

We are the members of the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality. We were selected as a cross section of Ireland's people and are honoured to represent our fellow citizens in advising you on advancing a more gender equal Ireland for all. We see our recommendations as successors to those of previous Citizens' Assemblies that have helped transform Irish society to reflect how Irish people want to live their lives in the twenty first century.

Undeterred by the Covid 19 pandemic, and despite the challenges of moving online, we gathered in mutual respect and openness as we listened, learned, and reflected. Our views on gender equality were deepened and at times challenged. We looked back into Ireland's history, we looked at present day society and we are now submitting to you a new view of a future Ireland where gender equality is the norm. We have worked hard together to agree a set of recommendations which we believe could make a real difference to the everyday lives of everyone living in Ireland, young and old.

Covid 19 has highlighted a cultural shift in our attitudes to gender-based inequalities in Irish life. It has magnified many shortcomings and gender inequalities which are no longer tolerable. We want to see change now. We believe our laws and policies need to be transformed to make them fit for the post Covid world.

We ask that you bear the following in mind as you respond to our recommendations and also as you develop laws and policies in the longer term.

- Gender equality is a matter of human rights, justice, and fairness. It must underpin all of our interactions as a society. The State has a special responsibility to treat all of its citizens equally, regardless of their gender identity, in compliance with article 40.1 of our Constitution (*"All citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law"*).

- While there are still many inequalities in women's lives that need to be eliminated, we also recognise that gender inequalities are intensified by discrimination on other grounds. Men also suffer from inequality, lack of opportunity and discrimination. Some of the prevailing gender norms and stereotypes are deeply destructive and adversely affect all genders. Trans and non-binary people suffer from particular facets of inequality. Advancing gender equality through implementing our recommendations can benefit the whole of Irish society, regardless of gender identity. We are recommending behavioural change so that all citizens are respected and valued.
- Even pre-Covid 19, it was clear that we need to transform our models of care to ensure that our society values every person, and provides high quality care for all who need support at every life stage. Post the pandemic, it is even more urgent to commit to well designed, publicly funded pay and career structures for carers, whose invaluable work in the home and wider community contribute so much to the common good of our society.
- Ambitious, not incremental, change is needed to ensure political, business, sporting and cultural institutions are more representative of Irish society in terms of gender balance and representation of minorities. Without affirmative action to increase the number of women in representative office at national and local level, change will be too slow and we want to see change now.
- Gender equality is vital for a sustainable and equitable economy. It helps to reduce poverty and promotes economic growth. At work, the gender pay gap must end and we need a better work-life balance for the good of our families and our society.
- Gender stereotyping and old gender norms must be eliminated, including through education. Everyone must be supported in achieving their own potential, regardless of their gender identity. Urgent legislative action is needed to hold technology and social media companies to account for identifying and removing sexually violent or abusive content and to penalise and eliminate hateful and abusive language, including on the basis of gender.

- There is no place in our society for gender-based violence. We support the aspiration of the Istanbul Convention to create a Europe free from violence against women and all forms of domestic violence. We want our Government to work actively towards this goal.

Our recommendations call for better public services and improved social protection in order to advance gender equality. These should be funded firstly through greater efficiency and accountability for public funding and reprioritisation between current spending and revenue raising. If necessary, we are also prepared to support and pay higher taxes based on the principle of ability to pay, to make a reality of our recommendations.

We have enjoyed our work in the Assembly and welcomed the opportunity to contribute our views. Each of us has invested serious time and effort in our work, conscious of the importance of the theme of gender equality in our own lives and for the healthy development of our society.

We urge you to match our commitment by accepting our recommendations and implementing them without delay to deliver gender equality for Ireland.