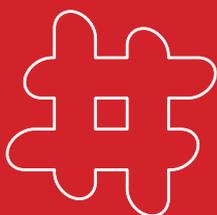


27.11.2019

Practical Steps to Workplace Equality:

Report and Recommendations from
the #Work**Equal** Conference



INTRODUCTION

The #WorkEqual Conference took place in November 2019. It was organised by the Dress for Success Dublin charity, and sponsored by SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority. The conference brought together business leaders, politicians, policymakers and NGOs to develop practical recommendations on how to progress workplace equality in Ireland. During a facilitated workshop session, delegates at the conference identified their priority areas for reform.

This report captures common recommendations from those who attended the #WorkEqual conference. It contains key recommendations on government policy and business policies, alongside recommendations for how we can all individually affect positive change. The recommendations incorporate various Government Departments including Education, Justice, Trade and Health. As such, we believe that implementation of these recommendations would sit with the Taoiseach's Department to ensure cross departmental investment for economic and societal gain.

At the #WorkEqual conference, delegates identified five priority areas that need to be addressed in order to progress workplace equality:

- Caring responsibilities
- Societal gender norms
- Flexible working
- Women in leadership
- The gender pay gap

In this report, we have included a section on each of these five priority areas with:

- An overview of the current context;
- Our findings of best practice and gold standard internationally, where policy changes have delivered proven positive societal and economic impacts; and
- The most common recommendations that came out of the #WorkEqual Conference – sub-divided into recommendations for government policy, business policy and personal responsibility.

By taking this three-pronged approach to the #WorkEqual recommendations, we believe we can drive the conversation at all levels of society.



An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar with Sonya Lennon, Founder of Dress for Success and Conference Rapporteur



An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar delivering the opening address at the #WorkEqual Conference 2019



Hayley Barnard, MIX Diversity Developers; Debra Searle MBE; and Emer Bucukoglu, Innecto Reward Consulting

1.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The key recommendations resulting from the #WorkEqual conference can be summarised as follows:

1. A STRATEGY FOR CARING AND RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDING UNPAID DUTIES - CHILDCARE

Government commitment to Universal State Childcare being provided by 2028. This would facilitate improved quality of childcare whilst improving the wages and working conditions of the (mainly) women employed in the sector.

2. TACKLING SOCIETAL GENDER NORMS - UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING

Government review of the educational curriculum and the materials used in classrooms which reinforce historical stereotyping of men and women in relation to caring responsibilities and employment.

3. ADOPTION AND VISIBILITY OF FLEXIBLE WORKING –

Government to introduce a legal requirement for employers to disclose their policies on maternity, paternity and parental leave, and associated supports.

4. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP - STRATEGY AND VISIBILITY

Government to introduce a state-driven quality assurance mark for organisations that demonstrate deep gender parity and a framework to progress towards equality.

5. GENDER PAY GAP - STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Government to implement gender pay gap reporting with mandatory submission by companies of their strategy and action plan to close the gap.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 BACKGROUND:

The Challenge

In 2011, the international charity Dress for Success was brought to Ireland as Dress for Success Dublin (DFSD) by broadcaster and businesswoman Sonya Lennon. The mission of the organisation is to equip women for economic independence by preparing them for job interviews with professional clothing and HR coaching. Follow on programmes developed locally continue to support DFSD clients through their career progression at all stages. Since DFSD was founded in Ireland, it has supported over 3,000 women to enter the workforce and further their careers.

In 2016, DFSD became increasingly aware of an impediment to that women's career progression which was outside of the organisation's control, but not outside of their influence. DFSD was preparing women to enter the workforce, giving them confidence to mould their message and frame their value. However, once they entered the workforce, they were met with cultural challenges and hidden biases, some benevolent, some less so, that negatively impacted their ability to advance to their potential.

In Ireland as in the rest of the world, the structure and culture of the working environment is inherently biased towards men. This is due to a complicated array of

factors – legacy, structural and cultural - which hide unconscious bias in how we do business.

These factors impact on pay and opportunity for women from entry point onwards, right through to the pension gap.

Many men are reluctant to take parental leave because it is not a cultural norm and because it is perceived to have a negative impact on career progression. At the same time, some children see less of their parents than is optimal due to parents having to endure long commutes to deal with the cost of housing and childcare.

How we work, as men and women, is ripe for change. We are currently wedded to a work culture of low engagement, long hours, presenteeism, mental health issues and burn out.

At the same time, women are opting into low paid part-time work to mitigate the high cost of childcare and doing twice as much unpaid work and caring duties as men.

This situation leads to a lack of representative decision making at all levels of our society and economy.



Mark Paul, *The Irish Times*; Orla O'Connor, *The National Women's Council*; Emily Logan, Ireland's first Ombudsman for Children and first Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission; Fiona Taylor, *Permanent tsb*; and Nikki Gallagher, *SOLAS*



Sonya Lennon, founder of *Dress for Success Dublin* speaking at the inaugural #WorkEqual Conference in November 2019

2.2 THE #WORKEQUAL CAMPAIGN

In 2016, Dress for Success Dublin launched the #WorkEqual campaign to highlight these issues, and to promote gender equality in the workplace. At the time, there was limited public discourse about gender equality at work and a common misperception that no gender pay gap existed. Indeed, there remains pervasive confusion over what the 'gender pay gap' actually means.

