

# ONE FAMILY

## ANNUAL REVIEW 2015



**One Family** believes in an Ireland where every family is cherished equally and enjoys the social, financial and legal equality to create their own positive futures.

### Our Vision

One Family believes in an Ireland where every family is cherished equally, and is enabled to enjoy the social, financial and legal equality to create their own positive futures.

### Our Mission

One Family is working to ensure a positive and equal future for people parenting alone, sharing parenting, and separating – changing attitudes, policies, services and lives. Together with these one-parent families, we are committed to achieving equality and respect for all families.

In addition to striving for fundamental attitudinal and structural change in our society, our services support individual families through times of change and difficulty, as well as those experiencing a crisis pregnancy. We know that every family is unique, and so we work in a family-centred way to bring about better lives for parents and children.

### Our Values

Respect, compassion for and acceptance of the parents, children and organisations that we come in contact with are at the heart of what we do. We connect with others in a relationship of equals and are completely non-judgmental. We believe that we can hold the hope for the families we work with, especially when they are unable to. We achieve this through innovation, excellence, accountability and our family-centred approach.

Since being founded as Cherish in 1972, One Family has been an organisation of determination, passion and courage, working with integrity towards achieving equality for all families in Ireland.



### What Next

Our current strategy 2013-2015 has reached its conclusion, so our Strategy 2016-2018 will be finalised and compiled with a launch date in July. Children remain at the centre of our work and in 2016 we will continue to engage with policy makers, focusing our policies on ending child poverty. In 2016, our Professional Development Service will be redeveloped and expanded to include new workshops to support the building of the knowledge, skills and approach of service providers who work with children, parents and families, or in crisis pregnancy services. We will also continue to work towards attitudinal change; challenging stereotypes and highlighting one-parent family role models. Our annual Family Day, as a day of acknowledgment and celebration for all children irrespective of their family form, supports these aims. We expect even greater numbers to attend in 2016 and, to this end, we will seek partners and collaborators to grow the event.

### Thank You

To all our volunteers, individual donors, corporate partners and government funders for helping us deliver all the services and campaigns that we do, we thank you for believing in our work and for playing your part in making Ireland a better place for children in one-parent families.

### Donate

To donate, visit [www.onefamily.ie](http://www.onefamily.ie) and click on the donate button or call our office on 01 662 9212 if you wish to set up a Direct Debit. Alternatively you can donate by cheque, postal order, or in person to us at the address below, or donate directly to:

### Bank of Ireland

**Account No:** 17 19 19 23 **Sort Code:** 90-00-17

We, One Family, commit to comply with the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

### Accounts

Our full audited accounts are available on [www.onefamily.ie](http://www.onefamily.ie)



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**Company No.** 45364 **Charity No.** 6525



**JOHN O'CONNELL**  
ONE FAMILY CHAIR

Social welfare reforms continued to have seriously detrimental effects on one-parent families in 2015 as we saw more parents having to leave part-time work due to stricter requirements of the new payments. In February, we presented our SMART action plan for Reform of the One Parent Family Payment (OFP) to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection. Our Pre-Budget Submission for 2016 sought changes to ensure work pays for parents on social welfare and some of our recommendations in relation to income disregard were accepted. We continued to call for the provision of affordable, accessible and quality childcare, which remains the greatest barrier for lone parents in returning to the workplace or education.

We were delighted to see the Children & Family Relationships Act become law as we had worked hard on ensuring that the reality of family diversity is recognised and that children are protected in all the different families they live in. We launched our six point General Election Manifesto in December so that our members, clients and the families we represent could directly lobby election candidates to ensure that the voices of one-parent families were heard.

We are proud to be recognised as Ireland's expert voice and opinion on issues affecting people parenting alone, sharing parenting, and separating and we continued to work in partnership with stakeholders within Ireland and across Europe. We served on the Advisory Council on Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020; participated in the European Families & Societies project; and had a leading role in the development and delivery of the Civic Forum on One-Parent Families with now Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone.

One Family's voluntary Board of Directors continue to place strong emphasis on governance and financial management. I thank our funders and donors for their continued support. I also thank our volunteers, supporters and staff members, who remain dedicated to creating a positive and equal future for all members of one-parent families in Ireland.



