



Informing  
Unmarried  
Parents

# Strategic Plan



## 2026-2030



### Equal Voices, Stronger Families: A Strategy for Change





# Introduction

## INTRODUCTION

Treoir, which means to direct or guide, was founded in 1976 and is a national organisation advocating for equal rights for the families of today and their children. Originally named the Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children, Treoir is a membership organisation providing specialist information and advice to families not based on marriage and engaging in training, research and advocacy in an overall effort to advance equality for all families. Central to Treoir's work is ensuring that policy decisions that impact the lives of these families are influenced and informed by the experience of those directly affected.

In the lifetime of this strategic plan Treoir will be fifty years old. Established at a time when births outside of marriage were not socially acceptable, staff in Treoir have witnessed a dramatic transformation in Irish society and a welcome and significant shift in our understanding of the traditional Irish family. Today, half a century since Treoir's foundation, approximately forty per cent of children are born to families outside of marriage. There are over 12,000 children in kinship care families and one in five families are headed by one parent. Despite some positive changes in policy and legislation during this time, one-parent families mostly headed by mothers, are the most likely to be forced into poverty and are the families most acutely affected by the ongoing housing crisis. Simultaneously, fathers who are not married to their children's mothers still lag behind a wider European legal trend that acknowledges the important role many fathers play in their children's lives regardless of their marital status.

Through its direct engagement with families not based on marriage, listening deeply to their problems and lived experiences and analysing the information gathered from its national information line, staff in Treoir have a deep understanding of the critical issues of the day facing families. From five decades of building a small but steady foundation in terms of practice, learning and reputation, Treoir has developed into an organisation that tries to „lift as we climb”. We recognise and celebrate the rich diversity of family formation in Ireland today and take an intersectional approach in advancing equal rights for families some of whom are navigating disability, migrant rights issues, care, systemic poverty, trauma, family homelessness and being pushed to the margins of our society. In consultation with parents, members, board and stakeholders, Treoir has taken a brave stance in leading out on new areas of practice, for instance, Shared Parenting, Young Parents and Kinship Care. In other circumstances staff recognised that our voice can support others by expressing solidarity. Treoir has nearly 50 years of direct engagement with families and a proven track record in being solution focused, collaborative and innovative. Treoir is uniquely well placed to advance equal rights for all families in conjunction with them, our allies and our members to improve services, laws, policies and public discourse.

All Families Matter is Treoir’s five year strategic plan developed by the staff team and board, the accumulation of extensive consultation with families we work with, service users, allies, partner organisations and other strategic stakeholders. It highlights some of the impact Treoir has had over the past five decades and aspires to have over the next five years in terms of tackling the issues facing families not based on marriage in Ireland and contributing to a broader equality agenda. The impact goals detailed here are informed by a refreshed vision and mission and steered by our theory of change outlined here in terms of how we see change happening. All of this is grounded in a critical analysis and in the lived experiences of the families and parents with whom we work.

# #1

# Story of Now



---

## THE BIGGER PICTURE

As part of the participative and consultative process informing this strategic plan we asked members, families, key stakeholders, the Treoir team and board what bigger picture trends or developments should be considered when advancing our vision and mission over the next five years.

**National and global trends around marriage.** As trends across Europe would suggest, Ireland's family types will likely continue to deprioritise marriage as an 'essential ingredient' in family formation. In EU countries in 2023, 58.9 % of children were born inside marriage. More people are choosing not to get married in Ireland. With 40.8% of children born outside of marriage in 2023 Ireland's demographic and socio-economic landscape has changed dramatically over the last fifty years. These changes have had implications for the nature of Irish families both in terms of composition, and the issues they face.

Global income **inequality**, while historically decreasing due to economic growth in populous and poorer countries like China, has recently experienced a significant increase, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. From an inequality perspective the gap between rich and poor has never been so stark. The richest 10 percent today hold 52 percent of all income. The poorest half just 8.5 percent. From a wider equality perspective outdated social beliefs and norms as they relate to family have not disappeared. They look different to how they did fifty years ago but they still have an impact.

Against a backdrop of **unprecedented levels of racism and anti-migrant rhetoric globally and nationally** it has become increasingly challenging for migrants to move work and live in dignity and safety. This is particularly true for those leaving the poorest and more politically unstable countries of our world. Treoir staff works with families formed outside of marriage from increasingly diverse backgrounds. Communities here in Ireland have never been more multicultural, diverse and vibrant. Trends and patterns around global migration which is essentially about the movement of people, families and workers is an important wider contextual piece.

The **socio economic bigger picture** is an ever present reality that Treoir needs to take into consideration in working to advance equal rights for the families of today. Alongside a rise in the cost of living there is a housing and homeless crisis and a perceived competition for more limited resources that forms a challenging backdrop to progressive social change; social change agenda concerned with those families most at risk of disadvantage and discrimination.