In truth, the gender pay gap is simply a symptom to be addressed. As a society, we need to tackle the root cause.

In Spring 2019, DFSD partnered with SOLAS for the launch of a SOLAS research report on Women on Home Duties.

At the report launch, in a room full of diverse stakeholders – ranging from Ibec to ICTU to elected representatives and industry leaders – all present agreed on what needed to be done to ensure women enjoyed full and equal access to the labour market. Seeing such diverse stakeholders in agreement, DfSD decided to gather all parties together with the defined purpose of agreeing on a set of priority actions and

recommendations to expedite real and positive change towards full gender equality in the workplace. This is how the idea for the inaugural #WorkEqual conference was born.

2.3 THE #WORKEQUAL CONFERENCE

The #WorkEqual Conference took place on the 27th November 2019 at The Marker Hotel, Dublin. The day-long event brought together over 130 business leaders, politicians, policymakers and NGOs.

The conference had the dual aims of:

- Drawing on the personal and professional experience, and sectoral knowledge, of each of the conference delegates in relation to the issues that must be addressed, and the practical ways that this can be done.
- Engaging and informing high-level political, business and civil society leaders on a broad range of issues around gender equality in the workplace.



Fiona Taylor, Permanent tbs; Nikki Gallagher, SOLAS; Andrew Brownlee, SOLAS; and Tatjana Latinovic, The Icelandic Women's Rights Association

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The programme for the conference was carefully designed to include:

- A facilitated workshop session for conference delegates to identify their priority areas for reform, and recommendations for implementing reforms effectively.
- Keynote talks by international experts to provide insights into best practice and learnings in other countries in relation to tackling gender inequality in the workplace.
- Panel discussions exploring the domestic issues that must be addressed and providing insight into how this can be done in different sectors and across society.

The Conference was opened by An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD. Keynote speakers, panellists and facilitators over the course of the day included:

- **Tatjana Latinovic**, Chair of the Icelandic Women's Rights Association and a member of the Gender Equality Council at the Prime Ministry of Iceland.
- **Christine Armstrong**, British author and journalist.
- **Andrew Brownlee**, CEO of SOLAS.
- **Dara Calleary TD**, Deputy Leader of Fianna Fáil.
- **Hayley Barnard**, Managing Director and Diversity Strategist at MIX Diversity Developers.
- **Emer Bucukoglu**, Senior Consultant at Innecto Reward Consulting.
- **Emily Logan**, first Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.
- **Orla O'Connor**, Director of the National Women's Council of Ireland.
- **Patrick Naughton**, Executive Director of People and Organisational Development at ESB.
- **Julie O'Neill**, former Secretary General at the Department of Transport.
- **Andy Pike**, National Secretary of the Fórsa trade union.
- **Senator Colette Kelleher**.
- **Mark Paul**, Business Affairs Correspondent with The Irish Times, served as the conference MC, while the conference rapporteurs were Sonya Lennon, founder of Dress for Success Dublin, and Professor Michelle Millar of NUI Galway.

CONFERENCE DELEGATES

The conference was marketed in such a way as to ensure a broad spectrum of voices, sectors and perspectives were represented at the event.

Business leaders, politicians, policymakers, trade unions and NGOs were all targeted and the conference was attended by representatives from:

- **Politics:** including former and sitting TDs, Senators and Councillors from Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil, the Labour Party and the Green Party, as well as independents.
- **The public sector:** including State Agencies, Government Departments and policymaking bodies.
- **Business:** including banks, multinationals and indigenous companies.
- **Trade Unions.**
- **NGOs.**

A full list of the conference delegates is available in Appendix 1.

CONFERENCE REPORT

In conjunction with Prof. Michelle Miller, co-conference rapporteur, the feedback from delegates was collated and distilled into the following practical and implementable actions. These actions are broken down by relevance to policymakers, businesses and society, to address and expedite gender equality in the workplace, and by extension, society at large.

3.0

GENERAL CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 OVERVIEW

“Care is not only personal: it is an issue of public and political concern whose social dynamics operate at local, national and transnational levels”¹.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality includes a specific target that aims to promote the shared responsibility of unpaid care within the household and address the underrepresentation of women in the labour market².

In spite of the expansion of female employment in Ireland related to economic growth and subsequent employment opportunities, there has been limited work-family policy development in recent years. Irish family policy has failed to keep pace. In fact, increases in female employment occurred despite the lack of state support³.

A Eurofound report in 2018, examining the gender gap between Irish men and women in relation to hours spent in paid and unpaid work, found that men engage in 10 hours more paid work a week than women. However, women work 14 hours more than men in unpaid work⁴. This represents one of the largest gaps in the EU and suggests a ‘gender division of labour’ where Irish men mainly perform the paid work and women mainly perform the unpaid work of care and domestic tasks. Whilst Ireland has the highest level of user satisfaction with childcare⁵; the OECD (2016) rank Ireland as having the highest number of people (3.4 per cent of the population) not seeking full-time employment due to a lack of affordable childcare. This percentage has been steadily increasing from less than one per cent in 2006⁶. The report also noted that the cost of childcare in Ireland is amongst the highest in the OECD.

