



CUAN

An Ghníomhaireacht um Fhoréigean
Baile, Gnásach agus Inscnebhunaithe
The Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based
Violence Agency



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration

Zero Tolerance — The Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: 2022–2026

Progress Report
on Implementation, 2025



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An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
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Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration



An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Combhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality



An Roinn Aeráide,
Fuinnimh agus Comhshaoil
Department of Climate,
Energy and the Environment



An Roinn Cultúir,
Cumarsáide agus Spóirt
Department of Culture,
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An Roinn Cosanta
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An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
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Department of Finance



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Department of Housing,
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Department of Public Expenditure Infrastructure
Public Service Reform and Digitalisation



An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach



An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport



Seirbhís Phríosúin
na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service



NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curáil agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment



An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh
The Probation Service



An Oifig Náisiúnta um
Shábháilteacht Pobail
The National Office
for Community Safety

ACTIVE*CONSENT



An Garda Síochána
Ireland's National Police & Security Service



An Phríomh-Oifig
Staidrimh
Central
Statistics
Office



Coimisiún
na Meán



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service



Fiosrú
Oifig an Ombudsman
Políneachta
Office of
the Police
Ombudsman

HEA | HIGHER
EDUCATION
AUTHORITY



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



An Bord Um
Chúnamh Dílthíúil
Legal Aid Board
Providing access to justice since 1979



PCSA

Údarás Políneachta
& Sábháilteacht Pobail
Policing & Community
Safety Authority



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND



Comhairle na mBreithiúna
The Judicial Council

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Whole of Government and Society Strategy

Zero Tolerance – the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) 2022–2026 was published in June 2022. The Zero Tolerance Strategy approaches change as a whole-of-government and whole-of-society task. Government departments, state agencies, NGO partners, and DSGBV services work collaboratively to deliver on the Strategy.

The previous page illustrates the breadth of cross-governmental collaboration evidenced in the Strategy and its third and final implementation plan, which Cuan is responsible for coordinating and monitoring.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning
AGS	An Garda Síochána
CHI	Children's Health Ireland
DCDE	Department of Children, Disability and Equality
DSGBV	Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HSE	Health Service Executive
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LCSP	Local Community Safety Partnerships
NSIO	National Social Inclusion Office
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education

Foreword from the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration



I am pleased to publish this progress report on the implementation of the Zero Tolerance Strategy for 2025. The Strategy represents an ambitious and comprehensive programme of work, delivered through a whole-of-government approach, in close collaboration with civil society and the DSGBV sector.

This report is the first progress report on the Strategy issued on an annual basis and outlines the key actions undertaken by implementing partners across Government since the publication of the previous biannual progress report, which covered July-December 2024. It reflects the sustained commitment of Government Departments, statutory agencies, and external stakeholders to embed a coordinated, survivor-centred response to DSGBV across policy, legislation, service delivery, and public engagement.

Over the course of 2025, the Cabinet Committee on Justice, Migration and Social Affairs continued to provide political oversight of the Strategy and it received regular progress updates on Cuan's work. The governance framework for the Strategy, which includes the Cabinet Committee, the High-Level Oversight Board, and the Senior Officials Group, will continue to support cross-governmental coordination, maintain implementation momentum, and facilitate the timely identification and resolution of delivery challenges as we move through the final phase of the Strategy this year.

While delivery of the Strategy's objectives requires sustained effort over time, and significant work remains to ensure all victim-survivors are protected, supported, and able to access justice, this report demonstrates the measurable progress achieved in 2025. It highlights developments across key priority areas, including improving access to justice, advancing the National Emergency Domestic Violence Accommodation Plan, and progressing legislative reform. When I published the 2025–2026 Zero Tolerance Implementation Plan, I highlighted several key areas of reform that I was committed to pursuing, including the removal of guardianship of a child from those convicted of killing their intimate partner or ex partner, and the introduction of a provision for those who have been convicted of domestic violence against a partner or former partner to be publicly named on a Register of Judgments. Progress on these initiatives is detailed in this report, and I will continue to advance these and other efforts in 2026.

In conclusion, I look forward to working closely with Government colleagues and sectoral partners to advance the objectives of the Zero Tolerance Implementation Plan as we move into its final phase. A key focus will be on consolidating progress to date, strengthening implementation efforts, and supporting the transition to the next phase of strategic delivery including the transition to the Fourth National Strategy, as we work together towards an Ireland that is free from domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

Jim O'Callaghan, TD
Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

Introduction from the CEO of Cuan



At Cuan, we are delighted to share the third progress report on the implementation of the Zero Tolerance Strategy since our establishment. This reporting period marks a significant phase in progressing the Strategy, as Cuan moved from establishment and early coordination into a more consolidated phase of implementation and deeper engagement, marked by the delivery of the 2025–2026 Zero Tolerance Implementation Plan.

Ending DSGBV requires intensive, coordinated, and collective effort across Government, statutory agencies, frontline services, civil society, and communities, and supporting this whole-of-government and society action is at the core of Cuan's mandate.

Throughout 2025, Cuan continued to strengthen whole-of-government collaboration, supporting partners to deliver against commitments across the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention echoed in the Zero Tolerance Strategy: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Policy Coordination. Building on the foundations laid in 2024, this period saw a strengthening of relationships with government departments, state agencies, and DSGBV services, alongside a continued focus on co-design, supporting evidence-informed policy development through research and analysis, and improved coordination at national and local levels.

Progress was made in embedding clearer governance, monitoring, and reporting structures, which has resulted in more consistent implementation and accountability in the delivery of the Strategy. The development of a bespoke monitoring and reporting framework for implementation in 2025 and 2026 has allowed Cuan to undertake in-depth reporting that highlights key achievements and identifies challenges or gaps that may require mitigation or enhanced action.

A central priority for Cuan remains the delivery of quality, effective, and accessible services for all victim-survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Active collaboration and partnership with DSGBV services continued throughout this period to ensure victim-survivors have access to enhanced support nationwide, in line with the commitments of the 2025–2026 Implementation Plan. Simultaneously, we continued to design and develop campaigns to raise awareness amongst the public of the scourge of domestic and sexual violence, and to encourage victim-survivors to come forward and seek help.

Cuan remains committed to strengthening coordination, measuring progress transparently, and supporting partners to achieve lasting, systemic change as we move towards the final phase of the current Implementation Plan. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, and our partners across Government, civil society, and the DSGBV sector for the continued commitment and collaboration during this period.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge and commend the courage of victim-survivors who come forward in the wake of profoundly traumatic experiences to share their experience with Cuan and inform the Government response to DSGBV. Your voices remain central to our work and to our shared ambition of an Ireland where there is zero tolerance of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

Dr. Stephanie O'Keeffe
CEO, Cuan

Zero Tolerance – the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2022–2026)

The Strategy is structured into pillars of activity aligned to the pillars of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention).

The **Prevention Pillar** focuses on supporting evidence-based actions designed to prevent DSGBV. The goal of this pillar is to work towards the eradication of the social and cultural norms that underpin and contribute to gender-based violence. The actions cluster under themes of education, training, and awareness raising, and making places where people congregate, such as workplaces and education settings, safer.

The **Protection Pillar** focuses on actions designed to protect victim-survivors of DSGBV, both adults and children, and to guarantee access to therapeutic support and services. The goal of this pillar is to ensure that all victim-survivors have immediate and longer-term access to the safety, support services, and advocacy they need, with due regard to their diversity. The actions cluster under themes of providing refuge, support services, and information.

