

Timeline:
Female Suffrage in the UK and Ireland

1832	Great Reform Act (UK and Ireland) – Explicitly excluded all women from voting in National elections.
1859	Ladies Collegiate School (now Victoria College) founded in Belfast by Margaret Byers.
1864	First Contagious Diseases Act (CDA) passed by UK Parliament to control venereal disease in the armed forces by having prostitutes and women believed to be prostitutes locked in hospital for treatment.
1866	Second CDA passed. Alexandra College for girls established in Dublin by Anne Jellicoe.
1869	Third CDA passed. Josephine Butler established the National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Acts.
1871	Acts heralded the beginning of the first women’s organisation in Ireland. Isabella Tod established the Belfast branch of the Ladies’ National Association to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts.
1872	Women’s suffrage in the UK became a national movement with the formation of the National Society for Women’s Suffrage.
1873	Isabella Tod formed the first Irish suffrage association – the North of Ireland Women’s Suffrage Society.

1876	Dublin Women’s Suffrage Association (DWSA) was formed by Anna and Thomas Haslam.
1878	Intermediate Education Act to include girls passed in UK and Ireland.
1879	Royal University Act, which also included girls, passed in UK and Ireland paving the way for women’s inclusion in the professions.
1886	Contagious Diseases Acts repealed.
1893	Textile Operatives Society of Ireland formed in Belfast to unionise women in factories and mills.
1896	Irish women granted right to become Poor Law Guardians. Dublin Women’s Suffrage Association renamed the Irish Women’s Suffrage and Local Government Association (IWSLGA). Isabella Tod dies. The North of Ireland Women’s Suffrage Society becomes the Belfast branch of the IWSLGA.
1897	Mary Galway becomes the first full-time woman trade union organiser as General Secretary of TOSI.
1898	Local Government Act gives women the right to vote and be elected to District Councils.
1903	Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) formed in England led by Emmeline Pankhurst.
1904	Suffrage militancy begins in England.

1906	Linen dispute initiated by women in York Street Mill, Belfast, with TOSI support, receives support from other Belfast mills (10 May). By July workers forced back to work with no pay increase.
1907	Women’s Freedom League (WFL), a militant suffrage organisation, is formed by Charlotte Despard and others in England.
1908	<p>Irish Women’s Franchise League (IWFL) formed in Dublin by Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Margaret Cousins.</p> <p>Bangor branch of WFL formed.</p>
1909	<p>Hilda Martindale appointed first woman female factory inspector in Ireland.</p> <p>Belfast branch of IWSLGA reorganised as Irish Women’s Suffrage Society (IWSS) and established branches in Londonderry and Whitehead.</p> <p>Bangor branch of WFL changed its affiliation to join IWSS.</p>
1911	<p>Irish Women’s Suffrage Federation (IWSF) formed in Dublin with Louie Bennett and Helen Chenevix as Joint Honorary Secretaries. IWSF aimed to link scattered suffrage groups that were forming throughout Ireland and carry out more effective propaganda and educative work.</p> <p>Northern Committee of IWSF to co-ordinate suffrage societies throughout Ulster.</p> <p>Irish Women’s Reform League (IWRL) formed by Louie Bennett as the Dublin branch of the IWSF with an emphasis on the social and economic</p>

	<p>position of women in society.</p> <p>Irish Women Workers' Union (IWWU) established in Dublin with Delia Larkin as General Secretary and Jim Larkin as President.</p> <p>James Connolly opens up a division of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) which had been established by Larkin in 1909. He named the women's section the Irish Textile Workers' Union and recruited Winifred Carney and Nellie Gordon to manage it.</p> <p>Irish women win the right to be elected to County Councils.</p>
1912	<p>The Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) votes defeat a Conciliation Bill in favour of female suffrage at Westminster. 41 IPP members voted against the Bill and 10 abstained. The Bill was defeated by 14 votes. The IPP feared the Bill would endanger the progress of the Home Rule Bill by precipitating a General Election or triggering resignation of cabinet ministers in favour of Home Rule who opposed suffrage.</p> <p>Irish Citizen newspaper first published by Francis Sheehy Skeffington.</p> <p>Irish women's united appeal for suffrage to be included in Home Rule Bill is ignored by IPP.</p> <p>Irish Women's Franchise League declares war on the IPP. 8 members jailed for damage to government property in militant acts, including Hanna Sheehy Skeffington. They begin a hunger strike.</p> <p>WSPU members attack Prime Minister Asquith in Dublin.</p>