The **increased polarisation and instability of politics** around the world including the rise of the organised far right is also being felt here in Ireland. Narratives high jacked by some far right actors did not help public perceptions and attitudes to wider civil society and Non-Governmental organisations. From an instability perspective recession looms on the horizon so the need to recession proof will be key in the operationalising of this strategic plan.

In the aftermath of the Family and Care referendum in 2024 a question remains central to Treoir’s policy and advocacy work. What does **progressive legislative reform for families formed outside of marriage** look like?

The adversarial structure of the family courts presents significant challenges for parents seeking resolution. This has contributed to the rise of private mediation services, some of which may operate without sufficient oversight or adherence to professional standards. Treoir advocates for regulated, high-quality supports that serve the best interests of families

We want an Ireland where children are not disadvantaged because of their socio economic status or the type of family they were born into and can grow up free of stigma and discrimination, free of inequality and injustice, free to be all they can be.

---

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

### Shifting Family Structures and Persistent Inequality

Ireland’s ongoing housing crisis and rising cost of living continue to hit families hardest in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities—many of whom Treoir supports. Lone mothers face severe challenges securing stable housing, while non-resident fathers struggle to maintain meaningful relationships with their children without a home environment to welcome them into. These conditions create significant barriers to shared parenting. Families outside of marriage often face multiple layers of inequality—poverty, immigration challenges, and systemic discrimination. With fewer resources to insulate themselves and their children against these pressures, their vulnerability is heightened. The intersection of economic hardship and social exclusion compounds disadvantage and deepens inequality.

## The Political Context: Changing Attitudes, Lagging Policy

Since Treoir's founding in 1976, societal attitudes toward non-marital and non-traditional families have changed dramatically. In 1976, only 3.8% of children were born outside marriage; by 2023, that figure rose to 40.8%. The marriage equality referendum was a turning point, affirming that family is defined by care and connection—not just law or biology.

An analysis of the 2024 Family and Care referendum revealed that rejection of the proposed amendments stemmed not just from conservatism, but from mistrust in the process and a belief that the reforms did not go far enough. Despite public support for inclusive family definitions, progress is slow. Census 2022 shows 14% of all families are cohabiting couples (176,956 households), yet policies still favour a married, heterosexual, two-parent model.

## Emerging and critical issues for the families of today

Treoir's analysis of ongoing and emerging issues highlights how outdated laws and contradictory policies disproportionately impact the families with whom we work, exacerbating barriers to legal access and increasing the risk of poverty, prompting the pressing question: if equality is enshrined, we have to ask ourselves why do unmarried families still face such systemic challenges? There are a number of existing and emerging policy and legal gaps that impact directly on the families and carers Treoir works with.

### Cohabiting Couples

Cohabiting couples still face legal and social welfare disparities. The Supreme Court's John O'Meara case highlighted this ongoing challenge. Cohabitants are penalised by social welfare systems that inconsistently recognise their status. Similarly, contradictory government policies simultaneously promote shared parenting while maintaining systemic barriers that hinder it especially in housing, courts, and social welfare.

### Contradictory Policies

The policies of successive governments on one hand being in favour of reducing child poverty, promoting shared parenting and alternative dispute resolution while on the other hand embedding poverty and barriers to shared parenting would not come as a surprise to many families who face these issues regarding housing, health, social welfare, and the courts. For one-parent families, young

parents, non-marital fathers, and co-parents sharing parenting, there are different and more persistent societal and systemic challenges than cohabiting couples.

## One-Parent and Shared Parenting Challenges

One-parent families, mostly led by mothers, face higher poverty and social exclusion. Despite making up 17% of all families, one-parent families (85% headed by women) are disproportionately affected by the housing crisis, unaffordable childcare, and austerity-era cuts to supports.

The Treoir team are seeing increasing diversity in the amount and type of families, such as blended families and kinship care (estimated 10-12,000 children living in kinship care, which is double the amount of children than is in Foster/State care). Young parent families, overwhelmingly led by women, face more difficult challenges in relation to societal stigma, housing insecurity, educational and social welfare supports. Young parents and kinship carers often unrecognised in policy face similar struggles. ESRI 2021 research suggests that “less than 25% of lone parents reported home-ownership compared with 70% of the total population. Lone parents had higher rates of affordability issues at 19% when compared to the general population 5%”.

Shared parenting is widely acknowledged as beneficial, yet current court systems are adversarial and slow. Without accessible alternatives like mediation, families are forced into legal battles that deepen conflict.

## Young Mothers

Young mothers (under 24) face greater challenges in promoting the child's best interests in terms of accessing supports to complete 2nd level education, engaging in higher education, having stable and adequate income through employment, securing stable housing, and not being forced into deprivation through inadequate social welfare supports.