The **Prosecution Pillar** focuses on actions designed to advance effective law enforcement and judicial proceedings that enable victim-survivors to access the justice they deserve. The goal of this pillar is to ensure that the justice system implements the law and provides the consistent enforcement and judicial proceedings necessary to vindicate the rights of victim-survivors, including children. The actions cluster under themes of strengthening access to justice for victim-survivors and building awareness and capacity of justice sector professionals in relation to DSGBV.

The **Policy Coordination Pillar** focuses on actions designed to support effective policy coordination and implementation at both national and local levels. The goal of this pillar is that the state offers a comprehensive, coordinated, whole-of-government, authoritative, monitored, and evaluated set of responses to DSGBV.



Minister Jim O'Callaghan launching the 2025–2026 Zero Tolerance Implementation Plan with Dr. Stephanie O'Keefe, CEO of Cuan

Implementation Plan for the Final Phase of Zero Tolerance, 2025–2026

The Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Jim O’Callaghan TD, published a targeted implementation plan for the final phase of the Zero Tolerance Strategy in June 2025.

The Zero Tolerance Strategy sets out a clear vision and strategic direction for preventing and responding to DSGBV, while strengthening the protection of victim-survivors. However, considerable and complex challenges persist nationwide; therefore, the final implementation plan requires a strong emphasis on effective delivery and coordinated collective action to ensure meaningful progress is achieved in the final phase.

The Implementation Plan contains 95 actions across the Strategy’s four pillars—Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Policy Coordination—with a clear focus on delivery and collective action. Cuan worked in close consultation with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, and in collaboration with other Government departments, state agencies, and external stakeholders, to develop the plan for 2025–2026. This is the first report on its progress.

The development of the Implementation Plan was evidence informed, involving research and a review of implementation to date, followed by in-depth consultations with Government departments, state agencies, and the DSGBV sector. The research phase took account of the wider policy environment, including the commitments in the Programme for Government 2025 and the recommendations of the report of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) to Ireland. The preparation of the plan also included the co-design of actions and key performance indicators (KPIs) to strengthen the focus on tangible impact, and to provide a clear framework for measuring progress.

Zero Tolerance is the first national DSGBV strategy that recognises children as individual victim-survivors in their own right, and a particular emphasis was put on child survivors of domestic and sexual violence in the current Implementation Plan, with approximately a third of the actions relating to children and young people.

Throughout 2025, Cuan has made efforts to enhance the intersectional lens of the Strategy in its implementation through the delivery of Cuan’s own actions under the plan, through engagement with communities affected by multiple marginalisations and their representatives, and through partnering with the National Women’s Council and the Observatory on Violence Against Women to begin the scoping and development of consultative structures to embed the victim-survivor voice in our ongoing work.

Monitoring, Reporting and Engagement

Cuan has a statutory obligation to report to the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration on the implementation of the Zero Tolerance Strategy.

The Implementation Plan for the final phase of the Strategy includes a bespoke monitoring and reporting framework, setting out actions, performance indicators, and accompanying data collection methods to monitor progress over the specified timelines agreed with implementation partners.

This signifies a more robust monitoring and reporting process that Cuan will strengthen over the course of implementation. By implementing the monitoring and reporting framework, Cuan will be better equipped to track the implementation of Zero Tolerance: how the 95 actions across the 4 pillars and 23 objectives have progressed towards the vision of Zero Tolerance and the enablers and challenges experienced by implementing partners.

The framework is supported by the development of a new integrated online survey tool and dashboard. This development supports Cuan and implementing partners by streamlining the monitoring process and providing an automated reporting tool with advanced insights.

The framework continues to use a colour coding system (blue, red, amber, green) to classify the status of actions and KPIs, known as the BRAG system, as a ready reckoner of statuses of the actions at the end of each reporting period.

The data captured informs regular reporting that Cuan prepares for the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, the High-Level Oversight Board, the Cabinet Committee on Justice, Migration and Social Affairs, and the Senior Officials Group, as well as externally through progress reports such as this.

Additionally, the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration hosts a biannual DSGBV Forum to engage with key stakeholders across the DSGBV sector to facilitate an opportunity for the sector to share important information and concerns, and to provide the sector with an update on progress under the Strategy.

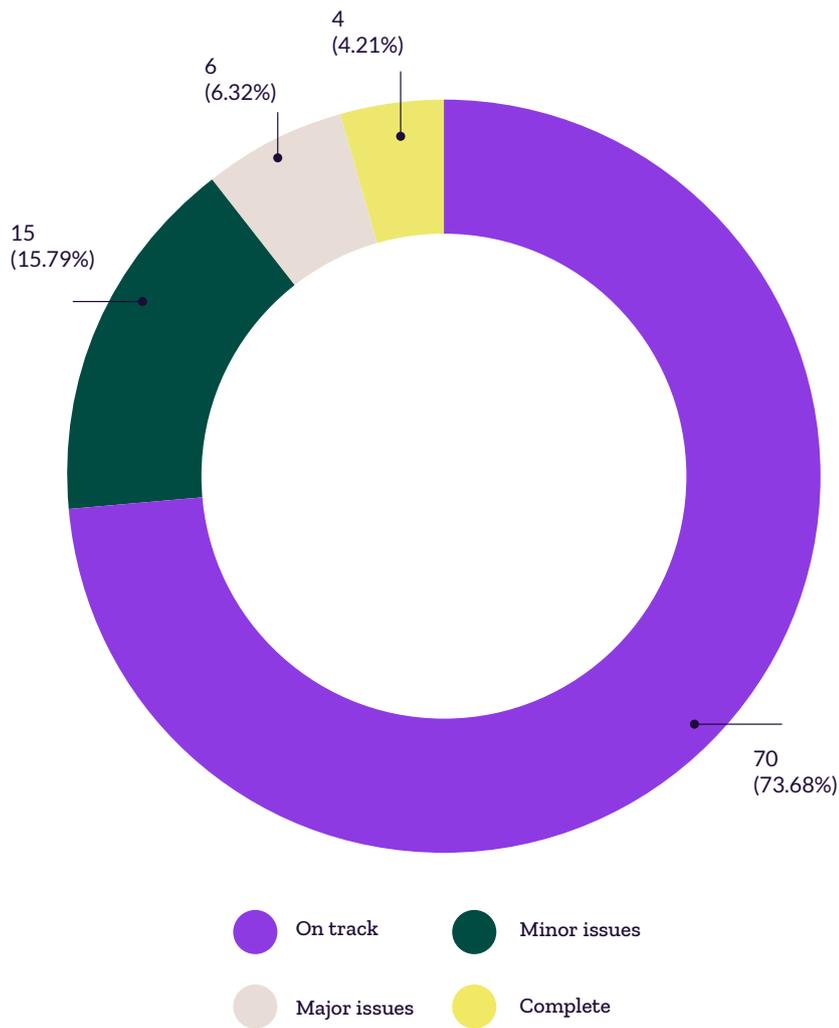


Minister Jim O'Callaghan and Minister for Mental Health, Mary Butler, at the DSGBV Forum

Snapshot of Progress in 2025

The figures below provide a summary snapshot of progress at the midpoint of the current Implementation Plan.

Figure 1: 2025–2026 Actions by Status – 95 Actions Total



Complete

4 actions, equating to 4.21% of the total number of actions in the 2025–2026 Implementation Plan, have been completed.

On Track

70 actions, or 73.68% of the total actions, remain in progress at the end of 2025 and will continue into the final year of the implementation phase.

