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**An Comhchoiste um Choimirce Shóisialach,
Forbairt Pobail agus Tuaithe agus na hOileáin**
Tuarascáil maidir leis an ngrinnscrúdú réamhreachtach
ar Scéim Ghinearálta an Bhille um Chlárú Sibhialta
(Clárú Leictreonach), 2023

Iúil 2023

**Joint Committee on Social Protection,
Community & Rural Development and the Islands**
Report on pre – legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme
of the Civil Registration (Electronic Registration) Bill 2023

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial data. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses and income. The text suggests that a systematic approach to record-keeping is essential for identifying trends and making informed decisions.

In the second section, the author addresses the challenges of budgeting in a dynamic market. It is noted that budgets are not static; they must be reviewed and adjusted regularly to reflect changes in market conditions and internal operations. The text provides several strategies for managing budget variances, such as identifying areas of overspending and implementing cost-saving measures.

The third part of the document focuses on the role of technology in modern accounting. It highlights how software solutions can streamline processes, reduce errors, and provide real-time insights into financial performance. The author discusses various types of accounting software and offers advice on how to choose the right one for a business's needs.

Finally, the document concludes with a section on financial reporting. It explains the importance of providing clear and concise reports to stakeholders, including management and investors. The text outlines the key components of a financial report and offers tips for presenting the information in a way that is easy to understand and actionable.

Committee Membership



Sen. Paddy Burke
Fine Gael



Jackie Cahill T.D.
Fianna Fáil



Joe Carey T.D.
Fine Gael



Joan Collins T.D.
Independents 4 Change



Paul Donnelly T.D.
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Sen. Róisín Garvey
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Sen. Paul Gavan
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Éamon Ó Cuív T.D.
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Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire
Sinn Féin



John Paul Phelan T.D.
Fine Gael



Sen. Mark Wall
Labour

Cathaoirleach's Foreword



The Civil Registration (Electronic Registration) Bill 2023 is an important piece of legislation which will provide for a wide range of issues relating to the registration of life events in the State – in particular births, stillbirths, and deaths and will amend the Civil Registration Act 2004. The Civil Registration Service operates under the aegis of the Department of Social Protection.

Under this Act, local registration services are provided by the Health Service Executive through the Civil Registration Services with offices located nationwide delivering registration services directly to the public. The need for an online registration option became widely evident during the Covid-19 pandemic when physical attendance at a HSE civil registration offices were restricted. The current arrangements whereby a person must attend in person before a registrar are largely unchanged since the 1800's. There is now an opportunity to reflect on the developments in technology and on opportunities for improved customer service.

This Bill provides for greater flexibility for persons seeking to register life events as they will no longer need to attend in person. In addition, the introduction of a requirement for hospitals and GPs to provide notification of deaths will result in improved and more timely collection of statistics on deaths. In this report, the Joint Committee have put forward 7 recommendations which span 4 key issues.

In its pre-legislative scrutiny of this Bill, the Committee held a meeting with officials from the Department of Social Protection and invited submissions from interested groups or individuals. I would like to thank the Officials for their valuable engagement with the Committee, the organisations who made written submissions, and Members for their hard work. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the Committee Secretariat in preparing this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denis Naughten". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Denis Naughten T.D.

Cathaoirleach to the Committee

July 2023

Table of Contents

Committee Membership	1
Cathaoirleach’s Foreword	2
Introduction and Witnesses	4
Recommendations	6
Key Issues	7
Key Issue 1 – Online registration of births and deaths	7
Key Issue 2 – Notification of deaths.....	8
Key Issue 3 – Stillbirth registration and access to stillbirth register Heads 5 and 6.....	10
Key Issue 4 – Cases involving a coroner inquest	12
Conclusion	13
APPENDIX 1 – Orders of Reference	14
APPENDIX 3 – Links to Submissions and Opening Statements	25
Submissions.....	25
Opening Statement.....	25

Introduction and Witnesses

The general scheme of the Civil Registration (Electronic Registration) Bill presents an opportunity to ease the administrative burden it places on the seriously ill and the bereaved. The new process being legislated for should ensure that every effort is made to eliminate multiple form filing which may be confusing or distressing.

