



**Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta  
an Duine agus Comhionannas**  
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission



An easy-to-read guide to

## **Ireland and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

Overview of Issues and Recommendations

January 2017



## What is this document about?

This is an easy-to-read guide to a document with more information in it about how the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's (IHREC) thinks Ireland is doing on CEDAW.

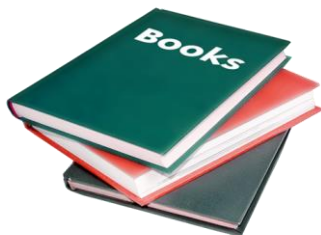
CEDAW is a United Nations (UN) agreement about women's rights.

The United Nations is an organisation of States working together.

IHREC are telling Ireland what issues there are around women's rights and ways they could be solved.

## There are 13 issues in the document

1. General issues
2. The Law
3. Access to Justice
4. National Structures
5. Stereotyping
6. Violence
7. Trafficking and prostitution
8. Taking part
9. Peace and Security
10. Education
11. Employment and Social Life
12. Health
13. Issues for specific groups





## 1. General issues

IHREC thinks that

- CEDAW is an important part of Ireland's responsibilities on human rights and equality.
- CEDAW should be fully made a part of Irish law.
- Ireland should put in place structures at Government level to make sure that the things the UN say make their way into Irish law.
- Ireland needs to get better at gathering information and data.
- Ireland should incorporate other treaties that have relevance to women.



## 2. The Law

IHREC thinks that

- The Constitution of Ireland should be changed to show equality between men and women.
- Irish equality laws should show that people can experience discrimination in more than one way.
- There are barriers to fighting discrimination.
- Systems should be easier to access and afford.



### 3. Access to justice

IHREC thinks that



- Ireland should make sure that women who were abused or treated badly should have redress.
  - Redress is when something is put right.

Some of the ways women were treated badly were

- Women experienced abuse in Magdalene Laundries.
- Women and children experienced abuse in mother and baby homes.
- The medical procedure that some women had when having a baby. This is called symphysiotomy.



### 4. National Structures

IHREC thinks that

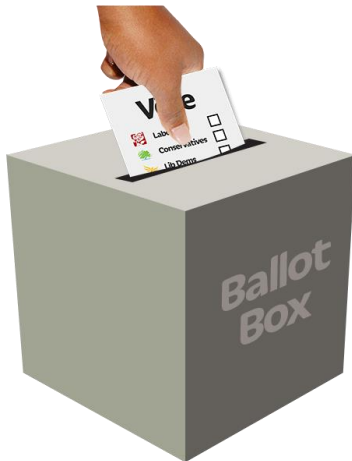


- The new women's strategy should focus on results and be monitored.
- There is a 'Public Sector Duty' which asks public bodies to promote equality and protect human rights.
- The Government should make sure that all plans and budgets take into account equality and women's rights.



## 5. Stereotyping:

IHREC thinks that



- There needs to be a referendum on the removal of a part of the Irish Constitution that says women should be carers in the home.
- People in Ireland should become better educated around gender stereotyping.
  - Stereotyping is when people make assumptions about you based on beliefs they have, that may be true or untrue.
- More rules should be put in place to stop sexism and stereotyping in the media and advertising.
  - Sexism is when one sex is discriminated against or treated as being lesser than the other.



## 6. Violence:

IHREC thinks that



- Laws protecting women and girls from all types of violence should be made stronger.
- All women should be able to get court orders to protect themselves from abusers even if they do not live with their abusers.
- Immigrations laws should be improved to protect women who are not Irish citizens from violent partners
- Housing laws need to be changed so that women suffering from violence are safely housed as soon as possible.
- Laws should be put in place to protect women and girls from online bullying and abuse should be included in the law.



## 7. Human Trafficking and prostitution:

IHREC thinks that



- All victims of human trafficking should receive support such as legal aid.
  - Human trafficking is when people are exploited by being sold and moved against their will.
- Victims of human trafficking should not be put in direct provision centres.
  - Direct provision is the system the Irish State uses to accommodate asylum seekers.
- Victims should be housed in suitable accommodation with the right supports and services.
- New laws on prostitution should be monitored closely to make sure they are working properly.
  - Prostitution is when people have sex with other people for money.