Minor Delivery Issues

15 actions, or 15.79% of the total actions, are reporting minor delivery issues. Cuan is the lead delivery partner on seven of these actions. Some of these include: Action 1.1.2, which involves commencing the development of an evidence-based porn literacy strategy; Action 2.2.1, which focuses on preparatory work to inform the framework for the National Services Development Plan; Action 2.2.7, which aims to support the sector to ensure continuous development of representative networks; and Action 2.3.2, which relates to progressing the development of a comprehensive National Domestic Violence Emergency Accommodation Service Development Plan that relates to service models, workforce, and referral pathways.

The delays are limited in scope and have arisen primarily due to resourcing constraints and the need to secure specialised external expertise to support implementation. Cuan is undertaking substantial work to ensure that these actions are delivered within the final year of the implementation period.

Other areas reporting minor delivery issues, include, Action 2.5.6 under which An Garda Síochána is aiming to produce and promote a video for the Barnardos Empower Kids Project. This work is envisaged to commence in 2026. Under Action 4.5.1, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality will this year progress a review of Section 7 of the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, which provides for domestic violence leave.

Notwithstanding these delays, substantial work has been completed to date, and the above actions are anticipated for delivery in 2026.

Major Delivery Issues

6 actions, or 6.32% of the total actions, are reporting major delivery issues. Cuan is the lead delivery partner on two of these actions: Action 3.6.1, which seeks to develop the national framework for working with perpetrators through co-design with key stakeholders; and Action 4.3.3, which aims to produce a research and data plan that sets out the current DSGBV data landscape in Ireland. Engagement is ongoing with key stakeholders to develop an approach to co-design for the first action, and work on the second will accelerate in 2026 in tandem with efforts ongoing with the Central Statistics Office to measure the prevalence of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence for both men and women in Ireland.

Some of the other affected actions involve substantial, complex programmes of work. For example, Action 3.6.6, led by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, seeks to progress the development of a system for multi-agency risk management of offenders of intimate partner violence. Similarly, Action 4.3.6 involves the Probation Service contributing to the development of this multi-agency management system. Progress on these actions has been impacted by delivery challenges, including ongoing consideration of the broader strategic direction of offender management.

Additional actions reporting major delays include Action 2.2.8, which concerns the establishment of a mechanism to proactively refer people in custody to the Irish Prison Service Psychology Service, and Action 3.6.5, which aims to develop a model of intervention for people in custody with a history of domestic violence. Progress in these areas is dependent on the development of a mechanism to identify victim-survivors in custody, which has not been established. However, the Irish Prison Service has taken positive steps by commissioning the development of a *Review of Support Services Available to People in Custody who have Experienced Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence*. When completed, the findings of this review are expected to inform and support the completion of these actions.

Monitoring and mitigation measures will be put in place by Cuan, as appropriate, to ensure continued progress and momentum in implementation over the final year of the Strategy.

2025 Highlights in Numbers

Cuan launched **two** public campaigns: *You are Not Alone* and *Hardest Stories*

The Department of Education and Youth delivered **21** events nationwide on the updated Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum, with over 600 participants. Over **40** events took place on the updated Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum, with over **1,500** participants¹

There were **14,997** visits to the landing page of the Courts Service website, which provides key information on domestic violence

The Personnel Support Service in the Defence Forces conducted **42** Sexual Ethics and Responsible Relationship workshops with a total of **798** participants across the Defence Forces

54 staff completed the Legal Aid Board Domestic Violence Awareness CPD Training, and **26** staff have completed further courses on DSGBV

The AGS Divisional Protective Services Units are currently staffed with **120** Inspectors, **66** Sergeants and **346** Gardaí nationwide

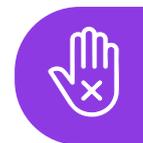
13,284 Webwise resources were downloaded and **12,952** hard copies distributed, while **8,874** participants engaged in professional learning on digital technology and online safety through courses, training, and Webwise events²

¹ Progress Report on Implementation July–December 2024, Spotlight Feature on Implementation, p.16

² Webwise - Internet Safety

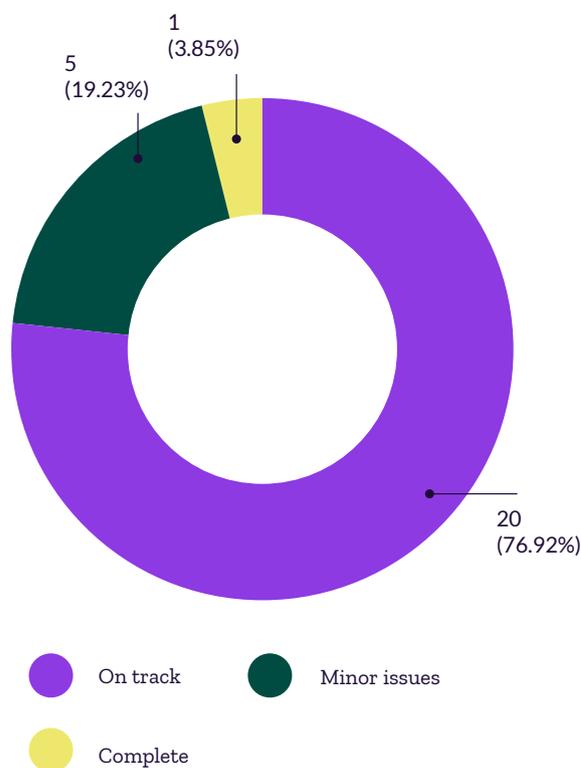
Key Progress by Pillar

Prevention



The Prevention Pillar focuses on eradicating the social and cultural norms that cause and condone violence against women, aiming to stop this violence before it starts. It adopts a whole-of-society approach, aiming to shift attitudes, particularly among men and boys, and to educate on healthy relationships, gender equality, and consent.

Figure 2: Prevention Pillar – 26 Actions Total



Public Awareness

A core objective of the Prevention Pillar is to enhance the understanding of the general public of all forms of DSGBV and its root causes and educate society to recognise the harm and human rights abuse that is DSGBV, while making clear the pathways to safety and sanctions.

During 2025, substantial progress was made in raising public awareness of DSGBV, increasing visibility of supports for victim-survivors and challenging the harmful attitudes and behaviours that enable gender-based violence to persist.

Cuan’s existing public awareness campaigns were expanded and strengthened throughout the reporting period. These included the *Always Here* domestic violence campaign, which provides information on available supports to victim-survivors. For the first time, bespoke campaigns were rolled out on social and digital media for each county that provided information related to local support services.

The *Let’s Have the Consent Conversation* campaign, which promotes public discussion and understanding of consent, appeared in everyday social spaces such as cafés, cinemas, pubs, and public transport. Campaign assets were also expanded into relevant environments such as online dating apps, which increased engagement to twenty times that of the benchmark.

Alongside the existing campaigns, Cuan developed and delivered two new national campaigns in 2025. *Hardest Stories*, which launched in February 2025, aims to encourage victim-survivors to come forward and seek support, and seeks to recognise the power and agency of victim-survivors in sharing their experiences and the role this can play in healing.

Campaign Impact

- Independent research carried out after the completion of the campaign showed that two-thirds of the population reported seeing the campaign, rising to three-quarters of 18–27-year-olds.
- 7 in 10 people indicated that they would visit the *Hardest Stories* webpage if they, or someone they knew, needed support.

These engagement levels are all above the industry standard performance benchmarks, indicating a marked increase in public awareness of DSGBV and available supports as a result of the campaign.

The *You Are Not Alone* campaign launched in September 2025 and focused on sexual violence. It aims to raise awareness of pathways to safety and available supports for victim-survivors.