## Non-Resident and Young Fathers

Fathers not living with their children still face outdated gendered assumptions about men's roles in caregiving, reinforcing outdated stereotypes. Childcare is often seen as the mother's duty, while fathers are expected to provide financially. However, ESRI (Fathers and Children from Infancy to Middle Childhood Smyth & Russell ERSI Research Series 130, 2021), evidences that children benefit more when fathers are actively involved beyond financial care.

## Invisible but Vital: Kinship Care

Children generally do better when they maintain relationships with their parents, when it is possible. Kinship carers are often penalised by the Department of Social Protection when they try to support these rightful relationships. Unlike formal foster care, for a kinship carer to access the Guardian's Payment, they must prove 'parental abandonment', often leading to unfair refusals. These carers, often women, provide vital care yet face poverty and a lack of access to vital supports to sustain their care and support a child who has had Adverse Childhood Experiences.

## Domestic Abuse and Systemic Failures

Families navigating domestic abuse face retraumatising systems. Courts often dismiss survivors' concerns, fail to capture children's voices, and can allow perpetrators of abuse to manipulate proceedings. Gendered roles and systemic disbelief add further danger to vulnerable families. Treoir acknowledges it isn't the lead agency in this space, but recognises the importance of advocating for safer, more informed family justice systems.

# #2

# Story of Us



---

## LOOKING BACK: TREOIR'S IMPACT

Treoir is an organisation that punches above its weight and values having an impact. Turning fifty in the lifetime of this strategic plan is a wonderful opportunity for the team, board, members, allies and families with whom we work to acknowledge the strides made for nonmarital families in Ireland by all and the impact Treoir itself has had.

For decades Treoir has championed the rights and equality of the families of today and their children, advocating for changes in family law and social welfare, and providing a vital information service with the goal of reducing the information gap and empowering the families with whom we work. Our National information service gives us unique insights into the needs of families outside of marriage in Ireland and actively informs our policy work. Albeit a small team, Treoir is proactive in its collaborations and partnership approach, working in active solidarity with community organisations who share our values to advance an equality agenda and make a real difference in the lives of families we work with and for.

Building on this ground work Treoir, families impacted and other civil society organisations, have made significant strides in advocating for and supporting diverse family formation in Ireland.

In the course of the last strategic plan 2019-2024 Treoir has;

- Through direct outreach, engagement programmes, and information services **reached thousands of individuals and families, ensuring they have access to the resources, advocacy, and support they need.**
- **Partnered with government departments and Tusla to expand the reach of and launch the Young Parent Support Programme (YPSP).** Evolving from the Teen Parent Support Programme, the YPSP now supports young parents up to age 24. The YPSP builds on a strong legacy to offer vital support to more young families across Ireland.
- **Stepped up to support and develop the innovative and impactful Kinship Care Ireland programme, boosting visibility and support for kinship families.** Advocacy has helped more families access the Guardian's Payment, while 7 new partner Family Resource Centre peer support groups have expanded assistance to kinship families nationwide.
- **Successfully highlighted** inequalities in family types, elevating conversations on family definition and legal inequalities nationally.

\*The Story of Us is adapted from Marshall Ganz's The Power of Story: The Story of Self, Us and Now. New Organizing Institute, Peter Gibs, Shea Sinnott.

- **Expanded our communications reach and public engagement** through traditional and social media methods reaching more people on key issues. As an indicator of our growing capacity, in 2020, Treoir had 4 media appearances. In 2024, Treoir had 53 media appearances.
- **Strengthened our governance and financial sustainability** continuing to diversify the funding needed to support our work.
- **Complexity of calls.** While the overall number of Treoir phone calls remained steady year on year, support queries rose from 8,117 in 2020 to 11,064 in 2024, highlighting increasing complexity in the issues raised by callers.
- **Supported key legal cases and spotlighted challenges** faced by cohabiting couples in accessing the widow's pension, supporting a Supreme Court case and gathering data to push for legislative reform.
- **Leadership role** in a national conversation about the definition of family.
- Developed shared parenting support services, raising awareness of the barriers to shared parenting.
- **Expanded our team** to better serve our growing membership whilst deepening our financial sustainability.

**MOVING  
FORWARD:  
TREOIR  
IMPACT  
GOALS  
2026-2030**

Working closely with people impacted, members and allies, Treoir will advance solutions to some of the most critical issues facing families not based on marriage in Ireland today. An approach grounded in values, community and an informed critical analysis will advance equal rights for these families. Treoir will continue to bring together different perspectives to advance solutions for the families of today with the best interests of children in mind.

