Memorandum of Understanding

between the

Central Statistics Office

and the

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

in relation to

Growing Up in Ireland

Table of Contents

List of abbreviations 3
Scope and Purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding 3
Establishment of the Parties 4
The Roles of the Parties 5
GUI: Context and background 6
Bilateral Steering Group 8
Legal and Regulatory Framework 8
Responsibilities of each Party 9
Research access to micro data & RMF Policy 13
Funding arrangements 13
Duration and Review of the Memorandum of Understanding 14
Appendix 1: GUI Survey and GUI Study activities 15
Appendix 2: Schedule of data collection as per 2020 Design Brief 15
Appendix 3: Agreed workplan and deliverables 2023-2025 16

This Memorandum of Understanding is made on the 9th day of March 2023

Between

The Central Statistics Office, Skehard Road, Cork, T12 X00E. (the CSO)

and

the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Miesian Plaza, Dublin 2, D02 XWI4 (the DCEDIY)

List of abbreviations

ADC	Administrative Data Centre (at the CSO)
AMF	Anonymised Microdata File
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GSBPM	Generic Statistical Business Process Model
GUI	Growing up in Ireland
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
RMF	Researcher Microdata File
SG	Bilateral Steering Group
TOR	Terms of Reference

Scope and Purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding

1. Growing Up in Ireland (GUI), the national longitudinal study of children, was established in 2006. GUI represents a very significant investment by the State in high quality research and data on the lives of children, young people and their families. Since its establishment, GUI has operated under the Statistics Act, 1993 through a formal agreement between the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

2. Following a Government decision in 2019 (S180/20/10/0528) to develop plans for the continuation of GUI and provide a stable and sustainable future for the study, a new partnership approach to the implementation of GUI has been developed. Under this new model the CSO are conducting the GUI survey as part of their household survey programme, and DCEDIY continues to be the study sponsor and to undertake key aspects of the GUI study including the identification of research needs, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, a research programme and knowledge transfer activities.
3. The purpose of this MoU is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of, as well as the areas of cooperation between, CSO and DCEDIY with regard to GUI. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of each party, describes the legal basis for the on-going operation of GUI, and describes the governance and operational arrangements for GUI from 1 January 2023, under the new partnership model, for the existing cohorts (Cohort 98 and Cohort 08) and for the new birth cohort (Cohort 24).
4. This agreement is a MoU and is not intended to create binding or legal obligations on either Party. The MoU is entered into on the understanding that it is subordinate to the relevant legislation governing each Party.
5. This MoU also sets out a shared understanding of the parties in relation to data protection issues that may arise and roles relating to the compilation, transfer and use of this data. The processing of personal data of data subjects is governed by the Statistics Act, 1993 and the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.

Establishment of the Parties

6. The CSO was established in 1949 and became a statutory body in 1994, under the Statistics Act, 1993.
7. The DCEDIY is a Government Department with responsibility for policies in relation to children, equality, disability, integration and youth. Established in 2011 as the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department's functions were expanded in 2020 and its mission is to enhance the lives of

children, young people, adults, families and communities, recognising diversity and promoting equality of opportunity.

The Roles of the Parties

8. The functions of the CSO are set out in the Statistics Act, 1993. In particular, Section 10 states that the functions of the Office are "the collection, compilation, extraction and dissemination for statistical purposes of information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions in the State". The Office has the authority to co-ordinate official statistics compiled by public authorities to ensure, in particular, adherence to statistical standards and the use of appropriate classifications and has the authority to assess the statistical potential of the records maintained by public authorities and to ensure that the potential is realised. Furthermore, the CSO has legal obligations regarding the development, production and dissemination of European statistics under Regulation (EC) No. 223/2009 of 11 March 2009.
9. As set out in the Department's Statement of Strategy (2021-2023) DCEDIY goals are to:
    a) develop, implement and influence evidence informed policies and legislation that improve the outcomes for those we serve.
    b) ensure the provision of a range of quality and sustainable services, underpinned by strategic investment, that meet the needs of individuals, families and communities.
    c) help those who are vulnerable, including children, young people and at risk individuals, to overcome adverse circumstances and to achieve their full potential.
    d) promote the development of a progressive, respectful and equal society, informed by the experiences of past generations and seek to respond to the needs of survivors.
    e) work in partnership with individuals, families and communities, and across Government Departments, public bodies and civil society to achieve better outcomes.

f) maintain high standards of performance and corporate governance with engaged, motivated and supported staff.

