

PUBLIC SECTOR



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

FALLON & BYRNE

FRIDAY, 6TH MARCH 2026

9:00am – 1:30pm

BOOK NOW!

SET OUT YOUR STALL - THE POWER OF VISIBILITY FOR WOMEN LEADING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

IN TODAY'S WORKING LANDSCAPE, VISIBILITY ISN'T ABOUT SELF-PROMOTION... IT'S ABOUT SELF-BELIEF.

Join PAI for an engaging Women's Network session exploring how women can confidently "set out their stall", showcasing their skills, leadership potential, and authentic value in a way that feels natural and empowering.

What makes our event different?

PAI's Women in Leadership is distinct in that it is purpose-built for the public sector professional, creating a national platform that unifies a widely dispersed sector for strategic, joined-up thinking, cross-organisational connection and collective progress beyond individual internal networks.

At this year's event we look forward to welcoming our 2026 panel of expert speakers, industry leaders and champions of change to explore three pillars of visibility that help women stand out and step up:

Corporate Responsibility – How organisations can be intentional in supporting women's career development, especially in flexible environments.

Personal Branding – Building your presence, saying "yes" to opportunities, and confidently sharing your voice -even when you don't have all the answers.

Allyship & Sponsorship – The vital role of advocates and champions who promote your achievements and open doors when you're not in the room.

This is your opportunity to reflect, connect, and gain practical insights on how to be seen, be heard, and be ready for what's next.



96%

of Past Attendees

rated our event as excellent, highlighting its relevant content!



Testimonials...

Unexpectedly welcoming in every way. Thought provoking showcase of women leading women in exceptionally positive, instructive and progressive way to the benefit of everyone, men, women Wonderfully supported by an excellent venue team.

A must attend for women in leadership

a wide variety of topics and insights

Very interesting and engaging

A collegiate and inspirational leadership conference for women

Enlightening, positive, engaging.

Keynote Speaker

Sonya Lennon

Thought Leader & Social Entrepreneur

Sonya is a multi-award-winning entrepreneur and social entrepreneur who founded Work Equal and LIFT Ireland. Sonya is also a high-profile advocate for equitable workplaces and women's empowerment.

She lobbies at the European level for policy change and was recently called on as an expert witness to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on gender equity.



Special Guest Speaker

Lee Chambers

business psychologist, male allyship specialist and speaker.

Lee is a business psychologist, male allyship specialist and speaker. He is the founder of Male Allies UK and Essentialise Workplace Wellbeing. Chambers was inducted as a Kavli Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences in 2023.

He has been interviewed by Vogue, The Guardian and Newsweek, and was recognised as a Gender Equality Changemaker by UN Women. He is one of the UK's leading voices on male allyship and gender equity.



**WHY MEN SHOULD BE GENDER
EQUALITY ALLIES | LEE CHAMBERS |
TEDXSHOREDITCH**

Agenda

09.00	Welcome Address Introduction to PAI's 2026 Women in Leadership Event Emma McBride, Director, Public Affairs Ireland	
09.10	Setting the Scene: Visibility, Voice and the Room We're In Ashley Hughes	
09.40	The Visibility Gap: Perception, Presence and Power in Action - <i>Taking a Strategic Approach to Influence, Ambition and Collective Impact</i> Sonya Lennon	
10.25	Coffee Networking Break	
11.00	How Women Lead - <i>Findings from the 2025 Women Who Lead, National Women's Council Report</i> • Policy to Impact and Why Representation Matters • Power of the 'Go-Betweeners': Visibility & Influence Within the System • The System Itself, State Gendered Mechanisms Prof. Pauline Cullen, MU	
11.30	Women Representing - <i>Leadership, Representation & Organisational Mechanisms in the Public Sector.</i> • Equality budgeting, • Evidenced female friendly policy and • Championing gender pay equity Francesca Kay, Assistant Director General, CSO Anna Visser, Dept of An Taoiseach Dr Jennifer Okeke, Chairperson, NWCI	  
12.00	Shaping Impact - <i>The Role of Women's Networks in Driving Gender Equity</i> Ashley Hughes	
12.20	Male Allyship in Action: Driving Gender Equity in the Workplace - how men can actively support gender equity, inclusive leadership, and sponsorship Lee Chambers, Business psychologist, male allyship specialist and speaker	
12.55	Working Together for Impact: Lessons from Women's Networks, Allyship, and Sponsorship - Driving meaningful, measurable gender equity outcomes across organisations. Maria Eugenia Souza, President, Professional Women's Network Brian Sheehan, Women to Election Robert Baker, Potentia Talent Consulting	  

