

Towards Equality for Unmarried Parents and Their Children

A history of the first 40 years of
Treoir The Federation of Services for
Unmarried Parents and their Children
1976 – 2016

Margot Doherty, Margaret Dromey, Dr. Patricia Kennedy, Gemma Rowley, Eilís Walsh

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"One of the problems facing unmarried couples is finding suitable housing. In the rental sector the landlord's interest is paramount. Ms. O'Brien said that the Housing Federation has been successful in its preliminary negotiations with various landlords about providing housing for young people. But she said that the Government must attempt to encourage more married couples to rent rather than buy.

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Foreword

It is my honour and privilege to be the chair of TREOIR on the fortieth anniversary of its foundation. Over those forty years, TREOIR has consistently and expertly supported unmarried parents and their children and advocated on their behalf. As this excellent account of TREOIR's growth and development makes clear, the organisation was formed at a time when our society attached great shame to having children outside of marriage and unmarried mothers and their children experienced a high level of discrimination. Unmarried girls who became pregnant had few choices if they could not support themselves. Their children were deemed to be 'illegitimate' and were legally described as 'filius nullius' – the child of no one. Giving their child up for adoption was the only option for most women in these circumstances.

Moved by the difficulties faced by these young women, a group of compassionate and far sighted people came together in the early 1970s to provide support and assistance. A number of organisations were formed, including Treoir, then known as the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents. From the beginning, the focus of TREOIR has been to provide information to unmarried parents and the professionals with whom they come in contact, the promotion of research and the adequacy of the law as it affects unmarried parents and their children.

This history of TREOIR chronicles the transformation that has taken place in this country in social attitudes to unmarried families and to the services and legislation that support them. Those who came together to establish TREOIR forty years ago – Gemma Rowley, Dermot Walsh, Margaret Dromey, Margaret Doherty, Eilis Walsh and others can be very proud of what has been achieved and we are immensely grateful to them for their foresight, skill and commitment. I would also like to thank Dr Patricia Kennedy for taking up the challenge to chart the first forty years of Treoir.

Is TREOIR's work completed? Unfortunately not yet. Unmarried families, and unmarried fathers in particular, still face discrimination in our laws and procedures. Commitments to children which this country entered into when it ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have yet to be honoured. TREOIR will continue to support unmarried parents and their children with excellent information, research and advocacy until the remaining discriminations are removed. Let us hope that TREOIR will have as much success in the decades ahead as it has had in its first forty years.

Ruth Barrington
Chairperson

Contents

CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT	PAGE 5
.....	
CHAPTER TWO: THE STORY	PAGE 16
.....	
CHAPTER THREE: THE WORK	PAGE 27
.....	
APPENDICES	PAGE 59

Introduction

Treoir (formerly the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children) was founded in 1976 by a group of social workers, academics and other concerned professionals working with unmarried mothers in the 1960s, arising out of their concern at the dearth of services and stigma pervasive at the time.

From its outset Treoir built a broad inclusive membership which was non-denominational and nationwide, which likely influenced its longevity. Its focus, unchanged today, was on providing clear and accurate information to unmarried parents and those involved with them. This was achieved through its National Specialist Information Service, workshops and publications notably the Information Pack for Unmarried parents.

It championed the cause of unmarried parents and their children by meeting with and influencing those involved in legislative change. In particular it influenced the various stages of the Status of Children Act 1987 which abolished the concept of 'illegitimacy' in Irish law and more recently the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 which introduced significant family rights. Challenging negative and inaccurate stereotyping of unmarried parents and their children continues as a core concern.

From its first days Treoir emphasised research both to inform its work and to provide information on an area surrounded by myths and secrecy. It recognised that in the absence of research on women who gave birth outside marriage, the planning of services would be hindered and best practice could not be achieved. A particular achievement of Treoir was its role in the initiation of the national longitudinal study of children, Growing Up in Ireland.

Treoir is committed to ensuring that families not based on marriage, whether they are cohabiting or not, are recognised, respected and protected. It supports and promotes the rights of children as listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and believes that all children have a right to know both their parents, and to be loved and cared for by them.

Treoir, despite being a national agency, is resourced by a small number of staff. Two women were central to its success for almost 40 years, namely Margaret Dromey and Margot Doherty.

During these years they were supported and guided by excellent chairpersons and dedicated council members. Other staff who subsequently joined made a significant contribution to the work of Treoir.

While it is unfair to pick out individuals, Treoir itself has accredited Gemma Rowley, ALLY, and Dermot Walsh, Medico-Social Research Board, as acknowledged through their respective roles as life time honorary member and honorary president. Among other important figures are Eilís Walsh, Eastern Health Board, Aileen O'Hare, Medico-Social Research Board, Fred Donohue, Eastern Health Board, Vivienne Darling, TCD, and Helen Burke, UCD, whose names pepper the archival material in the early decades.

Treoir is funded by the HSE, HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme, Tusla, Citizens Information and other government agencies and private foundations.

Since its inception forty years ago, the organisation has witnessed four decades of major social change in Ireland: the population increased by nearly three-quarters of a million despite two waves of emigration in the 1980s and since 2007; the percentage of births outside marriage increased from 3.76% in 1976 to 36% in 2015; non-family adoption declined from 1,005 in 1976 to 28 in 2015; the concept of illegitimacy was abolished; mother and baby homes became a thing of the past and equality legislation and social welfare payments for unmarried parents were introduced.

The following chapters outline in detail the story and achievements of Treoir over its first 40 years.

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"One of the problems facing unmarried couples is finding suitable housing. In the rental sector the parent is discriminated against," says Ms. O'Connell. The federation is conducting preliminary research on various housing problems but the attempt is to identify the needs of the various groups. "We have to be realistic," she says.

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The National Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children

Unmarried Mothers in the 20th Century

The Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children grew from a particular social context of stigma and exclusion associated with unmarried pregnancy and motherhood in Ireland. Unmarried pregnancy was unacceptable and was a cause of shame. Unmarried fathers were rarely mentioned and there was little legislation to protect the rights of unmarried mothers, fathers, or their children. Ireland was characterised by strong church influence, with few employment opportunities for women, limited social welfare provision and under-developed childcare services.¹ The 1937 Constitution recognised only the family based on marriage and this has not changed.

The ‘illegitimate’ child was referred to as *filius nullius*, or ‘child of no one’ and did not even have the right to take her/his mother’s name, but acquired it by usage. The Illegitimate Children (Affiliation Orders) Act 1930 made it possible for the mother of an ‘illegitimate’ child to apply to the court for an Affiliation Order against the putative father of her child for the purpose of maintenance only. However, this had to be done within six months of the birth and the onus of proof of paternity was on the mother. The Legitimacy Act 1931 gave an ‘illegitimate’ child and her/his mother reciprocal rights of succession on the other’s intestacy. However, any children born to the mother within marriage would take precedence over the child born outside the marriage.

Mother and Baby Homes were an indicator of attitudes to and treatment of unmarried mothers and their children. Diarmaid Ferriter² observed:

The solution to the problem of illegitimate births was believed to lie in the establishment of antenatal homes for expectant unmarried mothers and institutions where the mother and children ‘might be maintained together for at least the first year of the child’s life’ (the idea being that the child could then be fostered).

The 1927 'Report of the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor' Including the Insane Poor' differentiated between different groups of mothers, namely married mothers, widows and unmarried mothers.⁴ The latter group was split into two groups those 'who may be considered amenable to reform' and those 'regarded as less hopeful cases'.⁴ The latter category included married mothers who had children 'not the offspring of their husbands'. The Report referred to 'first offenders' and those 'who had fallen more than once'.⁵ The recommendations of this report included:

If an unmarried woman who applies for relief during pregnancy or after giving birth to a child is willing, when applying for assistance, to undertake to remain for a period not exceeding one year there should be power to retain her for that period, in the case of a first admission. In the case of admission for a second time, there should be power to retain her for a period of two years. On third or subsequent admissions the Board should have power to retain for such a period as they think fit having considered on recommendation of the Superior or Matron of the Home.⁶

The report indicated that such mothers should take part in useful employment and that:

We have come to the conclusion that no woman should be discharged until she has satisfied the Board of Health that she will be able to provide for her child or children, either by way of paying wholly or partially for maintenance in the home or boarding out with respectable people approved by the Health board. Discretion might be allowed...to allow the woman to take her discharge without taking her child or children.⁷

The first mother and baby home in Ireland was the Magdalen Asylum, Leeson Street, Dublin, established in 1766. Lady Arabella Denny, who was moved by the miserable state of such women, established the asylum to offer shelter:

..from shame, from reproach, from disease, from want, from the base society that has either drawn you into vice, or prevailed upon you to continue in it, to the utmost hazard of your eternal happiness.⁸

Other mother and baby homes were founded in the twentieth century in response to the 1906 Report on Poor Law Reform⁹ concerning the unsuitability of poor law institutions for the recep-

tion of unmarried mothers. Initially, with one exception, these catered for single women on their first pregnancy.

In 1919 St Patrick's Home, Navan Road, Dublin opened for unmarried mothers and their children under the direction of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in Pelletstown and it accommodated 200 mothers.¹⁰ The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary established homes for unmarried mothers in Cork, Castlepollard in Co Westmeath, and Roscrea in Co. Tipperary. The Sisters had already set up mother and baby homes in parts of England and Scotland. In 1921 they opened the Sacred Heart Home at Bessboro, Cork to accommodate 106 mothers. Castlepollard Mother and Baby Home opened in 1935 to accommodate 130 mothers. The Sean Ross Abbey Mother and Baby Home, Roscrea, opened in 1930 and was certified to take 150 mothers.

Dunboyne Mother and Baby Home was established in 1955 by the Good Shepherd Sisters for the purpose of providing separate accommodation for unmarried mothers on their second and subsequent pregnancies. Initially the Home catered for 15 mothers and their children. This was later extended to 30 mothers and their children.¹¹

'Children of unmarried mothers appear to have fared poorly, even in comparison with the relatively poor general standards of child welfare applying at the time' as highlighted in a Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Report.¹² The extensive quotes provided by Earner-Byrne¹³ from a "Report on Unmarried Mothers in Ireland" compiled in 1939 by Ms Alice Litster, inspector for boarded out children in the Department of Local Government and Public Health, are worth noting:

The chance of survival of an illegitimate infant born in the slums and placed with a foster-mother in the slums a few days after birth is greater than that of an infant born in one of our special homes for unmarried mothers. I except the Manor House, Castlepollard, in which the infantile death rate is comparatively low. In theory, the advantage should lie on the side of the child institutionally born. Pre-natal care, proper diet, fresh air, sufficient exercise, no arduous work, proper and comfortable clothing, freedom from worry, the services of a skilled doctor, the supervision and attention of a qualified nurse, all should be available and should make for the health of

the expectant mother and the birth and survival of a healthy infant...Cleanliness, medical attention, dietetic knowledge, all the human skill may continue to preserve child life should be at hand. Yet any infant born in any other circumstances appears to have a better chance of life.'

The current Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation¹⁴ is an attempt to gain insights into such institutions.

Earner-Byrne¹⁵ provides a comparison of mortality rates for all births and for illegitimate births over the period 1923 to 1950 which is based on Annual Reports of the Registrar General. From the figures presented it can be calculated that the infant mortality rate per 1,000 illegitimate births was at least 3.8 times that of other births. The mortality rate for illegitimate births was highest at 344 per 1,000 births in 1923 but it exceeded 200 per 1,000 births in 23 of the 28 years for which data is provided.