1 Williams, F. (2001) ‘In and beyond New Labour: towards a new political ethics of care’ *Critical Social Policy* 21 (4) p.487.

2 UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1,

3 Millar, M., Coen, L., Bradley, C., & Rau, H. (2012). “Doing the job as a parent”: Parenting alone, work, and family policy in Ireland. *Journal of Family Issues*, 33, 29-51.

4 Eurofound (2018), *Striking a balance: Reconciling work and life in the EU*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. P. 25

5 Eurofound (2017), *European Quality of Life Survey 2016: Quality of life, quality of public services, and quality of society*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

6 :OECD (2016), *Society at a glance 2016: OECD social indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

From a policy perspective, caring responsibility is categorised in relation to care and childcare. The most recent Irish Census of Population ⁷ defines a 'carer' as someone who provides regular unpaid personal help for a friend or a family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability (including problems which are due to old age). Census (2016) revealed that 195,263 people in Ireland provide unpaid care, averaging 38.3 hours a week. 60 per cent of carers are women and they are typically married, aged 40-59⁸. The 2011 Census reports that 59 per cent of all unpaid carers were also in paid employment. Women of working age are more likely than men to provide informal care across the life course⁹.

Government support is predominantly in the form of income support to carers and funding of formal home-based support in the form of home help and home care packages. Hanly and Sheerin (2017) argue that such support "accords with best practice in a number of European countries that use a combination of income supports and formal home help to relieve the burden on employed informal carers and facilitate them in remaining in employment if desired"¹⁰.

In 2012, the Government launched a National Carers' Strategy, the primary objective of which is to support older people or those with disabilities "to live in dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. Carers are vital to the achievement of this objective and are considered a backbone of care provision in Ireland"¹¹. However, implementation of the strategy has been criticised in the main due to inadequate resourcing of a strategy which was introduced on a 'cost-neutral' basis¹². Goal 4.2 in the Strategy commits to "encourage work-life balance provisions that are needed to ensure that working arrangements are carer friendly"¹³.

The Carers' Leave Act (2001) entitles employees to unpaid leave to provide full-time care for a dependent up to a maximum of 104 weeks. Family Carers Ireland (2017) have called on the state to review the Act to include the right to request flexible working arrangements, which is line with the EU Work Life Balance Directive. This will give employees the right to request flexible working arrangements for all working parents of children up to eight years old and all carers¹⁴.



An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar opening the #WorkEqual Conference in November 2019



Delegates at the #WorkEqual Conference 2019

7 CSO (2012). *This is Ireland Highlights from Census 2011 Part 1*, Stationary Office: Dublin.

8 Social Justice Ireland, (2019) Forthcoming Budget should move to protect carers and people with disabilities, <https://www.socialjustice.ie/content/policy-issues/forthcoming-budget-should-move-protect-carers-and-people-disabilities>

9 Hanly, P. & Sheerin, C., 2017. Valuing informal care in Ireland: beyond the traditional production boundary. *The Economic and Social Review*, 48(3, Autumn), pp.337-364.

10 Hanly, P. & Sheerin, C., 2017. p. 340.

11 Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, (2012) National Carers' Strategy. Dublin: Stationary Office, p, 5

12 Ibid p.3

13 Ibid p.18.

14 Family Carers' Ireland, 2017. Family Carers' Ireland Scorecard: Assessing the Government's Fourth National Carers' Strategy report from the perspective of family carers'. <https://familycarers.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Fourth-Family-Carers-Scorecard-Updated-Jan-2018.pdf>

3.2 WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW

The compartmentalisation of caring for family members and parental care results in a disjointed policy response to the continuum of caring responsibilities of women. The EU Work Life Balance Directive requires the Irish government to pass legislation to support a work-life balance for parents and carers; encourage a more equal sharing of parental leave between men and women; and address women's underrepresentation in the labour market by 2022. This Directive acknowledges the continuum of care and affords a unique opportunity for Irish policy makers to create policies that reflect the continuum of care.

Demand for home care is projected to increase with Ireland's ageing population. Eurofound argues that further reliance on informal care to meet this demand across the EU can have "a negative impact on work-life balance and the distribution of care between men and women"¹⁵. The value of family care to the State ranges between €2.1 and €5.5 billion, depending on the valuation approach used¹⁶. Formal home-based care acts as a "complementary support mechanism to informal care";¹⁷ however in Ireland it is underfunded.

3.3 GOLD STANDARD

Hanly and Sheerin (2017), drawing on international evidence, argue that funded formal home-based support combined with income support for carers can facilitate higher levels of labour force activity by informal carers. This combination also meets the wishes of care recipients as well as being more cost effective than institutional care. They highlight Scandinavian policy as the most effective in Europe in reducing the burden on carers, especially women, in combining care and paid employment. In these countries, investment in formal home care is higher than other European countries and this minimises 'trade-offs between care and employment'. However, they point out that such a policy is at odds with current Irish policy which has failed to prioritise funding for home-help services. This is a significant issue given the number of informal carers in Ireland who are also in paid employment¹⁸.



