

Women's Sector Lobbyist Update: October 2015

Gender Equality Strategy

The Women's Sector Lobbyist attended a Gender Advisory Panel meeting in October to discuss the new Gender Equality Strategy. While progress has been slow on the new Strategy, we will continue to work with OFMDFM to ensure the new strategy is fit for purpose. Updates will be provided on a regular basis. Read the current Gender Equality Strategy [here](#).

Review of Regional Infrastructure Support Programme

Following on from the previous update, please see below further information on the next round of workshops on the review of funding by DSD under the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme. [Here](#) is a link to a very rudimentary overview of the feedback given at the previous events. As you will see women have just been mentioned twice!

Details of the 2nd round of Co-Design Workshops is as follows:

1. 23rd November 2015 – Belfast, NICVA HQ
2. 24th November 2015 – Armagh, Market Place Theatre
3. 25th November 2015 – Londonderry, Holywell Trust
4. 27th November 2015 – Belfast, East Belfast Network Centre
5. 30th November 2015 – Ballymena, The Braid
6. 1st December 2015 – Cookstown, The Royal Hotel
7. 2nd December 2015 – Enniskillen, The Lakeland Forum

All workshops will run from 10.00am to 12.30pm with registration/tea/coffee at 9.30am.

Register your interest in attending one of these workshops by emailing VCU@dndni.gov.uk providing contact details and the name of the organisation you represent. In the event that we are oversubscribed we may have to limit attendance to one representative per organisation and will give preference to those who have registered first.

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It would be extremely helpful if as many women as possible could attend the next round of events with one key message – that DSD continue to prioritise and fund the thematic regional support for women in disadvantaged and rural areas.



Early Years Strategic Alliance - Childcare Strategy

After a meeting of the Early Years Strategic Alliance the group agreed six key asks that they would encourage everyone to include in their responses to the Childcare Strategy. Our official response to the Childcare Consultation is available [here](#), please feel free to use this as part of your own response. Any questions, please get in touch.

WRDA Responds to Consultation on Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Department of Social Development recently launched a consultation on the above which sets out proposals relating to the regulations for the preparation and scrutiny of charity accounts. To read our response please click [here](#).

Lobbying activity

October has been a very busy month meeting with MLAs. Meetings this month have included meetings with Paula Bradley (DUP), Claire Sudgen (Ind), Megan Fearon (SF) and Sandra Overend (UUP).

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I also met with the Shadow Secretary of State Vernon Coaker, MP and heard a presentation by John McCallister MLA (Ind) on his Opposition Bill currently going through the Assembly. I will of course keep you informed on movement on the Bill.

Women's Vision from Across the Barricades

I attended the launch of an excellent visual representation of inequality experienced by women from both Tiger's Bay and New Lodge launched by the Greater North Belfast Network. The work was undertaken by a group of women to offer visual representations of the issues affecting their own interface areas in a post conflict society. You can download the photobook from our website [here](#).

Austerity & Inequalities Conference

It was a pleasure to attend the above conference organised by the Equality Coalition. This one day conference explored perspectives on the impacts of austerity from home and abroad. A full report of the event will be available shortly on their website [here](#).

Children's Budgeting: Investing in Children

Making links with others sectors is part of the remit of the Women's Sector Lobbyist. With this in mind, I was delighted to attend the launch of the report commissioned by NICCY in to mapping funding relating to children's services. This will be a useful tool when the Women's Budget Group next meets to work towards calling for gender budgeting. The report can be downloaded [here](#).