

# Minutes of the First Meeting of the Equality Budgeting Expert Advisory Group

12<sup>th</sup> September, 2018

## Present:

Ronnie Downes (Chair, DPER), Carol Baxter (DJE), John Hogan (DoF), Deirdre Shanley (DEASP), Helen Johnston (NESC), Helen Russell (ESRI), Jennifer McCarthy Flynn (NWCI), Kieran Culhane (CSO), Laurence Bond (IHREC), Seamus Taylor (NUI, Maynooth), Scline Scott (DoF), Kate O’Flaherty (DoH), John Kinnane (DPER), Caroline O’Loughlin (DPER), Struan Charters (DPER) and Mary Dunne (DPER).

## 1. Welcome and Purpose of the Meeting

The Chair welcomed everyone and outlines DPER’s high ambitions for the development of equality budgeting in line with best international practice. The Advisory Group is central to meeting this objective through provision of guidance, expert insights and constructive critique.

## 2. Background and Context

DPER and DJE presented on the current state of equality budgeting in Ireland. Following commitments in the Programme for Partnership Government, a pilot initiative was established. Recommendations from the Parliamentary Budget Office, along with international best practice, will be considered as the initiative develops. Discussion followed around the collection and use of data, stakeholder engagement, and the possibility of a legislative basis for equality budgeting. NWCI proposed an “equality statement” to be read alongside the Budget statement. ESRI is about to publish a Gender Impact Assessment of ten years of budgets, something that will facilitate ongoing gender-based distributional analysis. D/Health drew attention to their initiative to target smoking among the most deprived groups in society.

## 3. Role of Equality Budgeting Expert Advisory Group

DPER referred the Group to the documents circulated prior to the meeting which outlined the initial Terms of Reference. IHREC proposed that the Terms could be expressed more concisely and this was agreed.

- **Action: DPER to revise the Terms of Reference.**

## 4. Progress on gender stream and next steps

Discussion about widespread lack of awareness of equality budgeting. DJE noted the centrality of the National Strategy for Women and Girls. Mapping such as that for gender was discussed for other equality dimensions, notably Disability or LBGTIQ. Group discusses the state of the gender dimension

in the pilot, notes importance of looking at large areas of spend. DCYA Childcare measures in the pilot were commended by the group. The publication prepared for the NWCI, 'Towards gender responsive budgeting in Ireland' was noted. It was also noted that no Gender Impact Assessment had yet been done on upcoming changes to the National Pensions Framework.

- **Action: DPER and DJE examine potential for mapping the National Strategy for Women and Girls onto Equality Budgeting pilot, especially large areas of spend.**
- **Action: DEASP to look into Gender Impact Assessment for National Pensions Framework.**
- **Action: NWCI to lead discussion at next meeting around recommendations of report on gender responsive budgeting.**

## **5. Socio-economic and other dimensions – potential next steps**

Noted that those lower socioeconomic groups are more likely to experience some other dimension of inequality, e.g., disability. DPER is liaising with the DEASP around the potential inclusion of the programmes Better Outcomes Brighter Futures and Pathways to Work in the next stage of the equality budgeting programme.

- **Action: DEASP to consider suitable programmes for inclusion within equality budgeting**
- **Action: DPER to include disability in pilot, examine links with gender inequality.**

## **6. Additional perspectives on Equality Budgeting**

Discussion around issue of intersectionality and data. Public sector duty re equality under the IHREC Act, lack of awareness of this. CSO noted that they have expanded their data infrastructure. Discussion about implications of GDPR.

- **Action: DPER to consider drafting Circular giving clear guidance to Departments on their public sector duty with regard to equality issues.**
- **Action: – CSO data infrastructure / analytical potential to feature on next meeting agenda.**

## **7. AOB**

It was agreed that there should be approximately four meetings of this group per year. The next meeting will be scheduled to take place after Budget 2019 has been announced.