



A chairde,

Thank you for inviting FairPlé here today to speak. We are a feminist volunteer organisation, established in January 2018 to achieve gender balance and fairness in Irish traditional and folk music.

Initially advocating for equal opportunities, it became increasingly evident that it was impossible to separate issues relating to gender representation and discrimination from those of gender-based harassment and violence.

Inequality in representation was being supported by a workplace culture which turns a blind eye to harassment and assault of women. From the outset, our members began receiving, unprompted, confidential disclosures of harassment and assault from women across the scene, so much so that it was clear an endemic problem existed.

In 2020, the #misefosta campaign brought further serious allegations of sexual abuse, assault, coercion and harassment to wider public attention which in turn led to an ever-increasing number of disclosures, which continues to this day.

For almost 4 years, we have worked tirelessly, as volunteers, to raise awareness and to address these issues and are very grateful for the support we have received to date. However, we have also been subjected to significant amounts of abuse and backlash, and a closing of ranks. Time and energy spent on this work has been, and continues to be at the expense of our own craft, while perpetrators continue to earn.

We are proud of what we have achieved and the influence we have had. We are proud of the solidarity that has grown between our sister organisations across the arts. We support the work of the ITI and the recommendations as set out in their Report and welcome the package of measures announced by Minister Martin.

However, the situation is grave and the measures should be far more ambitious.

Firstly

- All public arts funding must be subject to strict conditions to address gender-based harassment, discrimination and violence, which includes implementing and maintaining up-to-date anti-harassment policies and procedures.

Secondly

- A statutory independent body should be established which can receive disclosures and be given the power to investigate claims of discrimination or harassment affecting those not currently protected by existing law, such as freelance or self-employed workers.

And finally

- Funding must be increased drastically. The initial funding for implementation of the measures promised is woefully inadequate. We want to ensure that the Department is committed to ensuring that these measures are sustainable and not simply a 'one-off'.

Our briefing document provides more detail on these and further recommendations.

These measures are **long-term sustainable solutions** which will benefit us all. But if action is not taken, more women and marginalised groups remain at risk.

FairPlé therefore urges you all to take this seriously and address this urgently to secure a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment for ALL in the arts.

Thank you.