



Men's Development Network

The Men's Development Network CLG.

49 O'Connell St., Waterford, X91 E866
North Brunswick St., Dublin 7, D07 RHA8

Tel: 051-844260 | Email: men@mensnetwork.ie

www.MensNetwork.ie   @MensNetworkIE

Dignity and Equality in the Workplace The Defence Forces: - An Independent Review

April 4th, 2022.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in your review. The Men's Development Network celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. We have our headquarters in Waterford and have 17 core staff and a further 22 sub-contracted staff working on all our programmes. We run four national programmes that include MEND: Domestic Violence Intervention Programme, Engage: National Men's Health Training Initiative, Male Advice Line: national freephone service for male victims/survivors of domestic abuse and the all-Ireland White Ribbon Campaign: men ending violence against women and gender-based violence.

Over the initial years, the network ran a number of projects working with men who were at risk of or experiencing marginalisation. During this time, the network developed its own methodology of engaging men that has influenced the development of all its programmes and practices.

Our work is about Transforming Masculinities by providing opportunities to engage men and boys on issues such as their Health and Well-Being, Gender Equality and the ending of gender-based violence, not only in the national programmes mentioned earlier but also in programmes such as our Good Enough Parent Support Programme, Walking the Talk, FarmConnect, MenConnect, Mens Leadership and our Counselling Services.

The Men's Development Network through its White Ribbon Campaign has had significant engagement with the Defence Forces on men ending violence against women and gender-based violence. The Defence Forces, through its then Vice Admiral Mark Mellett, supported the campaign and encouraged involvement especially around International White Ribbon Day on November 25th.

We saw first hand the willingness to progress the rights of Dignity and Equality in the Workplace but are also aware there is a long way to go and engaging soldiers on these issues can be challenging. To that end, we would like to offer some suggestions as to how one could embed sustainable equality practices that would create the cultural shift necessary to ensure dignity and equality within the Defence Forces.

1. To develop an awareness programme that allows recruits to reflect on their understanding of masculinity, gender equality and gender-based violence and include in the induction process for all new recruits.



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice



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2. Make available this programme for all recruits and include it as part of the Continuous Professional Development Programme.
3. Develop a leadership programme by identifying champions for Dignity & Equality across all ranks.

These initial steps could have a major influence in creating the culture the Forces now desire for their organisation and we at the Men's Development Network would be willing to offer whatever support is needed to achieve this aim.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff and I have attached a link to our website for your information. www.mensnetwork.ie

Your Sincerely,

Sean Cooke CEO

086-7815605