Hayley Barnard, MIX Diversity Developers; Angela Smith, Dress for Success; Andrew Brownlee, SOLAS; Sonya Lennan, Dress for Success; An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar; Nikki Gallagher, SOLAS; Tatjana Latinovic, The Icelandic Women's Rights Association; and Emer Bucukoglu, Innecto Reward Consulting

¹⁵ Eurofound, 2018, p.2.

¹⁶ Hanly & Sheerin, 2017, p. 337.

¹⁷ Ibid p. 358.

¹⁸ Ibid p. 357-8.

4.0

CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 OVERVIEW / WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW

Even though the cost and accessibility of childcare services have been addressed in a circumscribed manner and for a somewhat limited number of people; due to the restrictions of policies implemented and high costs, inaccessibility and lack of provision are a constant source of struggle for many families in the State¹⁹.

Irish families spend between 24-35 per cent of their net family income (for dual earner families), and 40 per cent in a lone parent family, on childcare²⁰. Across the OECD, the average cost of childcare is 18 per cent of the average wage and 12 per cent of a family's net income, for those families where both parents earn 100 per cent of the average industrial wage²¹.

Ireland's free market approach to childcare, and the resulting high costs, interfere with parental decision making in the context of reconciling work and family life²² and afford limited choices regarding employment (particularly for women). Costs are a real disincentive to women remaining in the labour force, principally in cases where there are two or more children²³. In addition, many find themselves in situations of part-time

employment. This is particularly the case for specific groups such as low-skilled women or low-income families; for mothers of younger children; and for lone parents²⁴.

The primary policy focus of the state in this area has been predominately concerned with creating childcare spaces, with a lack of attention paid to supporting the quality of early year's provision and pedagogy or to issues of access and affordability²⁵. Since 2010, there have been considerable policy developments in this sphere. The universal Free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (FPSY) was introduced in January 2010 and provides for a free year of part-time early childhood care and education to all children in the state who meet the age criteria²⁶. In 2016, the government introduced the Affordable Childcare Scheme²⁷, the first scheme to introduce subsidised childcare for all children aged six months to 15 years on the principle that the 'money follows the child' with subsidies paid by the state to the childcare providers, who then pass on the subsidy to parents in reduced childcare fees. There are two income thresholds - those earning less than €22,700 and a sliding subsidy up to

19 O'Hagan, C. (2012). Who cares? The economics of childcare in Ireland. *Journal of Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement*, 3, 203-216.

20 OECD, (2014) *Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries: Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth*, Paris: OECD Publishing.

21 OECD (2016), *Society at a glance 2016*: OECD Social Indicators, Paris: OECD Publishing

22 Hodgins, M., Hogan, V., & Galvin, M. (2007). Reconciling work and family life—Policy and practice in Ireland. *Administration*, 54, 56-76.

23 OECD (2016), *Society at a glance 2016*: OECD Social Indicators, Paris: OECD Publishing

24 Richardson, L. (2012, June). Can parents afford to work? An update. Paper session presented at the European Population Conference, Stockholm.

25 Hayes, N. (2010). Childcare? Early childhood education and care? Towards an integrated early years policy for young children in Ireland. *Early Years: An International Research Journal*, 30, 67-78.

26 Bradley, S., & Hayes, N. (2009). Considering children's rights in Ireland's early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy. *Administration*, 57, 87-106.

27 DCYA (2016)

the maximum net income of €47,500 above which no subsidy is paid. Moloney (2016) argues that the scheme contains an 'ideological paradox'. Whilst the state is concerned with the quality of childcare, "in the absence of adequate financial support to childcare providers, quality and affordability will be incompatible"²⁸.

The New Economics Foundation (2014) argue that higher quality childcare requires a new approach to training, career development and pay for childcare workers. Acknowledging the cost implications of such an investment in "essential social and economic infrastructure" which will reduce inequalities and improve the quality of care, they call for financial support from Government²⁹. Moreover, they propose that if the working week was cut from 40 to 30 hours, the cost of providing such high quality childcare would be substantially reduced and "the provision of universal, free, high quality childcare would help to achieve a more equal distribution of employment opportunities, pay, discretionary time, and social mobility between women and men as well as between families in different socio-economic groups".³⁰

4.2 GOLD STANDARD

The OECD (2006) evidence review reported that the most effective way to make childcare and early education services more affordable as well as raising the quality of the service is through supply side subsidies such as capitation³¹. Caroline Criado Perez notes that in Denmark where all children are entitled to full-time childcare from 26 weeks to six years, the gender pay gap in 2012 was seven per cent and is continuing to fall. This is in marked contrast to the US which has no public provision for childcare and the pay gap was almost double that of Denmark and has not fallen further³². Parental leave was introduced in Ireland in 1998, on foot of a European Directive (2010/18/EU). It provides a legal entitlement to 14 weeks per child, is unpaid, and is available to both parents of children aged up to eight years, or 16 years in the case of a child with a disability.