For those children who did survive they were left with the realities of a society that did not encourage their functioning as a family unit with their mother.¹⁶

The DCYA Report suggests that though difficult to quantify it is also likely that at least some births to unmarried mothers were followed subsequently by marriage and perhaps other children born to unmarried mothers were brought up as a sibling of the mother or within the extended family without the true parentage being acknowledged. These were some of the limited range of options for an unmarried mother, in the climate of the time, who had no support from the father or her own family and, in the absence of social welfare provision, no means of providing for herself or her child.¹⁷

Regarding other options available to women who conceived outside marriage, Jackson claims that from 1922 to 1965 backstreet abortion was practised in Ireland which often resulted in judicial proceedings. After 1967 when abortion laws in Britain were relaxed the number of judicial proceedings reduced. Jackson indicates that backstreet abortion was engaged in by women of different social classes throughout the country and particularly during World War II when travel to England was restricted.¹⁸



The Unmarried Mother in the Irish Community

A Report on the National Conference on Community Services for the Unmarried Parent

Report on the National Conference on Community Services for the Unmarried Parent

Alexis Guilbride, in a study of infanticide in Ireland from Independence to the 1950s, indicates that:

...a salient point here is that motherhood was dependent on marriage. Economic factors prevented women from marrying, and social values prevented women from becoming mothers but they did not prevent them from becoming pregnant.¹⁹

Guilbride's research explains that one way of dealing with an extra-marital pregnancy in Ireland was infanticide and, interestingly in the cases she examined, almost all the women were classed as poor or destitute, more than half were employed as farm labourers while more than a third were domestic servants. Infanticide increased in Ireland during the 1940s after the passage of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1935 that banned contraception and the Emergency Powers Act 1939 which prohibited travel from Ireland during World War II. Guilbride concludes that '...infanticide in this state and throughout most of this century at least, has been constantly linked to illegitimacy and economic deprivation.'²⁰

In Abandoned Babies, Mike Milotte estimated that between 1920 and the mid-1970s more than 100,000 children were born

to unmarried mothers.²¹ He explained that these ‘fallen women’ had out of necessity to go to the UK, were ‘married off’ or turned to nuns for help as they were the only people prepared to offer any type of refuge to these women shunned by the remainder of society.²²

Between 1950 and 1953 the Diocese of Westminster dealt with 1,693 applications from pregnant Irish women, 28% of whom had conceived in Ireland.²³ ‘Pregnant From Ireland’ (PFI) was part of the terminology used by social workers working with the Irish in Britain. Writing in the 1960s, Michael Viney quotes a social worker in Britain: ‘...the fear of these girls has to be seen to be believed... what sort of society do you have in Ireland that puts the girls into that state?’²⁴

Creegan, writing in 1967, refers to the Regina Coeli Hostel for homeless women, run by the Legion of Mary, in Dublin which she describes as ‘...important as it constitutes the only housing provision available for the unmarried mother who wishes to keep her child’.²⁵ The Family Placement Service founded in 1965 (later to become ALLY) provided an alternative form of care for single pregnant women within the community by offering them accommodation with families during pregnancy. The Church of Ireland Social Services, based in Molesworth Street in Dublin had a similar service. These services provided an alternative form of care for unmarried pregnant women and also raised awareness among the general public about the plight of unmarried mothers and their children.

As the 1970s began, people were beginning to reap the benefits of free secondary education and a Government policy of economic expansion. Ireland was on the brink of joining the European Economic Community, breaking away from an insular past, moving towards greater equality and a more comprehensive welfare system. The Women’s Movement was gaining momentum and what were referred to as ‘women’s payments’ were introduced in 1973.

Other signs of change included the establishment of such groups as ALLY in 1971, a family placement service; AIM in 1972, a legal information service for married parents separating and Cherish in 1972, a self-help group of unmarried mothers. In 1972 the Commission on the Status of Women published its report.²⁶

Its terms of reference were:

...to examine and report on the status of women in Irish society, to make recommendations on the steps necessary to ensure the participation of women on equal terms with men in the political, social, cultural and economic life of the country and to indicate the implications generally - including the estimated cost of such recommendations.²⁷

In 1973, as a result of the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women and the extensive lobbying by interested parties, the Coalition Government introduced the Unmarried Mother's Allowance which was the first statutory recognition of an unmarried mother and her child as a family unit. For the first time unmarried mothers had options regarding their children's futures. The Unmarried Mother's Allowance was integrated in 1990 with other social assistance payments for low-income parents rearing children alone to form a new Lone Parents' Allowance. The year 1997 saw a further significant change in public policy on lone parents with the introduction of a more inclusive One-Parent Family Payment.

The 1980s in Ireland was marked by economic recession, high unemployment and high rates of youth emigration. There were two important constitutional referenda of social significance: the Eight Amendment in 1983 recognised the right to life of the unborn and the Tenth Amendment in 1986 proposed to remove the constitutional ban on divorce. These amendments were a litmus test for social attitudes and in particular attitudes towards sexuality, reproduction and the family.

In 1984 two events had highlighted the stark reality of being unmarried and pregnant in Ireland, even a decade after the introduction of the Unmarried Mother's Allowance. Ann Lovett a 15-year-old schoolgirl from Granard, County Longford died giving birth to her baby son, who also died, beside a grotto on 31 January 1984. In the same year, what became known as the Kerry Babies Case, an investigation into the killing of a newborn baby and the alleged killing of another infant, drew attention to the vulnerability of unmarried mothers and their babies.,^{28, 29}

Kofman and Sales described Ireland in 1996 as

a strong male breadwinner state in which the State and the Church together ensured that women's primary role was within the family as mothers, carers and dependants. This role was enshrined in the 1937 Constitution. The marriage ban against women working in the civil service was lifted only in 1977 and until 1984 married women received lower rates of benefit, for shorter periods, and were not eligible for unemployment assistance. Reform of social security in the mid-1980s was prompted in large part by European Commission law on equal treatment of men and women in social policy. This, together with the activities of women's groups, began to make inroads into the rigid male breadwinner model.³⁰

The 1990s was a decade of unprecedented economic growth in Ireland. The population increased by nearly three-quarters of a million despite two waves of emigration. As the Celtic Tiger roared, employment rose steadily from 1.1 million in the late 1980s to 2.1 million in 2007. From 1987 to 2007, economic growth averaged 6.3 percent per year.³¹ In the 1990s women's labour market participation increased.

There were initiatives such as the Commission on the Family (1995); the Tax and Social Welfare Expert Working Group (1996); the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997); the Group Examining the Probation and Welfare Service (1998); Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare (1998); the Working Group on Foster Care (1999); the Sexual Offences Review (1999) and the One Parent Family Payment Expenditure Review (1999). Significant literature of this period included Millar et al's *Lone Parents, Poverty and Public Policy in Ireland*³² and McCashin's *Lone Mothers in Ireland*³³. Other publications from the period, McLaughlin and Rogers³⁴, Lewis³⁵, and Jackson Conroy³⁶, theorised about the situation of lone parents, including unmarried parents, in Ireland, in the context of a traditional male breadwinner welfare regime.

Births Outside Marriage

In 1976 the number of births to unmarried women was 2,553, 3.8% of all births. There were 3,183 births to women under twenty and of those 70% were to married women. Births outside marriage continued to rise over the years and by 2015 numbered 23,990 representing 36.4% of all births. In 2015 there were just 1,187 births to women under twenty with 10.9% of them to married women. The number of non-family adoptions decreased considerably (Table 1).

Table 1: Total number of live births, births outside marriage, births to those under 20 and adoptions. Selected years 1976-2014-

Year	Total number of live births	Number of births outside marriage	Births outside marriage as % of all births	Number of live births under 20	Number of births to married women under 20	% of births under 20 to married women	Total adoptions / (family adoption)
1976	67,718	2,553	3.8	3,183	2,196	70	1,104 / (99)
1986	61,620	5,946	9.7	2,618	113	4.3	831 / (266)
1996	50,655	12,797	24.7	2,763	102	3.7	405 / (243)
2006	65,425	21,397	32.7	2,335	166	7.1	222 / (153)
2015	65,909	23,990	36.4	1,187	129	10.9	94 / (66)

Source: Compiled by author from Vital Statistics (Central Statistics Office), Health Statistics (Department of Health) and the Adoption Authority of Ireland selected years 1976-2015

The CSO began gathering data on place of residence of unmarried parents in 2007. In that year 51% of unmarried parents were registered as living at the same address and by 2015 the percentage had increased to 59%³⁷. As early as 1986 the Federation's research Mothers Alone?³⁸ revealed that 13% of the women who gave birth outside of marriage in 1983 had been cohabiting for a year or longer before the birth.

Since Treoir's inception forty years ago, Ireland has seen four decades of major change as witnessed by the following examples:

- the concept of illegitimacy was abolished
- social welfare payments for unmarried mothers have been introduced
- the rights of unmarried fathers in relation to their children have advanced somewhat
- Ireland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- mother and baby homes, in particular large ones, have become a thing of the past
- cohabitation has been recognised in legislation
- almost 60% of unmarried couples are cohabiting at the time of the birth
- the right to marry has been extended to couples of the same sex
- equality legislation has been introduced
- the percentage of births outside marriage has risen from 3.8% to 36.4%
- fewer children of unmarried parents are placed for adoption outside of their families
- Ireland is now a multi-cultural society

Chapter Two: The Story



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THE DAILY NEWS, SYDNEY, AUGUST 25, 1981

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The National Federation of Services for
Unmarried Parents and their Children



The Early Days

Arising from her work with a family placement service for single pregnant women, which became known as ALLY³⁹, Gemma Rowley, founder and honorary life member, was concerned about the stigma associated with unmarried pregnant women, and the paucity of services available to them. In her words ‘the exclusion and harshness of the attitudes of society towards unmarried pregnant women and mothers at that time were unacceptable’.⁴⁰ By 1969 she had succeeded in bringing together a group of people who shared her concerns. Social workers and those engaged in statutory and voluntary services were represented in the group. The voluntary sector included participants from different religious bodies active in this area at that time.

The group’s first step was to organise a national conference on Unmarried Mothers in the Irish Community. It was felt that such a national conference had the potential to highlight to a wider audience the current state of services and to garner support for changes which were needed. As the group was progressing the arrangements for the Conference, the Council of Europe issued a series of recommendations to protect single pregnant women, unmarried mothers and their children entitled Social Protection of Unmarried Mothers⁴¹ in May 1970. They included recommendations in relation to medical care, social assistance, employment and housing facilities. States were also requested to bring about “the use of non-discriminatory terminology with regard to the mothers and children in question”. The Council of Europe was seeking its 17 member states to implement these series of recommendations to protect single pregnant women and their children. This timely announcement allowed the group to place the Council of Europe recommendations at the centre of its conference programme.

Serendipity also played a part in finding a conference venue. Dr. Peter Birch, Bishop of Ossory and Patron of Kilkenny Social Services, was gaining a reputation as someone committed to social progress. Kilkenny Social Services had established itself as a flagship Social Service at the time. Dr Birch’s sponsorship of the conference added to his reputation for social progress particularly as the conference was the first major national conference on a social theme in Ireland.

The conference took place in the Newpark Hotel Kilkenny from 27 – 29 November 1970. It was opened by Tánaiste, Erskine Childrens, TD, Minister for Health. One hundred and seventy participants attended. For the first time in Ireland the issues and needs of unmarried mothers and their children were discussed and debated publicly.

See Appendix five for the conference programme and participant list.

The programme and attendance reflected national and international interest as well as a significant cross-section of service providers. The title of the conference National Conference on the Unmarried Mother in the Irish Community reflected the need to move from the institutional services of the time.

