

Lobbyist Update for November 2015

Women's Policy Group Manifesto

It has been a pleasure pulling together and editing the new Women's Manifesto. We are hoping to have it ready by the New Year and meetings set up with policy officers from the political parties to get our priorities across. Watch this space for further details.

Lobbying activity

Yet another busy month. Meetings this month have included Martina Anderson (SF), Clare Bailey (Greens) and Claire Hanna (SDLP) as well as policy officers from various political parties and civil servants.

Open Data Network

I attended training hosted by NICVA on Open Data in a Day. It was facilitated by The Open Data Institute. This is an excellent session, helping organisations to discover and use open data.

WRDA Responds to Childcare Consultation

It was a pleasure to engage with women from across South Belfast at Mornington Community Centre to garner their views on the childcare strategy. To read our response visit [here](#).

New Children's Strategy

We attended a pre-consultation event at Children in Northern Ireland on the new Children's Strategy due out next year. The event was attended by a vast array of children's organisations with presentations from OFMDFM Children's Unit and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

Seminar on Non-Party Campaigning

I attended an event by the Electoral Commission on non-party campaigning. There are rules that govern people and organisations who campaign in the run up to elections but are not standing as a political party or candidate. These people are referred to as “non-party campaigners”. The rules for non-party campaigners have been changed by the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014. At the seminar the changes were explained.

Reclaim the Agenda - Interview on NTV: Childcare

Reclaim the Agenda is on the second season of their informative series of interviews. I was delighted to participate alongside Joy Poots from South Belfast and Kyra Pauley from Footprints Women’s Centre. The recording will be uploaded shortly but if you wish to see back episodes go [here](#).

Upcoming Community Planning Events

We are hosting a series of events which will be held with women throughout Northern Ireland to help inform Council’s community planning engagement process. The sessions will be held in several locations to build capacity around local community planning. The sessions will inform women about the community planning process, what it is, what it involves and why it’s important to be part of the process. Women will be asked a series of questions which will help inform the publication of a report which will be given to all Council’s Community Planners to ensure they address the barriers faced by women when it comes to engaging in the community planning process. Details of the events will be sent out in the New Year.

Research: Why Women Only?

Diane Izabiliza is a student of Social Work from Berlin, Germany and is interning here until March 2016. She is under the supervision of Ellen and working on a research paper for WRDA which explores a question that many women's organisations are being asked, not just by decision-makers but by funders "why are you women-only?" The research will not only address this question but it will also highlight the benefits and value of women only services. Diane has started interviewing women's centres and groups.