The leave can be taken in one continuous period or two separate blocks. However, if the employer agrees, the leave can be used for a period of days or hours³³. In 2013, this was increased to 18 weeks. However, take up by fathers was recently reported as being at only five per cent³⁴ (OECD, 2010). In 2016, paternity leave was introduced in Ireland this entitles 2 weeks off work for new parents, other than the mother of the child. As with maternity benefit, paternity benefit is payable depending on social insurance contributions.

Russell and McGinnity (2011) also considered the take up of unpaid parental leave and reported that, of the mothers who had returned to work, only 18 per cent had requested parental leave and the majority (65 per cent) took the leave as reduced hours or days worked. As with maternity leave, there were differences in take up with the authors reporting evidence of a link between leave and affordability. Women with unemployed partners were four times less likely to seek parental leave, whereas those with higher earnings were more likely to have requested parental leave. In addition, there were higher take up rates amongst those employed in the public sector³⁵.

4.3 CARING RESPONSIBILITIES – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE I. GOVERNMENT

The introduction of a government strategy which acknowledges the significance and importance of caring responsibilities for families and society at large; and enables those in employment to realise their preferred work life/family balance. Such a strategy would:

- Acknowledge the life course nature of caring responsibilities from infancy to the elderly.
- Introduce shared parental leave in the first year of a baby's life whereby parents can opt to share maternity leave between them.
- Commit to Universal State Childcare being provided by 2028. This would facilitate improved

28 Moloney, (2016), p. 5

29 New Economics Foundation (2014) *The Value of Childcare: Quality, Cost and Time*. London: NEF.p. 30.

30 Ibid, p. 30.

31 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2006). *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/37425999.pdf>

32 Criado-Perez, p. 252.

33 ibid

34 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2010). *Gender brief*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/44720649.pdf>

35 Russell, H., & McGinnity, F. (2011). *Workplace equality in the recession? The incidence and impact of equality policies and flexible working*.

quality of childcare whilst improving the wages and working conditions of the (mainly) women employed in the sector*.

- In the interim, introduce a State Insurance Scheme for childcare providers which would lead to a decrease in the cost of childcare and an increase in the wages of those employed in the sector.
- Introduction of a legal requirement for employers to disclose their policies on maternity, paternity and parental leave, and associated supports.

II. BUSINESS

- Ensure that paternity and parental leave take up becomes the norm with improved measures taken by employers to encourage more men to avail of their full paternity leave entitlements.
- Acknowledge the vital role of professional care workers, and create wage bands to ensure a well-resourced, high quality and sustainable sector.
- Commit to improving the state provided home-care infrastructure for the elderly and disabled.

*When asked how to convince a government of the benefits of universal childcare, the Icelandic Ambassador to UK responded, 'that's simple, just make the economic case, it will save the state money'.



Sonya Lennon, Dress for Success; Senator Ivana Bacik; and Nikki Gallagher, SOLAS

5.0

TACKLING GENDER NORMS

5.1 OVERVIEW

The OECD (2019) Social Institutions and Gender Index reports that the cost to the global economy of gender-based discrimination in social institutions is six trillion USD³⁶. Gender stereotyping not only has consequences for individuals but for society at large as it “impacts the psychological and physical well-being of individuals, the resilience of families and the long-term availability and contributions of workers in the labour market”³⁷. In Ireland, under the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2004, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their gender in the provision of goods and services, education, sports, access to public facilities and accommodation.

Men and women are different. However, gender stereotypes “reflect the primary importance we attach to task performance when judging men and to social relationships when considering women”³⁸. Societal stereotypes view men as breadwinners and women as carers and while, as Ellemers (2018) suggests, there is “a kernel of truth” underlying gender stereotypes, this kernel is “tiny” and does not account for the inferences society makes about the differences between men and women³⁹. Gender stereotyping can lead to unconscious bias.

In its three-year Statement of Strategy published in 2017, one of the key strategic objectives under the theme of ‘Promoting Diversity and Plurality’ is that the

Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) would ‘foster a landscape that is representative of, and accessible to, the diversity of Irish society’⁴⁰. A stated outcome for the BAI is that ‘Irish audio-visual media is more diverse in terms of its content and those involved in its production’⁴¹ by the end of 2019. To this end, the BAI has developed a Gender Action Plan.

This plan is clearly positioned within the framework provided by the Council of Europe Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality in the audio-visual sector. This recommendation was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27th September 2017. Following the recommendation and recognising the need to integrate a gender equality perspective in the Irish audio-visual sector, the BAI Gender Action Plan will address four key areas in promoting greater gender equality.

These are:

- Data collection and publication;
- Supporting research;
- Encouraging the development of gender initiatives internally, and with stakeholders; and
- Enhancing accountability processes, including monitoring and reporting⁴².

36 OECD, (2019), *Social Institutions and Gender Index Report*, Paris: OECD Publishing.

37 Ellemers, N., (2018) ‘Gender stereotypes. *Annual review of psychology*, 69, pp.275-298. P. 292

38 Ibid, p.277.

39 Ibid, p.278.

40 BAI, (2017), *Strategy Statement 2017-2019*. Dublin: BAI. p. 2.

41 Ibid, p. 1.

42 BAI, (2018) *BAI Gender Action Plan*. Dublin: BAI. p. 2.

The strategy is now complete. However, all action points are focused on industry composition rather than content output, which is consumer facing and therefore has the power to create and enforce gender and diversity norms. This is a global issue, but Ireland has an opportunity to lead the way in gender representation and challenging stereotypes through a content auditing initiative.