The report on the Conference noted that ‘about 70% of children born to unmarried mothers would be placed for adoption despite the mothers passionate desire to keep them because the facilities to enable them to do so did not exist. These were the facts behind a human situation responsible for considerable anguish, apprehension and uncertainty’⁴².

Dr Dermot Walsh, one of the founders and Honorary President of Treoir, was the rapporteur and published the Conference proceedings in 1972 with the following objective: ‘...it is hoped that both the Conference and the publication of its proceedings will make some contribution to the development of services for the unmarried parent and the care of her child in Ireland.’⁴³ In the conference papers, *The Unmarried Mother in the Irish Community*,⁴⁴ Walsh also reports how throughout the Conference there had been an awareness of the need for ‘a national, non-sectarian, voluntary agency for the unmarried mother and her child to act as a central advisory, publicity and co-ordinating body.’⁴⁵ He records how:

...finally, it was proposed by a member of the panel, Mrs Rowley, that consideration be given to the setting up of a central, multi-disciplinary, non-denominational national body and a formal proposal to this effect was put to the Conference by Fr Fergal O’Connor. This motion was carried.⁴⁶

A number of participants selected on a regional basis, together with members of the organising committee of the conference, held a short meeting immediately and agreed to discuss the possibility of

the formation of a central body at a meeting to be held in Athlone:

...Thus, even before the participants dispersed from the Conference, the first seed had been sown and the possibility established that from the Kilkenny Conference would come change and improvement so that the care of the unmarried mother and her child would henceforth be established at a higher level than ever prevailed in this country before.⁴⁷

Directory of Services in Ireland for the Unmarried Mother and her Child

The working party which organised this Conference continued to meet to progress the development of services for the unmarried mother and her child. It was felt that one of the most urgent areas of need was the provision of information on existing services. Consequently, the working party compiled and had published, in conjunction with the Medico-Social Research Board, the Directory of Services in Ireland for the Unmarried Mother and her Child⁴⁸ in April 1974. This was the first such publication to provide accurate and up-to-date information to unmarried parents. It also responded to a demand from social workers and others for information on services for unmarried parents.

The Directory was comprehensive and contained pertinent information on accommodation, including mother and baby homes, health care, social work agencies, finance, adoption, provision of care for children. It contained information on legal issues such as registration of births, legitimation, inheritance, affiliation, maintenance agreements and other topics such as action for seduction⁴⁹. This was an action that could be brought by an unmarried pregnant woman's father for loss of her services. There were twenty one adoption agencies listed and only one self-help group. The National Conference and the publication of the Directory together signalled a greater openness to public discussion of an area previously shrouded in secrecy.

Following a general meeting held in March 1974 in the Royal Dublin Hotel a study day was held in Trinity College Dublin on the 8th March 1975. The urgent need for a national body which would co-ordinate services for the unmarried parent and child was confirmed and a steering committee was appointed to work out how best to achieve this.

This steering committee drew up a provisional constitution for a proposed federation of services for unmarried parents and their children. The letter inviting interested parties to the inaugural meeting on 21st November 1975, signed by Margot Doherty, organising secretary, stated that those attending the inaugural meeting would be asked to elect a Council for one year to proceed with the setting up of the co-ordinating body already agreed to at the study day in Trinity: 'In order to ensure the success of this body we would earnestly request your attendance as it is only with your support and expertise that this can be achieved.' ⁵⁰ The letter went on to say: 'Sanction has been obtained from the Ministers for Health and Social Welfare for employees of statutory bodies to attend with special leave, pay and expenses. We suggest that not more than two representatives of each agency attend – one of whom should be an administrator and one, a social worker.'

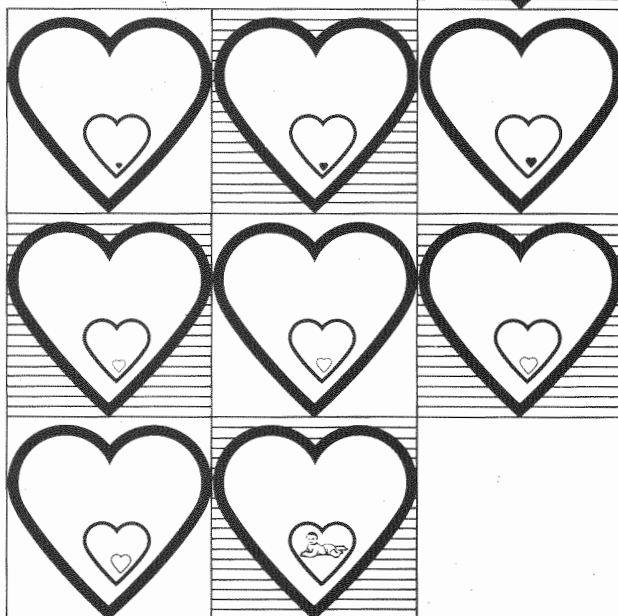
The Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children is established

The inaugural meeting of the proposed Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children took place at Powers Royal Hotel, Kildare Street on November 21st 1975. Frances Hishon, UCC, was the Chair. The Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children was established in 1976 as the national co-ordinating body of voluntary and statutory agencies working with unmarried parents and their children and was formally launched in the Gresham Hotel by Mr Frank Cluskey TD, Minister for Social Welfare. The Federation was ahead of its time in 1976 in including unmarried fathers as well as mothers and reflected this in its title.

Hitherto the focus was on unmarried mothers and fathers were rarely mentioned.

Directory of
Services in Ireland
for Unmarried
Parents and
Their Children

Directory of Services in Ireland for Unmarried Parents and their Children



The first Annual General Meeting was held in April 1977. See Appendix six for a list of attendees. The Chairman, Dr Dermot Walsh, was able to report significant progress in a number of areas:

We have introduced ourselves as a body to the legal, civil and ecclesiastical bodies in the country having visited both the Departments of Justice, where we were kindly received by the Minister, the Department of Health, Archbishop's Office Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterians and Methodists and we have also been received by the Adoption Board. In practical terms the Department of Health has guaranteed us an income levied on the health boards which you shall be hearing about in the Treasurer's report and we are also greatly indebted to a number of commercial firms and organisations for financial help.

On the basis of these promises and on the strength of cash in hand we have opened an Information and Referral Centre in Merrion Road, in premises kindly lent to us by the Eastern Health Board who also provide a telephone. In this context we have advertised for a person to man the office on a part-time basis.⁵¹

The Constitution ⁵² was adopted at the first Annual General Meeting. The aim was confirmed as follows:

The promotion of activities directed towards the improvement of standards of care for unmarried mothers and their children by all appropriate means. The objective would be sought through:

- the dissemination of information, to individuals and agencies
- the establishment of guidelines as to the desirable standards of care and practice
- the examination of the adequacy of existing legislative provision
- the promotion of research
- the organisation of conferences and workshops dealing with problems relevant to the unmarried parent and child⁵³

Thus the focus of the Federation was on providing clear and accurate information for unmarried parents and professionals. This had a dual purpose. Firstly, it provided a vital service at a time when there was a dearth of information and secondly, the incoming queries highlighted the inequities between married and unmarried parents and their children. From this platform of revolving information, Treoir went on to build and develop a remarkable and enduring advocacy service on behalf of unmarried families. To further deepen understanding of the needs of unmarried families, Treoir was committed to undertaking and commissioning research and ensuring policy was informed by evidence.

The membership, with distinctive and often different backgrounds and beliefs, sometimes had to address controversial and sensitive issues. Usually consensus was reached at council meetings, a tribute to the chairpeople and the calibre of representatives. Very occasionally an issue had to go to a vote of members as consensus could not be reached. One such occasion concerned the inclusion of information on family planning in the second edition of the Directory of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children in 1977. The vote, by a narrow majority, resulted in family planning services being excluded from that edition. This omission resulted in significant commentary among the press at the time. Nevertheless the Directory went on to sell extremely well, like the first edition which was a best seller.

Critical to the early days of the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children was the assistance and support provided by a wide variety of organisations and individuals. For example, the Eastern Health Board provided offices and a telephone line initially in Ballsbridge and subsequently in Clonskeagh and Rathmines. The Department of Health provided the first grant of £4,000.

There was an important contribution of voluntary effort which included assistance with hosting meetings, legal advice, accountancy and a range of other areas, an aspect which continued until the Federation was well established.

While the founders of the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children, particularly Gemma Rowley, Dr Dermot Walsh and Eilís Walsh, determined the ethos of the organisation with emphasis on respect, empowerment,

generosity, positivity, teamwork, networking, passion and conviction there were others who drove and supported the organisation in the early days, for example Breda Gaffney-Molihan, Barnardos, Maura Foran, North Eastern Health Board, Fred Donohue, Eastern Health Board, Fr. John O'Mahony, St. Anne's Adoption Society, Hilda Cassidy, Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland (adoption society, subsequently called Cúnamh), Margot Doherty, Eastern Health Board, Anna Lee, Cherish, all who served as members of Council.

Aveen Maguire was the first member of staff appointed to operate the Information and Referral service. She was succeeded some months later by Margaret Dromey in 1978 and Margot Doherty joined in 1982. Both worked part-time, carried forward the ethos and values of the founders and embraced the cultural, social and technological changes which took place in Ireland during the four decades. They steered Treoir for the next 38 and 32 years respectively. Other staff who joined the team over the years made important contributions to the development and work of Treoir. They are listed in Appendix 2.

Change of Name from the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children to Treoir

In 1994 the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children changed its name to Treoir, which means direction and guidance. 'Treoir' aptly describes the aspirations of the organisation to guide parents in the area of rights and entitlements and also to point the way to change. Students in the college of Marketing and Design were invited to design the logo and Minister Proinsias De Rossa TD, then Minister for Social Welfare, awarded the prize for the winning design.

Following discussion and consultation with Treoir members throughout the country it was agreed to continue to represent specifically unmarried parents and not to expand the service to all lone-parent families. This was in recognition of the fact that

unmarried families continued to be in a very different legal position to other families and there was concern that the very specific needs of unmarried parents might get lost or overlooked in an organisation that catered for all lone parents.

Membership of the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children

A feature of the Federation from its beginning was its membership representing the majority of agencies working in the field. This feature continues while reflecting the changes that have taken place over time in services. This alliance is a significant strength of the Federation. On the one hand it functions as “an ear to the ground”, important in early identification of changing needs and trends, and, on the other hand, as a combined strength in advocating and influencing for improvements. At the centre of these activities is a continuing education process assisting members to stay abreast of relevant developments. Its members initially included adoption agencies, mother and baby homes, hospitals, accommodation agencies, ALLY, Barnardos and Cherish, as well as the eight Health Boards.

As the social and economic situation of mothers improved and the stigma associated with unmarried parenthood lessened many services ceased operation. ALLY, Ballyogan House, St. Patrick’s Mother and Baby Home, Dunboyne Mother and Baby Home, Denny House, Belmont Avenue and a large number of adoption agencies have closed or changed their focus. For example, Bessborough Centre in Cork, which was one of the largest mother and baby homes in the country, now provides accommodation and training to mothers keeping their children. Very few children are now placed for adoption, which was the option chosen by significant numbers of mothers in the 1970s and 1980s.

The current member agencies of Treoir (Appendix 3) reflect services in the community including family support services, youth services, smaller accommodation units and support for other non-traditional families.

Treoir continues to be the one-stop-shop for comprehensive information for unmarried parents and those involved with them. It functions as a steady hand in an area of constant change especially, though not only, in the increasing complexity of law.

In brief:

- The first National Conference on the needs of the unmarried mother and Child was held
- The Directory of Services in Ireland for the Unmarried Mother and her Child was published
- The Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children was established with a national, broad based membership.

