

# PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

## QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30225

Name: Brian Tonge

### Theme 1: Gender norms and stereotypes

#### Gender norms and stereotypes as barriers to gender equality

Fixed ideas about what women and men should do in the home or at work are learned by girls and boys in early childhood and throughout their lives. These ideas or gender stereotypes affect their choices in school and as they enter careers and contribute to a lack of progress toward equality between women and men. This limits not only the jobs that women and men consider or are available to them, but also can exclude women and men from social roles and tasks.

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

Law - I have 3 kids at home under 2 and wanted to be as much part of their upbringing as my wife. Both of us work in good jobs but would say we both put family first. I received 8 weeks fully paid paternity leave from my employer, including 2 from the state. My wife received 26 paid by the state and topped up by her employers. She also received 18 weeks unpaid after this. This is a clear and obvious legal situation which leads to gender stereotypes from day 1. Obviously my wife had the labor of the births and breastfed so needed her time off, but in different circumstances she may have preferred to go back to work and me to stay at home. It would cost nothing to change the law for both the mother and Father to have a minimum time and then let the family decide how best to share the remaining leave. It would help reduce the gender pay gaps as post birth leaves would be shared, unconscious of conscious bias around hiring/promoting would also be removed. It would empower the family to decide what is best for their individual circumstance rather than the state remaining paternalistic in dictating the terms and conditions of a child's first year.

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

State and then adapted across all employers

### Theme 2: Work: Occupational segregation by gender, gender discrimination and the gender pay gap

Women and men are often concentrated into different kinds of jobs and within the same occupations, women are often in work that is less well paid and has less opportunities

for career advancement. Women often work in areas where they can work part-time so as to fit in with their caring responsibilities. While many men work in low paid jobs, many professions dominated by women are also low paid, and professions that have become female-dominated have become lower paid. This worsens the gender pay gap (the average difference between the wages of women and men who are working).

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

Unequal time off around childbirth in favour of women has a detrimental impact on their careers. Allowing the family to decide how leave should be taken rather than the state would allieve this at no cost to the start. There is no gender pay gap where either I (private) not my wife (public) work. However this is a recognised policy of the business. I believe a law should be brought in to say it is discriminatory to have an unexplained gender pay gap. However this is something written pro female as this is the case in the majority of times. I believe it should be written gender neutral to allow for the much smaller but just as wrong times when men are paid less.

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

Change in law,

### **Theme 3. Care, paid and unpaid, as a social and family responsibility**

Care -- the social responsibility of care and women and men's co responsibility for care, especially within the family

Women remain disproportionately responsible for unpaid care and often work in poorly paid care work. For working parents or lone parents, balancing paid work with parenting and or caring for older and dependent adults presents significant challenges. Women are most disadvantaged by these challenges, yet men also suffer from lack of opportunities to share parenting and caring roles. Despite recent legislation and policy initiatives to support early years parental care, inequalities in the distribution of unpaid care continue between women and men. The cost of childcare has been identified as a particular barrier to work for women alongside responsibilities of caring for older relatives and dependent adults.

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this them in law, policy and practice.

If the gender pay gap is fixed and access to Carr after birth shared between the couple as they see fit o think this helps here. There are clearly societal issues also but I do feel more and more men are choosing to be involved. The more that do the more that will feel comfortable taking it. In my work I am in middle management and when I took extended unpaid leave, other men with much older kids felt comfortable to take

it. They said to me they were never comfortable taking it before I did. This needs to be tackled. The answer to making this more equal is not encouraging women to take less, it encouraging men to take more. I understand it is not always affordable for both to take though.

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

Cultural issues need to be addressed and employers could do a lot more here. I would guess many do not want to

#### **Theme 4: Women's access to, and representation in, public life and decision making**

##### Ensure women's participation and representation in decision-making and leadership in the workplace, political and public life

Women are systematically underrepresented in leadership in economic and political decision-making. Despite the introduction of a candidate gender quota (through the system of party funding) for national political office, and initiatives to support women's access to corporate decision-making roles, men continue to dominate leadership positions. There are also issues to be considered around how media represents women and men.

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

It's well documented that a good balance of genders, backgrounds and views makes for better decisions. I believe the quota rule should be increased to 40% minimum gender representation at election (again written gender neutral) it should also be expanded to include party funding, airtime coming up to election etc. There was an increase in female candidates but not a proportionate increase in TDs. This would help raise their profile.

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

As above

#### **5. Where does gender inequality impact most?**

To conclude we would be interested in your response to the following question: In which area do you think gender inequality matters most?

Please rank the following in order of importance, 1 being the most important:

- Paid work 3
- Home & family life 2
- Education 4
- Politics and public life 5
- Media 7
- Caring for others 1
- Other – please elaborate 6

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

While it has improved much of the care is still assumed on the female. The gender pay gap is clear to see also

➤ Please include any further comments or observations you may have here.