Treoir's strategic priorities for the next five years are grouped under **three core impact goals:**

**Goal 1 Advance equal rights for Families of Today (not based on marriage)**

Through provision of information, training and advocacy, Treoir will take strategic and collective action to advance rights for all nonmarital families in Ireland. This will start through the provision of timely and accessible information to those who need it and include strategic advocacy efforts that engage those with lived experience, members, allies and partner organisations. Treoir will;

- Continue to provide a **national information service** ensuring families not based on marriage have access to up-to-date, accurate and relevant information in an accessible and timely manner. Over the next five years Treoir will embed innovation in our services to ensure the people most in need can access the information, advice and support they need.
- Ground its work in a **critical analysis of the lived experience of families** not based on marriage in Ireland. We will develop a compelling evidence base by analysing the data coming through our information service, consciously engaging with and listening to families and where appropriate initiating research. This critical analysis will be regularly updated and directly inform the organisations policy positions, research efforts and advocacy work.
- Led by the experience of people directly impacted, informed by members and with the support of allies and partner organisations, **advocate for change and campaign** on key issues. This will include for example seeking the legal recognition of all family types including constitutional change and a national kinship care policy.
- Devise a **tailored training programme** with the goal of upskilling targeted organisations who are working directly with non-marital families and strategically placed to have a positive impact. Criteria will be developed to focus training and outreach efforts; for example a focus on organisations working with harder to reach families at greater risk of social exclusion and discrimination/ disadvantage, those promoting shared parenting and/or building the capacity of parents to advocate for themselves.

## **Gola 2** **Develop and deliver innovative responses**

Treoir has a track record in developing dynamic solutions and bringing together different perspectives to complex problems facing families and will continue to foster this innovative response over the next five years. Treoir believes that families that are impacted by the issues we work on should be central to the development of solutions and that in addition to being grounded in community and values our responses are stronger when informed by a shared and critical analysis. Using community work, case work and other approaches Treoir will;

- Foster **dynamic national programmes and responses to critical issues** facing families not based on marriage as aligned to shared values. Treoir will continue to actively support the important work of Kinship Care Ireland, the Young Parent Support Programme and Shared Parenting amongst other impactful initiatives

and programmes. Treoir is committed to active solidarity with new groups who have the potential to advance rights for non-traditional families in Ireland.

- Actively seek ways to work with **those impacted to amplify their voices, consciously creating space for parents and families impacted to participate** in developing a collective analysis and a collective response to the issues facing families of today in Ireland. Examples may include; peer led research, participatory forums and discussions, supporting formation of parents/campaign groups.
- Cultivate a supportive and empowering environment so that parents/carers in families not based on marriage can **develop their skills and analysis as leaders and spokespeople to advocate themselves** for the change needed. This would include identifying opportunities and spaces for people impacted to self represent and supporting them to develop the knowledge, skills and values to lead.

### **Gola 3** Nurture a thriving organisation for greater impact

Treoir prioritises responses that have an impact and over the next five years is committed to measuring the impact we have to validate and strengthen the work of the organisation. We value immensely the team that implements the work and the board that supports it and we will enhance the organisation's development so it's a workplace to thrive in and an organisation with a national profile that advances rights and equality for the families of today. We will amplify the voices of non-marital families collaborating with others to ensure the diversity of modern family formation is celebrated. To that end Treoir will;

- **Strengthen our communications infrastructure and grow our national profile** so we can reach people impacted more often and more effectively. We will develop the capacity to build a supporters network that brings voice and power to the non-marital family rights agenda. Our communications will enhance our messaging and collaborate with others to amplify the stories of modern families in order to contribute to a discourse that recognises and celebrates inclusion and diversity of family life/formation.
- **Enhance our membership strategy so it is inclusive and representative** of the diversity of all family types in modern Ireland. We will collaborate more effectively with members to advance impact goals and bring power in numbers to persuasive policy solutions and positions.

- **Deepen our collaboration with wider civil society organisations with shared values** and strategic stakeholders to advance solutions and a broader equality and rights agenda for the families of today.
- **Continue to invest in team and board development** ensuring a team environment where people can grow and develop and contribute their ideas and use their knowledge and skills to advance our mission. We will diversify our board and team membership continuing to work together closely to ensure we maintain the highest standards of governance and impact.
- **We will design and utilise a robust impact measurement framework to strengthen the work of the organisation,** improving our capacity to gather feedback and continuously reflect, evaluate and adapt. This system developed with the team and board will have established milestones and clear reasoning in its measurement of impact. Using this impact framework we will continue to diversify our funding and strengthen Treoir's sustainability into the future.

All of these impact goals are grounded in shared values, the lived experience of families not based on marriage in Ireland and a critical analysis that understands the nature of inequality today. Whilst Treoir does not work directly with children and young people we recognise that every single child has the right to family and the importance of solutions advanced being child centred. Treoir promotes the inclusion of the voice of the child within family decisions that impact upon the child's access to their own family, in a way that is appropriate, meaningful and does not place a child in a pressurised position to make adult-decisions.