Chapter Three: The Work



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**'People will
forgive all
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things—but
as for birth
outside
marriage...'**

treoir

The National Federation of Services for
Unmarried Parents and their Children

This Chapter highlights the work of Treoir under the objectives as outlined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association.⁵⁴ As the work and achievements described in this Chapter span 40 years, the original name Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children or Treoir, is used where relevant. The objectives are:

- (a) To provide information regarding the services and entitlements available to unmarried parents and their children
- (b) To promote and develop a high standard of services for unmarried parents and their children
- (c) To provide a forum for research and the distribution of information relating to the welfare of unmarried parents and their children
- (d) To educate opinion at all levels of society about the welfare of unmarried parents and their children
- (e) To promote co-operation and co-ordination between statutory and non-governmental organisations so as to ensure that full use is made of available knowledge, expertise and community resources so that unmarried parents and their children have available to them services of all kinds of a professional standard.

(a) To provide information regarding the services and entitlements available to unmarried parents and their children

National Specialist Information Service

The key contribution which Treoir has made over the years is in the provision of the professional, National Specialist Information Service to unmarried parents and those involved with them. It reflects and continues to reflect the concerns identified at its foundation, that is, the need for the provision of accurate and timely information. Staff members collect, examine, consult, test and re-examine information in order to ensure the accuracy and accessibility of the information provided. Publications are prepared, printed and widely distributed. The arrival of new

technology has enhanced the distribution of information to a wider audience.

Queries to the Service

In the early years of the service there were approximately 600 queries a year, which concerned housing, adoption, fostering, day care, financial issues, social welfare and the legal rights of unmarried parents. In 2015 the National Specialist Information Service received over 8,000 queries, 63% were legal enquiries (guardianship, access, custody, cohabitation, birth registration, passports) the remainder concerned with social welfare, work, childcare, parenting and other issues.

The change in the nature of queries to the National Specialist Information Service can be explained partly by the fact that from the late 1970s onwards more and more mothers chose to keep and raise their children rather than place them for adoption. Their needs concerned accommodation, financial support and childcare. By 2015 there were few calls to the Service regarding accommodation while calls regarding legal rights and entitlements increased significantly.

The legislative changes which have taken place over the last 40 years have led to a complicated legal environment. For example, the issue of having the father's name on the child's birth certificate is now more complex and key decisions have to be made about the child's surname. Carers other than fathers can now become guardians. Cohabitation has become legally recognised and cohabitants have rights and duties. Acquiring passports for children whose parents are not married is now more difficult particularly in terms of requiring the consent of both parents.

Treoir had at its outset developed a specialist library which became an important resource for its members, students, professionals and journalists. Technological developments have reduced the library's relevance as information is now available on the Treoir website and on the internet.

This development in technology has also influenced the way the organisation now works. In addition to the number of information queries being dealt with by telephone, Treoir now hosts a very comprehensive, up-to-date website targeted at dif-

ferent groups, specifically pregnant women, unmarried mothers, unmarried fathers, grandparents, cohabitants, and more recently, responding to changes in Irish society, a section for LGBT parents (www.treoir.ie). The number of visitors to Treoir's website trebled from 20,000 in 2012 to over 65,000 in 2015. Treoir also has an active Facebook and Twitter presence.

Treoir still provides a very important telephone service. Many of the people who make contact have originally accessed some information on the website but because of the complexities of their individual situation they need to discuss and tease out their circumstances with Treoir's specialist information staff. Providing an attentive listening ear and personal contact are the essence of Treoir.

Users of the Service

In the 1970s it was mainly professionals working with unmarried parents who contacted the Information Service. Mothers themselves also contact the service but in lesser numbers. Some calls were from women who were extremely distressed at discovering an unplanned pregnancy and feared the reaction of their parents. Some calls were from pregnant women who were told to leave home because they were a 'disgrace to the family'. Others were told they themselves could return but could not bring their baby with them.

By 2015, with the increase in the numbers of unmarried parents in Ireland, in excess of 80% of the nearly 9,000 queries were from unmarried parents themselves, both mothers and fathers, with 15% from professionals and 13% from family members. Queries from mothers numbered 44% of all calls while 39% were from fathers. The number of grandparents contacting Treoir's National Information Service has increased significantly, many of whom are rearing their grandchildren in the absence of the birth parents.

Publications

From the initial Directory of Services in Ireland for Unmarried Parents and their Children published in the early life of the organisation, Treoir has built a comprehensive suite of information booklets, leaflets and information bulletins. The topics addressed include: the rights of unmarried parents, cohabitants, grandparents; going to court; shared parenting; birth registration; welfare-to-work; adoption; acquiring passports and other topics. Most publications are developed in the National Specialist Information Service in response to specific needs of parents which emerge in the course of queries to the Service.

Treoir's signature publication, Information Pack for Unmarried Parents, first published in 1987, continues to be updated annually and 15,000 copies per year are distributed with funding provided from the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme. Treoir publications can be found on www.treoir.ie.

(b) To promote and develop a high standard of services for unmarried parents and their children

Since the very beginning Treoir has been fortunate to have had very skilled, committed, vibrant and enthusiastic council members and chairpersons. The range of organisations represented on Council facilitated the cross fertilisation of ideas which sometimes led to the development of new services and improvements of standards e.g. identifying areas where training was needed, supporting the development of new services and promoting and initiating research.

Information pack

for unmarried parents

1997



Federation of Services
for Unmarried Parents
and their Children

36 Upper Rathmines Road,
Dublin 6.

Telephone/Fax: (01) 496 4155



Conferences, training and outreach workshops

Treoir continuously organises meetings and conferences around Ireland to highlight important changes in policy and legislation and to ensure those working with unmarried parents and their children are fully informed with up-to-date on relevant information. The topics addressed reflect the important issues emerging at the time. In the early years conferences focused on such topics as Finding Parents for Children with Special Needs; Unmarried Parents - Working Towards the Best Decision; Origins as Part of Identity Formation; Fathers Involvement with their Non-Marital Children.

In the years following the commencement of the Status of Children Act 1987, there was a focus on the implications of the Act. It led to a greater need for mediation and Treoir, with the assistance of Maura Wall Murphy, of the Family Mediation Service, provided training to social workers and others to assist them to develop new skills in working with parents in conflict.

Similarly, in the years following the Irish Government's ratification of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1992, Treoir printed information material and organised workshops throughout Ireland in an attempt to create awareness about the potential of the Convention to improve the lives of children born outside of marriage. The workshops were funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Treoir has always responded to requests for outreach information workshops to parents and groups of workers who provide services to unmarried parents. Workshops are tailored to meet the individual needs of groups and include topics such as legal rights of unmarried parents, including cohabiting parents, shared parenting and explaining relationships, social welfare payments and welfare/work/education/training and new legislation impacting on unmarried parents.

In recent years the demand for these workshops has increased considerably and funding was secured from the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme to deliver 20 workshops a year throughout the country.

(c) To provide a forum for research and the distribution of information relating to the welfare of unmarried parents and their children

Early on it became evident that not only was there a dearth of information on the few services available to unmarried parents but there was also a dearth of information on the socio-demographic characteristics of unmarried parents in Ireland and on their lived experiences as well as the outcomes for their children. Treoir identified the need for research to provide such information.

Dr Dermot Walsh of the Medico-Social Research Board, who was one of the founders and the first Chair of Treoir, facilitated a close link with the Medico-Social Research Board and subsequent innovative research. It supported the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children in identifying and addressing its research needs, initially through engaging a social science student during the summer to undertake small scale studies. The first of these was Finding Parents for Children with Special Needs in 1979.

In 1980 another study was undertaken on The Reasons why Children of Unmarried Parents Came into Care. This study was a response to findings of a Department of Health study which found that 33% of children received into care were children of unmarried mothers who, according to the report were 'unable to cope.' The study explored the circumstances and background of each admission into care in relation to the social and financial support available to the mother at the time the decision was made. Illness on the part of the mother was the most common cause of admission to care with inadequate support from the father a further contributor.

In 1985 Children in Pre-Adoptive Placements, a pilot study of 184 children awaiting adoptive placement in the care of a registered adoption society, was undertaken.

As lack of housing was a significant issue for unmarried parents the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children undertook a study on their housing needs. This led to on-going meetings with the local authorities on the need to include smaller units for unmarried parents.

These studies, though small in scale and undertaken by students, supervised by senior researchers in the Medico-Social Research Board, are indicative of the issues which needed addressing at the time.

“Mothers Alone?” The First National Study of Women Who Gave Birth Outside Marriage in Ireland (1983)

Arising from the information gained from these small-scale studies, it was decided that a national study was needed to gain basic demographic information on unmarried pregnant women in Ireland. In 1982 the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children, with the Medico-Social Research Board, embarked on a national research project on the characteristics of unmarried women who gave birth during 1983. It was the first national socio-demographic study of women giving birth outside marriage in Ireland. The study was a major undertaking, carried out with the support of social workers in the maternity hospitals and mother and baby homes. It surveyed 89% (4,049) of women who had non-marital births in Ireland in 1983. In that year 9.6% of births were outside marriage.

“Mothers Alone?” was undertaken in the context of an overall falling birth rate and a rising rate of births outside marriage. About three quarters of the women surveyed planned to keep their children which was indicative of the improvements in Irish society in the decade since the introduction of Unmarried Mother’s Allowance in 1973; the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977 which prohibited sacking a woman because of pregnancy and the Maternity (Protection of Employees) Act 1981, which for the first time legislated for maternity leave.

“Mothers Alone?” reported that thirty-seven percent of the women surveyed were teenagers, fifty-five percent were from lower-socio economic groups, half the women received ante-natal care late in pregnancy, nineteen per cent had a previous non-marital birth and thirteen percent were co-habiting for a year or more before

the birth. The Report was launched by Rory O' Hanlon, TD, then Minister for Health, in the Rotunda Hospital Pillar Room in 1986 and was very favourably reviewed by Dr Charles Mollan in the Irish Times.⁵⁵

National Longitudinal Study of Children (Growing Up in Ireland)

From its establishment in 1976, the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children was convinced that there was a need for a national longitudinal study of children to ascertain the outcomes for children of unmarried parents vis-a-vis children of married parents. It was felt at that time that much more information was needed to inform policy such as how many children were being raised by mothers alone and how they fared in terms of general health and emotional wellbeing in comparison with children in other family types; their social and financial circumstances; and to chart the movement in and out of one-parent families.

The need for the study was raised in 1983 and again and again throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The Federation held and facilitated discussions on the possibility of initiating the study with various bodies over the years including the Economic and Social Research Institute, the Combat Poverty Agency, the Health Research Board, the health boards, maternity hospitals etc. Funding was sought from numerous sources including the Ford Foundation, the Ireland American Fund, the European Commission, the Carnegie Corporation, the Millennium Fund, as well as various sources in Ireland, without success.

In 1993 on behalf of the Federation, the Economic and Social Research Institute prepared a paper entitled National Child Development Study - Proposal for the Initiation Phase (internal paper). A year later Treoir commissioned See How They Grow - a Proposal for a Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland in an attempt to progress the project. Meetings were held with some of those involved in the National Child Development Study in Britain which led to the establishment of 'Friends of the Longitudinal Study' and a campaign for the study was designed and initiated.



Authors at
the Launch of
“Mothers Alone?”
Report

Treoir also made a submission to the Commission on the Family which resulted in a recommendation for the study being included in the Commission’s final report in 1998. The proposed National Longitudinal Study was raised in meetings in 1999 with the Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs, Dermot Ahearn and Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children Mary Hanafin.

Treoir continued to promote the study at every opportunity.