**KAREN KIERNAN**  
ONE FAMILY CEO

One Family continued to expand our range of specialist family support services for people parenting alone, sharing parenting, and families who are separating. Our counselling services remained in constant and high demand. Our national **askonefamily** helpline had its busiest year yet with another 20% increase in call volume since 2014. This was mostly due to the radical social welfare changes for parents in receipt of the One-Parent Family Payment whose youngest child reached the age of seven years old.

Other issues of concern to parents included family law changes, particularly for unmarried fathers; practical information and emotional support for separating parents was frequently sought; as was social welfare information for low-income working parents seeking to maximise their income amid changes and cuts.

We continued to grow our Parenting Support Services, expanding the locations where we provide individual parent mentoring services. We also ran a new online parenting programme and established a new Facebook group just for parents. Despite ongoing funding challenges to our Childcare service we have invested in additional qualified staff to ensure high standards are maintained and we experienced a successful Childcare service inspection by the HSE. Having been awarded National Lottery Funding, we also facilitated free Professional Development programmes for professionals working with young people and in family support.

In May, we celebrated Family Day with our fifth annual Family Day Festival attended by 5,000 people. We offered a busy programme with free and low-cost events for parents and children throughout the Summer, while in December our Winter Party was attended by happy children and parents in the historic Dublin Castle.

I would like to thank our dedicated and hard working staff members, volunteers, and the Board for their continued efforts in providing the much needed services of One Family. It remains a privilege to work with and on behalf of the diverse group of people who make up one-parent families in Ireland.





## ATTITUDINAL CHANGE & COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY



**5,000** HAPPY PEOPLE ATTENDED FAMILY DAY FESTIVAL



**87** MEDIA INTERVIEWS AND MENTIONS



**77,000** VISITORS ACCESSED INFORMATION ON WWW.ONEFAMILY.IE



ISSUED **20** PRESS RELEASES



## POLICY & LEGAL CHANGE STRATEGY



**32** POLICY SUBMISSIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

### Policy papers and submissions included:

- Election Manifesto.
- SMART Plan for the Reform of the One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) & Why Reform of the One-Parent Family Payment Reform is Not Working.
- Energy Poverty position paper.
- Contribution to Low Pay Commission.
- Pre-Budget 2016 submission.
- Minimum Income, Childcare and One-Parent Families in Ireland.



## FUNDING STRATEGY



## SYSTEMS & PERSONNEL STRATEGY

- One Family is compliant with The Governance Code: a code of practice for the community, voluntary and charitable Sector in Ireland.



- One Family is fully committed to achieving the standards contained within the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

### CONTINUED TO REACH A WIDE AUDIENCE TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRATING ALL FAMILIES:

- 32% INCREASE IN SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS
- 100,000 PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

MONTHLY ONLINE SURVEYS WITH OUR CLIENTS, MEMBERS AND FOLLOWERS PROVIDES US WITH FURTHER INSIGHTS FOR OUR POLICY WORK. 2015 SURVEYS INCLUDED CHILD BENEFIT; CHILDCARE PROVISION; THE BACK TO WORK FAMILY DIVIDEND; AND SCHOOL HOLIDAYS.

WE CONTINUED TO ENGAGE WITH POLICY MAKERS, POLITICIANS AND OTHER INFLUENCERS FOCUSING OUR MESSAGE THROUGH A JOINT CAMPAIGN ON ENDING CHILD POVERTY AND HALTING REFORM OF THE OFP.

SUCCESSFULLY LOBBIED FOR CHANGES TO THE INCOME DISREGARD LEVELS OF JOBSEEKER'S TRANSITION WHICH EQUALISED IT TO OFP, REDUCING SOME NEGATIVE IMPACTS FOR SOME PARENTS, WHILE CONTINUING TO CALL FOR THE REFORM TO BE STOPPED.



## OUR WORK, AND THE FAMILIES WE WORK WITH AND FOR

One Family works under **Strategy 2013-2015** which is available on [www.onefamily.ie](http://www.onefamily.ie). Annual work plans are devised for each service of the organisation based on the strategy and all staff members are monitored accordingly.

We organise our strategy into three ambitious objectives because by 2020 One Family will have achieved the following:

- The Constitution and legislature will have recognised and afforded respect to all family forms and structures including one-parent families;
- Poverty rates for one-parent families will be significantly lowered and will be comparable to that of the general population; and
- One-parent families will be widely recognised, understood and celebrated as positive family forms.

