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UNIVERSITY  
OF GALWAY

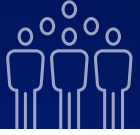
An Institiúid Cúrsa Saoil  
& Sochaí

Institute for Lifecourse  
& Society

ENABLING  
EQUITY  
ACROSS THE  
LIFE COURSE

# Institute for Lifecourse and Society - ILAS

## Public Policy Innovation Series



## What next for Irish Public Policy Development? *Strengthening the use of Data and Evidence*

How do we foster and support effective public policy in Ireland?

How can we best use data and research evidence for key policy decisions over the life course?

The seminar examines 'what next' for our system of public policy. It considers progress since the OECD report *Strengthening Policy Development in the Public Sector in Ireland* (May 2023) from a national and international perspective, broadening the dialogue with public bodies, NGOs and other interested parties.

**DATE: Tuesday, 28th May 2024**

**TIME: 10:00-16:00**

**VENUE: ILAS, Auditorium, University of Galway**



[Register here](#)

The seminar will focus on research and evidence as a key pillar in developing effective public policy and will foster debate about next steps in a vital and challenging agenda of change.

The seminar will examine some of the substantial work underway on strengthening our approach to policy development, implementation and evaluation, and on enhancing the impact of policy over the complete life course. The civil and public service reform agenda and the Research and Innovation Strategy *Impact 2030* will form a key backdrop to the event.

INVITATION

# Schedule

Time	Speaker
10:00	Registration, Tea and Coffee, Networking
10:30	Welcome & Introduction <i>Prof. Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, President, University of Galway</i> <i>Simon Harris TD, Taoiseach - Recorded Message</i> <i>Dr Fergal Lynch, Senior Lead, Government and Public Policy Engagement, University of Galway</i>
	Session 1: Setting the Scene: Progress, Plans and International Context
10:40	Strengthening Public Policy Development: Recent Progress and Next Steps <i>John McKeon, Secretary General, Dept of Social Protection</i>
11:10	The Challenges and Opportunities of Building Policy Capability: An International Perspective <i>Prof. Ngaire Woods, Dean, Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University</i>
11:40	Panel Discussion Moderator: Prof. Emer Mulligan, University of Galway <i>Elizabeth Canavan, Dept of the Taoiseach</i> <i>Jasmina Behan, Dept of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform</i> <i>Larry O'Connell, Director, NESCC</i> <i>Prof. Eilíonóir Flynn, Director School of Law, University of Galway</i> <i>Ivan Cooper, CEO, The Wheel</i>
13:00	Lunch
	Session 2: Data and Evidence: Strengthening Impact of Policy on People's Lives
14:00	The challenges and opportunities of data for policy development <i>Padraig Dalton, Director, CSO</i>
14:15	The challenges and opportunities of research evidence for policy development <i>Dr Colm O'Reardon, Secretary General, Dept of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science</i>
14:30	Panel Discussion Moderator: Dr Helen Maher, VP Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Galway <i>Dr Mairead O'Driscoll, CEO, Health Research Board</i> <i>Prof. Selina McCoy, Economic and Social Research Institute</i> <i>Dr Philip Nolan, DG, Science Foundation Ireland</i> <i>Prof. Kieran Walsh, Director ILAS, University of Galway</i>
15:45	Rapporteur <i>Prof. John Canavan, Institute for Lifecourse and Society</i>
16:00	Conference close <i>Prof. Kieran Walsh, Director, ILAS, University of Galway</i>



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# Speakers



**Prof. Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh** is President of University of Galway. With a BComm from this university and PhD in Accounting from the University of Leeds, UK, he has worked in academic leadership roles in New Zealand, DCU and UCD. He drove the development of a new strategy for University of Galway, *Shared Vision, Shaped by Values*, which outlines the University's direction and priorities, and is again working in collaboration with staff, students, external stakeholders and university management to develop our next strategic plan.

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**Dr Fergal Lynch** works with the University of Galway to help foster closer links between policy practitioners and academics in the development, implementation and evaluation of public policy. Fergal was previously Secretary General of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (2015-2022) and Deputy Secretary General of the Department of Health (2012-2015).

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**John McKeon** joined the Department of Social Protection in October 2010 and was appointed Secretary General in July 2017. He has held Assistant Secretary positions with responsibility for activation policy, the development and implementation of the Pathways to Work programme, and the modernisation of the department's public office (Intreo) services. He also held responsibility for staff relations and Finance, Legislation and PRSI policy. He has worked for the Department of Post and Telegraphs / Telecom Éireann / Eircom over a period of 31 years, latterly as Managing Director of eircom Wholesale.

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**Prof. Ngaire Woods** is the founding Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government and Professor of Global Economic Governance at Oxford University. Her research focuses on how to enhance the governance of organisations, the challenges of globalisation, global development, and the role of international institutions and global economic governance. She founded the Global Economic Governance Programme at Oxford University, and co-founded (with Robert O. Keohane) the Oxford-Princeton Global Leaders Fellowship programme. She led the creation of the Blavatnik School of Government.

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**Prof. Emer Mulligan** is a Personal Professor of Taxation & Finance in the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics at University of Galway. She is Head of the Accountancy & Finance Discipline, and Director of the University's Tax Clinic. Prof. Mulligan's research investigates the international social, political and economic dimensions of taxation from the perspectives and interactions of a range of stakeholders, including political policy makers, governmental regulators, international businesses, taxpayers and professional tax advisers. Prior to joining academia Prof. Mulligan was a tax manager with PWC.