In its submission to the National Children’s Strategy in February 2000, Treoir advocated once again for a National Longitudinal Study of Children. It stated: ‘...the most significant component of any National Children’s Strategy would be first and foremost, having available comprehensive, national data on how the children of Ireland fare’ and pointed out that this was stated in 1998 by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Following a proposal from the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Social Protection, the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Inclusion gave approval for a detailed proposal outlining scope, methodology, management arrangements and costs

involved in undertaking a longitudinal study. The design brief, produced by a consortium of researchers, was submitted in July 2001.

In its March/April Bulletin of 2002 Treoir was able to finally welcome the Government's announcement of the immediate allocation of €1.27 million to cover the start-up costs of the Growing Up in Ireland study and recalled how Dr Dermot Walsh, first Chair of Treoir, had proposed the idea of such a study as far back as 1983.

The Growing Up in Ireland study commenced in 2007. Undoubtedly, Treoir's tenacity was instrumental in bringing about this important initiative. The data from the study are widely used by research institutes and agencies as well as by the Growing Up in Ireland team.

Subsequently, with the financial assistance of the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme Treoir commissioned Dr Owen Corrigan to undertake a number of research projects using the data from the Growing Up In Ireland study: Watch them Grow: Unmarried Cohabitant and Solo Parenthood in Ireland: an analysis of data from the Growing Up In Ireland Study waves one and 2.⁵⁶ These reports are available on the Treoir website.

Mapping Lone Parent Groups

As a result of the isolation of lone parents, support groups for them began to spring up throughout the country. Treoir, in 1994, commissioned the mapping of lone parent groups nationally so that Treoir clients could be referred to these supports when the need arose. However, now the vast majority of mothers whether parenting alone, cohabiting or sharing parenting can access information on the internet and the support of generic local community services.

Employment Aspects of Young Lone Parents

Concerned with the fact that many unmarried parents leave school early and are ill-equipped to take up employment opportunities, Tony McCashin was commissioned by Treoir and the National

Youth Federation to undertake a study on Employment Aspects of Young Lone Parents in Ireland (1997).⁵⁷ One of the recommendations was that future policy should not be uncritically focussed on mobilising large numbers of lone mothers to take up paid employment as an end in itself. McCashin's central tenet was that if lone mothers attempted to re-enter the labour market without improving their skill level it is possible that their re-entry would be temporary. These findings were subsequently used to inform policy affecting unmarried parents and their engagement with the labour market.

For forty years, Treoir has carried out and facilitated the completion and dissemination of research on the situation of unmarried parents and their children in Ireland. This has been crucial in providing solid foundations on which to develop policy and influence legislative and policy change.

(d) To educate opinion at all levels of society about the welfare of unmarried parents and their children

From the beginning Treoir recognised that legislation and social policy needed to be changed to improve the disadvantaged situation of unmarried parents and their children in Ireland. Thus, advocating for change and educating opinion became an intrinsic part of its work. The Council and staff of Treoir take every opportunity to meet with ministers, civil servants and others to promote change, submitting considered opinions and proposals on a wide range of topics including developments in family law, adoption, the child's right to know the identity of her/his parents, the constitutional definition of the family, recognition of cohabitants, social protection and poverty and many others.

Family Law and Unmarried Parents

Abolishing the concept of illegitimacy - Status of Children Act 1987

From its foundation Treoir sought the abolition of illegitimacy which discriminated against children born outside marriage. At a meeting with the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children in 1981 Mr Spring T.D. then Minister of State at the Department of Justice, expressed a commitment to introducing reforming legislation in the areas of adoption and illegitimacy. The Law Reform Commission published a report on illegitimacy in 1982.⁵⁸ It recommended equalising the position of children born within and outside of marriage. It also recommended that unmarried fathers should be automatic guardians of their children.

The Chairman's Report to the half-yearly meeting of the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children in November 1982 stated:

...We believe the publication of the Law Reform Commission's report on Illegitimacy is one of the most significant events since the inception of the Federation. We will press the next Government to implement the recommendations.

While parents and professionals worked towards having the concept of illegitimacy abolished the general belief among member agencies at that time was that granting automatic rights to all unmarried fathers was not a viable option. There was concern that it would give fathers equal guardianship rights with the mother irrespective of their relationship with the child.

The Status of Children Act 1987 which followed on the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission's report, abolished the concept of illegitimacy in Irish law and while it did not grant automatic guardianship rights to unmarried fathers they were granted the right to apply to the court to become guardians of their children. The legislation marked a new chapter for non-marital children and their parents in Ireland. The Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children was very involved at all stages of the legislation – initially responding to the Law Reform Commission's report, meeting the key people involved on numerous occasions including: Ms Nuala Fennell, T.D. Minister of State

at the Department of Justice; Mr Brian Ingoldsby, the drafter of the legislation; the then Attorney General, Mr John Rogers, to discuss the impact different options would have on children of unmarried parents and regularly speaking at and hosting public meetings. Subsequently the Federation provided training for members on the legislation and developed information materials for parents and professionals.

This period was viewed by all associated with the Federation as a high point in the life and work of the organisation. The concept of *filius nullius*, the child of no-one, was finally removed.

The January 1988 Information Bulletin stated the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children welcomed:

...with great delight the signing by the President [Patrick Hillery] of the Status of Children Act 1987 on 14th December 1987. The Federation and other groups have worked for over a decade towards the abolition of illegitimacy and equalising the rights of all children. While we realise that there are still some differences in the rights and status of children depending on marital status of their parents, we see the enactment of this legislation as a major step forward in social legislation in Ireland and feel great delight at having played a role in its development.

Information
Material on The
Status of Children
Act 1987



Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children



STATUS OF CHILDREN ACT 1987

Joint Guardianship by Agreement - Children Act 1997

Guardianship for unmarried fathers was further progressed ten years later with the enactment of the Children Act 1997. Following its enactment it became possible, when two parents were in agreement, for the father to become a joint guardian of their child(ren) with the mother without going to court, by signing a Statutory Declaration in the presence of a peace commissioner or commissioner for oaths.

Children and Family Relationships Act 2015

The Law Reform Commission again paved the way for significant legislative change in the position of families in its report *Legal Aspects of Family Relationships* in 2010.⁵⁹ An invitation from the Law Reform Commission to submit views on family legislation in 2009 led to significant engagement between Treoir and members of the Commission. Among the many recommendations of the Report of the Commission, were that there should be joint guardianship rights for unmarried fathers on birth registration.

The Children and Family Relationships Bill 2014 which followed was welcomed by Treoir as it gave the possibility of guardianship rights to fathers who had been cohabiting with the mother for at least a year, step-fathers, same-sex parents, grandparents and anyone who had acted in loco parentis. However, Treoir perceived there was little in the bill to improve the legal position of non-cohabiting fathers. Also it made no provision for a Central Register for Guardianship Agreements despite intensive lobbying for a Register by Treoir for many years. Meetings were held with Mr Alan Shatter, Minister for Justice and Law Reform and subsequently with Ms Frances Fitzgerald, when she was appointed Minister for Justice and Equality.

The process of influencing the Children and Family Relationships legislation was particularly challenging for Treoir. The Minister, public servants and other NGOs were anxious that the family leg-

islation be passed prior to the referendum on the Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Marriage Equality) Bill 2015 in order to ensure its smooth passage. Treoir was sympathetic to this view but could not be compelled to remain silent on its concerns regarding the lack of rights for non-cohabiting unmarried fathers. Fortunately, with the support of some opposition politicians Treoir succeeded in achieving a number of concessions. Minister Fitzgerald agreed to include in the legislation a facility for unmarried parents to sign joint guardianship agreements at the point of birth registration. She also agreed to initiate a study on the feasibility of having a central register for joint guardianship agreements. The radical Children and Family Relationships Act was passed in 2015.



Minister for Justice and Equality Frances Fitzgerald with Beatrice Cronin, Margaret Dromey and Brenda Forde (Treoir)

Adoption

At the time that the organisation was set up adoption was the only option for significant numbers of single pregnant women as it was not possible to raise their children alone.

One of the Federation's earliest submissions was in 1978 to the Department of Justice regarding the proposed Sixth Amendment to the Constitution (Adoption) Bill.

In 1985 the Federation welcomed the Report of the Review Committee on Adoption Services⁶⁰ as comprehensive and sympathetic in considering carefully the position of all parties involved in the adoption process. The organisation agreed with the Review Committee that unmarried fathers should be encouraged to become more involved with decisions concerning their children.

In the mid-1990s attention turned to the European Court of Human Rights. In the Keegan Vs Ireland case (1994), the verdict handed down was that Mr Keegan's rights to family life had been violated by the secret placement of his child for adoption. This highlighted that legislation in the area of adoption in Ireland needed to be changed to bring adoption practice into line with the European Court judgement.

Treoir has been campaigning for access to birth records for adopted people for decades. In its submission to the Joint Committee on Health and Children on the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2015 Treoir appealed to the legislators to progress the issue of access to birth information for adoptees as quickly as possible. It also expressed concern about the inappropriateness of the adoption/birth certificates being issued under section 89 (2) of the Adoption Act 2010. The abridged version names the adoptive parents as the mother and father of the child and the fact that the child is adopted is concealed. This is contrary to the principle of the right to identity enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The whole area of adoption has undergone radical change from the first Act in 1952. The percentage of children being placed for adoption has dropped significantly, from 90% of unmarried births to 1% in 2014; the number of voluntary adoption societies has dramatically reduced; there is now a requirement to consult fathers in relation to the adoption of their children; most domestic adoptions are step-parent, or family, adoptions rather than stranger adoption; originally under the Department of Justice, adoption is now the responsibility of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and regulated by the Adoption Authority of Ireland.

Identity Rights

The child's right to identity has always been a guiding principle of Treoir. In 2000 Treoir made a submission to the Department of Health and Children on the National Children's Strategy which focused on children separated from one or both parents, reiterating that children have the right to appropriate and accurate information as to the identity of their biological parents; to on-going contact with their biological families and other significant carers where this is appropriate and the possibility exists; to have the names of both parents entered in the Register of Births and to essential medical history and information.

Treoir welcomed the ratification by the Irish Government of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child⁶¹ in 1992. Articles 9.1 and 9.2 made clear statements regarding children's rights to both parents. Following ratification of the UN Convention, Treoir developed a set of guiding principles in relation to children and their identity:

- Children have the right to appropriate and accurate information relevant to their age and stage of development, as to the identity of biological parents.
- Children have the right to on-going contact with their biological families and other significant carers where this possibility exists.
- Children have the right to have the names of both parents entered in the Register of Births.
- Children have the right to essential medical history and information.

Treoir particularly welcomed the Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2014 as it made it compulsory to include the unmarried father's name in the Register of Births (with some exceptions). However, a provision in the legislation was of major concern to Treoir whereby if parents did not agree on the surname, no surname would be assigned to the child until the child reached the age of majority and could choose his/her own surname. Treoir had several meetings with officials from the Department of Social Protection on this matter and subsequently Treoir proposed that the Children's

Rights Alliance raise this critical concern with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child at its hearing in Geneva in January 2016. The issue was given significant attention by the Committee and members of the Committee expressed dismay that children would not have a surname assigned until either the parents agreed or until the child reached 18 years. The Department of Social Protection has committed to reviewing the legislation.

The Family in the Constitution

It has always been a concern of Treoir that unmarried parents do not have Constitutional recognition or protection in the Irish Constitution as families. The organisation engaged with the various committees and conventions tasked with addressing constitutional inequities to achieve positive change over the years. The Constitutional Review Group⁶² in 1996 recommended that ‘All family rights, including those of unmarried mothers or fathers and children born of unmarried parents, should now be placed in Article 41.’ Treoir very much welcomed this but no action was taken to progress the issue.