The general scheme is based on a review of the Civil Registration Act 2004 undertaken by the Department of Social Protection following difficulties that arose for citizens in carrying out life event registrations due to the Covid-19 lockdown and the recent cyber-attack on the Department of Health. It also follows a recent public consultation process around the registration of deaths and recommendations from the Minister for Health around stillbirth criteria. This Bill provides greater flexibility for persons seeking to register life events as they need no longer attend in person.

The main proposals in the Bill seek to amend the Civil Registration Act 2004 as follows:

- The introduction of an online process for registering births and deaths in addition to the current arrangements where a person must attend at a local registration office.
- A requirement for medical practitioners to provide timely notification of a death to the State. This will enable more timely collection of statistics on deaths and support the online death registration process.
- A reduction to the timeframe in which a death must be registered.
- Allowing families to register a death in circumstances where a coroner has not yet completed enquiries into the cause of the death. Currently a family cannot register the death without a coroner's certificate. This measure will allow the registration to be completed and a death certificate to be produced. The record of death will be updated when the cause of death had been determined.
- Amending the criteria for the registration of stillbirths to reflect advances in clinical practices and in line with recommendations by the Department of Health. There will also be improvements in access to the Register of Stillbirths.

- Other technical amendments to the Civil Registration Act 2004 contained in the Bill. These seek to update definitions and correct previous drafting errors in the Act.

In this context the general scheme of the Civil Registration (Electronic Registration) Bill 2023 was referred to the Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands on June 1, 2023.

The Committee held one meeting on the general scheme. Meeting transcript and details available below:

Date	Witnesses
5 July	<p data-bbox="453 904 1158 943"><i>Officials from the Department of Social Protection</i></p> <ul data-bbox="328 972 1356 1122" style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Brendan O'Loughlin, Assistant Principal Officer, GRO Legislation/ Marriages• Mr. David Dillon, Principal Officer, GRO Ops & Policy• Mr. Liam Daly, Assistant Secretary General, Operation Control <p data-bbox="453 1144 935 1182">Opening statement available here</p>

Recommendations

1. The Committee recommends that, while moving the process of registration online is a much-needed advancement, the opportunity to register a death in-person must remain.
2. The Committee recommends that the review of the processes required for death registration are grief literate and appropriately acknowledge the bereaved person's loss and incorporate an opportunity to signpost people to bereavement supports.
3. The Committee recommends investment in physical spaces, provision of support and training to staff and officials, and documentation to ensure a compassionate approach to the registration of a death (in person but also online).
4. The Committee recommends that provisions be made for retrospective registration for stillborn babies who were not afforded registration in the past due to their size or gestational age.
5. The Committee recommends that the Department of Social Protection continually review the criteria for registration to reflect advances in clinical practices.
6. The Committee recommends that for parents whose babies are already recorded in the current Stillbirth Register may have their babies' names included in the 'new' open register.

7. The Committee recommends investment in a 'Tell Us Once' approach to the registration of details of a person's death.

Key Issues

Key Issue 1 – Online registration of births and deaths

Heads 3,4 and 10.

Heads 3,4 and 10 of the General Scheme aim to introduce provisions that will facilitate online registration of births and deaths. Parents or bereaved relatives will need an authenticated SAFE identity (in the form of a Public Services Card issued by the Department of Social Protection) and a verified MyGovID account.

The HSE cyber-attack in May 2021 severely impacted the delivery of civil registration services, with system outages lasting between 5 and 10 weeks in some regions. No births or deaths were registered during this period. The online system of registration will be hosted on the IS infrastructure of the Department of Social Protection.