5.2 WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW

Media representations of men and women reinforce stereotypical expectations, illustrating women in caring roles and men as experts⁴³. Ward and Harrison (2005) reviewing research in this area found that over time “the gender stereotypes implicitly conveyed in this way impact on the beliefs that girls develop about gender roles, their bodies and sexual relationships”⁴⁴. Russell et al (2017) report on research showing that gender stereotypes concerning school subjects and occupations are evident among young children “who have quite fixed notions of the ‘appropriate’ jobs for men and women”⁴⁵.

In 2007, the Equality Authority’s (no longer in existence) ‘Introduction to Gender Issues in the Marketing and Design of Goods for Children’ report highlights pervasive and thorough gender stereotyping in the marketing and design of goods to children. They concluded that the overall impact is gender stereotyping where boys

are portrayed an independent, active and aggressive, whereas girls are portrayed as dependent, passive and nurturing⁴⁶. However, under the Equality Acts such discrimination is prohibited and the Code of Standards for Advertising, Promotional and Direct Marketing in Ireland states that “marketing communications should respect the principle of equality between men and women. They should avoid sex stereotyping and any exploitation or demeaning of men and women.”⁴⁷

5.3 GOLD STANDARD

Ellemers argues that gender stereotyping can be changed by educating people about “the descriptive and prescriptive nature of stereotypes” and that such education can release “people from the conviction that all gender differences are biologically determined and hard-wired.”⁴⁸

In December 2019, the UK Committees of Advertising Practice introduced regulations which will come into effect in June 2020, banning adverts that depict gender stereotypes such as women struggling to park and men struggling to put a nappy on a baby or which emphasise traits associated with boys or girls. Such ‘harmful gender stereotypes’ are regarded as having the potential to negatively impact the aspirations of viewers⁴⁹.

43 Ellemers,, p. 284.

44 Cited in Ellemers, p.,284.

45 Russell, H, Smyth, E, McCoy, S, Grotti, R, Watson, D and O Kenny (2017), *A Study of Gender in Senior Civil Service Positions in Ireland*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute. p.3

46 Valilus, M, O’Driscoll, A and Redmond, J (2007), *Introduction to Gender Issues in the Marketing and Design of Goods for Children*. Dublin: Equality Authority.

47 Advertising Standards of Ireland Authority, (2016) *The 7th edition of the Code of Standards for Advertising and Marketing in Ireland*, Dublin: ASIA.

48 Ellemers, p. 292.

49 Committee of Advertising Practice, (2019), *Regulatory Statement: Gender Stereotyping in Advertising*. London: Committee of Advertising Practice



Sonya Lennon, Dress for Success; An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar; and Mark Paul, The Irish Times



Fiona Taylor, Permanent tsb

5.4 TACKLING GENDER NORMS – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE

The introduction of a government-led campaign to change societal expectations around gender norms and roles in Irish society, which would challenge gender stereotypes and social norms from childhood across the life course. Such a campaign would:

I. GOVERNMENT

- Conduct a review of the educational curriculum and the materials used in classrooms which reinforce historical stereotyping of men and women in relation to caring responsibilities and employment.
- Ensure that all teachers receive unconscious bias training as a component of the Continuous Professional Development programme.
- Attract more male students into the teaching profession through the provision of state scholarships.
- Implement the Broadcasting Codes of Conduct in relation to negative gender stereotyping in broadcast and advertising.
- Introduce a consumer facing quality assurance mark for gender equality, as per the Icelandic initiative.

II. BUSINESS

- Provide training and awareness raising initiatives for employers, recruiters and managers on issues such as unconscious bias.
- Introduce incentive schemes for men to take up and share unpaid caring and domestic duties.
- Use imagery that normalises shared responsibilities.

III. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Understand your own unconscious bias to better manage and mitigate it. [The Harvard Implicit Bias Test](#) is a useful place to start.
- Actively ask yourself in decision making situations – is this a fair representation of both men and women?

6.0

FLEXIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

6.1 OVERVIEW

Flexible working is “workers’ control over when and where they work”. More specifically, “flexitime is having control over the timing of one’s work” which involves a “worker’s ability to change the timing of their work (that is, to alternate the starting and ending times), and/or to change the number of hours worked per day or week – which then can be banked to take days off in certain circumstances.”⁵⁰ Heejung and van der Lippe also discuss working time autonomy where employees have a greater degree of autonomy and decide themselves what hours they work. Drawing on the European Working Conditions Survey (2015) they report that in Ireland 23.9 per cent of men and 23.1 per cent of women have schedule control regarding flexible working and working time autonomy. This ranks closely to the EU average of 26.2 per cent for men and 24.9 per cent for women. However, in Norway, Sweden and Denmark over 50 per cent of men and women have schedule control⁵¹. In addition, 17.1 per cent of Irish men and 10.1 per cent of women report working from home at least several times a month in the last 12 months. The number of Irish men is higher than the EU average of 12 per cent and for women it is lower at 12 per cent. Denmark has the highest rate for both men and women at 26 per cent⁵².