Almost ten years later in its submission to the All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution⁶³ Treoir recommended the protection of family life in all of its forms based on Article eight of the European Convention on Human Rights⁶⁴ which reads: ‘Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence’. Treoir further recommends the inclusion of a protection for those rights within the Constitution.

However, the 2006 All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution recommended:

In the case of the family, the committee takes the view that an amendment to extend the definition of the family would cause deep and long-lasting division in our society and would not necessarily be passed by a majority. Instead of inviting such anguish and uncertainty, the committee proposes to seek through a number of other constitutional changes and legislative proposals to deal in an optimal way with the problems presented to it in the submissions.⁶⁵

Again in 2012, Treoir, in partnership with other organisations whose objective is equality for all families, endeavoured to have constitutional protection for non-marital families addressed by the Constitutional Convention.⁶⁶ It was not one of the issues addressed but it recommended that the definition of the family, and a number of other topics, should be prioritised for discussion by government, the Oireachtas or any future Constitutional Convention.

It is difficult to understand the reluctance of the authorities to extend constitutional protection to unmarried families and it is a source of great regret to Treoir in its fortieth year that it has not happened. The inequity is particularly glaring since constitutional protection has been extended to same sex (married) couples, with or without children, but unmarried parents and their children are still denied recognition and protection in the Irish Constitution.

Recognition of Cohabitants

Treoir had for many years sought legal rights for unmarried cohabiting parents as more and more children were born to parents who were unmarried but registered at the same address. The Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 was significant for unmarried parents as it established, for the first time in Ireland, the concept of cohabitation in Irish law. While this Act mainly concerned civil partnership rights for same sex couples, it did include a very significant section for cohabiting opposite and same sex couples. It provides financially dependent cohabitants with the possibility of financial redress at the end of a relationship through death or separation and the recognition of cohabitants' agreements.

Social Protection/Poverty

Since 1986, following the report of the Commission on Social Welfare⁶⁷, the first ever comprehensive review of the Social Welfare System, Treoir has been calling for the introduction of a fair and adequate social welfare system based on principles of adequacy, equity, consistency, simplicity and affordability.



Dr Michael Woods
with Margot Doherty
and Joan Burton

It believes that an adequate basic payment for all those in need of social welfare regardless of gender, marital status or contingency should be introduced.

Treoir has recommended a more just and equitable social welfare system in all of its pre-budget submissions over the years. In addition many minor changes were sought to improve inequities regarding unmarried parents. While some successes were achieved the fundamental change sought by Treoir is yet to be realised.

Treoir was invited to attend the first ever Department of Social Welfare pre-budget forum in 1988, hosted by then Minister for Social Welfare, Dr. Michael Woods, and has attended each year since. Initially the fora were attended by a small number of voluntary organisations in the board room of the Department of Social Welfare. The fact that up to forty organisations now attend is indicative of the growth of the voluntary sector in Ireland.

Despite these efforts Treoir's research⁶⁸ published in 2013 using Growing Up in Ireland data shows that solo parents were ten times more likely to be welfare dependent and nine times more

likely to be on rent supplement than married parents. They fared worse on every measure of deprivation as compared to married parents. The study confirmed that lone parents with low levels of education were less likely to be in employment. Indeed nearly 36% of lone parents had never worked before the birth of the child and experienced significant difficulties in accessing affordable quality childcare.

Fahey and Keilthy⁶⁹ highlight the ‘sharp’ change that has taken place when characterising high-poverty family types in Ireland. Forty years ago the typical poor family in Ireland was comprised of two parents with a large number of children; today it is typically a small one-parent family.

Treoir, in its submission to the National Anti-Poverty Strategy⁷⁰ in September 1995 wrote about the need for:

...a coherent and aggressive housing policy; a national longitudinal study as ‘a matter of urgency’; the promotion of the take up of health services and their accessibility; an accessible, adequate legal system; mediation services; accurate and accessible information on services etc.

In its 2000 submission to the National Children’s Strategy, Treoir drew attention to the need for support other than monetary support for unmarried parents. Such supports would include an increase in the level of community services, community mothers schemes, public health nurses, family carers, and the provision of parenting courses which would include issues relevant to unmarried parents. It also called for the initiation of a network of ‘access centres’ where contact between non-resident parents and children could be facilitated in a relaxed and friendly environment. Treoir drew attention to the need for supports for young parents which would enable them remain in school during pregnancy and to encourage them to return to education.

Raising Awareness

Treoir commissioned and hosted a number of major campaigns to raise awareness of issues impacting on unmarried parents and their children including:

The needs of children in relation to both parents; (radio, DART and bus advertising) in 2006

Alerting unmarried fathers to the fact that they needed to take action to acquire guardianship rights to their children (the radio advertisement for this campaign was award winning) in 2008

An awareness raising campaign to publicise the new rights and obligations of cohabitants in 2010

An information campaign, Baby on Board, in 2013 which aimed to provide information for expectant unmarried parents and raise awareness of their needs.

- (e) To promote co-operation and co-ordination between statutory and non-governmental organisations so as to ensure that full use is made of available knowledge, expertise and community resources so that unmarried parents and their children have available to them services of all kinds of a professional standard

Treoir, as a federation of statutory and voluntary organisations, was always committed to working in partnership with other agencies. It maintained an excellent working relationship with the Departments of Social Welfare, Health, Justice, Education, Children and Youth Affairs, Environment, Enterprise and Employment. Treoir has had a long working relationship with the Citizens Information Board, formerly Comhairle. It has also worked with a broad range of coalitions and networks over the years to advance and promote equality for unmarried parents and their children, in particular the Adoption Review Group, under the chairmanship of Dr Joseph Robins, the Moving On Project with the National Youth Federation, the Children's Rights Alliance

(CRA), Family Diversity Initiative, and various groupings within the member agencies.

Moving On – Young Mothers and Employment

While Treoir was concerned with the welfare of all unmarried parents and their children it recognised the particular vulnerability of young parents. Treoir partnered with the National Youth Federation, St. Catherine's Community Services Centre in Carlow and Louth Youth Federation to host an innovative project aimed at enabling young mothers (aged 16-25) to return to work, education or training by providing flexible, needs based and accredited pre-vocational training and by tackling the institutional barriers to young mothers' participation in the labour market and/or mainstream education and training. In other words, the project aimed to get young mothers to the starting line of employment. The "Moving On Project" is ongoing and significant numbers of young mothers have truly "moved on" as a result of engagement with the programme.

The National Resource Centre for those Working with Young Parents (NRCWYP)

The National Resource Centre for those Working with Young Parents was initiated in 2003, with funding from the Department of Health, in order to provide support to those working with young parents in health, education, social and youth services. It promoted and disseminated models of good practice in working with young parents. In 2004 a booklet entitled Information for Young Parents in Education was produced as well as the Resource Pack for Workers with Young Parents. In 2008 the first edition of the Young Parents Survival Guide, and in 2010 the second edition. All of these were funded by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme. See www.treoir.ie for these publications.

Teen parents Support Programme (TPSP)

Sheila Lawlor, a former council member of Treoir and then a social worker in Galway Maternity Hospital met Minister Frank Fahey and expressed her concerns about the number of young mothers whose children were admitted to hospital for ‘social’ reasons. Thus began a series of events which resulted in the establishment of the Teen Parents Support Programme by the Department of Health and Children. Three pilot projects (in South-West Dublin, Limerick and Galway) were established in June 1999 with national support provided by Treoir.

The projects aimed to provide a range of additional support services for teen parents during pregnancy and until their children reach two years of age. All teen parents, both fathers and mothers, up to and including 19 years of age, are eligible to participate in the Programme. In 2004, following the evaluation by the Department of Health, Treoir engaged a full-time National Co-ordinator for the projects. The main role is to focus on the development of the Teen Parents Support Programme nationally. There are now eleven projects around the country.

The TPSP was presented as one of the four examples of good practice in the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005.⁷¹

In 2015 a total of 1,029 young parents, their children and families accessed support from the TPSP, bringing to 6,478 the number of young parents who, together with their children, partners and families, had received this service since the TPSP was established in 1999. One of the aspirations of the TPSP is that eventually all teen parents in Ireland will have access to this type of support.

In 2013 the TPSP published a Toolkit⁷², a resource for those working with pregnant or parenting teenagers which was funded by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme.

The TPSP co-ordinator regularly brings issues affecting young parents to the attention of policy makers from a range of government departments and represents the needs of teen parents and unmarried parents on The Parenting Network facilitated by the Centre for Effective Services. For more information on the Teen parents Support Programme see www.tpsp.ie.

In Brief:

- The number of enquiries to the National Specialist Information Service increased dramatically over the years. Parents, extended family members and professionals were the main users of the service.
- The nature of enquiries to the National Specialist Information Service has changed over time
- Developments in technology changed the way in which Treoir services were delivered and the Treoir website is extensively used
- Relevant publications were produced in response to demand from service users
- Conferences and workshops were held over the years to address issues concerning unmarried parents and their children
- Research projects were undertaken which explored the reality of lives of unmarried parents and helped to inform policy
- Legislation impacting on unmarried parents and their children developed significantly over the period
- The adoption process has undergone radical change
- Treoir developed a set of principles in relation to children and their right to identity
- The additional needs of young parents are being recognised and the Teen Parents Support Programme was established to meet their needs.

Funders

The Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children was initially core funded by the Eastern Health Board and subsequently, through negotiations with the Department of Health, all other seven health boards contributed to its funding. Treoir is now funded through the HSE Social Inclusion Unit and Tusla, formerly the Health Boards.

New funding was sourced to support the expansion of the organisation:

In 2001 Treoir formed an important relationship with the newly founded Crisis Pregnancy Agency which was established to reduce the number of crisis pregnancies by providing education, advice, contraceptive services and supports as well as counselling and welfare services after crisis pregnancy. For the first time dedicated funding was made available to agencies providing services to single pregnant women and unmarried parents.

Treoir was one of the agencies to benefit from this new source of funding and the funding enabled Treoir to appoint its first full-time information officer, to publish the Information Pack for Unmarried Parents annually and distribute it to all the G.P.s in the country. Currently the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme funds two full-time posts and makes an annual grant to the flagship publication of Treoir - the Information Pack for Unmarried Parents and many other publications of Treoir.

The Citizens Information Board grant aids Treoir to provide a back-up specialist service to its local network of CICs around the country. This funding also ensures that Treoir publications are readily available to all CICs.

Funding for specific projects was received from a number of sources over the year including the Health Education Bureau, the Family Support Agency, Gulbenkian Foundation, Community Foundation of Ireland, Katherine Howard Foundation, Google Annual Adwords In-kind Advertising, Pobal, People in Need, Lottery Funding, Departments of Health and Social Welfare amongst others.

Without the support of these loyal funders the work of Treoir could not have been achieved.

Other People Who Supported Treoir Over the Years

Treoir has been very fortunate to have the support, guidance and expertise of many specialists over the years. Key supporters included Tony McCashin, social policy TCD, Geoffrey Shannon, Child rapporteur and legal expert and chair of Adoption Authority, Fergus Ryan, lecturer in law in NUI Maynooth, Professor William Duncan, former professor of Law at TCD, Dave Ellis, Coolock Community Law Centre, Ann Vaughan, assistant secretary Department of Social Protection and many other Department of Social Welfare/Social Protection staff, too numerous to mention.