GUI: Context and background

10. The establishment of a National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland (NLSCI) was approved by Government in March 2002 (SI80/20/10/0528). Responsibility for the study was assigned to the Office for the Minister of Children. The study, now known as Growing Up in Ireland (GUI), was commissioned in 2006 as a two-cohort study, tracking the development of two nationally representative samples of children: Cohort '98 (formerly known as the 'Child Cohort', born in 1998) and Cohort '08 (formerly known as the 'Infant Cohort' born in 2008).
11. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2006 set out the arrangements agreed between the CSO and the Department of Health and Children for the study to be conducted within the framework of the Statistics Act, 1993. Section 11 (1) of the Act empowers the Central Statistics Office to "*make arrangements with other public authorities and persons for the collection, compilation, extraction or dissemination of information for statistical purposes*".
12. From its establishment, the aim of GUI was to examine the factors which support or undermine the well-being of children in families, in order to inform effective and responsive policy making and service development. It was envisaged that GUI could be extended over time providing invaluable policy relevant data over the lifecycle.
13. Following competitive tendering, GUI was undertaken by the Economic Social and Research Institute (ESRI) ('the contractor') under a series of contracts with the Department over the period 2006 to 2022.
14. In April 2019, Government approved, in principle, the transfer of GUI to the CSO by 2023, subject to the development and agreement of a design brief for the next phase of GUI, agreement of the terms of the transfer, and achievement of the necessary funding approval. An updated MoU was put in place, between CSO and DCEDIY, setting out the arrangements for the transition period 2020-2022.

15. During the transition period, a Design Brief for the future of GUI was agreed and a new partnership model which made a distinction between the GUI Survey (to be led by the CSO) and the GUI Study (to be led by DCEDIY) as follows:
    a. The "GUI Survey" refers to the elements of GUI being undertaken by the CSO under the authority of the Statistics Act, 1993. This encompasses all stages of the survey life cycle as defined by the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), namely: Identify Needs, Design, Build, Collect, Process, Analyse and Disseminate. The CSO will ensure that the survey process is informed by the fullest possible engagement with key stakeholders, in particular, with the DCEDIY.
    b. The "GUI Study" refers to those elements of GUI being undertaken by the DCEDIY. These encompass: engaging with policy and scientific stakeholders; consulting with children/young people; identification of research needs, data priorities and policy objectives; consulting on instrumentation development and design; enhancing awareness of GUI; building capacity in GUI data use; promoting the use of GUI data for research and policy development; and generating research analyses of the data in the GUI study. The DCEDIY will engage with the CSO throughout these processes.

    See further detail on GUI study and GUI survey activities in Appendix 1.
16. The Design Brief also set out a schedule of data collection for the period 2023-2030 as shown in Appendix 2.
17. In 2022, a further Government decision approved the establishment of a new birth cohort for GUI. The Memorandum to Government which proposed a new birth cohort, described the collaborative model for GUI developed by DCEDIY and the CSO, to build on and make best use of the expertise and remit of each organisation. The model involves DCEDIY and the CSO working in partnership to deliver GUI, each taking responsibility for leading on separate but interrelated phases of the work.
18. The DCEDIY contract with the ESRI to deliver GUI terminated on 31 December 2022 and the new model for GUI became operational on 1 January 2023.

