



WOMEN'S SPACES

**Creating platforms to strengthen women's voices
in peacebuilding, civic and political life.**

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Realising Our Rights

WOMEN'S RIGHTS & INT'L LAW

Tuesday, 19 May 2026
Guildhall, Derry-Londonderry

We were delighted to come together with our Women's Spaces partners for 'Realising our Rights: Women's Rights and International Law' conference hosted in the Guildhall Derril-Londonderry with over 70 women in attendance.

We were truly inspired and uplifted by our range of speakers, including Dr Kellie Turtle, who explored international human rights frameworks, followed by a panel of experts from the women's sector discussing key issues affecting women today, moderated by Louise Coyle of NI Rural Women's Network:

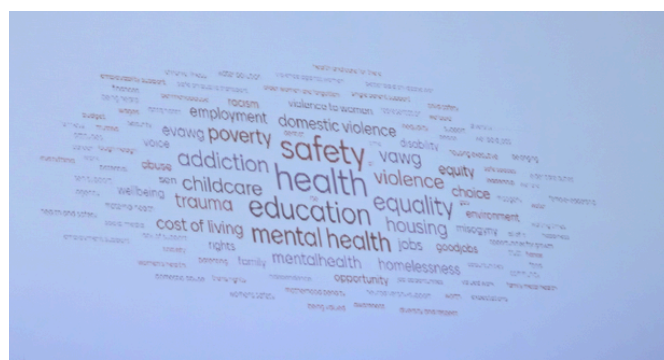
- Elaine Crory, WRDA's Women's Sector Lobbyist on VAWG and RSE
- Dr Meghan Hoyt, WRDA's WSL Policy Assistant on Women's Health
- Deirdre Quinn, WRDA's Training and Development Manager on Employment Rights
- Dr Siobhán Harding, WSN's Policy Officer on Poverty and the Cost of Living Crisis

While we are realistic about the scale of the challenges facing women, the day showed us that with the dedication and commitment of women serving their communities, real change can happen. The event closed with 2 inspiring speeches from Catherine Barr, Women's Centre Derry and Dr Cllr Lilian Seenoi-Barr, North West Migrant's Forum on the role of Women's Centres and Groups and the importance of women in public and political life, respectively.

A huge thank you to all of our speakers and everyone who attended and helped make the event such a success.

Realising Our Rights...

WOMEN'S RIGHTS & INT'L LAW



Stronger Voices - Campaigning for Change

WITH SSUNI FEMINIST SOCIETY

We were delighted to organise an event in partnership with Ciara Murray of SSUNI Feminist Society on Campaigning for Change to End Sexism in Schools. 26 participants attended the event with a wide range of speakers from both pupils and women activist and campaigners.

Dr Anne McVicker, Director of WRDA, opened the event and introduced the panel of changemakers who spoke on ongoing and past successful campaigns:

- Sally Rees, NASUWT, moderator - Campaign Against Misogyny
- Elaine Crory, Women's Resource & Development Agency - Access to Bathrooms in Schools research 2026
- Grace Boyle, Menstruation Matters - End Period Poverty Campaign 2016+
- Dr Emma Campbell, Alliance for Choice NI - Relationship & Sexuality Education in Schools Consultation 2023
- Claire Hanna MP and leader of SDLP - Free Period Products Legislation 2022

Then we had 2 presentations from student groups on their campaigns:

- Female Voices, Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock: <https://www.knock.co.uk/female-voices>
- Safe Schools, Strong Voices Campaign, Secondary Students Union NI - Connie Rogers, Katie O'Brien, Ciara Murray

Claire Hanna, MP, closed the event with an inspiring and encouraging message to all who attended.



Women's Votes, Women's Voices



WITH AOIFE CLEMENTS, 50:50NI

Want to feel informed, confident, and ready to vote? These workshops demystified how politics works in Northern Ireland, what decisions mean for everyday life, how elections run, and what our elected representatives actually do. The aim was simple: to help women feel informed, confident, and ready to vote.

The course ran over four sessions, each focused on a key aspect of political life:

Week 1 – Introduction to Politics in NI

An overview of our political and governmental structures, and the main parties and what they stand for.

