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GLEN Welcomes Publication of Revised Details of Children and Family Relationships Bill

The Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald TD today published the revised General Scheme for the Children and Family Relationships Bill which was approved by the Government this week.

“We welcome the publication of the revised General Scheme of the Bill. The commitment of the Government and of Minister Fitzgerald to update parenting legislation to recognise the different family forms in Ireland is of critical importance to a wide range of families, including lesbian and gay headed families” said Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair.

The General Scheme has been updated following the public hearings on it conducted by the Oireachtas Justice Committee earlier this year.

Ireland now has many different types of families into which children are born and raised, including step-parent families, families headed by cohabiting couples, lesbian and gay headed families and families headed by members of the extended family. **“The Bill sets out to ensure that children across all family forms enjoy the same duties of care from those parenting them and can form a legal relationship with those parents”** said Rose.

“We particularly welcome that the **key principle of the best interests of the child** will underpin all the proposed reforms. Extending the range of people who can take on the duties and responsibilities of care to a child through guardianship can ensure that the best interests of a child are fulfilled” said GLEN’s Kieran Rose.

The revised Heads of Bill proposes a range of changes in the areas of guardianship, custody and access, in maintenance provisions, in adoption, in the area of parenting for children born through assisted human reproduction and updates civil partnership legislation to take account of children being parented by civil partners. **“GLEN will study these proposals carefully. We look forward to engaging with the Government and members of the Oireachtas on the Bill”** concluded Rose.

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Editors Note:

The General Scheme of the Bill is available at the Department of Justice website
<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB14000256>