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### **Gender Pay Gap**

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average hourly pay of all male employees and of all female employees. The EU average is 16%. And in Ireland it is 14.4% in 2017, up from 13.9% in 2015. So, on average women earn 85.6 cents for every Euro men earn. Last time I checked, there isn't a gender discount available in shops, so this has a real impact on families and communities!

### **Why are women paid less?**

Actually it's not surprising because:

- Women still face discrimination in the labour market;
- Some employers tend to assign jobs on the basis of gender stereotypes, assumptions and discrimination, rather than skills/aptitude;
- Most of the highest paying occupations are predominantly male while most of the lowest paying occupations are predominantly female (Horizontal)
- Senior positions tend to be held by men (vertical);
- There is a motherhood penalty
- Part-time penalty.(more women and lower paid)
- Double/Triple shift. (Job, Housework, Children)

We also have a low pay problem with 23% of the workforce designated as low paid compared to an OECD average of 15%. And Women are over represented in this cohort – between 60/65%

We also have among the most expensive childcare in the EU, built on the backs of mostly low paid women.

And we have among the lowest control over our working times and patterns – including access to flexible working arrangements.

And, women (and men) workers and their trade unions have no legislative right to be recognised in the workplace for collective bargaining purposes, or to make representations to their employer through their union.

### **Recommendations**

That's quite a menu of issues to be dealt with but we feel the following measures would make a real difference and would urge the members of the Assembly to recommend the following:

The previous Government and the current one have made commitments to introduce gender pay gap reporting legislation that has yet to be completed. The law is designed to require certain employers to publish information in relation to the gender pay gap in their organisations. It will provide an incentive to employers to create plans to deal with any gaps identified and allow prospective employees to see their record in this regard.

There is also action at EU level with the EU Commission considering proposals for a Pay Transparency Directive so that the EU can once and for all address the undervaluing of work that is predominantly done by women.

**1. Recommendation - support legislating for pay transparency at home and across the EU.**

The Living Wage Technical Group estimated the Living Wage at €12.30 an hour in July 2019 (for a single adult with no dependents working fulltime). Since 1 February 2020, the National Minimum Wage (NMW) has stood at €10.10 an hour (for a single adult worker aged 20 and over). This equates to 82% of the recommended Living Wage.

The European Commission's 2020 work programme commits to proposing EU legislation on 'fair minimum wages for workers in the EU' in the last quarter of 2020.

**2. Recommendation: Support the process of aligning the National Minimum Wage with the Living Wage, in anticipation of EU Fair Minimum Wages legislation.**

Collective bargaining (the process in which workers, through their trade unions, negotiate with their employers to determine their terms and conditions of employment, including pay, hours of work, holiday leave, sick pay and other benefits) is one of the most effective ways to create more equal redistribution of wealth, reduce inequality and address low pay.

**3. Recommendation: Call for legislation to grant collective bargaining rights to workers in Ireland.**

**4. Recommendation: That childcare is treated as a public service and there is a substantial increase in State investment in childcare in order to create a professionalised workforce delivering quality, affordable childcare.**

In 2019 the European Union adopted legislation—the Work-Life Balance Directive<sup>1</sup>—designed to help parents and carers to combine their working and family lives. It includes provisions on paid parental leave and flexible working

**5. Recommendation: Full transposition of the EU WLB Directive; use process to explore how working parents are supported to balance caring responsibilities and work commitments through an expansion of pay related in-work benefits and family supports thereby placing maternity, paternity and parental benefit on a pay-related basis and extending such paid leave to women and men; and to introduce .**

**6. Recommendation: That every worker has the legal right to flexible working arrangements**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9438&langId=en>