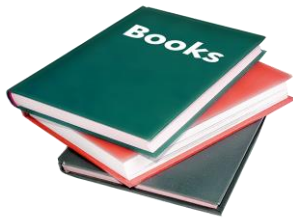


## 8. Taking Part:

IHREC thinks that



- There should be more Irish women participating in public life.
- There should be gender quotas during candidate selection at local government level.
- Training should be put in place to address the lack of minority women in politics.
  - Minority means a social group who are smaller than the dominant group in society.
- There should be more funding to support women's groups in communities.
- Local Community Development Committees should have equal gender representations.
- Funding to sporting bodies should promote equal gender participation.
- The boards of Irish sporting bodies should have equal gender representations.



## **9. Peace and Security:**

IHREC thinks that

- Women should be more involved in decisions about the peace process in Northern Ireland.
- Support should be put in place for women seeking asylum in Ireland.
- The law should be changed so that refugee women can travel to Ireland in a safe way.

## **10. Education:**

IHREC thinks that

- The State must make changes to ensure there is gender equality in the Irish education system.
- Schools are given guidance on promoting gender equality for students making subject choices.
- A new subject on sexual and reproductive health education should be introduced in schools.
- A new policy should be introduced supporting pregnant students to stay in education.
- No children are given preference over others when applying for public schools.
- The State should introduce a policy supporting undocumented person's access to education.



## 11. Employment and Social Life:

IHREC thinks that

- The government needs to address the amount of women in low-paid jobs in Ireland.
- The State should investigate discrimination against marginalised women in the workplace.
  - Marginalised means a group who have been isolated or treated as unimportant in society.
- Migrant women caring for people in their homes should not be discriminated.
- Asylum seekers and women living in direct provision should be supported to work in Ireland.
- The social security system should be reviewed to stop discrimination against women.
- The social security system should not discriminate against migrant, Traveller or Roma women.
- The State's pension policy needs to be changed so that older women are treated equally to men.
- Women who are parents as a result of surrogacy should receive maternity benefit.
  - Surrogacy is when someone gets pregnant and carries the child for others who cannot become pregnant.
- The State should implement an affordable childcare scheme so that more women can go out to work.



## 12. Health:

IHREC thinks that



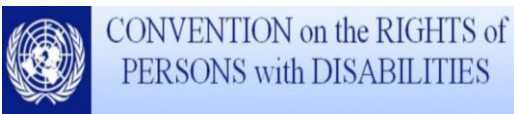
- Healthcare in Ireland should be more sensitive to women's experiences.
- Maternity services in Ireland need to be improved and fully resourced.
- The State should implement the UN recommendations regarding breastfeeding.
- The current law on abortion in Ireland has a negative effect on certain groups of women.
- The Citizens Assembly should take on board the findings from the UN in relation to Ireland's abortion laws.



### 13. Issues for Specific groups:

IHREC thinks that

- The State must address the barriers that Travellers face in getting appropriate housing.
- The State should work with people with disabilities to include their voices in the ratification of the UNCRPD.
- Rural policies should include a gender perspective as women's rights are not properly addressed in current policy.
- The transport needs of women in rural areas should be met.
- Women living in direct provision centres should receive gender-sensitive counselling.
- Inspections of direct provision centres should include the monitoring of sexual violence.



### 13. Issues for Specific groups:

IHREC thinks that



- Staff members working in direct provision centres receive gender equality training.
- There needs to be a review of the conditions in women's prisons.
- Facilities and services offered to men in prison should also be offered to women.
- A policy for Transgender persons in prison should be put in place.
- There needs to be an action plan, developed with the Travelling community, that addresses the needs of Traveller women in prisons.
- The State should develop gender-sensitive alternatives to prison.

This Easy to Read Document was developed by Inclusion Ireland for the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

The document was proof-read by men and women with disability.



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