Week 2 – Why Your Vote Matters

Demystifying Northern Ireland's two voting systems (First Past the Post and Single Transferable Vote) and how they work to decide who wins.

Week 3 – Making Sense of Campaigns

How to cut through campaign noise, evaluate manifestos, compare policies, check evidence, and spot red flags or unrealistic promises. Participants leave with a practical checklist for campaign season and canvassing at the door.

Week 4 – Putting It All Together

A recap and a chance to apply learning to the issues participants care most about. Together we'll create practical checklists and question prompts to use with candidates, raising priorities and asking for clear commitments.

The workshops were interactive, accessible, and designed for women who may not want to run for office but want to be confident, engaged citizens.

Gender Justice in Transition - Lessons from Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace

WHAT DOES GENDER JUSTICE REALLY LOOK LIKE AFTER CONFLICT?

We were pleased to have Dr Daniela Suárez Vargas join us for a timely conversation on how women's and LGBTQIA+ movements are actively shaping transitional justice in Colombia.

This session centred on Macro-Case 11, the first case within Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace dedicated entirely to gender-based violence. Opened in 2023 after sustained organising by women's and LGBTQIA+ groups, it marks a critical shift in recognising gender-based violence as systemic and widespread.

During the sessions we explored how participatory approaches are reshaping legal processes, evidence, and definitions of victimhood, and what this means for justice in practice.

Her Vote Matters



A PART OF WHY VOTING MATTERS WITH NI YOUTH FORUM

We were pleased to be invited to be a part of this event with NI Youth Forum on Why Voting Matters as part of their International Women's Day programme.

The evening explored the importance of voting, representation, and the role young women play in shaping our democracy. It was inspiring to see so many voices, ideas, and experiences shared throughout the event.

With our partner, Bronagh McAtasney from NI Screen, we delivered a workshop on the importance of women's votes and participation in decision making processes, showcasing the Digital Film Archive footage on women's suffrage and political activism.

Special thanks to NI Youth Forum for inviting us!



Bronagh McAtasney, NI Screen



Leon Hughes, NIRWN

Imagining Something Different: Women & Rights in NI post Brexit

WITH DR AOIFE O'DONOGHUE, QUB SCHOOL OF LAW



Women's Platform was delighted to host Prof Aoife O'Donoghue from Queen's University School of Law to discuss women and rights in NI.

She is an expert in constitutionalism, international law, rights and legal feminism. She also works extensively on Brexit and Northern Ireland, and particularly its impact on rights. The seminar included a presentation followed by discussion around the impact of Brexit on the rights of women in Northern Ireland.

Pillars for Peacebuilding

WITH BELFAST SAPPHICS AND WITH QUB CRIMINOLOGY STUDENTS



The Urban Coordinator Sarah Stack was pleased to be invited to deliver a workshop on women's activism and collective leadership in Northern Ireland to the Belfast Sapphics group who were participating in a Women In Leadership course by WRDA and a workshop on women's activism and the Northern Ireland peace process to undergraduate students studying criminology at Queen's University Belfast by Dr Teresa Degenhardt of QUB's Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice.

Participants heard from women peacebuilders and pioneers captured in the toolkit and explored the timeline of women's rights in Northern Ireland and Internationally from the early 20th century to today.

Older Women's Survey - 30 June 2026!

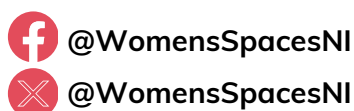
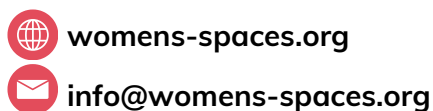
PREPARING FOR THE OLDER PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT

Join us the final Women's Spaces event on what's most important to older women!
Conversation on issues for the Older People's Parliament this year.

For Older Women (aged 55+)
Your views are important - Tell us what is most important to you.

Tues 30 June, 7-8pm ONLINE

Register to get the link: <https://wkf.ms/3QKebN0>



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs
RECONCILIATION FUND



Women's Spaces seeks to strengthen the voices of all women and girls in peacebuilding and decision making, delivered by a consortium involving Women's Platform, NIRWN, WRDA and WSN.