Our Event MC



**ASHLEY
HUGHES**

Ashley Hughes

Learning and Development Professional, Lecturer in Management & Leadership, Change Management

Ashley Hughes is a training and development specialist with over twenty five years' experience working in both academic education and management development arenas. Her work reflects her ongoing interest and enthusiasm for supporting organisational participants in their quest for excellence in managing people. Working across public and private sectors, Ashley has designed and delivered bespoke management development training for a range of organisations operating in Ireland and across Europe.

Our Panel of Speakers



**PROF PAULINE
CULLEN**

Prof Pauline Cullen

Maynooth University

Pauline Cullen is Professor in Sociology in the Department of Sociology, Maynooth University, National University of Ireland. Her work examines civil society and feminist analysis of politics and policy including inequalities in representation and care. She is a gender expert for the Commission of the European Union, and the European Institute for Gender Equality, the Irish Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality and a member of the research advisory group of the Electoral Commission of Ireland.



**DR JENNIFER
OKEKE**

Dr Jennifer Okeke

Chairperson, NWC

Dr. Jennifer Okeke is the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator with the Immigrant Council of Ireland and Chairperson of the National Women Council of Ireland (NWC). She is a community activist and former chairperson of a migrant women's organisation based in Ireland. Jennifer is a board member of the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW) and has extensive knowledge and expertise on issues of GBV, anti-trafficking, human rights and migration (refugees, asylum seekers, direct provision). She has a proven history of supporting local migrant communities in the promotion of integration.

Jennifer was recently awarded a PhD from Dublin City University, and her research was on the experience of African migrant women trafficked into/through Ireland for sexual exploitation. She holds a Master's in International Relations, from the School of Law and Government, DCU and a BSc from University College Birmingham



**FRANCESCA
KAY**

Francesca Kay

Assistant Director General, CSO

Francesca Kay joined the Central Statistics Office in December 2020 and is the Chief Information Officer (CIO). She is responsible for a broad remit covering technology, quality, methodology, administrative data as well as population and vital statistics. The overall goal of her area is to provide an integrated set of services to exploit new and varied data sources, collected and shared in a variety of ways, whilst modernising the technology used at the CSO. Frankie is the Management Board champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, supporting a number of initiatives to make the CSO a more inclusive organisation both for its employees but also to ensure our statistics and data reflect everyone in society.

Frankie moved to Ireland after an extensive career leading technology and transformation in the private sector and most recently in a number of senior leadership roles at the UK's Office for National Statistics. These included heading both the Economic Statistics and Census Data Collection Transformation Programmes, before being appointed as the Interim Director General for Data Capability with overall responsibility for Technology, Methodology and Data Research and Data Science.

Our Panel of Speakers



Anna Visser

Department of the Taoiseach

Anna spent her career working on policy and research to make a positive impact. Right now, she is leading the Child Poverty and Well-Being Programme Office in the Department of the Taoiseach, which she joined in April 2023. Before this, Anna headed up Research and Evaluation in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth, where she managed projects like the Growing Up in Ireland study. Before moving into the civil service in 2019, Anna spent over 15 years in the non-profit world, working both in Ireland and Brussels. She was the Director of The Advocacy Initiative and led the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland. Beyond work, Anna has been involved with several non-profit boards and is currently volunteering at a local community center. She also has a PhD from University College Dublin, where she focused on social policy.



Maria Eugênia Souza

President, CEO, Professional Women's Network

Maria Eugênia Souza is an award-winning Head of Human Experiences & Innovation at the Future of Work Institute, part of the Cpl Group and President of PWN - Professional Women's Network Dublin. Maria's career is driven by a passion for ensuring that employer brands reflect a company's true essence. Using her HR expertise and psychological insight, she crafts authentic employee experiences that align with the company's identity. As she puts it, 'If a company promotes itself as a delicious cupcake, it needs to make sure that when new employees take a bite, they don't end up with a dry muffin!'



