

CA30104	Name: Clare Leader Forum: Rights Based Group of Disabled Women and Men
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From: [redacted]

Sent: Saturday 22 February 2020 00:58

To: Citizens Assembly 2019 <info@citizensassembly.ie>

Cc: [redacted; Clare LeaderForum [redacted]]

Subject: Citizens' Assembly on gender equality questionnaire

Please find the completed questionnaire from the Clare Leader Forum: Rights Based Group of Disabled Women and Men.

We are asking that the Citizens Assembly investigate the issues impacting Disabled Women's (DW) lives as it relates Gender Equality. DW to be invited to present to the Assembly. We request Government investigate the constitutional rights of Disabled Women, Men and Children in any proposed amendments to article 41.2. Recognising care duties in the constitution could be ableist and contravene the Equal Status Act, Employment Equality Act, UNCRPD and undermine the constitutional rights of people with support needs and Disabled Women (and DM) as care-givers. DW have the same rights to non-disabled women socially, economically and politically.

Thank you
[redacted]

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

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.

There is a lack of inclusion and empirical research regarding inequality and stereotyping of Disabled Women, including women with mental health issues (DW) and our caring responsibilities. DW are mothers, family carers, homemakers, workers with caring responsibilities. DW are primarily viewed as only needing support/care and a burden to non-disabled women. In an effort to create equality of opportunities and outcomes for women there is a serious lack of recognition of intersectional gender issues.

- 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.)

The needs of DW need to be fully recognised in a manner that speaks to our rights. Family members being identified as carers in the absence of balancing the needs and rights of DW immediately creates inequalities reinforcing negative stereotyping. The specific and common needs of DW need to be explicitly outlined in policy and recommendations regarding the proposals for amending the constitution. The state has a duty to ensure that protecting the rights of one group i.e. Women, does not in any way infringe on the rights of DW and DM or reinforce negative stereotyping. Academics and Women's Representative's Organisations have a role in telling the full story that informs policy on gender equality, inclusive of women under the nine grounds of discrimination. State must protect the rights of all women and assume DW have caring responsibilities. The supports for DW are an integral part of meeting our caring duties. The lack of supports (e.g. Personal Assistants, accessible housing, aids & appliances, accessible transport, Sign Language Interpreters, Counselling and Mental Health Supports, parenting classes etc.) by the state for DW create unnecessary vulnerabilities, creating other issues which contribute to further inequalities and competing interests between women.

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.

DW need support services to be able to work outside the home as mentioned above. Many DW need a non means tested medical cards also to work and provide for their families. There needs to be access to work services as in the UK. Ireland has a compensation for employers' approach toward employing DP rather than equipping the DW (Assistive Technology, Universal Access in the build environment, PA support, transport (travel pass for DW and DM working who cannot drive and on low incomes).

- 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.)

Department of Justice, Citizen's Assembly,

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 theme in law, policy and practice.

DW are viewed as less than non-disabled women. DW are not viewed as care givers. DW are often afraid to ask for assistance for fear of being judged and children being removed from their loving families. DW are not allowed to have support with PA hours to parent.

- 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.)

Improving the suitability of, and confidence in, social supports and services for DW would improve the circumstances, health and wellbeing of all women in unpaid care

roles. Suitable transport, employment, PA hours, accessible and supported housing options for DW and DM would increase their economic security, social connections and safety and in turn reduce the need for non-disabled women to provide unpaid support. Also important is the need to transform gendered research and policy positions recognising unpaid care work of all women including DW.

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.

European Commission country Report for Ireland 2019 revealed that Ireland has one of the lowest employment rates for people with disabilities in the EU (26.2 % compared to 48.1 % in the EU in 2017). Ireland also has one of the highest gaps between people with and without disabilities (45.1 percentage points) in employment. According to UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Disabled women are twice as likely to be unemployed. These key economic and social disadvantage further reduces the opportunities for DW to engage in politics. It also diminishes the belief that DW can make effective public representatives. Thus access to public life is profoundly disadvantaged. As DW are not generally part of the discourse of gender inequality and excluded from Irish literature in any meaningful way re gender based care inequalities, it is more difficult for the general public to view DW are representatives for everyone, thus further reducing access to representation in public life and decision making from school boards, Local authority representatives, TD and Senators. The glass ceiling for DW is lower than non-disabled women.

- 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.)

Gender quota for national political office, and initiatives to support women's access to corporate decision-making roles need to further offer DW opportunities. 3 % of candidates need to be DW. State supports are needed to facilitate DW to engage in politics.

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 _ _ _ 1 _ _
- Education _ _ _ 2 _ _
- Politics and public life _ _ _ 4 _ _
- Media _ _ _ 6 _ _
- Caring for others _ _ _ 5 _ _
- Other – please elaborate _ _ _ _ _

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

DW need to be supported in our homes and family lives. This takes care of our other female relative care roles. D Girls and DW need education, works skills and supports with paid work. DW need to be supported and encouraged to participate in solutions to the barriers and challenges in particular politics.

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

We are asking that the Citizens Assembly investigate the issues impacting DW's live as it relates the above issues. DW to be invited to present to the Assembly. We request Government investigate the constitutional rights of Disabled Women, Men and Children in any proposed amendments to article 41.2. Recognising care duties in the constitution could be ableist and contravene the Equal Status Act, Employment Equality Act and undermine the constitutional rights of people with support needs and DW as care-givers. DW have the same rights to non-disabled people socially, economically and politically.