The Civil Registration (Electronic Registration) Bill is a key opportunity to ease the administrative burden it places on the seriously ill and the bereave. The new process being legislated for should ensure that every effort is made to eliminate multiple form filling which may be confusing or distressing. In a submission received by the Committee¹ it was recommended that the revisions of registering a death being introduced by this Bill are grief literate. Grief literacy is about recognising that everyone who is grieving can benefit from community-based acknowledgment and validation of their grief. The physical process of registering a death is a key opportunity to acknowledge the significance of a person's grief. The registration staff are in the position to offer condolence and human compassion to bereaved people and this should be encouraged and supported.² While the ability to avail of online

¹ Irish Hospice Foundation submission page 1 – available [here](#)

² Irish Hospice Foundation submission page 1 – available [here](#)

registration of a death may be of benefit to a cohort of people, the opportunity to register a death in-person must remain.

The Committee feels that these online registration process should also provide information on bereavement support and signpost to services. Online registration must have easy access to the technical support to the user. It is highly important that the registration process is seamless and smooth and in no way adds to a person's distress or to the burden of administration required after a death.

Recommendations

1. The Committee recommends that, while moving the process of registration online is a much need advance, the opportunity to register a death in-person must remain.
2. The Committee recommends that the review of the processes required for death registration are grief literate and appropriately acknowledge the bereaved person's loss and incorporate an opportunity to signpost people to bereavement supports.
3. The Committee recommends investment in physical spaces, provision of support and training to staff and officials, and documentation to ensure a compassionate approach to the registration of a death (in person but also online).

Key Issue 2 – Notification of deaths

Heads 9 and 11

The aim of the proposed amendments is to ensure that deaths are registered in a timely and streamlined manner. Existing practices involve a paper-based process while the timeline for registering a death is 3 months.

Registration of deaths are dependent on relatives of the deceased giving a registrar a completed Death Notification Form, which can lead to delays in registration. The proposed amendments look to streamline and modernise existing practices by introducing a new three-stage process of:

- i. Notification of the death direct to the GRO by a medical practitioner or institution where the death occurred no later than 2 days from the date of death;
- ii. Certification of the cause of death by a medical practitioner no later than 3 days from the date of death;
- iii. Registration of the death by a relative no later than 28 days from the date of death.

Notification of a death is an essential step in enabling online registration of deaths as the registration details provided by the next-of-kin in an online application must be crossed checked with the death notification received by GRO. Currently, only next-of-kin receive a death notification form from a GP or hospital which they then present to a registrar when seeking to register a death.

This Bill proposes the time afforded to the relatives of a deceased person to register a death be reduced from three months to 28 days from the date of death. Most other countries allow a much shorter period for the registration of deaths (typically 5 days).

It is essential that every effort is made to ensure that information such as bills are not sent to a deceased person as this can be understandably distressing for the bereaved. The Committee support the introduction of and investment in a 'Tell Us Once' service, similar to the service in the UK. This service would mean that a death can be reported by telephone or on-line and this information is communicated to most government organisations.³ The introduction of online registration represents an opportunity to provide for a joined-up online system.

While the introduction of an on-line registration system will be a very useful choice for some people and will be engaged in, this Bill is an ideal time to highlight the need for investment in appropriate spaces for people who are registering deaths to ensure

³ Irish Hospice Foundation submission page 2 – available [here](#)

the environment is as sensitive as possible. All allocated spaces for the bereaved should be specifically designed to ensure dignity and comfort. Face-to-face registration offers the opportunity for information on bereavement support to be provided verbally by registration staff, or for hard copies of bereavement information resources to be made available to people. Staff and officials providing registration services in physical spaces, through online chats and over the phone should be supported with training for interacting with people who are grieving. Staff should receive regular training in communication and specific information on the needs of the bereaved. Staff may also need similar supports to enable them to continue ongoing interactions with people who have been bereaved.

Recommendations

4. The Committee recommends investment in a 'Tell Us Once' approach to the registration of details of a person's death.

Key Issue 3 – Stillbirth registration and access to stillbirth register Heads 5 and 6

Currently, a stillborn child means a child who, at birth, weighs not less than 500 grammes or has a gestational age of not less than 24 weeks. It is proposed to amend these limits to 400 grammes and 23 weeks to reflect improvements in neonatal survival rates, in line with the latest clinical guidance from the Department of Health and the HSE. The general scheme provides that in cases of multiple pregnancies, if any child reaches the criteria for stillbirth, then where the other child/children also show no signs of life they should also be recorded as a stillbirth, provided they each weigh 200 grammes or more.

