

One Family Strategy

Forging Ahead
2025-2027



About this document

One Family is Ireland's national organisation for people parenting alone, sharing parenting, and separating.

Forging Ahead is our latest strategy and will provide the framework for our annual business plans from 2025 to 2027. These plans set out time frames for delivery and are measured and monitored by both our management team and our Board.

The following pages are organised as follows:

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- How will we fund our work?

We are deeply grateful to everyone we work with. Their experience and expertise has led to the development of this strategy.

One Family is committed to building an Ireland where every family and child is cherished and treated with equal respect.

Our vision

An Ireland where every family and child is respected and cherished equally.

Our mission

To create a society that values and supports one-parent families. We do this through the provision of specialist family support services, research, and policy work.

Our values

Understanding

Everything we do starts from a non-judgemental place of respect and understanding for the service users, families, staff and organisations with whom we work.

Courage

We are a determined and passionate organisation, not afraid to challenge and demand greater equity for all families in Ireland.

Equity

We believe in, and work towards, equity for all families ensuring that all may receive the same respect, opportunities, and access to resources.

What we do: Service provision

One Family provides specialist services to, and advocates with, all members of one-parent families.

Our approach is child and person-centred. We know that one-parent families are formed in various ways including separation, divorce, bereavement, or by choice. Some children grow up between two one-parent households, sometimes within blended families with step-parents and siblings. Our specialist family support services involve layers of intervention to support complex challenges.

We work with people and families who are:

- ★ Parenting alone
- ★ Sharing parenting of their children
- ★ Separating
- ★ Experiencing unplanned or crisis pregnancy

The services we offer include:

- Our national helpline AskOneFamily
- Parenting courses and mentoring
- The Separating Well for Children Programme
- New Futures Employability Programme
- Counselling services for adults and children
- Training and upskilling for professionals
- Unplanned pregnancy and post-abortion counselling



What we do: Policy and advocacy

In 1972, our organisation was established to tackle inequalities faced by families in Ireland's services, policies, and laws. Many of those inequalities still exist today, which is why we concentrate on the issues of **family law reform** and **child and family poverty** in our policy work.

Child and family poverty

Research shows that one-parent families experience higher levels of poverty, deprivation, homelessness, and social stigma.

To address these inequities, we advocate for:

- Supporting lone parents escape poverty with an education-first approach to sustainable employment.
- A public system of early childcare education and care that is affordable, accessible, and focused on the needs of children.
- Reform of the housing strategy with a focus on the housing needs of one-parent families, including those who have experienced separation.
- Reform of the social welfare system to eliminate poverty traps and barriers to working, so as to maximise parents' income.
- Assessment of policies and services to confirm they effectively address the needs of one-parent families.
- Action to address societal and legislative issues which negatively impact one-parent families.



What we do: policy and advocacy

Family law reform

Family law procedures can be unsupportive and unsuitable, often leading to lengthy and sometimes traumatic experiences for children and families.

We advocate for the development and provision of:

- Specialist family law courts, with trained judiciary and legal practitioners.
- Child-centred legal proceedings that are timely, well-funded, and accessible.
- Supports for non-adversarial out-of-court solutions for families.
- Out-of-court support services for families, including parenting courses, therapies, mediation, risk assessments, and child contact centres.
- An out-of-court system for the child-centred assessment, and enforcement, of child maintenance.

We know that if services and policies work for lone parents, they should work for all parents.

Forging Ahead: 2025-2027

Our latest strategy demonstrates our commitment to driving meaningful policy and attitude changes, while delivering essential services that impact lives. It reflects One Family's collaborative efforts to embrace change, deal with new challenges, and devise ideas for the future.

Our strategy emphasises the need for specialised services that match the evolving needs of the individuals and families we serve.

We remain committed to all our services and initiatives. We will continue to be flexible to meet emerging demands.

Many family members, funders, policymakers, and other nonprofit organisations—as well as our staff and board members—contributed to the development of this strategy.

Three goals

With this strategy, we have redefined our three core strategic goals. Each goal builds upon, supports, and enables the others.



GOAL 1

EMPOWER

We will provide practical and emotional resources that support our service users, so they feel empowered to confidently navigate their lives.

Why is this important?

All individuals should have access to public services that are suitable for their needs. Ireland's family support and public services have not adequately addressed the needs of lone parents and their children. Their challenges and diversity require specific services based on understanding their needs.

Our specialist parenting, therapeutic, listening, information, and employability services empower people to deal with their lives more effectively.

Strategic objectives

- 1.1** Provide specialist family services for people living in one-parent families.
- 1.2** Increase accessibility to our specialist family services nationally.
- 1.3** Expand training and development opportunities to professionals and employers working with one-parent families.



GOAL 2

REPRESENT

We will amplify the voices and realities of one-parent families advocating for improved policies, legislation and services, working towards greater equity for all.

Why is this important?

One-parent families and people with unplanned pregnancies have been historically stigmatised. They are still treated unfairly by some policies and legislation in Ireland, resulting in poorer outcomes.

Understanding the realities faced by one-parent families, along with evidence-based policymaking, will drive equitable outcomes for those parenting alone or sharing parenting responsibilities. This will lead to better lives for their children.

Strategic objectives

2.1 Deliver positive changes in Child and Family Poverty and Family Law Reform.

2.2 Strengthen parents', families' and children's voices across national service and policy development.

2.3 Be a leading and trusted voice for the experiences, stories, and challenges of one-parent families in all their diversity.

GOAL 3

FUTUREPROOF

We will secure our long-term sustainability and effectiveness by strengthening our staff team, funding portfolio, internal capabilities, and culture.

Why is this important?

We require a robust, well-resourced organisation to deliver this strategy for one-parent families. This demands the alignment of purpose, culture, resources, and people to deliver strong, measurable impacts.

Strategic objectives

3.1 Secure the reputation of One Family through continued strong governance and enhanced operations.

3.2 Cultivate a strong organisational culture to support our people and our purpose.

3.3 Ensure a sustainable and diverse funding portfolio to drive impact and effectiveness.



How will we deliver this strategy?

We will ensure that the following elements remain in place, as they are critical to meeting our objectives.

**Strong leadership
and governance**

**Engaged and
committed staff**

**Data-driven impact
measurement**

**Evidence-based
decision-making**

How will we fund this strategy?

The budget for this strategic plan is consistent with previous years. We will allocate existing resources to maintain current service levels and secure additional funding before providing new initiatives.

We will undertake feasibility studies, mapping exercises, and internal reviews to manage our budget. These will be conducted using in-house resources. These processes will enable us to adapt to both emerging needs and changing circumstances.

When we secure new sources of funding, we will leverage them to innovate and enhance our services.

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