## HOW WE WORK IN TROIIR - OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Treoir is concerned with structural change and addressing the root causes of inequality by empowering families not based on marriage with the information they need and building their active participation in a collective agenda to advance equal rights and challenge norms that still stigmatise nontraditional family forms. We are solution focused and develop collaborative approaches in the form of shared policy positions and alternative models that alleviate hardships and tackle injustices.

Through our frontline information services we document trends, generate an evidence base and identify problems that need solutions, often making first contact with parents and organisations on the ground who want to get involved in advocacy and campaigns for change. The data generated from our information service informs an active evolving critical analysis that is nurtured in our team and fed directly into our policy positions.

Treoir's advocacy support for John O'Meara who took a case against the Department of Social Protection and successfully challenged discrimination on the grounds of marital status for the Widow/ Widowers/ Surviving Civil Partner Pension is a prime example of how Treoir effects change. Here Treoir connected directly with a nonmarital parent, developed a good analysis of the issue at hand, engaged strategic litigation support in the form of (FLAC) and with the support of members and allies applied pressure to push for change. Treoir has identified a number of anomalies and inequities such as these by listening to the lived realities of people contacting our service. We have the capacity to build collaborative and strategic alliances with members and partners organisations to push for policy and procedural change which can alleviate hardship and stress and progress equal rights.

**We recognise that while providing accessible reliable information to groups and families is important other more participatory and strategic methods are needed to bring about the kind of systemic change that Treoir is committed to. Improving the circumstances of individuals and family units matters a great deal to Treoir so too does having the kind of impact that changes policies, procedures, legislation and advances equal rights. Our evolving theory of change will combine our frontline information services, policy and advocacy work with strategic campaigns that advance policy and legislative change. A community work process at the heart of this will build the participation and leadership of for example parents and kinship carers ensuring those impacted are at the fore of a collective effort to bring about change.**

This change takes longer and should be informed and driven by those directly impacted. Working collaboratively and strategically with members, partner organisations and the wider community sector we will build power around pragmatic and winnable solutions. Through our communications and amplification of the voices and stories of non-marital families we can influence societal norms about family, chipping away at the stigma and othering that still occurs.

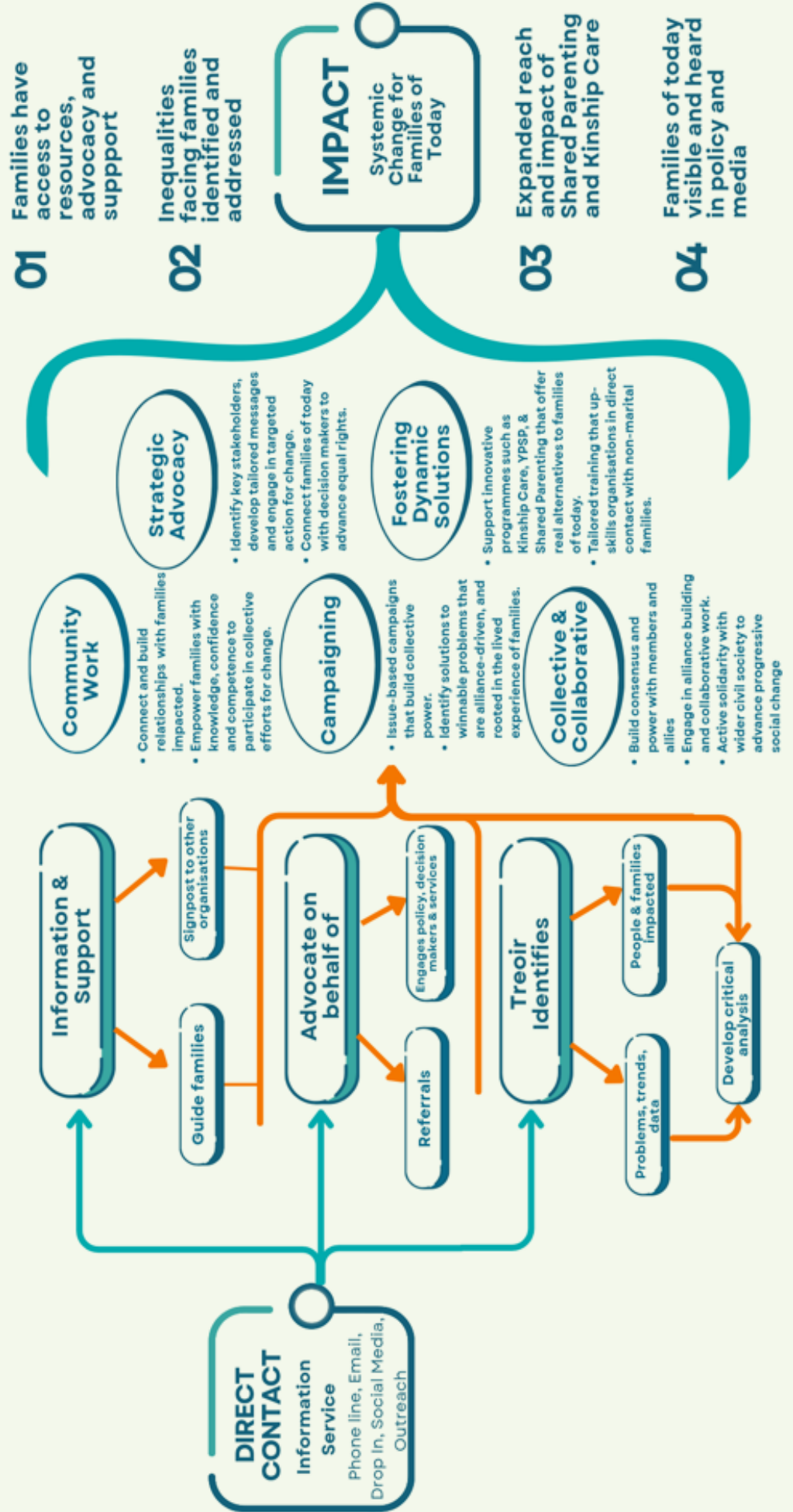
Treoir aims to empower individuals while pushing for broader policy and structural shifts. We see Treoir's theory of change as operating "in and against the state" — i.e. working with decision makers and within structures while retaining the right to challenge systems and policy. This pragmatic response is grounded in community, values and a shared critical analysis with the end goal of contributing to progressive systemic change.