Others who were very influential and supportive include Maura Wall-Murphy of the Family Mediation Service, Rosemary Grant, Chair of TPSP advisory committee, Pat Bennett and Mary Lloyd, Family Support Agency, Justice Catherine McGuinness, former Supreme Court Judge, Brian Ingoldsby, Department of Justice, Dara Breathnach, Department of Justice and Equality, Tony Fahey, UCD, Tony McQuinn and Geralyn McGarry, Citizens Information, Sheila Cooney, Donal Egan, Carrol O'Daly, legal advisors, Michael Mulvihill, Department of Health, Bill Cunningham, John Philbin, accountants, Kathleen O'Higgins, ESRI, staff of the Family Law Office, Dolphin House, Cora Pollard, Ian Hood, CIB mentoring service, Deirdre McTeigue, consultant, John Doyle, Eastern Health Board, Gerry O'Dwyer, Department of Health, Peter Clarke, Three Candles Printers, Yvonne Murphy, NSSB, Brid McGrath, consultant, and Gillian Van Turnout, former senator.

The Future

In 1971, at the Kilkenny conference on Community Services for the Unmarried Parents, it was proposed that:

Consideration be given to the setting up of a central multidisciplinary, non-denominational, national body and a format proposal to this effect was put to the conference and carried.⁷³

The process of bringing this proposal to fruition involved some years of dedicated negotiation ensuring that all the relevant agencies were represented and involved. This voluntary effort led to the establishment of Treoir, the National Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and Their Children. The collaboration with the statutory agencies was critical from the outset and the long and honorable tradition of voluntary agencies working in this area should not go unnoticed.

It is clear that significant progress has been achieved in addressing the deficiencies identified in Kilkenny in 1971 and since then. The early pioneers who had the vision and foresight to germinate the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children deserve applause and recognition as Treoir celebrates its fortieth anniversary in 2016. The foregoing chapters set out in some detail the work and achievements of the organisation.

Nowadays, the increasing prevalence of births outside of marriage, greater tolerance for social change and the increased complexity of modern family types make Treoir's mission more relevant than ever. The journey towards equality for unmarried parents and their children continues as:

- The relationship between unmarried fathers and their children is not fairly recognized in the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015
- Unmarried families do not yet have constitutional protection
- Children's right to identity is not fully recognized and acknowledged

As Treoir enters its fifth decade it will continue to represent the best interests of unmarried families in Ireland and work towards equality for unmarried parents and their children.

Appendices



treoir

The National Federation of Services for
Unmarried Parents and their Children

Appendix 1: Chairpersons 1976-2016

Chairpersons

DrDermot Walsh	Medico-Social Research Board
Gemma Rowley	ALLY
Fred Donohue	Eastern Health Board
Joseph Robbins	Department of Health
Derry O'Dwyer	Midland Health Board
P.J. Fitzpatrick	Court Services Board
Anna Comerford	National Maternity Hospital
Norah Gibbons	Barnardos
Rosaleen Maguire	National Maternity hospital
Eilis Walsh	National Social Work Qualifications Board
Leonie Lunny	Citizens' Information Board
Ruth Barrington	Molecular Medicine Ireland/ Health Research Board/
Honorary President	Dr. Dermot Walsh
Honorary Life Member	Gemma Rowley

Council Members 1976 - 2016

This list is based on the available reports of the time. Earlier records may be incomplete

ALLY	Noreen Keane
Barnardos	Breda Gaffney-Molihan
Barnardos	Laetitia Lefroy
Barnardos	Aileen Young
Barnardos	Norah Gibbons
Barnardos	June Tinsley
Barnardos	Margaret Acton
Bessborough Care Centre	Thomas Quigley
Miss Carr's Housing Association	Ruth Prendergast
Carr's Home Housing Association	Deborah Sutcliffe
Carr's Home Housing Association	Christina Hughes
Cherish	Margaret Murphy
Cherish	Anna Lee
Cherish	Liz Chalnor
Cherish	Miriam Logan
Cherish	Cora Pollard
Cherish	Ann Lyons
Cherish	Veronica Black
Cherish	Ann Bowen
Church of Ireland Social Services	John Stokes
Church of Ireland Social Services	Pat Smyth
Clarecare	Joan O Keffe
Coombe Women's Hospital	Rosemary Grant
Cork University Hospital	Dearbhla Ni Riordain
Cúnamh (Catholic Protection and Rescue Society)	Hilda Cassidy
Cúnamh (Catholic Protection and Rescue Society)	Anne Roynane
Cúnamh	Niamh McHale
Cúnamh	Denise Porter

CURA	Mairead Curren
CURA(Galway)	Ann Mills
CURA	Louise Graham
Doras Buí	Siobhan Roddy
Eastern Health Board	Mary Rice
Eastern Health Board	Margot Clarke/Doherty
Eastern Regional Health Board	Ann McWilliams
GLEN	Sandra Irwin Gowran
Here-to-Help	Marie Naughton
HSE Ballinasloe	Marie Finn
Life National	Anne Kennedy
Life National	Mary McCarthy
Limerick Social Services Council	Sr. Dolores
Limerick Social Services Council - TPSP	Phyllis Crowe
Limerick Social Services Council	Breda Collins
NUI Galway	Anne Egan
Mid-Western Health Board	Ita O'Brien
Mid-Western Health Board	Seretta O' Mahony
Mid-Western Health Board/SEHB	Marie Kennedy
North Eastern Health Board	Eilis Craig
North Eastern Health Board/HSE	Mary Barron/McGovern
North Western Health Board	Maura Foran
North Western Health Board	Marilyn Roantree
National Maternity Hospital/Centrecare	Rosaleen Maguire
National Maternity Hospital	Loretta Reilly
National Maternity Hospital	Ciara McKenna
National Maternity Hospital	Clare Murphy
Ossory Adoption Society	Una McHale
PACT (Protestant Adoption Society/ Single Parent Counselling)	Janet Pasley
PACT	Dorothy Gibney

PACT	Ann Craig
PACT	Sinead Whiting
PACT	Berit Andersen
Portiuncula Hospital	Cathy Fox
Rotunda Girls Aid Society	Claire Henry
Rotunda Girls Aid Society	Angela O'Mahony
Rotunda Girls Aid Society	Joan Kavanagh
Regional Hospital Galway	Sheila Lawlor
Rotunda Hospital	Eleanor Holmes
St Ann's Adoption Society	Fr. John O'Mahony
St Ann's Adoption Society	Jackie Kavanagh
St Ann's Adoption Society	Sheila Sieviewright
St Ann's Adoption Society	Ruth Murray
St Ann's Adoption Society	Clare Barry
St Ann's Adoption Society	Jacinta Ryan
St. Catherine's Adoption Society	Margaret Gill
St. Mura's Adoption Society	Fr. W.J. Campbell
St Patrick's Guild	Sr Gabriel
St Patrick's Mother and Baby Home	Sr Rosalie
St Patrick's Mother and Baby Home	Ann Valentine
St Patrick's Mother and Baby Home	Imelda Keogh
Southern Health Board	Christine Moran
Southern Health Board	Sr. Maureen O Donoghue
St Catherine's Adoption Society, Ennis	Sr Angela Lennox
St Kevin's Adoption Society, Wexford	Kitty Greaney
South Eastern Health Board	Frances Jones
South Eastern Health Board	Anna Harney
South Western Area Health Board	Mary O'Neill
Tusla Regional Adoption Service	Aisling Dowling Deignan
University of Limerick Maternity Hospital	Jennifer O'Grady

Western Health Board
Western Health Board

Mary Gormley
Alex MacLean

Appendix 2: Treoir Staff

Aveen Maguire	Natalie McDonnell
Margaret Dromey	Nicola Mulvany
Pamela McHugh	Rosie Toner
Barbara James	Bella Maher
Margot Doherty	Margaret Morris
Brenda Forde	Joanne Hickey
Richard Beck	Beatrice Cronin
Veronica Black	Greg Staton

Students, interns and participants of social employment schemes also assisted over the years

Appendix 3: Treoir Current Member Agencies

Aislinn	Students Union
Barnardos	Carr's Child and Family Services
Bessborough Centre	National Maternity Hospital
Clarecare	Here2help
Coombe Women's Hospital	Rotunda Hospital
CURANational Office	Sligo Social Service Council
Doras Buí	St. Anne's Day Nursery
Foróige	St. Catherine's Community Services Centre
HSE	Glen Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
Home Start	Familibase
Anew Support Services	
Limerick Social Services Council	
Mary Immaculate College	

Appendix 4: Members of working groups who organised the National Conference on the Unmarried Mother in the Irish Community and who developed the Directory of Services in Ireland for the Unmarried Mother and her Child

Mrs Patricia Arnold, Social Worker, Church of Ireland Social

Miss Margaret Bradley, Medical Social Worker, Rotunda

Mrs Helen Burke, Department of Social Science, UCD

Miss Helen Campbell, Social Worker, Ally

Sr Caoimhin, Social Services Limerick

Miss Vivienne Darling, Department of Social Studies, TCD

Rev P Duggan, Chaplin, Ossory Adoption Society

Rev Paul Fitzgerald, Director, Kilkenny Social Services

Miss Eileen Healy, Social Worker, St Joseph's School Kilkenny

Miss Ruth Lewis, Educationalist, Seville lodge Kilkenny

Miss E Lyng, Social Worker, St Patricks Home, Navan Road

Miss Pauline McCullagh, Social Worker, National Maternity Hospital

Mrs Margaret Mansfield, Social Worker, Ballinasloe

Mrs Margaret Murphy, Department of Social Science, UCD

Dr A O'Beirne, Assistant M.O.H County Clinic, Kilkenny

Mrs Aileen O'Hare, Sociologist, Medico Social Research Board

Mrs Gemma Rowley, Social Worker, 9, The Laurels, Dundrum

Sr Vincent, Social Worker, Dublin Health Authority

Dr Dermot Walsh, Medico-Social Research Board

Miss Nora Wren, Social Worker, Ossory Adoption Society

Appendix 5: Programme for the National Conference on the Unmarried Mother in the Irish Community and participant list

Friday November 27, 1970

Address of welcome by the Mayor of Kilkenny

Official Opening by Tánaiste Erskine Childers TD Minister for Health.

Session I: Theme: The socio-medical problems of the unmarried mother

- Lecturer: Dr Declan Meagher Master of the National Maternity Hospital, Dublin.
- Chairman: Right Rev Dr McAdoo Bishop of Ossory, Ferns and Leighin

Sat Nov 28

Session II: Theme: The Social Protection of the Unmarried Mother

- Lecturer: Ms Margaret Bramall, General Secretary, National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child Great Britain
- Chair: Most Rev Dr Birch, Bishop of Ossory

Session III: Theme I: The Role of the Voluntary Agency in the Care of the Unmarried Parent

Lecturer: Rev G. Colleran, Chaplain, Catholic Prevention and Rescue Society, Dublin

Theme II: The Role of the Statutory Agency in the Care of the Unmarried Parent

- Lecturer: Mr F.J. Donohue, Senior Administrative Officer, Dublin Health Authority
- Chairman: Dr V. Barry, County Medical Officer, Kilkenny

Session IV: Theme 1: The Function of the Mother and Baby Home

- Lecturer: Mother Hildegard, Sacred Heart Convent, Bessboro' Cork

Theme II: Community Care for the Unmarried Mother

- Lecturer: Mrs G.B. Thompson
- Chairman: Rev P. Fitzgerald, Director, Social Services, Kilkenny

Sunday November 29

Session V: Open Forum

Panel: Mrs M. Bramall, Mrs G.O. Simms, Mrs G. Rowley, Social Worker, Rev F. O'Connor, OP, Mr D. F. Donovan, County Manager, Kilkenny