Bilateral Steering Group

19. A DCEDIY and CSO Bilateral Steering Group (SG) will be convened. The SG will drive the strategic direction of GUI and ensure its continued relevance to the policy remit of the Department.
20. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the SG will be as agreed between the DCEDIY and CSO. The ToR will cover, amongst other things, membership of the SG frequency of meetings and scope of the SG. Changes to the ToR must be jointly agreed by both parties.
21. Nothing in the foregoing shall be construed as superseding the independence of the Director General of the CSO in respect of statistical matters. The terms of reference of all groups established will reflect the statutory basis of the survey.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

22. Data collection and processing carried out by the CSO in the conduct of Growing Up in Ireland will be done in accordance with the Statistics Act, 1993, the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, EU law and in accordance with the CSO's Code of Practice, in particular its protocol on data matching where one or more datasets originate from outside of the CSO.
23. The collection and processing of GUI data is covered by, inter alia, the following provisions:
    - Section 13 of the Statistics Act, 1993, concerning the statistical independence of the Director General of the CSO;
    - Sections 30 and 31 of the Statistics Act, 1993 concerning the use of the records of public authorities for statistical purposes;
    - Sections 32 and 33 of the Statistics Act, 1993, concerning the protection of information;
    - Section 24(2) of the Statistics Act, 1993 (as amended by Section 178 of the Data Protection Act), concerning the provision of information to the CSO;
    - Article 6(1)(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation;
    - Article 9(2)(j) of the General Data Protection Regulation;

- Article 89 of the General Data Protection Regulation;
- Section 42 of the Data Protection Act 2018;
- Section 45 of the Data Protection Act 2018;
- Section 54(c) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

24. The Statistics Act, 1993 provides for the Director General of the CSO to:
    - Carry out "*…the collection, compilation, extraction and dissemination for statistical purposes of information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions in the State*" (Section 10(1))
    - "*assess the statistical potential of the records maintained by public authorities and, in conjunction with them, to ensure that this potential is realised in so far as resources permit*" (Section 10(2))
    - "*make arrangements with other public authorities and persons for the collection, compilation, extraction or dissemination of information for statistical purposes*" (Section 11(1))
    - "*invite any person or undertaking to—(a) complete a form, questionnaire or other record, (b) answer any questions, (c) provide any information or records*" (Section 24)
    - "*request any public authority to: (a) allow officers of statistics at all reasonable times to have access to, inspect and take copies of or extracts from any records in its charge, and (b) provide the Office, if any such officer so requires, with copies or extracts from any such record*" (Section 30(1)).
25. Section 13 of the Act provides that "*The Director General shall have the sole responsibility for and be independent in the exercise of the functions of deciding—(a) the statistical methodology and professional statistical standards used by the Office; (b) the content of statistical releases and publications issued by the Office; and (c) the timing and methods of dissemination of statistics compiled by the Office*".

Responsibilities of each Party

26. The CSO and the DCEDIY have a shared role in achieving the overall objectives of GUI and ensuring compliance with relevant legislation. Operationally, roles and responsibilities are assigned as set out in the following paragraphs:

27. The CSO will be legally responsible for all elements of the Survey life cycle including:
    a. the development of the survey instrument(s) with input from the DCEDIY drawing on previous waves of GUI, relevant research by DCEDIY and consultation exercises undertaken to identify policy and scientific needs;
    b. the design of a national survey that can, as far as possible, meet the Sponsoring Department's requirements and national user needs while seeking to provide for inter-wave, intergenerational and international comparability;
    c. the conduct, including all associated methodological issues, of the survey;
    d. the assessment of administrative data potential for GUI and the conduct of any data linkage under the CSO Data Protocol;
    e. the preparation, including content and timing, of written text of report(s) and analysis published by the CSO; and
    f. Preparation of anonymised microdata files to be lodged with ISSDA (or any successor) and of researcher microdata files in line with the CSO's policy on access to data by researchers.
28. The CSO will be solely responsible for publishing the survey results in line with section 13(a) to (c) of the Statistics Act (1993). This will take the form of releases and publications that contain appropriate accessible content, primarily descriptive statistics. In designing statistical outputs, the CSO will be mindful of all inputs on stakeholder needs elicited during consultations.
29. The CSO will provide appropriate internal governance for the GUI survey as specified in the governance framework document. This includes corporate structures such as the CSO Data Office, Committee on Data Security and Confidentiality, Quality and Methodology services, the Social Survey Ethics Advisory Group and survey management structures in line with GSBPM. It also includes policies on data management in line with GDPR and child protection in line with the Children First Act, 2015.

