

ONE FAMILY STRATEGY 2016-2018



Working towards an
Ireland where every family
is cherished equally

www.onefamily.ie



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, we provide services to support individual families through times of change and difficulty, and for people 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.

How will our vision become a reality?

One Family is an organisation that develops and critiques policies, as well as being a specialist service provider; therefore our focus is to deliver positive **policy and attitudinal changes** for the families we represent at a national level. This focus on improving the lives of one-parent families through policy and attitudinal change is fundamental to our work.

We want Ireland to have achieved the following by 2020:

- The Constitution and legislature will recognise and respect the rich diversity of all family forms and structures in Ireland today;
- The necessary family support services will be available for people parenting alone, sharing parenting, and separating;
- Poverty rates for children in one-parent families will be dramatically reduced and comparable to that of the general population; and
- One-parent families will be widely recognised, understood and celebrated as positive family forms.

In order for these aspirations to become a reality, we will be fearless in naming the challenges faced by the families we work with and represent; we will speak out and challenge current laws, policies and services so that we can all do better. We will encourage others to work with us in strategic ways, while continuing to be accountable to all our stakeholders, having excellent governance and delivering quality specialist services.

How One Family will work to make these aspirations a reality

1 Family Support Services Strategy

Our services are designed to support people to parent alone and share parenting well through times of crises, family change, and separation. The outcomes we seek are to improve children's lives in one-parent families through empowering, supporting and upskilling their parents so they can reach their full potential. We will achieve this by:

- Reaching more parents nationally through the expansion of online family support services and more regionally based services;
- Supporting parents into sustainable work through our accredited bridging programmes and wrap-around supports;
- Supporting parents in one-parent families through a range of specialist parenting services, counselling, information and support;

- Supporting children in one-parent families directly through services and indirectly through supporting their parents; and
- Supporting one-parent families experiencing a diverse range of challenging circumstances including homelessness, unemployment, and going through family law courts.

2 Policy & Legal Change Strategy

We have always striven to connect practice to policy and to drive positive changes for one-parent families. When poverty and background is accounted for, evidence shows that the wellbeing of children in one-parent families is equivalent to children in two-parent families. Therefore, our ongoing focus must be on addressing the legal and policy gaps that exist for diverse families so that society does not continue to impede their progression. In this strategy, we will focus on:

- Ensuring the dangerous increase in child poverty rates in one-parent families is reversed through targeted measures to be taken by government;
- Ensuring that policy makers and society understand the needs of those sharing parenting of their children and that the appropriate services and policies are put in place;
- Working to assist in the provision of accessible support services for those using the family law courts;
- Broadening the Constitutional definition of the family to ensure respect and recognition of all the different family types children live in; and

- Providing support to other organisations who are leading on structural issues impacting on one-parent families including childcare, housing and education.

3 Attitudinal Change Strategy

Many children and parents living in diverse families in Ireland still experience external and internal deep-rooted prejudice and negative stereotyping about their family form. Ireland is struggling as a nation to expand our understanding of family life. We will work to reflect the reality of the lives of people parenting alone, sharing parenting, and separating by:

- Continuing to highlight the real life experiences of children and parents in one-parent families through a range of media, and ensuring that their voices are heard;
- Growing Family Day into a nationally recognised day of celebration for all children, irrespective of the form their family may take; and
- Campaigning to challenge stereotypes and providing positive role models of one-parent families.

4 Supporting Strategies

Our ability to deliver strong outcomes depends on the strength of our supporting strategies and systems. We will continue to be a trustworthy and accountable partner to funders and policy makers, and an honest and fearless voice for the families we work with and represent. We will continue to provide a workplace with meaningful employment and volunteering opportunities for our colleagues. We will continue to partner with other service providers and policy makers across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.

We have developed a series of strategies, actions and outcomes in the following areas:

- Funding, finance and governance;
- Evaluation, monitoring and research;
- Partnership working;
- Membership;
- Knowledge transfer and training;
- Communications, media and online engagement; and
- Facilities fit for purpose.



Growing Family Day into a nationally recognised day of celebration for all children, irrespective of the form their family may take.



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