1913	<p>Home Rule Bill passed, suffrage vote excluded.</p> <p>Cat and Mouse Act passed in Westminster (Prisoners Temporary Discharge for Ill Health).</p> <p>IWFL prisoners released under Cat and Mouse Act.</p> <p>Ulster Unionists promise women the vote in separate Ulster parliament.</p> <p>WSPU established 'Ulster Centre' in Belfast and a Dublin branch.</p>
1914	<p>Ulster Unionists withdraw promise of vote for women.</p> <p>WSPU arson attack begins targeting Unionist property and places of recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 27 March – Arson attack on Abbeylands House in Whiteabbey causing £20,000 in damages. The grounds had been used to drill UVF corps.➤ 31 March – Dorothy Evans and Madge Muir arrested after explosives and a gun discovered by police in their Belfast flat.➤ 31 March – Lilian Metge arrested for breaking windows of Belfast Court House in protest against denial of women's access to courthouse during Evans' and Muir's hearing.➤ 8 April – Court disruptions during trial of Evans and Muir led to adjournment, both women remanded in custody without bail.➤ 9 April – Mabel Small arrested for stoning Old Town Hall in Belfast. She was sentenced to 2 months hard labour. Hunger strike secured her temporary release under Cat and Mouse Act.➤ 12 April – Evans and Muir released under Cat and Mouse Act.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 16 April – Carson hackled by Suffragettes in Ulster.➤ 20 April – Scheduled retrial of Evans and Muir – both women failed to appear in court. Subsequently re-arrested and trial adjourned.➤ 22 April – Arson attack on Annadale House in Belfast with £500 damages.➤ 22 April – A suffrage meeting in Ulster Hall broken up by Unionists.➤ 22 April – Evans and Muir released from Crumlin jail as a result of sustained hunger strikes.➤ 30 April – Evans and Muir re-arrested.➤ 3 May – Belfast Bowling and Lawn Tennis Pavilion burnt with damages of £889.➤ 4 May – Unconditional release of Evans and Muir.➤ 2 June – Evans and 2 other suffragettes broke into James and Cecil Craig’s house while Sir Edward Carson was present.➤ 3 June – Arson attack on Ardmillan House, Belfast. Madge Muir and Mary Larmour arrested for attack. They were released from Crumlin Road jail after a 6 day hunger and thirst strike. Muir was wanted on explosive charges but after her release the authorities were unable to detect her.➤ 3 July – Arson attack at Ballymenoch House, Belfast caused £20,000 damages.➤ 29 July – Race strand burnt in Newtownards with £750 damages.➤ 31 July – Explosion at Church of Ireland Cathedral in Lisburn. 4 WSPU members arrested.➤ 12 August - 4 WSPU members released from prison as a result of sustained hunger strike.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 22 August – WSPU offices in Belfast closes due to the outbreak of WW1. ➤ December – Pending cases against suffragettes dropped.
1915	<p>Attempts to establish branch of Irish Women’s Franchise League in Belfast fails.</p> <p>Women’s International Peace Conference at The Hague.</p>
1916	Easter Rising – murder of Frank Sheehy Skeffington
1918	<p>End of World War 1</p> <p><i>The Representation of the People Act</i> gives women over 30 in Ireland and Britain who satisfy property qualification the vote and also the right to stand for parliament. Age of male suffrage extended to 21.</p> <p>Constance Markievicz becomes the first female MP elected to the British House of Commons but as member of Sinn Féin did not take her seat. She served instead in Dáil Éireann as Minister of Labour (1919-1921).</p>
1922	Women in Irish Free State gain equal suffrage rights with men and can vote at 21 years of age.
1928	Women in UK and Northern Ireland receive vote on equal terms with men as a result of Representation of the People Act 1928.

Sources for Irish Suffrage Timetable:

- i. Rosemary Cullen Owens, A Social History of Women in Ireland 1870-1970, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd) 2005.
- ii. Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (eds.), Irish Women and the Vote: Becoming Citizens, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press,) 2007.
- iii. Diane Urquhart, Women in Ulster Politics 1890-1940, (Irish Academic Press), 2000.