Access to the stillbirth register will also be expanded. Currently, only the parents of a child recorded in the register or the staff of GRO can search the register. The proposed amendments contained in Head 6 will enable a broader range of staff in the civil registration service to search the Stillbirth Register and to provide certificates or copies of the records to parents or relatives of the child recorded in the register.

The Committee welcomes the proposed changes in criteria for the registration of stillbirths with a reduction of the current weight and gestational age, as well as the changes to include multiple pregnancies. These changes mean that many babies will now be given the acknowledgement, recognition, and validation they deserve.

With the changes of the criteria, it is of utmost importance that parents who were unable to register their babies in the past, as they didn't meet the criteria, will now be given the opportunity to do so. This Committee calls for this criterion to be continually reviewed to reflect the advances in clinical practices, as well as calling for retrospective registration for all babies who did not meet the previous criteria for stillbirth registration.

In a submission received by the Committee⁴ regarding the advancements in offering access to the Register of Stillbirths to "Other Relatives", it was stated that they do not feel that these advancements are in any way sufficient. From their vast experience and their nationwide interactions with communities of bereaved parents, they can say that parents do not want their babies to be kept as a 'family secret', reporting that the lack of acknowledge of their child magnifies and intensifies their grief. What families want is recognition, and not privacy. The Committee feel that maintaining the private status of the register as 'a default' sets a precedence that keeping the existence of stillborn babies private is the norm and should be the baseline. While there may be families who may want to keep their baby's records private, the Committee suggests that the register be made public with an opt-out option.⁵

Recommendations

5. The Committee recommends that provisions be made for retrospective registration for stillborn babies who were not afforded registration in the past due to their size or gestational age.

⁴ Féileacáin submission page 5 – available [here](#)

⁵ Féileacáin submission page 5 – available [here](#)

6. The Committee recommends that the Department of Social Protection continually review the criteria for registration to reflect advances in clinical practices.

7. The Committee recommends that for parents whose babies are already recorded in the current Stillbirth Register may have their babies' names included in the 'new' open register.

Key Issue 4 – Cases involving a coroner inquest

Heads 7 and 8

The changes proposed in the General Scheme will enable deaths that are referred to a Coroner to be registered before the coroner has determined the cause of death. This will help speed up the death registration process. Importantly, it will also enable families of the deceased to register the death and receive a death certificate. Once the cause of death is determined, it will be included in an amended death certificate.

In a submission received by the Committee⁶ it was stated that the plight of bereaved families who have endured significant delays in receiving a coroner's inquest date, cause of death and therefore a death certificate demands resolution. The proposed change allowing registration prior to the conclusion of the inquest is an important contribution to the bereavement care of these families. It is vital that the online system for registering these often traumatic and sudden deaths is technologically easy to use, sensitive to language used and that it is supplemented with signposting to appropriate bereavement care supports.⁷

⁶ Irish Hospice Foundation submission page 3 – available [here](#)

⁷ Irish Hospice Foundation submission page 3 – available [here](#)

Conclusion

This general scheme of the Civil Registration (Electronic Registration) Bill 2023 is an important piece of legislation which is crucial to enable families to register births and deaths online for the first time, revise the criteria for the registration of stillbirths, improve access to the stillbirth register and to register a death where a coroner's inquest has not been concluded. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to scrutinise the general scheme and put forward their recommendations to the Department of Social Protection. The Committee endorses this piece of legislation and hopes that the Minister for Social Protection reports back to the Committee on the implementation of the recommendations contained within this report.

APPENDIX 1 – Orders of Reference

Scope and context of activities of Select Committees (DSO 94 and SSO 70)

DSO 94

- 1) The Dáil may appoint a Select Committee to consider and, if so permitted, to take evidence upon any Bill, Estimate or matter, and to report its opinion for the information and assistance of the Dáil. Such motion shall specifically state the orders of reference of the Committee, define the powers devolved upon it, fix the number of members to serve on it, state the quorum, and may appoint a date upon which the Committee shall report back to the Dáil.