30. DCEDIY will be legally responsible for all elements of the Study including the following aspects:
    a. Submitting a research needs /variable specification reports to the CSO in advance of every wave of GUI data collection. This will build on GUI to date, draw on international best practice, specify priority research needs based on stakeholder consultations and propose validated measurement scales for potential use in each survey as appropriate.
    b. Establishing and chairing a Research and Practice Expert Advisory Group. This Group shall be comprised of relevant experts who can inform a continued focus on research topics relevant to all aspects of children's lives in the Study, informed by scientific and practice expertise across GUI domains of data collection. This group will contribute to ensuring that Study developments are informed by national and international research literature and the expertise of organisations working for and with children, young people and families. It will also help ensure that the study remains firmly based on a sound conceptual framework. Coherence with other research initiatives especially longitudinal cohort studies will also be a key focus for this group, where possible facilitating linkage possibilities and international comparability over time.
    c. Establishing and chairing a Policy Advisory Group as an information sharing and advisory mechanism which will provide input into the research objectives of the Study and content of the Survey. The Policy Advisory Group will consist of representatives from the CSO, the Department, other Departments and agencies as appropriate. The Policy Advisory Group can draw on other external expertise as required. The Group will be chaired by the Department. It will act as a forum for sharing information and providing advice to ensure the continuing policy relevance of the Study.
    d. Ensuring that the voice of the child / young person remains central to the study through consultations with a broad spectrum of children and young people undertaken in advance of each wave of data collection.
    e. DCEDIY will draw on its Research Ethics Committee to: Review and provide guidance in relation to any direct consultation with children and young

people and families in relation to their views on the development of the study and review of research needs/variable specification reports.

31. A schedule of deliverables required from each Party to achieve the work programme of GUI 3 for the period 2023-2025 is shown in Appendix 3. Each party recognises the interdependence of key deliverables in delivering this ambitious work programme.
32. Consistent with General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection requirements, the CSO who will: design the questionnaire according to needs specified by the Department, generate the sample, hold personal data required for the operation of the survey, and control access to personal data compiled or collected as part of the survey operation; will act as sole controller of GUI Survey data.
33. DCEDIY will: conduct GUI Study activities such as preparatory research and stakeholder consultations to inform GUI survey content; conduct or commission specific research analyses of archived data sets to address policy problems; act as sole controller of any personal data generated through these activities.
34. In the event of a breach relating to GUI Survey data the CSO will inform the Data Protection Officer of DCEDIY. This notification will be made within 24 hours. In addition, the CSO will refer to their own data breach procedures and may report the breach to the Data Protection Commission as appropriate. The DCEDIY will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury caused as a result of such a breach.
35. In the event of a breach relating to GUI Survey data the CSO will inform the DCEDIY through the Bilateral Steering Group, in advance, of any decision to issue a public statement in relation to the breach. Similarly, the DCEDIY will inform the CSO, through the Bilateral Steering Group, in advance, of any decision to issue a public statement in relation to the breach.
36. In the event of a breach relating to GUI Study data the DCEDIY will inform the Data Protection Officer of CSO. This notification will be made within 24 hours. In addition, the DCEDIY will refer to their own data breach procedures and may report the breach to the Data Protection Commission as appropriate. The CSO

will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury caused as a result of such a breach.