### IRELAND IN 2015

- There are over 215,000 one-parent families in Ireland today – 25.8% of all families with children (Census 2011).
- 1 in 4 families with children in Ireland is a one-parent family – over half a million people.
- 52.4% of lone parents are in the labour market and the unemployment rate for lone parents is 14.7%.
- Employment rate of lone parents (aged 15-64) with children under 5 years is 42% rising to 49.7% where the youngest child is aged 6 to 11, and 63.2% where the youngest child is aged 12 to 17. This indicates that, as children get older, the prohibitive costs of childcare are reduced and lone parents are more likely to engage in work.
- 42,104 people are now receiving the One-Parent Family Payment (OFP). This has decreased from 92,326 in 2010. 25,500 exited the OFP scheme on 2 July, 2015.
- The *Survey on Income and Living Conditions* (SILC) 2014, revealed that one-parent family households experience the most deprivation (inability to afford two from a list of 11 basic necessities) in Ireland.
- Children living in one-parent family households are almost twice as likely to live in poverty than other children – 23% of children in a one-parent family experience deprivation (SILC 2014).
- Furthermore, almost 60% of lone parent households experience more than one form of deprivation (SILC 2014).
- 11% of children aged 0-17, or 1 in 9 children, live in consistent poverty (SILC 2014). This can mean going 24 hours without a substantial meal.
- One-parent families continue to have the lowest disposable income out of all households in the state (SILC 2014).



OUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICE LAUNCHED FREE TRAINING TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS.

## ASKONEFAMILY

HELPLINE CALLS +20%

OVER 3,000 QUERIES RECEIVED BY **ASKONEFAMILY**

OVER 33% OF HELPLINE QUERIES WERE SOCIAL WELFARE RELATED AND, OF THESE, OVER 50% CONCERNED THE **ONE-PARENT FAMILY PAYMENT** (OFP)

OVER 25% OF CALLS WERE FOR **LISTENING SUPPORT** AND LASTED BETWEEN 30 MINUTES TO ONE HOUR

NEW **FACEBOOK GROUP** LAUNCHED JUST FOR PARENTS, WITH WEEKLY Q&As

IMPLEMENTATION OF **AISTEAR: THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK** AND **SIOLTA, THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**



## PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

- Represented interests of one-parent families on 23 boards and committees.
- Active service and policy partnerships with over 40 organisations in Ireland and across Europe.
- Member of HSE's Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme's Advisory Group and on the course advisory board of Maynooth University's NUI Certificate in Crisis Pregnancy Counselling Skills Course.
- Provided expert parenting inputs to TUSLA Parenting Working Group; the TUSLA Parenting 24/7 Working Group and the Parenting Network.
- Representative on Advisory Council for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*: National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020 and actively participated in sub-groups on Child Poverty and Prevention and Early Intervention.
- Participated in the President's Ethics Initiative: St Vincent de Paul's roundtable on activation of lone parents.



## OUR FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES IN 2015

### askonefamily helpline

- Information provision and listening support for callers.
- Email support and information.
- In-person information sessions to members of one-parent families.
- Social media engagement with client queries and live weekly Facebook Q&As.
- Website information hub.

### Parenting & Childcare

- Childcare service and parent coaching.
- Specialist parenting courses for one-parent families, including *Separated Parenting*, *Positive Parenting* and *Family Communication* offered nationwide.
- Parent Mentoring expanded to more regions across Ireland.
- Mediation services.
- Social Group offering activity programme for parents and children.
- New online parenting programme.

### Counselling

- Non directive 3-option crisis and unplanned pregnancy counselling.
- Post-abortion counselling.
- Pregnancy and parenting support service for young people in care and in independent living.
- Ongoing parenting supports following unplanned or crisis pregnancy.
- Solution-focused counselling.
- General counselling for those parenting alone or sharing parenting.
- Play therapy for children.

### Welfare to Work

- Career Clinics.
- One to one Career Advice.
- New Futures programme in partnership with Longford Women's Link.
- Options training programme with Ballsbridge College of Further Education.
- *Stronger Parents, Stronger Families* project with partners in Scotland, Czech Republic and Italy.

2014

2015

**5,164** INDIVIDUAL SERVICE OFFERINGS  
20% INCREASE FROM 2014

2014

2015

**3,406** INTENSIVE IN-PERSON SUPPORTS  
20% INCREASE FROM 2014