- 2) It shall be an instruction to each Select Committee that –
 - a) It may only consider such matters, engage in such activities, exercise such powers, and discharge such functions as are specifically authorised under its orders of reference and under Standing Orders;
 - b) Such matters, activities, powers, and functions shall be relevant to, and shall arise only in the context of, the preparation of a report to the Dáil;
 - c) It shall not consider any matter which is being considered, or of which notice has been given of a proposal to consider, by the Joint Committee on Public Petitions in the exercise of its functions under Standing Order 125(1); and
 - d) It shall refrain from inquiring into in public session or publishing confidential information regarding any matter if so requested, for stated reasons given in writing, by –
 - i. A member of the Government or a Minister of State, or
 - ii. The principal office – holder of a state body within the responsibility of a Government Department or
 - iii. The principal officer – holder of a non – State body which is partly funded by the State,

Provided that the Committee may appeal any such request made to the Ceann Comhairle, whose decision shall be final.

- 3) It shall be an instruction to all Select Committees to which Bills are referred that they shall ensure that not more than two Select Committees shall meet to consider a Bill on any given day, unless the Dáil after due notice to the Business Committee by a Chairman of one of the Select Committees concerned, waives this instruction.

SSO 70

- 1) The Seanad may appoint a Select Committee to consider any Bill or matter and to report its opinion for the information and assistance of the Seanad and, in the case of a Bill, whether or not it has amended the Bill. Such motion shall specifically state the orders of reference of the Committee, define the powers devolved upon it, fix the number of members to serve on it, state the quorum thereof, and may appoint a date upon which the Committee shall report back to the Seanad.
- 2) It shall be an instruction to each Select Committee that –
 - a) It may only consider such matters, engage in such activities, exercise such powers, and discharge such functions as are specifically authorised under its orders of reference and under Standing Orders;
 - b) Such matters, activities, powers, and functions shall be relevant to, and shall arise only in the context of, the preparation of a report to the Seanad;
 - c) It shall not consider any matter which is being considered, or of which notice has been given of a proposal to consider, by the Joint Committee on Public Petitions in the exercise of its functions under Standing Order 108 (1); and

- d) It shall refrain from inquiring into in public session or publishing confidential information regarding any matter if so requested, for stated reasons given in writing, by –
- i. A member of the Government or a Minister of State, or
 - ii. The principal officeholder of a State body within the responsibility of a Government Department, or
 - iii. The principal officeholder of a non-State body which is partly funded by the State,

Provided that the Committee may appeal any such request made to the Cathaoirleach, whose decision shall be final.

Functions of Departmental Select Committees (DSO 95 and SSO 71)

DSO 95

- 1) The Dáil may appoint a Departmental Select Committee to consider and, unless otherwise provided for in these Standing Orders or by order, to report to the Dáil on any matter relating to—
 - a) legislation, policy, governance, expenditure, and administration of—
 - i. a Government Department, and
 - ii. State bodies within the responsibility of such Department, and
 - b) That performance of a non – State body in relation to an agreement for the provision of services that it has entered into with any such Government Department or State body.

- 2) A Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order shall also consider such other matters which –
 - a) Stand referred to the Committee by virtue of these Standing Orders or statute law, or
 - b) Shall be referred to the Committee by order of the Dáil.

- 3) The principal purpose of Committee consideration of matters of policy, governance, expenditure, and administration under paragraph (1) shall be –
 - a) For the accountability of the relevant Minister or Minister of State, and
 - b) To assess the performance of the relevant Government Department or of a State body within the responsibility of the relevant Department, in delivering public services while achieving intended outcomes, including value for money.

- 4) A Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order shall not consider any matter relating to accounts audited by, or reports of, the Comptroller and Auditor General unless the Committee of Public Accounts –
 - a) Consents to such consideration, or
 - b) Has reported on such accounts or reports.

