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## » HOW TO... Identify Your Policy Audience

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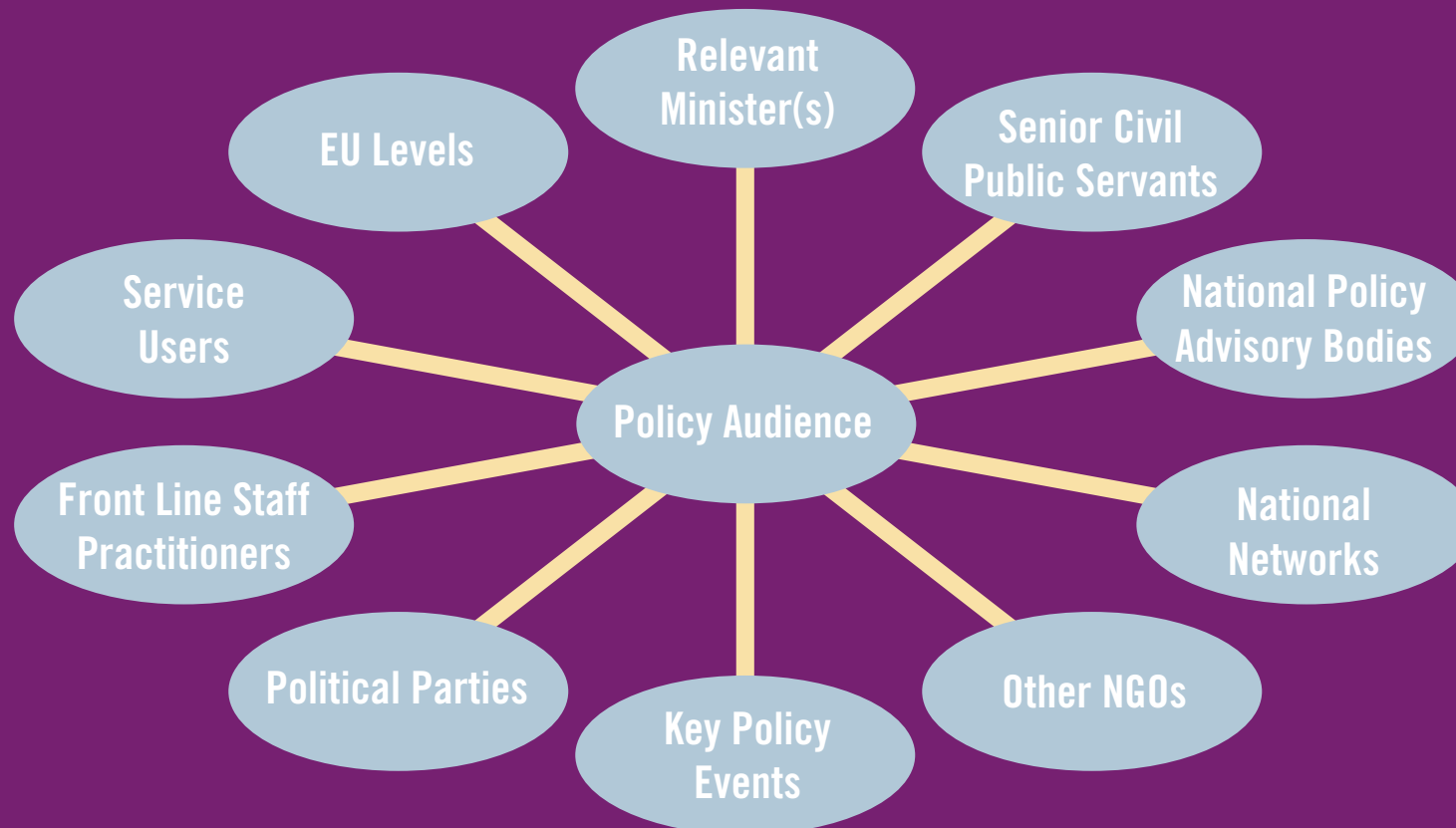
Communicating your policy messages should be an integral part of your strategy for influencing policy. That means deciding who the audience for your policy should be.

You can communicate your message both upwards and outwards.

- **Upwards, to government, national and international bodies**
- **Outwards, to your peer groups in the community and voluntary sector and to groups that will be affected by your policy proposals.**

## » Who is your policy audience?

In deciding who you need to get your policy message across to, consider all the various policy-makers, policy-bodies and others directly involved with shaping policy in Ireland and internationally. The main ones are:



Your potential policy audience includes a wide range of players, including government ministers, policy-makers, press officers, service deliverers and users of service.

Aim for the highest level of decision-maker or policy-maker who deals with your area of work. The highest players nationally are the relevant minister(s) and key officials in the department(s) in which your policy message is relevant. Make sure to send these your policy submission as they have the most decision-making power.

**Send your policy message also to:**

- **Government advisory bodies, such as the National Economic and Social Council and National Economic and Social Forum. These bodies include the views of the wider social partners and have strong links with government.**
- **National networks, including the Irish Social Policy Network, the social partners, Community Platform and Community Pillar. These have influence at key policy-making arenas, such as the national partnership agreement.**
- **Non-governmental organisations in the not-for-profit and community and voluntary sectors as part of your 'outward' policy audience.**
- **Political parties. Most political parties have research or policy officers who seek material relevant to policy from a wide range of sources. Use these outlets to get across your policy vision.**
- **Front-line staff and bodies that deliver policies and programmes, if appropriate. These can**

have powerful insight and experience in the actual delivery of policies. Often they have ways of feeding back information to more senior managers and people who can influence policy.

- Also include the target population that your policy will affect. Build these service-users or end-users into what you do, both when you are developing your policy and when you are communicating it later.
- Remember, decisions are also made at an international or EU-level. That means you should target your policy messages not just to national policy-makers, but also at those that influence policy at the European and international levels. These include bodies such as the EU, United Nations and the Council of Europe.

Taking part in key policy events, such as the annual Pre-Budget Forum and Joint Oireachtas Committees (JOCs) will give you great scope for presenting your policy message to high-level people who influence and make decisions.

## » Build a media strategy

You should develop a media liaison strategy to get across your policy message most effectively. This means deciding who in the media is relevant to your policy or concerns and actively targeting them to get your policy message across.

Your communication strategy should focus on what is of greatest public interest and you should actively communicate this to your policy audience.

### Policy Audience

- Relevant Minister(s)
- Other NGOs
- Key Policy Events
- Senior Civil / Public Servants
- National Policy Advisory Bodies
- National Networks
- Political Parties
- Front-Line Staff / Practitioners
- Service-Users
- EU-Level