- Chair: Dr D Walsh, Senior Psychiatrist, Dublin Health Authority

Participant list at the National Conference in Kilkenny 27 – 29th September

Joan Ackerly, Church of Ireland Social Services

Patricia Arnold, Church of Ireland Social Services

Sr M. Ambrose, Student

Sr M. Aloysius, St Mary's Adoption Society

Sr Austin, Diocesan Moral Welfare Society Salford

Sr Angela, Down & Conor Catholic Family Welfare Society

Sr Ann, Good Shepherd Convent

Sr Austin, Kilkenny Social Services

Jennifer Armstrong, Limerick Social Service Centre

Fr Augustine, The Friary, Kilkenny

Alex Bowen, Christian Family Movement Kilkenny

Aine Breathnach, St Nicholas' Adoption Society Galway

Margaret Brady, PHN Health Centre Drogheda

Sr M Butterly, Medical Missionaries of Mary

Norah Bride, SPHN Clare

Mr Brooks, Magdalen Home and Nursing Rescue Society

Mrs Brooks, Magdalen Home and Nursing Rescue Society

Annelies Becker, Protestant Child Care Association

Margaret Bradley, Medical Social Worker Rotunda Hospital

Sr Bernardine, St Vincent's North William Street

Bridget Butler, PHN Kilkenny

Connie Bray, St Augustine's Blackrock

Dr A Beirne, Assistant County Medical Officer

Mother Bernadette, St Patrick's Home Navan Road

Sr Breid, Good Shepherd Convent Dunboyne

Sr M. Benigna, Aut Evan Hospital Kilkenny

A. Cunneen, Limerick Adoption Society

Elizabeth Cody, Children's Officer Wexford

H.V. Connolly, County Medical Officer Longford

M. Colreavy, Senior Assistance Officer Longford

Elizabeth Clifton, Catholic Children's Protection Society Liverpool

Josephine Crowley, The Children's Hospital Temple Street

Rev Desmond Carroll, Church of Ireland Waterford

Padraig Connolly, National Association of Adult Education

C. Clyne, Dublin Health Authority

Sr Carmel, Catholic Family Advice Centre Manchester

H. Cassidy, Catholic Protection & Rescue Society of Ireland

Fr E. Casey, Bishop of Kerry

Sr Caoimhin, Social Service Centre Limerick

Rev Conway, Clonliffe College

Ms Clandillon, Department of Health

Margaret Duggan, I.C.A.

Patrick Doyle, Muintir na Tire

Ronald Drennan, Catholic Children's Protection Society Liverpool

Norah Dillon, Children's Officer Tipperary

W.V. Denard, Dean of Women TCD

Rev Patrick Duggan, Ossory Adoption Society

J.J. Doyle, Dublin Health Authority

A. Davy, Catholic Protection & Rescue Society of Ireland

V. Darling, Trinity College Dublin

Eilish Darcy, Student

Sr M. Eudes, Aut Evan Hospital Kilkenny
 Sr M. Edna, St Mary's Adoption Society
 Sr M. Eucharía, Social Service Centre Clondalkin
 Sr Eileen Marie, Holy Family Convent Kilkenny
 Sr Frances, Ballyfermot
 Deirdre Foran, Kerry County Council
 Nuala Finlay, PHN Clare
 Nora Fleming, Health Authority Cork
 Sr Felicitas, St Mary's Hospital Dublin
 Sr A.M. Flynn, Josephine Butler College Liverpool
 A. Forristal, Kilkenny
 Rev Paul Fitzgerald, Kilkenny Social Services
 Carmel Fay, Adoption Board
 Susan Ferris, Community Services Centre Waterford
 Frances Farley, Children's Officer Cork
 Mary Griffin, Limerick Social Service Centre
 Eileen Greene, Catholic Children's Protection Society Liverpool
 Sr Geraldine, Limerick Social Service Centre
 Olga Garland, Church of Ireland Social Service
 Rev Fred Gillmor, Church of Ireland
 Anne Gill, Independent
 Sr Good Counsel, Kilkenny Social Services Centre
 Brendan Green, Senior Assistance Officer Kilkenny
 Kathleen Glover, Bethany Home Dublin
 Rev Brian Geoghegan, Limerick Social Service Centre
 Ms Gregg, The Coombe Hospital
 Marie Hogan, Nurse Freshford
 M. Hanrahan, County Medical Officer Clare
 Frances Hishon, Health Authority Cork
 Eileen Healy, St Joseph's School Kilkenny
 Mary Horkan, UCD
 Sr Albert, , St Mary's Hospital Cappagh
 Sr John Gabiel, St Patrick's Guild
 L.A. Johnston, ICA
 Sr Joan, , Student
 Margaret Kerin, Magdalen Home for Protestant Unmarried Mothers

Sean Keane, Leitrim County Council
 Brendan Keavitt, Department of Social Welfare
 Kay Kinsella, Department of Justice
 Eilis Lyng, St Patrick's Home Navan Road
 Alice Leahy, Voluntary Services International
 Rev Sean Lowry, Down and Connor Catholic Family Welfare Society
 Ruth Lewis, Youth Course, Kilkenny
 Joan Lynch, Adoption Board
 Catherine Lonergan,
 Una Lappin, Sligo County Council
 Maura O'Looney, Probation Officer Dublin
 Ms Marnell, Marriage Advisory Service
 Rev J. Murphy, Bennetsbridge
 Sr Mark, Drogheda
 Sr Mary de Ricci, St Louis Secondary School Monaghan
 B. Mitchell, Marriage Counselling Service Dublin
 M. Mansfield, Ossary Adoption Society
 Sr Madeline, Brigidine Convent Tullow
 Rev John Murphy, Leeds Rescue Society
 Mary Moroney, Clare County Council
 F.M. Mullen, Lancaster Protection and Rescue Society
 M. Murphy, UCD
 Sr Margaret, Holy Family Convent Kilkenny
 Maura McCormack, Children's Officer Galway
 Nancy McEvilly, Children's Officer Mayo
 Rosemary McGillicuddy, Marriage Counselling Service Dublin
 N. McDermott, Dublin Health Authority
 E. McManus, Dublin Health Authority
 Canon McHugh, Diocesan Children's Rescue Society Birkenhead
 P. McCullogh, National Maternity Hospital Dublin
 F. McGarry, County Clinic Kilkenny
 Mary Nevill, Catholic Women's Aid Society Cork
 K. Neary, , Dublin Health Authority
 Sr Norbert, Sacred Heart Convent Bessboro'
 D. Overend, Dublin

Sam Oakes, Kilkenny County Council
 A. O'Brien, PHN County Clinic Tipperary
 P. O'Brien, SPHN County Clinic Tipperary
 Mary O'Brien, PHN Sligo
 Hanora O'Connor, Children's Officer Limerick
 M. O'Connor, Dublin Health Authority
 A. O'Doherty, Children's Officer Cavan
 Dymna O'Flynn, Housing Department Dublin
 Michael O'Hanrahan, Meath
 Mrs O'Hanrahan, Meath
 Barbara O'Hara, Southwark Catholic Children's Society
 Eileen O'Hegarty, Welfare Officer Aer Lingus
 Colette O'Kelly, St Kevin's Hospital
 Rev John O'Mahony, Student
 Cannon O'Neill, Lancaster Protection & Rescue Society
 Rev Sean O'Neill, Rotunda Girls' Aid Society
 Michael O'Mordha, Department of Education
 S O'Reilly, Dublin Health Authority
 Rev P.J. O'Reagan, Mulingar
 Yvonne Pim, Church of Ireland Youth Counselling Service
 Sr M. Patricia, Social Worker, Freshford, Kilkenny
 Sr Paul, St. Anne's Adoption Society Cork
 Sr Paul Mary, St Louise Secondary School Monaghan
 Rev Oliver Pierce, The Rectory Clogh, Fermanagh
 Mary Clair Prendergast, St Patrick's Hospital Dublin
 Sr Paula, Social Service Centre Clondalkin
 Rev G. Young, St Patrick's Home Navan Road

Sr Patricia, St Patrick's Home Navan Road
 Sr Patricia, Social Service Centre Clondalkin
 Frank Rowley, Dublin
 B. Rutledge, Children's Officer Dublin Health Authority
 Sr Rosaria, Bridgine Convent, Tullow
 Anne Ronayne, Catholic Protection & Rescue Society of Ireland
 Mary Ruttie, Adoption Board
 Beatrice Somerville Large, Protestant Nursery Rescue and Children's Aid Society
 Sr M. Sacred Heart, Good Shepherd Convent
 Sr Sheila, Kilkenny Social Services Centre
 P. Sheehan, Dublin Health Authority
 Sr Stanislaus, Kilkenny Social Services Centre
 Ms Treacy, Adoption Society Killarney
 Sr Teresa, Holy Family Convent Kilkenny
 J. Teahan, Dublin Branch of Kilkenny Social Services
 Claire Tuohy, UCD
 Sr Ursula, Limerick Social Service Centre
 Sr Vincent, Dublin Health Authority
 Sr Vincent, Sisters of Charity Drogheda
 Jean Wilson, Kells
 Patricia Waldron, Housing Department Dublin
 A.P. Walker, Independent
 Camille Williams, Independent
 M. Walsh, Health Authority Cork
 Nora Wren, Ossary Adoption Society

Appendix 6: List of attendance at First Annual General meeting on 29 April 1977

Eleanor Holmes, Social Work Dept. Rotunda Hospital Dublin

Sr M Barbara

Sr M. Pauline, St Joseph's Babies' Home Stamullen

Maura McAuliffe

Noreen Keane, ALLY

Una McHale, Ossory Adoption Society Kilkenny

Margot Clarke, Eastern Health Board

Anna Lee, Cherish

Liam Devine, C.C., St Attracta's Adoption Society Sligo

Eileen Fitzgerald, Contact

Teresa Sewell

Mary Payne

Martin McHale, Shelter Referral

Nancy MacEvilly, Western Health Board (Mayo)

Sr Philomena, Sacred Heart Home, Blackrock Cork

Eileen Cassidy, National Maternity Hospital Dublin

Catherine Gregg, The Coombe Lying-in Hospital Dublin

Laetitia Lefroy, Dr Barnardo's Dublin

Sr Miriam Brennan Sligo Social Service Centre

Eithne MacCormack Western Health Board

Rev R. Keane, St John's Adoption Society Waterford

Christine Moran, Southern Health Board

Jim O'Sullivan, Southern Health Board

Denise Burgess, Rotunda Girls Aid Society Dublin

Patricia Arnold, Dr. Barnardo's Dublin

Sr Rosalie, St Patrick's Home Navan Road Dublin

Frances Hishon, University College Cork

Beatrice Somerville-Large Nursery Rescue Society

Renée Harkness, South Eastern Health Board

Sr Angela Lennox, St Catherine's Adoption Society Ennis

Vivienne Darling, Children First

Mary Rice, St Louise's Adoption Society Dublin

Sr Joseph,, St Mura's Adoption Society

Mother Michael, St Mura's Adoption Society

Fr W.J. Campbell, St Mura's Adoption Society

R. Black, St Mura's Adoption Society

Hilda Cassidy, Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland

Anne Ronayne, Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland

Sr Gabriel, St Patrick's Guild Dublin

Imelda Keogh, St Patrick's Guild Dublin

Maura Foran, North Western Health Board

John Stokes, Church of Ireland Social Services

Pat Smyth, Protestant Adoption Society

Leone Eccles, Miss Carr's Homes

Pauline Berwick, Council for Social Welfare

Sr Mary, Sacred Heart Convent, Blackrock, Cork

Gemma Rowley, ALLY

Eilís Walsh, Treasurer FSUPC

Dermot Walsh, Chairman FSUPC

Fr. O'Mahony, Sacread Heart Adoption Society Cork

Aveen maguire, FSUPC

Brenda Molihan, Dr Barnardo's Longford

Anneliese Becker, Interaid

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