Therefore, in Ireland there is a gender gap in relation to flexible working arrangements with men having greater schedule control and access to working from home.

In Ireland, women who have paid sufficient social insurance contributions are entitled to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave (which is taxable) and a subsequent 16 weeks of unpaid leave. Russell, Watson, and Banks in their 2011 national survey of pregnant women in relation to work, reported that two-fifths of women took up unpaid maternity leave⁵³. However, “women in less privileged positions were less likely to take combined paid and unpaid leave. Lone parents, non-Irish nationals and mothers with lower levels of education were all significantly less likely to take additional unpaid leave”⁵⁴. There is no legal right to work part-time in Ireland. Indeed, part-time work and flexible working arrangements such as flexi-hours, job sharing, and working from home are at the discretion of the employer in Ireland and vary greatly⁵⁵. There are higher levels of job-sharing and part-time working arrangements in the public sector, but private sector workers are more likely to report working from home. Flexitime levels in the public and private sector were similar⁵⁶.

50 Heejung, C and T van der Lippe (2018), ‘Flexible Working, Work–Life Balance, and Gender Equality: Introduction’, Social Indicators Research, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-2025-x>, p.2

51 Ibid, p. 3

52 Ibid, p.4

53 Russell, H., Watson, D., & Banks, J. (2011). *Pregnancy at work: A national survey*. Dublin: Health Service Executive, Crisis Pregnancy Agency, and The Equality Authority.

54 Russell, H., & McGinity, F. (2011). *Workplace equality in the recession? The incidence and impact of equality policies and flexible working*. Dublin: Equality Authority and The Economic and Social Research Institute. pp. 48-9

55 Millar, M & Crosse, R. (2014)

56 Russell, et al, 2014.

6.2 WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW

Current government strategy, Future Jobs Ireland, comprises of five pillars, one of which concerns ‘increasing participation in the labour force’.

In December 2019, the Irish Government launched a consultation seeking the public’s views on flexible working arrangements. In the press release, it was stated that flexible working options may include:

- starting or finishing work at differing times;
- working compressed hours;
- having access to flexitime;
- being able to work remotely; and
- having the right to disconnect outside work hours.

Flexible working can also include access to part-time or shared working options⁵⁷.

At the EU level, The European Pillar of Social Rights adopted in 2017 concerns work–life balance and the Directive on Work–Life Balance aims to remove barriers to women’s entry into the labour market and ensure a more equal distribution of care between men and women⁵⁸. Principle 9 refers explicitly to work–life balance:

“Parents and people with caring responsibilities have the right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services. Women and men shall have equal access to special leaves of absence in order to fulfil their caring responsibilities and be encouraged to use them in a balanced way.”⁵⁹



Professor Michelle Millar, NUI Galway and Conference Rapporteur; Anne-Marie Taylor, Balance for Better Business; Ciara Garvan, Founder of WorkJuggle.com; and Sonya Lennon, Dress for Success

New ways of working may require new ways of rewarding workers. A results only work environment (ROWE) is a human resource management strategy co-created by Jody Thompson and Cali Ressler wherein employees are paid for results (output) rather than the number of hours worked. Cali and Jody, who originally proposed the strategy at Best Buy, have since started a consulting group called CultureRx. The strategy has subsequently been implemented at a second large American retailer, Gap; as well as other large organisations across the United States.

ROWE tries to give managers the tools to define goals which can be clearly met or unmet by the results of individual contributors working for that manager. This focus on met or unmet results allows significant freedom to the organisation to focus on fewer minute details of employees’ daily routine. There are 5 fundamental requirements for ROWE to be successful:

1. **Employees must understand what their role is in the company.**
2. **Employees must understand what they are responsible for.**
3. **Employees must understand what the measurement for success is.**
4. **Employees must understand the repercussions of failing to meet the set measurement of success.**
5. **Employees must be confident that the repercussion will be metered equally among other employees (there will be no favourites).⁶⁰**



Dara Calleary TD, Deputy Leader of Fianna Fáil; Shane Dempsey, Construction Industry Federation; Julie O’Neill, former General Secretary of the Department of Transport, Board Member of Ryanair and Permanent tsb, Patrick Naughton, ESB; and Mark Paul, The Irish Times.

⁵⁷ Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation, 2019,

⁵⁸ Eurofound, 2018.

⁵⁹ European Commission, 2017, *European Pillar of Social Rights*. Brussels: EU Publications Office.

⁶⁰ www.gorowe.com

The system is not without its critics but, when applied properly, does endow a workforce with a sense of ownership and accountability, something currently in short supply.

6.3 GOLD STANDARD

Donnelly et al (2012) explain that legislative approaches to flexible working arrangements differ depending on institutional context. Two broad approaches can be identified. First, the 'life-cycle' approach which guarantees employees the 'right to work' reduced hours for a specified period to accommodate work/life needs, predominantly present in Nordic and Western European countries. The second approach extends the right of certain groups of workers to 'request' flexible working arrangements, found in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. In the latter, employers can refuse requests on specified grounds, usually reasonable business grounds. In their study of women in the New Zealand public service, they report that under 'right to request' legislation the burden of implementing flexible work arrangements and managing competing workloads is borne by the individual;⁶¹ thereby questioning the capacity of this legislative approach to enable uptake of such arrangements.