## Treoir's strategy includes;

- 1 Providing Information & Advocacy:** Informing parents about their rights, offering support in individual cases, and advocating for systemic improvements.
- 2 Strategic, Solution focused & Participatory Approaches:** Engaging those directly impacted, holding decision-makers accountable, and using diverse methods and tactics (e.g., workshops, policy submissions, supporting innovative programmes and pilot projects e.g. shared parenting model, supports for kinship care).
- 3 Strategic Litigation & Collective Action:** Using legal cases, such as the John O'Meara case, to drive precedent-setting changes, amplifying the voices of affected communities and coalition building around specific issues with existing members and allies.
- 4 Campaigning & Mobilisation:** Running issue-based campaigns that build collective power with impacted families, members and allies. Identifying solutions to problems that are winnable, alliance-driven, and rooted in the lived experience of the families and parents we work with.
- 5 Impact-driven value informed Strategy:** In line with organisations values and grounded in communities Treoir is working in, we prioritise efforts based on their feasibility, in alignment with Treoir's strengths, and potential for meaningful change.

Treoir's theory of change revolves around empowering individuals while driving systemic reform, ensuring that families and communities can thrive through informed advocacy and participatory action. There is a clear appetite in Treoir to push further into campaigning, with solid analysis, lived experience, and trusted reputation to push for broader reform.

# THE THEORY OF CHANGE



---

## OUR ANALYSIS

We in Treoir are very clear that our efforts to advance equal rights for families formed outside of marriage is part of a wider struggle for progressive social change for a better Ireland, future and world for us all. A feminist analysis, human rights based approach and community work values of participative democracy and active solidarity underpin our work and guide our efforts. A critical analysis informs all of our efforts; one that pushes us to identify the root causes of the issues facing the parents, kinship carers, children and families with whom we work.

### Our shared analysis is;

- **Feminist** - Current system of care is shaped by patriarchal structures which place the primary responsibility for childcare on women. This is intensified in cases of domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence, where mothers face the challenge of pursuing fathers for support. This can isolate mothers, reinforce gender inequality, and weaken the bonds between fathers and their children. A more equitable approach requires recognising and promoting shared caregiving responsibilities, strengthening father-child relationships, and advocating for policies and legislation that support both parents in caregiving roles.
- **Intersectional** - We take an intersectional approach in advancing equal rights for non marital families some of whom are navigating disability, racism, care, systemic poverty, trauma, family homelessness and being pushed to the margins of our society.
- Underpinned by a concern with people's basic **Human Rights**. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a key policy framework informing our advocacy and analysis. Treoir is committed to respecting the right to dignity and bodily integrity of every child, aligning with the core principles of the UNCRC, particularly Articles 2, 3, and 7.
- Influenced and informed by **Community Work** which values a critical analysis of power and wider social analysis informing thoughtful action and a wider concern to advance progressive social change for those most marginalised or excluded in society.