- 5) A Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order may be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Éireann to be and act as a Joint Committee for the purposes of paragraph (1) and such other purposes as may be specified in these Standing Orders or by order of the Dáil: provided that the Joint Committee shall not consider –
 - a) The Committee Stage of a Bill,
 - b) Estimates for Public Services, or
 - c) A proposal contained in a motion for the approval of an international agreement involving a charge upon public funds referred to the Committee by order of the Dáil.

- 6) Any report that the Joint Committee proposes to make shall, on adoption by the Joint Committee, be made to both Houses of the Oireachtas.

- 7) The Chairman of the Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order shall also be Chairman of the Joint Committee.

8) Where a Select Committee proposes to consider –

- a) EU draft legislative acts standing referred to the Select Committee under Standing Order 133, including the compliance of such acts with the principle of subsidiarity,
- b) Other proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues, including programmes, and guidelines prepared by the European Commission as a basis of possible legislative action,
- c) Non-legislative documents published by any EU institution in relation to EU policy matters, or
- d) Matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the relevant Council (of Ministers) of the European Union and the outcome of such meetings,

The following may be notified accordingly and shall have the right to attend and take part in such consideration without having a right to move motions or amendments or the right to vote:

- i. Members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland,
- ii. Members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and
- iii. At the invitation of the Committee, other members of the European Parliament.

9) A Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order may, in respect of any Ombudsman charged with oversight of public services within the policy remit of the relevant Department consider –

- a) Such motions relating to the appointment of an Ombudsman as may be referred to the Committee, and
- b) Such Ombudsman reports laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas as the Committee may select: Provided that the provisions of Standing Order 130 apply where the Select Committee has not

considered the Ombudsman report, or a portion or portions thereof, within two months (excluding Christmas, Easter, or summer recess periods) of the report being laid before either of both Houses of the Oireachtas.

SSO 71

- 1) The Seanad may appoint a Departmental Select Committee to consider and, unless otherwise provided for in these Standing Orders or by order, to report to the Seanad on any matter relating to –
 - a) Legislation, policy, governance, expenditure, and administration of –
 - i. A Government Department, and
 - ii. State bodies within the responsibility of such Department, and
 - b) The performance of a non – State body in relation to an agreement for the provision of services that it has entered into with any such Government Department or State body.

- 2) A select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order shall also consider such other matters which –
 - a) Stand referred to the Committee by virtue of these Standing Orders or statute law, or
 - b) Shall be referred to the Committee by order of the Seanad.

- 3) The principal purpose of Committee consideration of matters of policy, governance expenditure and administration under paragraph (1) shall be –
 - a) For the accountability of the relevant Minister or Minister of State, and
 - b) To assess the performance of the relevant Department, in delivering public services while achieving intended outcomes, including value for money.

- 4) A Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order shall not consider any matter relating to accounts audited by, or reports of, the Comptroller and Auditor General unless the Committee of Public Accounts –
 - a) Consents to such consideration, or
 - b) Has reported on such accounts or reports

- 5) A Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order may be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Dáil Éireann to be and act as a Joint Committee for the purposes of paragraph (1) and such other purposes as may be specified in these Standing Orders or by order of the Seanad: provided that the Joint Committee shall not consider –
 - a) The Committee Stage of a Bill,
 - b) Estimate for Public Services, or
 - c) A proposal contained in a motion for the approval of an international agreement involving a charge upon public funds referred to the Committee by order of the Dáil.

- 6) Any report that the Joint Committee proposes to make shall, on adoption by the Joint Committee, be made to both Houses of the Oireachtas.

- 7) The Chairman of a Joint Committee pursuant to this Standing Order shall be a member of Dáil Éireann.

