

October 2020



16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence is an international campaign. It takes place each year from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) until 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

Throughout the campaign, Mothers' Union joins with others globally to raise awareness of, and call for an end to, gender-based violence in all forms and in all societies.

The ongoing restrictions around Covid-19 will change how we engage with the campaign in 2020.

On 5<sup>th</sup> December we will hold our first ever Global Day of Action where members around the world will be stepping out of their comfort zones to support survivors.

Mothers' Union has produced a set of resources specifically for its members and friends, which you are welcome to use and to encourage others to use.

For more information:

[www.mothersunion.org.uk](http://www.mothersunion.org.uk)

[www.mothersunion.ie](http://www.mothersunion.ie)

**Opportunity to influence the Domestic Abuse Bill and connect (further) with Church Dioceses in ongoing work on Domestic Abuse**

MU made a formal submission to the House of Commons Scrutiny Committee of the Domestic Abuse Bill in July, and this Bill will now be progressing to the House of Lords towards the end of September. There are opportunities to influence debate within the House of Lords, and the associated Guidance through the Home Office.

The 2 key "asks" which MU is making is to remove the "no recourse to public funding" restriction for victims where their immigration status is unclear, which means that they are faced with the choice of returning to the perpetrator or becoming destitute; and to include faith as an important element, both in understanding causes of Domestic Abuse and the value of faith-based organisations in signposting survivors to appropriate support. A draft letter that can be sent to MPs is available to be downloaded from [www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org). We would encourage everyone to download it, personalise it (real life anecdotes, local stories have a bigger impact than generic content) and send it to your MP.

Get writing folks – large numbers of letters received on a single topic can have significant influence; every letter counts! For details of your local MP use the link below.

<https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

In January 2019, inspired by the one hundred year anniversary of the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil on 21 January 1919 the Children's Rights Alliance along with the Irish Times launched the No Child 2020 campaign. As a member of the Children's Rights Alliance, Mothers' Union fully supported the campaign to improve the lives of children throughout Ireland. The campaign had 5 main goals based on the promises made in 1919. Below is a summary of progress towards achievement of the campaign's five goals.

### **1. No child should be hungry**

The long-term goal

Every child will have a hot, nutritious meal every day.

The first step

A daily school meal is a proven intervention in tackling child poverty.

The result

A pilot scheme providing free hot meals in 36 primary schools will be extended to another 35,000 children in 2020. Another scheme will provide meals in 45 early-years childcare settings.

### **2. No child should be homeless**

The long-term goal

Home should be a warm, secure, and safe place for all children.

The first step

Legislate to ensure the interests of children informs any decision about where to accommodate them.

The result

There is no sign that the Government will legislate to ensure housing policies are child-centred and the social housing situation continues to grow worse.

### **3. No child shall be without timely, affordable healthcare**

The long-term goal

Every child will have access to basic healthcare when they need it.

The first step

Our short-term ask was that the Government increase medical card income thresholds for families with children, to the same income threshold as pensioners.

The result

Free GP care is to be expanded to children under the age of eight and free dental care will be provided to children under six, however there was disappointment that eligibility for medical cards was not extended to more low-income families in Budget 2020.

### **4. No child should be blocked from having an education**

The long-term goal

The Constitution requires the State to provide for free primary education.

The first step

For books alone the average annual cost per primary school child is €95. Our short-term ask was for €20 million per annum to introduce free schoolbooks for every child in primary school.

The result €1 million was provided to launch a pilot project for free schoolbooks in 50 primary schools.

### **5. No child should be excluded from culture and sport**

The long-term goal

Every child will have the opportunity to take part in community-based arts and cultural activities.

The first step

Invest to ensure every child can access at least one community arts or cultural opportunity each year, by providing a "culture card" to all under-18s or their parents.

The result

The project's ask that all under-18s or their parents be provided with a "culture card" was not mentioned in Budget 2020.

Mental Health Ireland has shared five simple actions we can all take to protect our mental health and maintain positive wellbeing during uncertain and challenging times.



More information: [www.mentalhealthireland.ie](http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie)



Parenting NI has a vision of a future where parenting is highly valued and so we believe it's important to take Parenting Week to recognise the important role parents have to play in children's lives and highlight the amazing job they do every day.

Parenting Week is a celebration of the important role parents play in their children's lives. The week takes place every October; in 2020 Parenting Week will be from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> – Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October. As well as celebrating the amazing and often difficult job parents do, the week gives us as an organisation an opportunity to focus on issues affecting parents and to highlight the support available.

2020 has been a challenging year for us all! We wanted Parenting Week 2020 to acknowledge how difficult this year has been, while celebrating the incredible work parents do every day. We hope to celebrate the positive moments that lockdown has brought and reflect on the importance of family and fostering strong relationships with your children.

[www.parentingni.org/parents/parenting-week/](http://www.parentingni.org/parents/parenting-week/)

#ParentingWeek



Fairtrade Foundation has welcomed the UK government's new measures to hold businesses and public bodies accountable for tackling modern slavery.

Fairtrade Foundation's Policy and Advocacy Manager, Alice Lucas, said:

'This announcement is an important step in the right direction: tougher measures are desperately needed if we are truly serious about tackling modern slavery in our supply chains. It is high time companies were legally obliged to clean up their supply chains and act decisively on human rights and environmental abuses. This will help to protect the poorest and most vulnerable farmers and workers worldwide, and level the playing field for those businesses already making strides in this area. We welcome the government's plans to include due diligence in modern slavery reporting, extend rules to the public sector and penalise companies who fail to comply. This is a positive start, and we will continue to engage with the government on a broader legislative solution.'

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>



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<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>



## **Delivering better mental health services for children and young people**

Our **survey** for children and young people on **mental health services** in Northern Ireland is now open!

Link to survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YA-survey>

### **Promoting the survey**

We ask that you help spread the word about the survey to your contacts/networks via social media platforms.

***Calling children & young people age 13-25! Tell us what you need & want from mental health services in Northern Ireland***

## **Useful Dates for your Diary**



### **October – Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

10<sup>th</sup> – World Mental Health Day  
16<sup>th</sup> – World Food Day  
17<sup>th</sup> – Child Poverty Day  
17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> – National Parenting Week  
18<sup>th</sup> – Anti Slavery Day  
30<sup>th</sup> – British Summer Time ends

### **November – Men's Health Awareness Month**

6<sup>th</sup> – International Stress Awareness Day  
10<sup>th</sup> – Remembrance Sunday  
11<sup>th</sup> – Armistice Day  
11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> – Alcohol Awareness Week  
13<sup>th</sup> – World Kindness Day  
16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> – Road Safety Week  
25<sup>th</sup> – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women  
29<sup>th</sup> – International Women Human Rights Defenders Day