Campaign Impact

- Following the campaign bursts, independent research indicated that 80% of people said, 'if they needed support, they now feel more ready to reach out', which was an increase of 8% when compared with the previous *Always Here* campaign.
- The research showed that the campaign was well-received by the public, with 84% of people agreeing it was a sensitive campaign and 85% agreeing it was informative without being sensational.
- The campaign performed well at prompting interpersonal action, with a large majority of the population saying they would share information or feel ready to act if someone they knew disclosed a sexual violence incident.
- The campaign also raised awareness of Cuan and the *Always Here* website, with 1 in 4 people now being aware of Cuan, a rise from 1 in 5 prior to the launch.³

3 **Action 1.1.1** – Develop effective, impactful and evidence led public awareness campaigns aimed at changing attitudes, preventing and reducing the incidence of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence

Higher Education

During the reporting period, the higher education sector made considerable efforts to prevent sexual violence from occurring within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) through efforts to enhance understanding of DSGBV, consent, coercive control, and healthy relationships, and by supporting the implementation of a victim-survivor-centred response. In 2025, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) completed the initial development phase of a national campaign to address sexual violence and harassment on campuses across the country.⁴ This work complements the ongoing implementation of the Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment Framework in HEIs, which promotes a zero-tolerance culture through institutional action plans, policy reform, staff training, and targeted funding.⁵

In 2025, seventeen HEIs implemented the Speak Out initiative⁶. Speak Out is an anonymous online reporting tool for both students and staff in HEIs to speak out about their experiences of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, hate crimes, coercive behaviour/control, stalking, assault, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape, and directs individuals to supports relevant to their experience.

Education

The education system plays a significant role in advancing a key objective within the Prevention Pillar to improve the awareness of children and young people of the factors that contribute to gender inequality, as well as deepening their understanding of consent and healthy relationships.

In pursuit of this objective, the Department of Education and Youth continued to lead a substantial programme of curriculum reform of SPHE, supported by extensive teacher professional learning experiences delivered by Oide, the support service for teachers and school leaders.

At post-primary level, professional learning experiences were delivered to support teachers with the introduction of the new Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum. The Department of Education and Youth delivered the events summarised in the Highlight Section, which addressed key learning outcomes of the SPHE curriculum, including the impact of pornography on healthy relationships.⁷

4 **Action 1.2.3** – Roll out Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Higher Education Awareness Raising Campaign

5 **Action 1.2.2** – Oversee and monitor Higher Education Institution (HEI) implementation of the Framework for Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Higher Education

6 [Speak Out | Policy | Higher Education Authority](#)

7 **Action 1.3.2** – Deliver teacher professional learning to support the introduction of new SPHE specifications

An updated SPHE curriculum for Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) students was introduced in September 2025 to support learning in relation to gender and social norms, healthy as well as abusive relationships, and safely managing social situations. Teachers were provided with support in the rollout of the updated SPHE curriculum for LCA students through a dedicated webinar held in October 2025 by the Oide LCA team.⁸

The Consent Ed Project, which is a sexual violence prevention resource for young people developed by Cuan to complement the SPHE curriculum, progressed educator training and completed the development of the school-based education sessions.

By the end of 2025, a total of 1,052 educators had been trained, with over 400 schools and organisations engaged under the Project. The estimated student reach for the 2024/25 academic year will be approximately 88,564.

The Consent Ed Project also developed and disseminated parent resources to align learning with that of teachers and school leaders, covering consent, online sexual harm, and healthy relationships, with tailored versions for different age groups.

Throughout the reporting period, the Consent Ed Project also progressed work to develop DSGBV prevention education in non-formal education settings. This included Cuan convening a non-formal education symposium, which used co-design principles to inform the development of future resources. The purpose of the non-formal education strand is to provide education on consent, gender equality and healthy relationships to young people in marginalised communities.⁹

Training and Development

Embedding a shared understanding of DSGBV across the public sector underpins both prevention and response efforts, as reflected in the objective to enable frontline professionals and support staff to have the necessary analysis, skills, and expertise to identify potential risks and make appropriate preventative interventions and referrals. Across the health and justice systems, training initiatives focused on enabling frontline professionals to build their capacity in this regard throughout the reporting period.

In June 2025, the Health Service Executive (HSE) launched the fourth and final module of the national DSGBV e-learning programme, completing the rollout of the full training programme to all HSE employees. Uptake of the training was strongest for module one with 1,415 completions, followed by 933 completions for module two, and 791 for module three. A total of 570 staff undertook module four, demonstrating sustained participation throughout the programme. The programme aims to improve awareness of the prevalence and impact of DSGBV, empower employees to recognise signs of domestic and sexual violence among its clients, and learn how to respond effectively and refer victim-survivors to appropriate services.¹⁰

Complementing this, the HSE National Social Inclusion Office (NSIO) delivered targeted education sessions that addressed the specific experiences and needs of marginalised groups, including ethnic minorities and LGBTIQ+ victim-survivors, embedding an intersectional lens into DSGBV training.

In the reporting period, the Probation Service continued to prioritise training to equip professionals with the skills and knowledge to intervene using a trauma-informed approach and to assess and supervise perpetrators in accordance with best practice. The Probation Service provided training for new employees, alongside more specialised learning for those dealing with complex cases, supporting consistent and informed decision-making. Additionally, mentoring and awareness-raising initiatives further reinforced professional capability and victim-centred practice.¹¹

8 **Action 1.3.3** – Implement the rollout of the Senior Cycle SPHE specification to all students entering the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme in September 2025, including the provision of necessary resources

9 **Action 1.3.1** – Aligned with SPHE outcomes, progress existing DSGBV-prevention education programme (Consent Ed) in the formal education system and develop DSGBV-prevention education programme for non-formal education contexts

10 **Action 1.4.2** – Continue the implementation and development of the National DSGBV e-learning training programme including the development of in-person skillsbased sessions

11 **Action 1.4.4** – Deliver training to Probation Service staff dealing with perpetrators and victim-survivors of DSGBV

Transport

The Prevention Pillar includes a strong emphasis on targeted action to make our communities safer, and steps have been taken to improve safety in key areas such as public transport. The Department of Transport continued to increase the availability of taxis and night buses, including through the provision of fifteen 24/7 buses in Dublin, an increase from 10 in 2023.¹²

In order to contribute to safer public spaces and to strengthen preventative safeguards, the Transport for Ireland (TFI) Driver Check App ensures that passengers are enabled to instantly verify the driver of a taxi and the vehicle details. Uptake of the app continued to increase throughout 2025, with approximately 100,000 total downloads and strong engagement with the *Check a Taxi Licence* webpage. This level of engagement contributes to improving the safety of passengers and increasing public confidence.¹³

Online Safety

Online and digital spaces play an increasingly significant role in everyday life; however, the digital world can also enable new forms of DSGBV, including online abuse, harassment, sexual exploitation, including of children, and technology-facilitated coercive control. Addressing these risks is central to achieving zero tolerance of DSGBV.

Making digital and media spaces safer requires robust regulation alongside strong collaboration to raise awareness, promote respectful online behaviour, and support early intervention. Partnership-based, survivor-centred approaches are essential to ensuring that prevention is embedded across digital environments and that emerging online harms are addressed effectively.

Coimisiún Na Meán, who are a key implementing partner, published Part B of the Online Safety Code in July 2025.¹⁴ Part B sets out specific legal obligations for video-sharing platforms to protect users, particularly children.