37. In the event of a breach relating to GUI Study data the DCEDIY will inform the CSO through the Bilateral Steering Group, in advance, of any decision to issue a public statement in relation to the breach. Similarly, the CSO will inform the DCEDIY, through the Bilateral Steering Group, in advance, of any decision to issue a public statement in relation to the breach.
38. In the event of the receipt of a request for exercise of the data subject rights, set out in Chapter III of the General Data Protection Regulation, in respect of the GUI Survey the DCEDIY will direct the Data Subject to lodge the request with the CSO.

Research access to micro data & RMF Policy

39. Mechanisms to meet the need for additional research will be facilitated subject to the provisions of the Statistics Act, 1993. Access to Anonymised Microdata Files (AMFs), Researcher Microdata Files (RMFs) and protocols for release of data will be administered under the provisions of the Statistics Act, 1993 and the CSO Researcher Microdata File Policy. The mechanisms provided for under this policy conform to the highest statistical standards as well as being consistent with the Data Protection Act, 2018 and/or General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Funding arrangements

40. Each party to this MOU will engage with the Department of Public Expenditure directly to negotiate respective vote allocations covering both Study and Survey needs, commensurate with meeting agreed user requirements. The parties will cooperate in this exercise, having regard to the close intersection between their roles in the overall GUI process. In the event that funding ceases to be made available the project will be suspended.

Duration and Review of the Memorandum of Understanding

41. This MoU will be published on the CSO website (www.cso.ie) and the DCEDIY website (www.gov.ie/dcediy).
42. This MoU will remain in force until a new one is entered into or either the CSO or DCEDIY revoke it. Depending on events, this MoU may be amended, subject to the mutual agreement of DCEDIY and CSO.
43. This MoU will be reviewed biennially by the both the DCEDIY and the CSO. Any changes to the MoU shall only be made with the mutual agreement of the DCEDIY and CSO.

Signed

Central Statistics Office

Pádraig Dalton, Director General

Date: 09/03/2023

Signed

DCEDIY

Kevin McCarthy, Secretary General

Date: 10/03/2023

Appendix 1: GUI Survey and GUI Study activities

Phase A GUI Study: Consult, Plan, Design	**Phase B: GUI Survey - GSBPM**	**Phase C GUI Study: Research, Build Capacity**
Literature Review	Specify Needs	Policy awareness and use
Voice of children and young people	Design	Conducting analysis
Scientific expertise	Build	Publishing research reports
Policy makers	Collect	Annual conference
Refine policy needs	Process	Academic engagement
Produce research needs report	Analyse	Identifying emerging policy need
	Disseminate	
	Evaluation	

Appendix 2: Schedule of data collection as per 2020 Design Brief

	Age at data collection		
Year	Cohort '98	Cohort '08	Cohort '24
2023	25		Pilot@<1
2024		Pilot@17	<1
2025		17 \ 18	Pilot@3
2026	Pilot@29		3
2027	29	Pilot@20	Pilot@5
2028		20	5
2029			Pilot@7
2030			7

Appendix 3: Agreed workplan and deliverables 2023-2025

Phase	Cohort@age	Item	Owner	Deadline*
B	Cohort 98@25	Questionnaire finalised	CSO	January 2023
B	Cohort 98@25	Fieldwork commences	CSO	March 2023
A	Cohort 08@17	Research Needs Variable Specification delivered	DCEDIY	April 2023
B	Cohort 24@<1	Pilot fieldwork commences	CSO	September 2023
B	Cohort 08@17	Questionnaire available for consultation and review	CSO	August 2023
B	Cohort 08@17	Questionnaire content finalised	CSO	September 2023
B	Cohort 98@25	Fieldwork complete	CSO	November 2023
B	Cohort 24@0	Pilot report and key recommendations produced	CSO	February 2024
B	Cohort 08@17	Pilot Questionnaire build complete	CSO	December 2023
B	Cohort 98@25	Publication of headline results	CSO	May 2024
B	Cohort 08@17	Pilot field work commences	CSO	Q2 2024
B	Cohort 24@<1	Main field work commences	CSO	H2 2024
B	Cohort 24@<1	Main field work concludes	CSO	H2 2025

*End of month unless otherwise specified.