- 8) Where a Select Committee proposes to consider –
 - a) EU draft legislative acts standing referred to the Select Committee under Standing Order 116, including the compliance of such acts with the principle of subsidiarity,
 - b) Other proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues, including programmes and guidelines prepared by the European Commission as a basis of possible legislative action,

- c) Non-legislative documents published by any EU institution in relation to EU policy matters, or
- d) Matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the relevant EC Council (of Ministers) of the European Union and the outcome of such meetings,

The following may be notified accordingly and shall have the right to attend and take part in such consideration without having a right to move motions or amendments or the right to vote:

- i. Members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland,
 - ii. Members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and
 - iii. At the invitation of the Committee, other members of the European Parliament.
- 9) A Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order may, in respect of any Ombudsman charged with oversight of public services within the policy remit of the relevant Department consider –
- a) Such motions relating to the appointment of an Ombudsman as may be referred to the Committee, and
 - b) Such Ombudsman reported laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas as the Committee may select: Provided that the provisions of Standing Order 113 apply where the Select Committee has not considered the Ombudsman report, or a portion or portions thereof, within two months (excluding Christmas, Easter, or summer recess periods) of the report being laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas.

Powers of Select Committees (DSO 96 and SSO 72)

Unless the Dáil shall otherwise order, a Committee appointed pursuant to these Standing Orders shall have the following powers:

- 1) Power to invite and receive oral and written evidence and to print and publish from time to time –
 - a) Minutes of such evidence as was heard in public, and
 - b) Such evidence in writing as the Committee thinks fit;
- 2) Power to appoint sub-Committees and to refer to such sub-Committees any matter comprehended by its orders of reference and to delegate any of its powers to such sub-Committees, including power to report directly to the Dáil/Seanad;
- 3) Power to draft recommendations for legislative change and for new legislation;
- 4) In relation to any statutory instrument, including those laid or laid in draft before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas, power to –
 - a) Require any Government Department or other instrument-making authority concerned to –
 - i. Submit a memorandum to the Select Committee explaining the statutory instrument, or
 - ii. Attend a meeting of the Select Committee to explain any such statutory instrument: Provided that the authority concerned may decline to attend for reasons given in writing to the Select Committee, which may report thereon to the Dáil/Seanad, and
 - b) Recommend, where it considers that such action is warranted, that the instrument should be annulled or amended;
- 5) Power to require that a member of the Government or Minister of State shall attend before the Select Committee to discuss –
 - a) Policy, or

- b) Proposed primary or secondary legislation (prior to such legislation being published),

For which he or she is officially responsible: Provided that a member of the Government or Minister of State may decline to attend for stated reasons given in writing to the Select Committee, which may report thereon to the Dáil: and provided further that a member of the Government or Minister of State may request to attend a meeting of the Select Committee to enable him or her to discuss such policy or proposed legislation;

- 6) Power to require that a member of the Government or Minister of State shall attend before the Select Committee and provide, in private session if so requested by the attendee, oral briefings in advance of meetings of the relevant EC Council (of Ministers) of the European Union to enable the Select Committee to make known its views: Provided that the Committee may also require such attendance following such meetings;
- 7) Power to require that the Chairperson designate of a body or agency under the aegis of a Department shall, prior to his or her appointment, attend before the Select Committee to discuss his or her strategic priorities for the role;
- 8) Power to require that a member of the Government or Minister of State who is officially responsible for the implementation of an Act shall attend before a Select Committee in relation to the consideration of a report under DSO 197/SSO 168;
- 9) Subject to any constraints otherwise prescribed by law, power, to require that principal officeholders of a –
 - a) State body within the responsibility of a Government Department or
 - b) Non-State body, which is partly funded by the State,

Shall attend meetings of the Select Committee, as appropriate, to discuss issues for which they are officially responsible: Provided that such an

officeholder may decline to attend for stated reasons given in writing to the Select Committee, which may report thereon to the Dáil/Seanad; and

10) Power to –

- a) Engage the services of persons with specialist or technical knowledge, to assist it or any of its sub-Committees in considering particular matters; and
- b) Undertake travel;

Provided that the powers under this paragraph are subject to such recommendations as may be made by the Working Group of Committee Chairmen under DSO 120 (4)(a)/SSO 107 (4)(a)

APPENDIX 3 – Links to Submissions and Opening Statements

Submissions

Name of organisation		
1	Irish Hospice Foundation	Available here
2	Féileacáin	Available here

Opening Statement

Name of organisation		
1	Liam Daly, Assistant Secretary General, Department of Social Protection	Available here

Tithe an Oireachtais

Teach Laighean

Sráid Chill Dara

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