Women’s Health Taskforce
‘If I could use this process to make **one change** to improve health outcomes for women and girls in Ireland it would be…’

The new Taskforce members shared their ambitions and the difference they would like to make to women’s health. Some common themes included

- **Empowering** women and girls
- Improving **mental health**
- **Reducing inequalities**
- Improved health **information**
- **Removing shame**
Minister Harris and the Taskforce Co-Chairs opened the meeting

- Minister Harris emphasised that this is a watershed moment to tackle gender inequality in health, and no topic is off the table.

- Co-Chair Peggy Maguire, Director of the European Institute for Women’s Health spoke about her commitment to a holistic view of women’s health and her excitement at taking part.

- Co-Chair Jim Breslin emphasised that women’s health is a priority for the Department and that we will listen to women through the work of this Taskforce.
Members learned about the evidence and policy landscape around women’s health and shared their expertise to create a common baseline for our work.

On Women’s Health in Ireland, Jennifer McCarthy Flynn, Head of Policy, NWCI, gave an overview of headline statistics, health issues and health inequalities drawing on their recent report Women’s Health in Ireland.

On Gender and Health, Dr. Cliona Loughnane, NWCI, presented on gender equality and the importance of a women-centred approach.

Vanessa Moore, European Institute of Women’s Health outlined the key themes and requirements in the EU Manifesto for Women’s Health 2018.

Dr. Kate O’Flaherty, Department of Health, gave an overview of the Policy Foundation for Women’s Health in Ireland showcasing the range of policies in place which have positively influenced better health outcomes for women and girls.

Sarah Glavey, Department of Health, outlined recent work collaborating with key stakeholders to tease out priority issues that could form part of the Policy Agenda for Women’s Health in the Department of Health.

The Voice of Women - Members also learned from several short videos by National Women’s Council of Ireland providing perspectives on women’s mental health from the voice of women impacted by particular issues.
The Taskforce Members agreed to work together in the following ways:

- Our work will be **collaborative, open and inclusive**
- **Our first action** will be to commence a ‘radical listening’ exercise with women and girls across Ireland
- We will meet **every 4-6 weeks** with working sessions during our meetings
- Between meetings we will work in **small groups** to progress priority work
- Our work will be grounded in **evidence and insights** gained through fieldwork
- Each week, experts will address members of the Taskforce through ‘Women’s Health Weekly’
- We will carry out regular **online communication and consultation**
- Our **webpage will be updated weekly** so anyone who is interested can track our progress
Building on the evidence, members agreed to start work across 6 areas during the first phase of the Taskforce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tr>
<td>Radical Listening</td>
<td>To include the voices of women in in the Taskforce process and better understand women’s expectations and experiences of the health service.</td>
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<td>Policy Platform</td>
<td>To map current policy impacting women’s health nationally and internationally</td>
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<td>Leading the Way</td>
<td>To ensure that the Department has met all of its obligations and takes a leadership role with regard to gender equality internally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls 0-15 Years</td>
<td>To understand health at each stage of the lifecycle to identify high priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women 25-65 Years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women 65 + Years</td>
<td>To understand health at each stage of the lifecycle to identify high priorities</td>
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Members each chose to join one of the groups and the groups started working together to answer 4 key questions:

What's the work to date and where are the gaps?

Where are our successes and what can we learn from these?

Who can tell us more about what’s happening on the ground?

What issues could we explore that could be game-changers?
Homework for the Taskforce

- Review the **evidence base** on Women’s Health
- Work on **4 key questions** in workstream groups
- **Start fieldwork** – start talking to the frontline
- Share speaker suggestions for **Women’s Health Weekly**
- Department of Health members of the Taskforce are committing **4 days a month**
- The next meeting of the Taskforce will take place on **Thursday 31st October**
Keep in Touch

- **Email:** Womenshealthtaskforce@health.gov.ie
- **Social Media:** #womenshealthIRL