Robert Baker

CEO, Potentia Talent Consulting Limited

Robert is a passionate advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). After a 40 year career in global HR consulting, he now runs his own business, Potentia Talent Consulting, advising organisations on attracting, retaining and developing the best talent, building diverse teams and creating inclusive cultures. He specialises in training and coaching male executives to become allies in gender equity and wider diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Robert is Vice-Chair of European Women on Boards and is their DEI strategist. He is also a Trustee of One Loud Voice for Women and a visiting lecturer on Male Allyship at the University of Amsterdam Academy. Robert was appointed to be a Trustee of UN Women UK in September 2023.



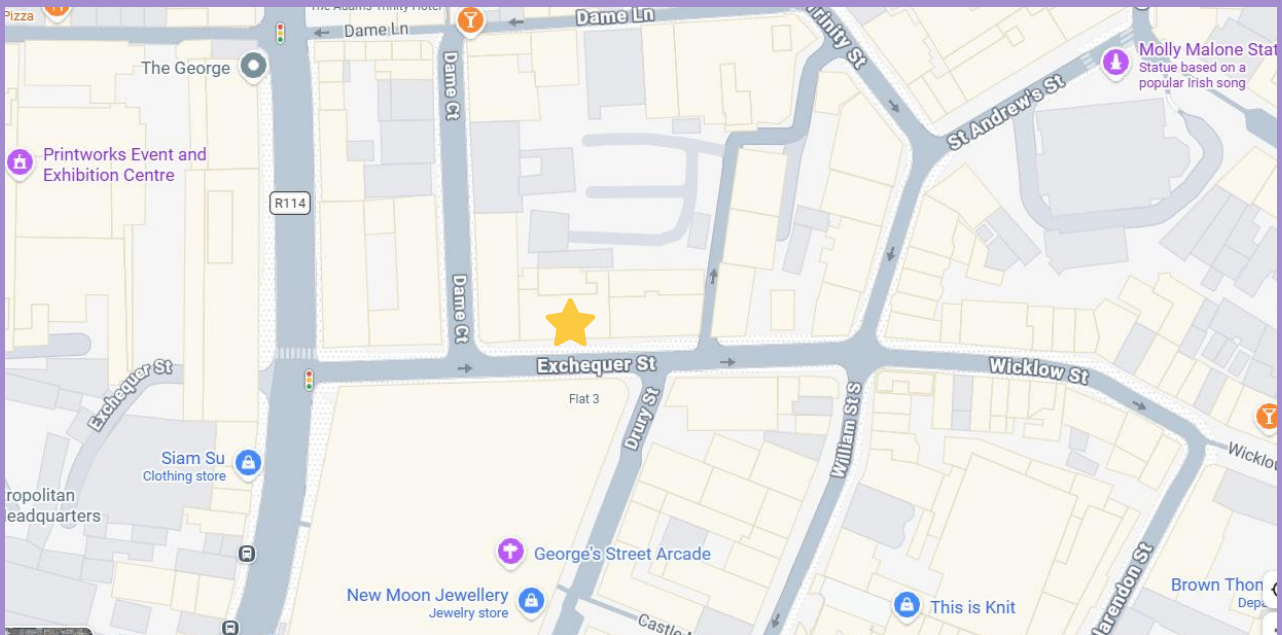
Brian Sheehan

CEO, Women to Election

Brian has a wide background in social justice advocacy, campaigning and politics. He was the co-director of the Yes campaign in the 2015 same-sex marriage referendum – the first in the world to succeed – and for a decade was the executive director of GLEN, one of the leading Irish LGBTI equality and advocacy organisations. He is a former co-chair of ILGA-Europe, the Brussels-based advocacy organisation of 700 LGBTI+ member bodies in Europe and Central Asia. More recently, Brian was the general secretary of a political party in Ireland which has a strong track record in promoting women's participation in politics.

Venue – Fallon & Byrne

11 – 17 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2



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