Coimisiún Na Meán holds responsibility for the Online Safety Framework, which includes the EU Digital Services Act among other pieces of key EU legislation. In July 2025, the European Commission published guidelines under the Digital Services Act to further reinforce protections for minors online. The guidelines promote stronger safeguards to ensure a safer online experience for children and young people.¹⁵

In November 2025, Coimisiún Na Meán launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of harmful content online and how to report it. The campaign, which aims to raise awareness of rights under Ireland's Online Safety Framework, particularly regarding the protection of children and young people, includes a series of videos encouraging users to report harmful material online and aims to strengthen public understanding of the importance of reporting harmful content to platforms.¹⁶

Launch of the You Are Not Alone campaign on sexual violence: (L-R Prof. Caroline Fennell, Chair of Cuan's Board, Dr. Stephanie O'Keeffe, CEO of Cuan, Martina Lawless, Director of ESRI, Rachel Morrogh, CEO of DRCC, Eilish Kelly, ESRI, Ellen-O'Malley Dunlop, GREVIO, Dr. Maeve Eogan, SATU, and Bláthnaid Raleigh)



¹² **Action 1.6.1** – Continue to take steps to increase the availability of public transport, including taxis

¹³ **Action 1.6.4** – Increase awareness for the Driver Check App, which allows intending passengers to check that a taxi and driver are properly registered and licensed before getting in

¹⁴ **Action 1.5.1** – Supervise, monitor and enforce age assurance requirements and any other relevant measures, including content rating for regulated online services, taking into account relevant frameworks and emerging technologies

¹⁵ **Action 1.5.3** – Implement, supervise and enforce the Online Safety Framework to improve online safety for women and girls

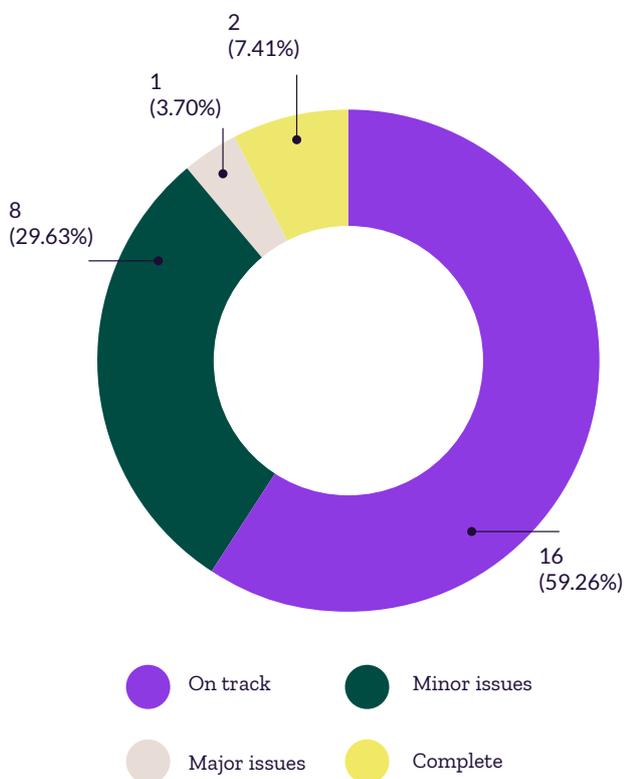
¹⁶ **Action 1.5.2** – Deliver information and education initiatives on online safety, including targeted resources for children and young people, parents/guardians, and teachers, in cooperation with relevant organisations

Protection



This pillar focuses on actions designed to protect the safety and meet the support needs of adults and children who have experienced DSGBV. To ensure that victims and survivors of DSGBV can access the services they need, it is incumbent on the State to provide adequate, appropriate, and accessible information on and offline.

Figure 3: Protection Pillar – 27 Actions Total



Access to Information

To provide access to information, the HSE NSIO launched a dedicated DSGBV webpage in 2025, which includes a directory of all available services to victim-survivors as well as information for healthcare professionals.¹⁷

The HSE also launched a new Women’s Health Service website, which had over 1,900 unique users over the course of 2025. The engagement rate for the website sits at approximately 70%, suggesting that it is reaching the relevant groups and raising awareness of the women’s health service.¹⁸

Voice of the Child

During 2025, the Access to Justice and Family Justice team in the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration progressed the multi-stakeholder Voice of the Child Working Group to examine current arrangements to hear the voice of the child in private and family law and Alternative Dispute Resolution.¹⁹ The Working Group advised the Department on the implementation of several recommendations contained in the Review of the Role of Expert Reports in the Family Law Process, including establishing a Children’s Court Advocate Pilot Project and the development of a Voice of the Child report template and guidelines.

By December 2025, the Department had finalised the tender for the Children’s Court Advocate Pilot, identified the preferred implementing partner, and met with the organisation to begin planning for the 2026 rollout. A tender for evaluation of the pilot was also published.

¹⁷ **Action 2.1.4** – Design and disseminate a public service directory and webpage for DSGBV information and resources

¹⁸ **Action 2.1.5** – Create a dedicated website for the Women’s Health Service to communicate and promote the service and reach relevant groups

¹⁹ **Action 2.5.2** – Progress the work of the Voice of the Child Working Group to examine current arrangements to hear the voice of the child in private and family law and Alternative Dispute Resolution

Operation Encompass

A key component of this pillar is to recognise and support children and young people as individual victim-survivors who experience DSGBV, using child-friendly and age-appropriate communications. To achieve this, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration commenced work to scope and develop an operational framework to introduce Operation Encompass in Ireland. Operation Encompass is a police-led, school-based early intervention programme designed to support children and young people who experience domestic violence, including where a child witnesses a domestic violence incident in the home. Under Operation Encompass, An Garda Síochána (AGS) will share information with schools in relation to garda-attended incidents at the home of the child, allowing the school to provide immediate support the following day and into the future.

In 2025, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration secured funding under the Shared Island Initiative within the Department of the Taoiseach and engaged closely with Cuan and the Department of Education and Youth to progress plans to deliver a learning event with key stakeholders in Northern Ireland, where Operation Encompass is already established, and to develop a pilot programme, which is proposed to be held in Louth in 2026.²⁰

Service Delivery and Development

The Protection Pillar commits to ensuring the availability of accessible, quality specialist and community-based DSGBV services across the state so that all victim-survivors have access to integrated services in the short, medium, and longer term.

In 2025, Cuan allocated €3.2 million to facilitate a targeted funding call to support the expansion of services and innovation across a range of domestic and sexual violence services and perpetrator programmes.²¹

The funding call targeted key areas, including:

- Expansion of counselling services for adolescent victim-survivors;
- Improved access to domestic and sexual violence services for marginalised groups;
- Increased capacity to address increasing service volumes across national helplines;
- Training for staff and board members working in DSGBV organisations on a range of topics from governance to trauma-informed complex care; and,
- Increased access to perpetrator programmes.

The funding was allocated towards the following areas of service expansion and innovation:

- Over €600,000 was awarded to 66 services to provide training and build the capacity of Board members and frontline professionals;
- €751,000 was allocated to sexual violence services to provide counselling services for adolescents;
- €1.1 million was allocated to 26 services to provide targeted services to marginalised groups;
- €352,000 was allocated to increasing access to perpetrator programmes; and
- €266,000 was provided to enhance access to two national helplines.

The funding provided by Cuan is expected to provide additional and improved training for more than 1,100 frontline professionals in 67 DSGBV services. An additional 5,484 victim-survivors will benefit from increased availability of services and appointments, and an additional 167 individuals will engage with perpetrator programmes.

In pursuit of the Protection Pillar's aim to enable victim-survivors to rapidly access and live in safe, accessible short and long-term accommodation as a priority, Cuan advanced preparatory work to support national service development in 2026. Initial work commenced on developing enhanced funding, data collection, and monitoring systems aimed at improving the understanding of service demand, which would inform future sector development, including the National Services Development Plan.²² Targeted training and interagency collaboration were advanced to foster increased capacity, consistency, and collaboration across the sector.

