

Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV)

While DSGBV policy has seen several positive reforms in recent years, these developments are failing to translate into tangible improvements for victims and survivors. More than one in three women in Ireland have experienced psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse from an intimate partner. Garda responses to domestic abuse callouts increased 45% between 2020 and 2024, and DSGBV service providers report rising demand on their services, yet specialist services continue to be inadequately resourced. DSGBV is a leading cause of homelessness for women, but refuge accommodation for victims and survivors is severely inadequate, and compounded by barriers to accessing social housing and gaps in protection in the Domestic Violence Act 2018. Victims and survivors are often retraumatised, as they must navigate different legal processes simultaneously with insufficient support.



Key Issues

- > Rising rates of reported DSGBV.
- > Since 1996, 277 women have died violently in the Republic of Ireland. Almost 90% knew their killer, 63% were killed in their own homes, and 55% were killed by a partner or former partner.
- > Lack of refuge accommodation and under-resourced support services.
- > Complex court systems that result in re-victimisation.





What actions are required by the State?

The CEDAW Committee and IHREC have made recommendations with actions that the State needs to take.



CEDAW recommendations

- › Strengthen investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of GSGBV and expedite the adoption of legislation specifically criminalising femicide, familicide, domestic homicide, and vicarious gender-based violence (indirect violence used to harm or control a woman by targeting other people or things she cares about).
- › Raise public awareness of legal protections and remedies available to victims; provide mandatory, culturally sensitive training to police, prosecutors, and judges; ensure access to specialised legal aid, support services and protection orders for all women, including marginalised groups, such as Traveller, Roma, migrant, LGBTQI+ and disabled women.
- › Resource Cuan adequately and enhance data collection.
- › Consolidate sexual offence laws and prohibit access to survivors' counselling notes.
- › Provide sustainable long-term funding for NGOs that support victims.



IHREC recommendations

- › Develop wrap-around court and non-court supports.
- › Significantly expand culturally appropriate refuge accommodation.
- › Issue guidance to local authorities on supporting survivors and victims seeking emergency accommodation and social housing.
- › Amend the Domestic Violence Act 2018 to expand the circumstances where victims and survivors can remain in the home.