# Speakers



**Elizabeth Canavan** is Assistant Secretary General of the Social Policy and Public Service Reform Division in the Department of the Taoiseach. A career civil servant, she has worked extensively in the policy development in the areas of Health, Children & Families and Public Service Reform. She is Deputy Chair of the National Economic and Social Council and Secretary to the Civil Service Management Board.

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**Jasmina Behan** is Assistant Secretary in the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR), with responsibility for the Work and Pensions Division. An economist by training, she previously headed the Irish Government Economic Evaluation Service, leading the capacity building for evidence-informed policy making across the Irish Civil Service.

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**Dr Larry O'Connell** is the Director of the National Economic and Social Council (NESCC). Recent work has focused on an assessment of the strengths and vulnerabilities of the Irish Economy; Ireland's Wellbeing Framework; and Affordable and Sustainable Housing. Larry has worked as senior Economist in NESCC on a range of policy issues, including climate change, housing and higher education funding. During his earlier career he worked in Teagasc, the higher education sector and in Louis Dreyfus (London). He holds a degree in Agriculture Economics, a Master's in Business and a Phd which focused on the internationalisation of Irish businesses.

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**Prof. Eilionóir Flynn** is an Established Chair in Law and Director of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy, University of Galway. Her research focuses on disability and social justice, with a particular emphasis on legal capacity, advocacy and reproductive justice. She is passionate about educating the next generation of disability rights scholars and working in active partnership with disabled people's organisations. Her research has received funding awards from the European Research Council, Wellcome Trust and Horizon 2020. Eilionóir regularly advises policy-makers at national and international levels, including providing support to the Secretariat of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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**Ivan Cooper** has been CEO of The Wheel since May 2023 and was previously Director of Public Policy there. He has a wide-ranging career-experience working in private, public and community and voluntary sectors including diverse roles in managing finance, governance, funding and strategy, and public affairs. Ivan represents The Wheel on a range of national and international fora. He has an MBA, a Diploma in Developmental Studies and a primary degree in psychology and philosophy from UCD.

# Speakers



**Pádraig Dalton** has been Director General of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) since 2012 and concludes his term shortly. A career statistician, Pádraig has worked across most statistical domains during his career in the CSO. He is a member of the Civil Service Management Board (CSMB) and a member of the CSMB sub-group on Strengthening Policy Making. Among other appointments he is Chair of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and a member of the National Statistics Board. Pádraig graduated from University College Dublin in 1989 and was awarded an MA in Economics in 1990.



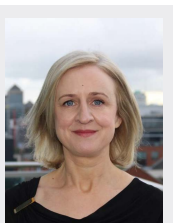
**Dr Colm O'Reardon** was appointed Secretary General of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in September 2023. He was previously Head of the Strategic Economic Development Division in the Department of Finance. In previous roles, he was Secretary to the Commission on Taxation and Welfare, and Head of Strategy and Policy at the Department of Health. Colm is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, Churchill College Cambridge and Wolfson College Oxford. He holds a D.Phil. in Economics from the University of Oxford, where he was also a Rhodes Scholar.



**Dr Helen Maher** is Vice President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Galway. Helen's experience has primarily been in the field of equality and social justice, working in a wide variety of contexts in higher education, civil society organisations and consultancy work. Helen holds a PhD on the Gendered nature of the Transition to Democracy in South Africa from Dublin City University.



**Dr Mairead O'Driscoll** is the CEO of the HRB, which is the lead agency in Ireland supporting health research, information, and evidence to inform policy and practice. As well as a portfolio of health research funding schemes, the HRB provides an evidence synthesis service to the Department of Health, manages four national health information systems, and hosts the National Office for Research Ethics Committees and the secretariat to the National Health Research Consent Declaration Committee.



**Prof. Selina McCoy** is a co-ordinator of Education Research at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin and is Adjunct Professor in Sociology, Trinity College Dublin. She has over 25 years' experience of research and evaluation projects in the fields of European education, inequality and inclusive education. Selina has published extensively on education issues, with over 150 publications to date. She has been the Irish expert at the Independent Experts on Education and Training at the European Commission for 10 years.

# Speakers



**Prof. Philip Nolan** is Director General of Science Foundation Ireland and CEO Designate of Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland. He is a former Director of the UCD Conway Institute for Biomolecular and Biomedical Research, and President of Maynooth University. Prof. Nolan was centrally involved in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a member of the National Public Health Emergency Team, chairing its disease modelling subgroup.



**Prof. Kieran Walsh** is currently the Interim Director of the Institute for Lifecourse and Society, Professor of Ageing & Public Policy and Director of the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology (ISCG) at the University of Galway. Kieran has extensive experience in ageing, public policy and interdisciplinary social gerontology research and has published extensively within the field of ageing.



**Prof. John Canavan** is the Director of the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at the School of Political Science and Sociology, University of Galway. His main research interests are Family Support, Evaluation theory, and connecting research, policy and practice. John's most recent book is *Understanding System Change in Child Protection* authored with colleagues from the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. He teaches at undergraduate, masters and Ph.D levels at the University of Galway.

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or

<https://forms.office.com/e/sBmqfYp0fq>

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## ILAS Constituent Centres

Centre for Disability Law and Public Policy (CDLP)

Community Engaged Research in Action (CORA)

Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI)

Health Economics and Policy Analysis Centre (HEPAC)

Irish Centre for Social Gerontology (ISCG)

Irish Centre for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Research (ICAN)

Speech and Language Therapy

UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre (UNCFRC)

PPI Ignite Network (PPI)