Domestic violence refuge capacity has increased by 13 units, bringing the total number to 172. Additionally, refurbishment of 9 units is underway, with the service expected to be operational by early 2026.

²⁰ **Action 2.5.4** – Scope and develop an operational framework to introduce Operation Encompass in the Irish system, including identifying any necessary legislative changes and consulting with relevant stakeholders

²¹ **Action 2.2.3** – Continue to develop a sustainable model of service delivery to include a phased roll-out of service enhancements and supports to sexual violence services

²² **Action 2.2.1** – Conduct preparatory work, including on data collection and monitoring, to inform the framework for the National Services Development Plan



Minister Jim O'Callaghan and staff of Sonas Domestic Violence Charity

Cuan completed a review of domestic violence accommodation targets in 2025. Following this review, and in agreement with the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, a plan was developed to deliver 52 new family refuge units and 45 new safe homes to be completed by the end of 2026, alongside 50 new units under construction. This will build on the work undertaken in 2025 in which the number of safe home units increased by 8, bringing the total capacity of safe homes across the country to 60.²³

To support victim-survivors accessing short-term accommodation, the Department of Social Protection continued to provide a fast-track approval process for Domestic Violence Emergency Rent Supplement.²⁴

Other actions to ensure victim-survivors have immediate and longer-term access to the safety, support, and advocacy they need include:

- The HSE provides specialist support to victim-survivors of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) with over 200 individual clients contacting the service during the reporting period. The support service currently treats an average of six new clients per week. Following the allocation of additional funding, the service expects to increase capacity, supporting further reductions in the waiting list from January 2026.²⁵
- The Department of Health is progressing plans to facilitate the recruitment of psychotherapists to work with women in prison in a therapeutic and educational capacity to promote awareness of healthy relationships among incarcerated women.²⁶
- The Department of Health arranged the provision of four workshops on consent and healthy sexuality in the Dóchas Centre and Limerick Prison to enhance access to support for women affected by DSGBV.

23 **Action 2.3.1** – Continue to progress the delivery of current DV refuge development programme pipeline across all priority locations identifying opportunities to accelerate delivery

24 **Action 2.4.1** – Continue to provide a fast-track approval process to Domestic Violence Emergency Rent Supplement

25 **Action 2.2.9** – Continue to provide clinical supports to victim-survivors of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

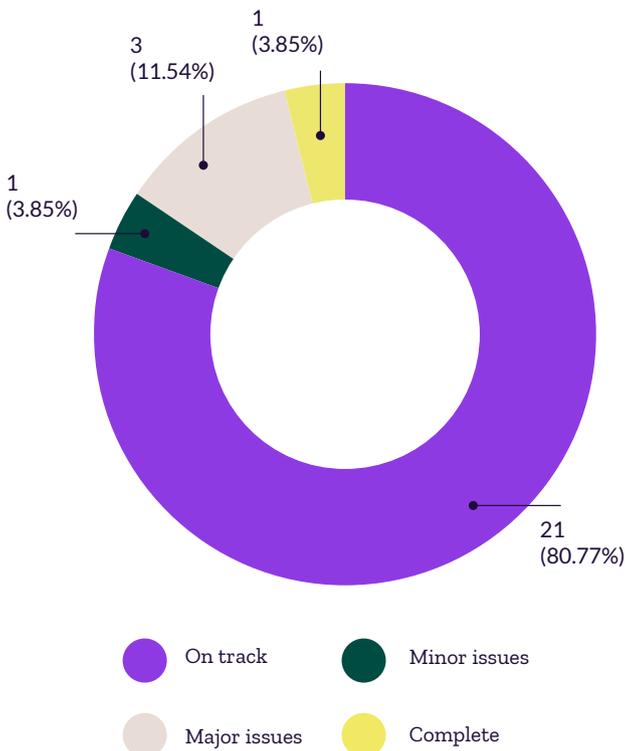
26 **Action 2.2.4** – Enhance support for women affected by DSGBV and promote awareness of healthy relationships among incarcerated women



Prosecution

This pillar centres on actions that strengthen law enforcement and judicial responses, ensuring victim-survivors can access the justice they deserve. Enhancing the policing and prosecution of DSGBV is a critical element of an effective justice system that supports victim-survivors and upholds accountability.

Figure 4: Prosecution Pillar – 26 Actions Total



The Prosecution Pillar aims to ensure that all professionals and frontline workers dealing with adult and children victim-survivors in the justice and legal systems have the skills and understanding of DSGBV to equip them with the necessary expertise required.

Capacity Building of the Justice Sector

The Courts Service has commenced integrating trauma-informed practices to ensure that court rooms are safe, compassionate, and respectful, aiming to prevent retraumatisation of victim-survivors. During 2025, the Courts Service provided trauma-informed training to over 80 staff, bringing the total number of staff trained to over 700. This training empowers the staff of the Courts Service to understand the impact of DSGBV on the lives of individuals.

The District Court Domestic Violence eLearning module was completed by 457 staff, while the new Identification of Abuse, Domestic Violence and Coercive Control module was accessed by 16 staff in 2025. A family law training officer was appointed in late 2025 to support the expansion and review of training.²⁷

²⁷ **Action 3.1.1** – Implement a programme of mandatory DSGBV training for those working in Family Law, including technical skills and further specialist training depending on the role

During 2025, the Judicial Council delivered a comprehensive programme of DSGBV-related training to the judiciary, complementing its annual programme with targeted seminars and workshops, including a strong focus on child sexual abuse. Training was delivered by experienced judges, supported by academics and sectoral experts, and covered areas such as coercive control, trauma-informed practice, avoiding retraumatisation, forensic evidence, and case management.²⁸

In parallel, Fiosrú commenced implementing an improved response to investigating complaints of DSGBV and managing complaints pertaining to the handling of DSGBV cases by members of An Garda Síochána. During the reporting period, Fiosrú strengthened its organisational capacity, service delivery, and victim-centred responses by fully operationalising the Specialist Services Unit within the organisation, which has responsibility for managing DSGBV-related cases. The establishment of this unit represents a significant step in enhancing the quality, consistency, and sensitivity of the response to complainants. Fiosrú employees also received ongoing training to ensure awareness and appropriate handling of cases pertaining to DSGBV-related matters.²⁹ In addition, Fiosrú appointed human rights lawyer and advocate and former CEO of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, Noeline Blackwell, as an independent expert adviser on DSGBV.³⁰

Family Justice

A core objective under this pillar is the reform of the operation of the family law courts to ensure victim-survivors are better protected and supported throughout the judicial process.

The Family Courts Act 2024, when commenced, will provide for the establishment of family court divisions within the existing court structures, including a Family High Court, a Family Circuit Court, and a Family District Court.

During 2025, the Courts Service undertook a coordinated and collaborative approach to planning for the implementation of the Act. This approach focused on aligning key stakeholders and ensuring extensive engagement across the family justice sector.³¹

The Courts Service introduced a new suite of District Court application forms, including domestic violence court order applications. The new forms modernise the process and allow for standardisation and ease for victims across all District Courts.³²

Legislation

The Prosecution Pillar aims to strengthen the policing and prosecution of DSGBV. Steps have been taken by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration to achieve this. In 2025, the Department progressed recommendations of the Study on Familicide and Domestic and Family Violence Death Reviews, including the examination of proposals to remove guardianship rights from those convicted of killing their partners or a parent of their child. Governmental approval was secured to draft the Guardian of Infants (Amendment) Bill 2025. The 2025 Bill provides for the removal of guardianship of a child from (1) a guardian convicted of the murder or manslaughter of another guardian or (2) a guardian convicted of a serious offence which incapacitates another guardian. The Bill will progress through the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2026.³³

Another key component of this pillar is to ensure perpetrators of DSGBV are held to account and prevented from victimising or re-victimising.