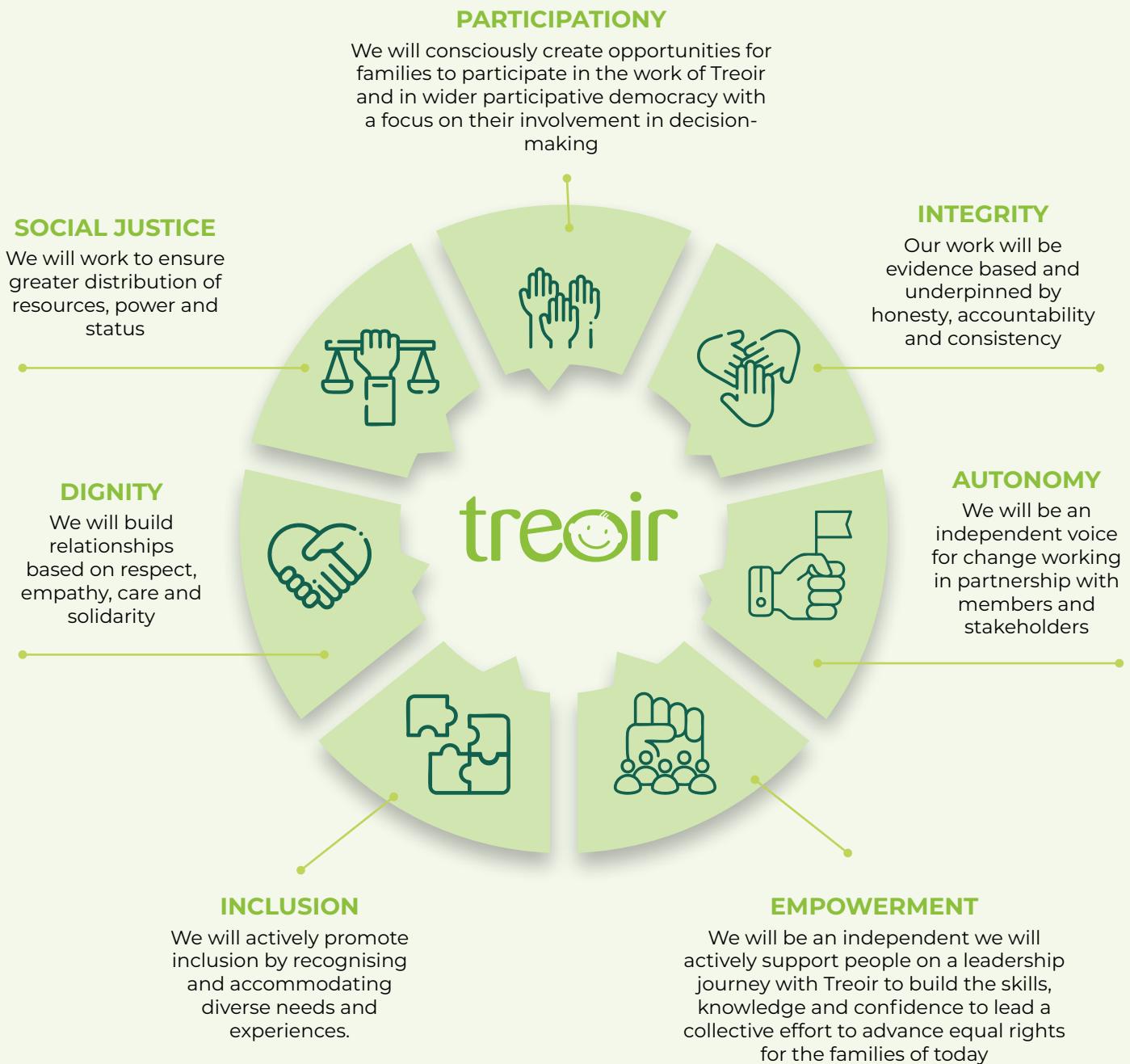
## We believe

- Everyone has the right to be **heard in decisions that affect their lives**. Families formed outside of marriage deserve a voice in shaping the policies and services that impact their wellbeing.
- **Change** is not only possible - it must be led by the people and families directly affected. Those we work with are more than capable of driving that collective change.
- **Diversity** in all its forms strengthens families, communities, and society. We recognise and celebrate the rich diversity of family formation in Ireland today.
- **In equality**. All families, including those formed outside of marriage, and all children should enjoy the same rights as married families. They must be recognised, supported, and treated equally across housing, health, education, training, and employment.
- **Every child has a right** to know about their parents and, wherever possible, to be loved and cared for by them and to have a relationship with them when it is safe and wanted.



# OUR CORE VALUES

Our work in Treoir is grounded in the lived experience of the families with whom we work, a critical analysis of the inequalities they experience and in shared values that we nurture in our approach to advance equality rights for the families of today. We recognise that our core and shared values define the purpose, priorities, processes and practices of our organisation. In the lifetime of this strategic plan we will make more explicit the values set Treoir operates from building a shared understanding and shared expectations with our team, board, membership and people impacted in our collective efforts to advance equal rights.



