

Citizens' Assembly

Social protection, pensions, work and caring

December 5



This paper summarises the suggestions made in the videos circulated in advance of the meeting (see members' page at www.citizensassembly.ie/!VTCBGO) as well as submissions received during the Public Consultation process (see all submissions at www.citizensassembly.ie/!GNZAU1).

It also includes recommendations from three people who you will hear from on the day. Their names are highlighted with a '*'. Finally, it includes recommendations from a recent policy brief from the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE).

This paper is intended as a reminder of what you have read and seen in the material circulated in advance of the meeting. You may want to refer to some of the ideas in it during the breakout group discussion but it is not intended, nor would it be possible, for you to discuss every suggestion in this paper in the breakout group.

Social Protection	
Improve eligibility for social protection for part-time, flexible and non-standard employment.	Mary Murphy, EIGE
Implement a 'participation income' payment which provides financial recognition to unpaid care work	Mary Murphy, NWC
Provide financial incentives to partners who both work part time	EIGE
Set social protection payments (including carers allowance) at a level that lifts people above the poverty line and supports a minimum standard of living. Provide jobseekers meaningful support, including supporting access to childcare. Ensure the process of applying for social protection supports is respectful and non-judgmental	INOUE, NWC, Submissions, Kathy Cunningham*
Introduce a Universal Basic Income	Submissions
Allow people receiving carer's allowance to work for more than 15 hours per week outside the home	Submissions

Social Protection	
Well designed and implemented job activation strategies for lone parents – in particular female lone parents – to increase employability skills and economic independence.	Submissions
Adopt fully individualised social protection system (qualified adults receive equal payments and access to supports) to promote a more equal division of paid work and care.	Mary Murphy, NWC
Ensure the social protection system recognises care by recognising part-time work as a valid option for jobseekers, provide access to employment supports to all people – including women outside of the labour market. Implement the Jobseeker Transition scheme for Qualified Adults. Ensure part-time work is recognised as a valid choice within the social protection system.	Mary Murphy, INOUE, Submissions
Streamline and improve processes and access to financial supports for returners to part-time study.	Kathy Cunningham*

Taxation and Budgets	
A gender-informed review of the taxation system.	Submissions
Adopt fully individualised taxation (removing second-earner tax credits) to promote a more equal division of paid work and care.	Mary Murphy, ELGE
Ensure the tax system recognises care by recognising part-time work as a valid option and linking tax credits to care.	Mary Murphy, Submissions
Increase taxation to provide for a more equal society with decent public services	NWC
Improve current Governmental gender and equality budgeting tools to ensure new policies are gender proofed.	Submissions

Pensions	
Introduce a Universal Pension	NWC, Submissions
Reduce the differences in occupational and private pension coverage across genders	Adele Whelan
Abolish the distinction between paid and credited contributions to support more women to qualify for the state pension.	ICTU
Raise female employment levels and ensure increased continuity in employment for women	Adele Whelan, Submissions
Introduce a full homecaring pension credit so that unpaid caring work treated like paid work in the state pension.	Mary Walsh*, Submissions

Pensions	
Women affected by the Marriage Bar (who were working before 1973) should be able to count the years after they were forced out of work for pension purposes. The relevant Minister should have a discussion with women within this cohort.	Mary Walsh*
Decrease the minimum number of contributions to be entitled to a full contributory pension.	Submissions
Ensure pension rights for non-standard contracts (e.g. temporary and part time work).	EIGE

Caring	
Improve access and affordability of childcare and afterschool care, including spaces for parents who work non-standard hours or days due to caring responsibilities	Submissions, EIGE
Improve paid parental leave schemes by, for example, extending paid parental leave or increasing the payment to cover a proportion of earnings. Allow parents flexibility in who takes leave while earmarking part of the parental leave for fathers. Integrate the three current paid parental leave schemes (maternity leave, paternity leave and parent's leave schemes)	ICTU, NWC, Submissions, EIGE Chris Ryan
Provide entitlement for breastfeeding in the workplace	Submissions
Improve family-friendly policies in male-dominated sectors	Submissions
Allow families choice in child-care preferences by supplementing parents who choose to stay home with their children	Submissions
Increase role modelling and visibility of men being carers	Finian Murphy*

Working conditions, including flexibility	
Make flexible working – including part-time work and job sharing – the norm for both men and women, allowing arrangements to be employee-led rather than employer led. Provide longer hours part-time jobs.	Mary Murphy, Submissions
Reduce working hours for all workers by, for example, introducing a four day week to allow a better work-life balance for both genders	Submissions
Introduce legislation on the right to request flexible working	ICTU
Introduce legislation on the right to disconnect	Submissions
Move towards output-based pay instead of per hour pay	Submissions
Improve awareness of the long-term impact of working part time	EIGE