In line with this, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration has progressed legislation, the General Scheme of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences, Domestic Violence and International Instruments) Bill 2025, to provide for a Domestic Violence Register, which will be published by the Courts Service. The Bill will provide for individuals convicted of domestic violence against a partner or former partner to be publicly named on a Register of Judgments.³⁴

In pursuit of the objective under this pillar to reduce demand for prostitution, the Department of Justice, Migration and Home Affairs prioritised the development of policy proposals in respect of the recommendations of the Review of Part 4 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, which decriminalised the sale of sex while criminalising the purchase. During the reporting period, the Department considered the legal and operational implications related to strengthening the enforcement of the legislation and commenced scoping the development of a public awareness campaign to increase awareness of the legislation.³⁵

28 **Action 3.1.3** – The Judicial Council, as part of its statutory remit, will continue to provide continuous professional learning to judges to include DSGBV and family law; and will engage where appropriate with relevant agencies

29 **Action 3.1.2** – Implement the improved Fiosrú response to investigating complaints of DSGBV and managing complaints pertaining to the handling of DSGBV cases by An Garda Síochána

30 Human rights lawyer Noeline Blackwell engaged as adviser on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence – Fiosrú

31 **Action 3.2.4** – Produce and implement an operational plan for the implementation of the Family Courts Act 2024. The plan should include details of how the needs of victim-survivors of DSGBV including children will be met

32 **Action 3.2.1** – Implement new suite of user-friendly, accessible forms for high volume applications in the District Court including Domestic Violence

33 **Action 3.5.7** – Scope and map the process to progress appropriate recommendations from the Study on Familicide and Domestic and Family Violence Death Reviews

34 **Action 3.6.2** – Develop a system, in consultation with An Garda Síochána, to ensure a person in an intimate relationship can be informed of a serious risk to them where a new partner has a history of domestic violence

35 **Action 3.4.1** – Consider and progress recommendations arising from the Review of Part 4 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017

Risk Assessment and Management

Throughout 2025, the Probation Service continued to work in close cooperation with AGS and Tusla to assess and manage the risks posed by perpetrators convicted of DSGBV-related offences to ensure that safety measures for adult and child victim-survivors are implemented efficiently. This work is delivered through the Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM) framework, a statutory, multi-agency system, which enables the structured sharing of information and expertise on individuals subject to supervision by the Probation Service and AGS. Risk assessments are conducted to determine the need for intensive monitoring and coordinated interagency case management.

The Probation Service routinely applies a Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) to all intimate partner violence cases referred by the courts for pre-sanction reports, assessing perpetrator risk factors and victim vulnerabilities. They also use a risk classification program that predicts the likelihood of sexual or violent reoffending in males.

To support the ongoing delivery of risk assessments, the Probation Service and AGS co-delivered Stable and Acute sex offender risk assessment training to staff throughout 2025.

Where relevant, child protection notifications are made to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, with ongoing information sharing and joint working between the agencies. As risk assessments are being conducted, victims engaging with the Probation Service are provided with information on local support services.³⁶

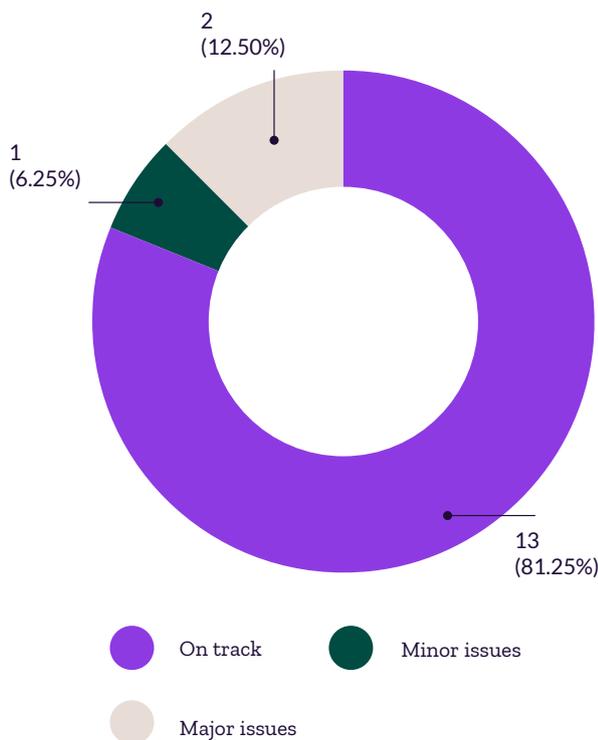
³⁶ **Action 3.6.7** - Work in partnership with other agencies to develop and strengthen risk assessment mechanisms for use with perpetrators of DSGBV-related offences and implement safety measures for adult and child victim-survivors

Policy Coordination



This pillar is focused on strengthening policy coordination and implementation at both national and local levels. It aims to deliver a comprehensive, coordinated, and authoritative State response to DSGBV, underpinned by effective monitoring and evaluation and informed by ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and service users.

Figure 5: Policy Coordination Pillar – 16 Actions Total



Central to the Policy Coordination Pillar is an enhanced, coordinated approach to data collection across Government and the DSGBV sector. This supports the objective of zero tolerance of DSGBV by ensuring an effective, robust research and evaluation framework that informs policy development and decision-making and enables the measurement of progress over the life cycle of the Zero Tolerance Strategy.

In 2025, Cuan made significant progress in strengthening an evidence base to support the Zero Tolerance Strategy with the development of a bespoke monitoring framework that sets out actions, KPIs, and accompanying data collection methods to monitor progress of the Strategy.

Research and Data

In 2025, Cuan commissioned the Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) at Leiden University to undertake a bibliometric analysis of DSGBV research from the island of Ireland and internationally. This analysis provides valuable insight into research trends, thematic strengths, key actors, and gaps from the period between 2012-2024, supporting future research planning and collaboration.

Cuan also established a Joint Research Programme with the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) on adult sexual violence in Ireland. The first output, a literature review on measuring prevalence, was published in September 2025, with further analysis underway using CSO survey data.³⁷

The Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration is progressing work to develop a single unique identifier and standardise data categorisation across the Justice sector. During 2025, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration undertook targeted engagement with stakeholders with expertise in data protection, civil liberties, and criminal justice. This informed the finalisation of a policy approach, now being advanced through a cross-agency group to ensure coordinated and consistent implementation across the criminal justice system.³⁸

Child Protection and Welfare

A core objective of this pillar is to recognise the child as an individual victim-survivor who experiences DSGBV in their own right, rather than as a bystander or witness.

In recognition of this objective, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) commissioned an evidence-informed scoping exercise of the current child protection and welfare environment with specific reference to DSGBV, including new and emerging trends that impact children, to inform the forthcoming review of Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. Preparations for the review are underway, including engaging with key stakeholders, securing funding, and developing research requirements.³⁹

The establishment of strong oversight and governance structures are key to the implementation and delivery of the commitments under the Zero Tolerance Strategy, with regional coordination structures to oversee delivery of services on the ground.

