

May 2023

Women's Aid submission to the National Equality Data Strategy 2023-2027



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Women's Aid is a leading national organisation that has been working in Ireland to stop domestic violence¹ against women and children since 1974. In this time, the organisation has built up a huge body of experience and expertise on the issue, enabling us to best support women and share this knowledge with other agencies responding to women and children experiencing domestic violence. More information on Women's Aid's work is available on www.womensaid.ie.

Women's Aid welcomes the National Equality Data Strategy 2023-2027 and its strategic aim to "Improve the collection, disaggregation and use of equality data".

We strongly support the intersectional approach of the strategy, which will improve the capturing of multiple/compound experiences and their impact on equality in general and more specifically relevant to our work, on women and children experiencing domestic abuse who also experience additional vulnerabilities and disadvantage.

We agree that the Central Statistics Office (CSO) should have a leading role in creating data standards and classification and welcome the creation of an Equality Data hub.

In relation to classification and standards, Women's Aid believes that additional grounds should be added as protected characteristics to equality legislation, in particular relation to gender identity and socio-

¹ While recognising that the legal term in Ireland is 'domestic violence' we acknowledge that many victims/survivors identify more with the term 'domestic abuse' or 'intimate partner violence'. Women's Aid uses these terms interchangeably in this submission to refer to the same set of abusive behaviours perpetrated by current or former intimate partners (including emotional, physical, sexual and financial abuse and coercive control)

economic status. We also strongly believe that it is also vital that the sex/gender category and relative data are retained as **separate** ground to gender identity, as we argued in our submission to the Department of Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth consultation on Review of the Equality Acts².

Consequently, data on sex/gender and gender identity should be collected separately and clear standards and guidance from the CSO will be essential for consistent implementation of this data collection and use.

While we are aware that Department of Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth Review of the Equality Acts is still ongoing and its findings are not yet public, Women's Aid suggests that the CSO standards should include clarification of the sex/gender and gender identity grounds and pertinent data. We would like to recommend consultation with the sector. In particular, regarding how this standards and definition may impact on combatting Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

As a keen stakeholder, supporting and advocating daily for women in the most vulnerable precarious and high risk situations of domestic abuse. Women, whose access to support and justice is directly impacted not just by their sex/gender but also potentially their race, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexuality etcetera, Women's Aid is eager to remain involved in this important work. We would appreciate any further opportunity for consultation and input both in relation to CSO definitions/standards and in relation to the forthcoming Domestic violence survey.

² Available here: <https://www.womensaid.ie/about/policy/publications/consultation-on-the-review-of-the-equality-acts-womens-aid-submission-december-2021/>