

Law & Regulation News

Bill to strengthen powers of Charities Regulator

The Charities (Amendment) Bill 2022 proposes to update existing charity law to improve the ability of the Charities Regulator to conduct its statutory functions and ensure greater public trust and confidence in the sector.

As well as providing for greater transparency in charity finances, it will include new financial thresholds to ensure more appropriate reporting requirements reflective of a charity's size; clarification on the general duties of trustees; enhancements to the regulator's powers in relation to the protection of charitable organisations; and the establishment of "the advancement of human rights" as a recognised charitable purpose.

Heather Humphreys, the minister for rural and community development, said: "Charities throughout the country do fantastic work every day but unfortunately there have been some high profile controversies in the sector in recent years.

"People want to know when they donate to charity that their money is going where it is supposed to and that it is being managed properly and responsibly.

"This bill strengthens the powers of the Charities Regulator to carry out its functions effectively so that the sector is well regulated and maintains full public trust and confidence.

"The bill will now go for pre-legislative scrutiny and both minister O'Brien and I look forward to working closely with our Oireachtas colleagues, hearing their views and working to progress this important legislation as soon as possible."

Joe O'Brien, minister of state with responsibility for community development and charities, added: "Proper regulation and guidance to the charities sector, operated independently through the Charities Regulator, protects the sector and gives our citizens the confidence needed to continue to give generously to many worthy charitable causes.

"It is important that we strike the right balance between necessary regulation and proportionate governance, ensuring that a reasonable and fair approach is at its core. I am particularly pleased that this bill makes provision for 'the advancement of human rights' as a recognised charitable purpose – this provision will have a significant positive impact on charities working on human rights' issues."

Source: www.irishlegal.com

Parents to gain right to request flexible working

The Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill, now being drafted by the Office of the Attorney General, will transpose elements of the EU Work Life Balance Directives into Irish law.

The bill includes provisions introducing five days' leave per year for serious medical care and extending the current entitlement to breastfeeding/lactation breaks under the Maternity Protection Acts from six months to two years.

Children's minister Roderic O'Gorman said: "I want to ensure that parents and carers can be supported to balance their working and family lives. Through the Work Life Balance Bill, they can have peace of mind that work will allow time for the responsibilities that caring brings.

"The proposals I have brought to government today will complement family leave and other entitlements already in place and will provide additional flexibility."

Source: www.irishlegal.com

EU plans to hold Big Tech companies accountable for harmful content gather pace

The Digital Services Act (DSA), proposed by the European Commission in December 2020, aims to "rebalance the rights and responsibilities of users, online intermediaries, including online platforms as well as very large online platforms, and public authorities".

It contains EU-wide due diligence obligations that will apply to all digital services that connect consumers to goods, services, or content, including new procedures for faster removal of illegal content as well as comprehensive protection for users' fundamental rights online.

Measures to counter illegal goods, services or content online include a mechanism for users to easily flag such content and for platforms to co-operate with so-called "trusted flaggers", and new obligations on the traceability of business users in online marketplaces.

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Source: www.irishlegal.com