Community Safety

A collaborative partnership between Cuan and the National Office for Community Safety, which was established in April 2025 to drive whole-of-government action on community safety, is advancing through engagement on the National Community Safety Steering Group, support for DSGBV engagement in Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs), and contributions for the first National Strategy for Community Safety. The LCSPs are in the process of being established, with 36 currently in place nationwide, 33 of which had appointed members by the end of 2025 with 66% including DSGBV representation. The LCSPs supported amplification of Cuan's *Always Here* campaign, and the consultations for the development of the National Strategy for Improving Community Safety included strong DSGBV sector engagement.⁴⁰

37 **Action 4.2.1** – Engage and build active partnerships with statutory agencies, research institutes, academia and researchers in the community

38 **Action 4.3.5** – Facilitate better collation and sharing of data by developing a single unique identifier and standardising data categorisation across the justice sector to support policy research and inform DSGBV service development

39 **Action 4.8.1** – Commission a scoping exercise of the current child protection and welfare environment with specific reference to DSGBV including new and emerging trends and their impact on children

40 **Action 4.1.2** – Establish a collaborative partnership between Cuan and the National Office for Community Safety

Spotlight Feature

The Department of Children, Disability and Equality is leading the implementation of Barnahus in Ireland. Barnahus, which translates as 'Child House', is the leading European model of a child-friendly multidisciplinary response to child sexual abuse.

The Protection Pillar focuses on ensuring the safety of victim-survivors of DSGBV, both adults and children, and to guarantee access to therapeutic support and services.



The goal of the Protection Pillar is to ensure that all victim-survivors have immediate and longer-term access to the safety, support, and advocacy they need, with due regard to their diversity.

The Zero Tolerance Strategy is the first national DSGBV strategy to clearly and directly identify children and young people as individual victim-survivors of DSGBV in their own right. An objective under the Protection Pillar is to ensure a victim-survivor-centred wraparound service through the creation of clear integrated local pathways (building on the mapping of the victim-survivor journey work) for adult and child (female and male) victim-survivors to access domestic violence and sexual violence information, services, and supports. In pursuit of this objective, DCDE is leading the provision of the coordinated interagency response to support child victim-survivors of sexual violence.

Barnahus is a safe and child-friendly place where a team of professionals work together with the child and family when there is a concern or disclosure of child sexual abuse. Agencies responsible for child protection, criminal investigation, medical care, and therapy services work together and deliver a coordinated and effective response that is guided by the child's best interests.

The focus of Barnahus is on ensuring that a child who may have experienced sexual abuse receives the right help at the right time. The approach is child-centred, recognising that sexual abuse affects children and their families in a multitude of ways, and that families will often require guidance navigating complex systems. Barnahus bridges the gap, ensuring children and young people receive coordinated interagency assistance. This is achieved by co-locating essential services together, within four rooms, where professionals work together in a multi-agency team to support families.

Barnahus Rooms

Protecting Children

When a concern is raised about the safety or welfare of a child, including abuse or neglect, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, will engage with children, young people, and families to ensure they are safe. The children, young people, and families involved engage with Tusla on areas of concern and discuss ways in which the safety of children can be ensured. Tusla will then develop a plan to ensure the safety of all children involved.

Medical Room

Barnahus will provide both medical and forensic medical examinations in cases where children need to be examined. The purpose of an examination is discussed with the parent or guardian, and any decisions will be made in the child's best interest. A medical examination may be helpful for the purposes of wellbeing, investigation, and recovery. Forensic examinations can provide important evidence for use in legal action. Supportive, specially trained doctors and nurses from Children's Health Ireland (CHI), the HSE, and Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATU) carry out child-friendly medical examinations when it is agreed to be in the child's best interest.

Criminal Investigation

As part of the evidence collection process, when the child feels ready to speak about the incident, they meet with specially trained interviewers. The interviewers are social workers from Tusla and CHI, and members of AGS who work together in pairs. Specialist interviewers are highly trained to gather the best evidence from children. The interview will be recorded and may be used in court as evidence.

Therapy Room

Protective caregivers have an important role in helping their child. Barnahus support parents and caregivers by providing advice about looking after their own and their child's emotional wellbeing. If a child has therapeutic needs, therapists engage with them, deciding with the child and their parents/caregivers as to what could best support them.

Barnahus has been established in Ireland to integrate health, medical, child protection, therapeutic, and policing services for children and young people who may have experienced child sexual abuse, under one roof in a safe environment that minimises re-traumatisation and improves outcomes for children and families.

There are currently two Barnahus services in Ireland: Barnahus West, which serves the Northwest, West, and Midwest; and Barnahus South, which was recently launched and serves Cork, Kerry, Waterford, and South Tipperary.

The continued implementation and expansion of Barnahus by DCDE was a priority area in 2025. Progress continued during the reporting period, with a strong focus on governance, service sustainability, evaluation, and further national rollout.

The second phase of the Joint European Union-Council of Europe Barnahus Ireland project commenced in September 2025, which aims to establish Barnahus East and support the design, development, and implementation of the legislative, operational, and practice reforms required to embed the Barnahus model in Ireland in a sustainable way.

Following extensive engagement between DCDE, the Department of Health, Tusla, and CHI, governance arrangements for Barnahus East have now been agreed, representing a significant milestone in progressing the operational readiness of the service.

To support the operationalisation of Barnahus East, Tusla secured additional funding from DCDE for two critical posts required to establish and manage the service, and recruitment for these posts has commenced, as well as two social work team leader posts and related service costs, including a dedicated training budget to support frontline professionals.

An evaluation of Barnahus is nearing completion. This desk-based research focuses on the implementation of the model in Barnahus West and will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the model, implementation challenges, and areas for further development. The findings of this evaluation will inform future policy and operational decisions, including the continued expansion of the model nationally.

Significant investment continues to underpin the delivery and expansion of Barnahus services.

In 2026, Tusla will receive an aggregate budget of €2.8 million to support the delivery of Barnahus, alongside an additional €639,000 approved for 2026 to support staffing and operational and training needs, particularly in Barnahus East. In addition, DCDE has been awarded €520,000 in Dormant Account Funding to support the further development of the Barnahus model and advance the multi-agency approach central to its delivery throughout 2026.

These developments represent substantial progress in delivering a coordinated, child-focused response to child sexual abuse in Ireland.

Conclusion

Over the course of 2025, significant efforts were made across Government to implement actions under the four pillars of the Zero Tolerance Strategy and its associated implementation plan. Nonetheless, domestic, sexual and gender-based violence remains endemic throughout Ireland, and renewed effort and engagement are necessary to increase prevention and to protect victim-survivors, including children and those who experience multiple marginalisations.

Under the leadership of the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, and with the engagement and oversight of the High-Level Oversight Board, the Senior Officials Group, and the Cabinet Committee on Justice, Migration and Social Affairs, Cuan will continue to work with all implementing partners to increase momentum and drive progress in the final year of the Strategy.

This report is the third Progress Report published on Zero Tolerance in the last two years, the first annual report, and the first report developed since the establishment of a bespoke monitoring framework for implementation and a purpose-built online reporting platform. This demonstrates the appetite of the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration to ensure DSGBV remains a political and public priority, and to increase accountability and transparency in the delivery of associated Government commitments.

Robust monitoring and reporting of the progress made under the Strategy will continue in 2026, and Cuan will also focus on building capacity of the monitoring and data collection mechanism to support enhanced analysis to provide a pathway for the development of the successor strategy.



Minister Jim O'Callaghan with the Senior Management Team of Cuan
(L-R: Elizabeth Peña, Grace Turner, Dr. Stephanie O'Keeffe, Minister Jim O'Callaghan, Marissa Ryan, Sarah Hegarty)

