepted, not just free from discrimination, violence and threat of violence.

**A learning society:** Everyone can access education throughout their lives. Education is well resourced, including at community and vocational level. Gender stereotyping does not constrain women and girls.

**Action needs to be both regional and local, building on these principles:**

**Priority for gender equality:** Greater will to deliver gender equality is needed in Northern Ireland. A fundamental area for action is eliminating gender stereotyping and discriminatory language, in policy as well as across society.

**Voices and spaces for women:** Women in all their diversity need spaces and services to come together, learn and build capacity to participate in public life. Resourcing the women's sector and filling gaps across the region is critical to support this.

Care: Investment in care and a caring society is urgently needed, as a basis for an inclusive and supportive society. Childcare, empathetic adult social care and supportive services for people with disabilities are cornerstones of an equal, inclusive and modern society.

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**Safety:** Ensuring if women experiencing violence and abuse, whether by an intimate partner or a stranger, have access to refuge, care and support is an urgent priority. Safety also involves a supportive built environment including street lighting and safe public transport, which also is accessible for people with disabilities.

**Health:** Investment in healthcare in all its forms is needed, including a women's health strategy based on local evidence of women's needs. Mental health is a particular emergency and requires urgent investment to save lives and protect the wellbeing of both individuals and families.

**Education:** Education should be an overall priority, with new investment and value given to vocational routes and community education to enable women and young people to engage in their communities, learn about rights and rights based systems, and build skills to access jobs. Children with special educational needs and their families need more support.

**Housing:** No one should be at risk of homelessness: good quality, affordable housing needs to be available to all. Specific provision needs to be made for victims and survivors of domestic abuse; refuge places need increased, and access to long term affordable housing improved. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers need access to quality housing, and security against destitution, not just a roof over their head.

**Economic justice:** Women need to have full economic independence and agency, and barriers to this need to be removed. This means securing fair pay for decent work, closing gender pay gaps and addressing gender discrimination and stereotyping in the labour market, as well as childcare and adult social care to give women meaningful control over their own lives. It also includes ensuring a humane social protection system, which includes adequate support for all. Barriers to employment and additional costs for disabled women need to be lowered

**Rural infrastructure:** Improved access to services and resources in rural areas is vital, especially for women, most of whom have caring responsibilities in often very traditional communities. This includes improved care infrastructure and connectivity, in public transport and digital technology, which is limited in rural areas and reduces opportunities to access jobs and services, or engage in society and socialise.