# #3

## About TREOIR the Organisation



Since the late 1970's Treoir has, in keeping with its name, **provided direction** and advice to thousands of parents and their families who by virtue of not being married experience challenges accessing services and in some cases have their rights denied. Treoir has worked to find solutions to issues arising at the intersection of family and society empowering people to better understand their rights and take action. Treoir has a unique contribution to make to ensure the diversity of modern family formation is supported to thrive in Ireland today.

With its members, partner organisations and families Treoir has successfully shone a light on many of the problems and issues facing families not based on marriage in 21st century Ireland. In an innovative and collaborative way Treoir has developed solutions and services to alleviate these issues and overcome some of these injustices. We have elevated shared parenting as a viable alternative to our courts system, pioneered support services for young parents and kinship carers, campaigned for access to the widows pension for non-marital life partners.

Whilst we have come a long way from the days of stigma and shame encountered by parents and their children born outside of marriage there are still issues that put families under pressure making people feel powerless and isolated with no clear route to being heard. How we view and experience family is fundamental to our sense of selves in the world and our quality of life.

## Our vision

**Our vision is of an Ireland where the families of today and their children enjoy full equality under the law and where their legal, civil and economic rights are realised both in legislation and society.**

## Our mission

**Our mission is to advance equal rights for families not based on marriage and the families of today. By providing specialist information and support, engaging in policy formation, advocacy, training and through building power with families impacted, members and allies we work for systemic change.**

Our mission is to promote equal rights for all families. We do this by offering expert information and support primarily to non-marital families, influencing policy, advocating for change, providing training, and working with families, members, and allies to create systemic change

**Our unique role** is in **directing, guiding and supporting families** formed outside of marriage, particularly those facing legal, social, and economic disadvantage.

■ We ensure parents and kinship carers **know their rights by translating complex family law into accessible information and guidance.**

■ Our work goes beyond information provision. **We walk alongside families through crises. We listen deeply and advocate effectively.**

■ **Rooted in living expertise** and informed by both qualitative and quantitative data we develop an analysis and evidence base from the trends and patterns we see.

■ We promote the **visibility and legitimacy of all family forms**, advocating for sharing parenting and celebrating the diversity of all families of today.

■ **We innovate and collaborate** identifying shared solutions to complex problems

■ We **build power for change aiming to influence systemic change** whilst preserving the trusty and safety we have built with the communities we serve



# #4

# Strategic Plan Process



In the Winter of 2024 to May 2025 the Treoir team and board participated in a reflective and productive strategic planning process which has;

Comprehensively consulted with stakeholders, service users and members through an online survey, structured conversations and a focus group with people impacted

- Reviewed Treoir's work under the current strategic plan, the organisations strengths, weaknesses and impact thus far
- Reflected on the values at the heart of the organisation's efforts and language used by Treoir and its vision and mission
- Explored Treoir's theory of change i.e. impact Treoir aspires to have and how the organisation sees change happening
- Analysed the critical issues of the day arising for non-traditional families in Ireland identifying gaps and opportunities and bigger picture threats
- Captured the main presenting issues coming through the information line from Oct 21-Oct 24
- Considered the methods and approaches Treoir takes in advancing equality for non-marital families consulting with stakeholders regarding areas for prioritisation and refinement

“

*Treoir is recognised for its unique focus on unmarried parents and children of those relationships. They collaborate with other organisations and play an essential role in lobbying for policy change, ensuring people's voices are heard in legislative and legal matters*

“

*Treoir staff are approachable, responsive, and deeply invested in the individuals they help. This connection is central to its impact, providing much-needed support during difficult times”*

“

*Treoir has a very clear focus about what they do, what they work on, who they represent and support..... That clarity is essential in effectively advocating for the rights of these families.*

# treoir



(01) 670 0120

info@treoir.ie

**www.treoir.ie**

CHY: 8877

RCN: 20022211

Keep informed.

Follow us on



facebook.com/treoir



@Treoir1976



bsky.app/profile/treoir.bsky.social



## KINSHIP CARE IRELAND

**www.kinshipcare.ie**

**E:** info@kinshipcare.ie

**P:** 087 148 7124

**Facebook:** facebook.com/kinshipcare.irl

**Instagram:** kinshipcareireland

**LinkedIn:** Kinship Care Ireland

**Bluesky:** @kinshipcareireland.bsky.social



## YOUNG PARENTS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

**www.youngparents.ie**

**E:** sam@ypsp.ie / info@ypsp.ie

**M:** 087 251 8428

**TikTok:** @youngparentsireland

**Instagram:** @ypspireland

**Bluesky:** @youngparentsirl.bsky.social