Eurofound highlight the role collective bargaining has had in some EU countries, in addition to policy measures, in implementing flexibility in the workplace. In Denmark, the Industrial Agreement 2017-20 permits special working time arrangements in companies once agreed by employers and trade unions. Spain introduced the continuous working day as an alternative to the traditional working day with a long lunch break. In Slovenian metal and electro industries, employers are obliged to allow employees with family responsibilities to work the schedule they prefer, in line with the needs of the working process. In Greece, the National General Collective Labour Agreement entitles mothers to arrive later or leave earlier by one hour every day for 30 months from the end of maternity leave.⁶²



An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar delivering the opening address at The #WorkEqual Conference 2019



Change to: Emer Bucukoglu, Innecto Reward Consulting; Hayley Barnard, MIX Diversity Developers; and Debra Searle MBE

6.4 FLEXIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE

Societal acknowledgment that flexibility in the workplace will result in improved work-life balance for employees and benefits to the employer such as increased productivity and retention, and should become the norm for all employees.

The introduction of the EU Work Life Balance directive requires the Irish government to pass legislation to support a work-life balance for parents and carers, encourage a more equal sharing of parental leave between men and women and address women's underrepresentation in the labour market by 2022.

61 Donnelly, N, Proctor-Thomson, SB and G Plimmer (2012), The Role of 'Voice' in Matters of 'Choice': Flexible Work Outcomes for Women in the New Zealand Public Services' *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 54 (2), 182-203. P. 185

62 Eurofound (2018), *striking a balance: Reconciling work and life in the EU*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, .pp. 29-9.

This would require:

I. GOVERNMENT

- Introduction of measures which would negate the negative state pension implications for those who work part-time.
- Implementation of a public awareness campaign around sustainable work practice. [In Ireland, if you come in early and stay late, the perception is that you are giving your all as a dedicated employee. In the Nordic countries, the perception of the same situation is that you can't handle your workload and are struggling to keep up. The result of this pressure in Ireland is unsustainable work practice, a 'presentee' workforce and systemic mental health issues and burn out.]

II. BUSINESS

- Create awareness amongst employers of the benefits of workplace flexibility.
- Create new, more effective ways of working within specific workplaces.

III. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Offer to set your own targets and deadlines with your superiors and report frequently on outputs.



Mark Paul, Columnist with the Irish Times and Conference MC

7.0

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

7.1 OVERVIEW

The IESE Women in Leadership Index⁶³ explores four dimensions of women's leadership; personal, political, business and social, in 34 OECD countries. The Index also highlights change over time to assess that extent to which equal opportunities are being achieved. Sweden, Iceland and Norway are ranked as the top three respectively in terms of achieving equal opportunities, with Turkey, Japan and South Korea being the three lowest ranked. Ireland ranks 17th out of 34. However, Ireland was ranked third in the domain of business leadership with:

- A high ratio of female to male managers;
- A higher than average percentage of women board directors;
- Low rate of involuntary part-time work and unemployment; and
- Greater gender balance in labour force participation rates⁶⁴.

Ireland scores 10th on social leadership, 23rd on personal leadership and 24th on political leadership.

7.2 WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW

In the Irish Civil Service, 63 per cent of positions are held by women. However, holding educational levels, length of service and age constant, men are twice as likely to

occupy the position of Principal Officer and above⁶⁵. Cross and Linehan (2006) report on the beneficial effects of mentoring on career progression for Irish women in the high-tech sector, revealing that women with a mentor "receive more promotions, have more career mobility and advance at a faster rate than those without mentors."⁶⁶ The National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) campaign for a 30 per cent gender quota for candidates in national elections has led to an increase in female TDs, although it remains low at 22 per cent.

The OECD (2014) highlights that the under representation of women in leadership is linked to women's lower self confidence in comparison to men, which results in women taking less risky career choices. Citing a Harvard Business Review, women tend to apply for promotion when they perceive that they meet at least four of five criteria for the post, whereas men apply if they meet two out of the five.⁶⁷

When we talk about 'leadership', we should not confine the definition solely to a position of power. Anywhere that one has influence, one is a leader, whether it's within the home, in education, in business or in society at large.

The call for women in leadership really comes down to the need for gender representative decision making at all levels of our economy and society. With women

63 Chinchilla, N, Jiménez, E, and M. Grau (2018), I-WIL Index 2018: IESE Women in Leadership. IESE Business School, University of Navarra.

64 Chinchilla, N, Jiménez, E, and M. Grau (2018), p. 24.

65 Russell, et al, 2017, p. vii

66 Cross, C and M Linehan (2006), 'Barriers to advancing female careers in the high-tech sector: Empirical evidence from Ireland', *Women in Management Review*, 21 (1), 28-39. P. 36.

67 OECD, 2014.

accounting for 50.43 per cent of the population, input and influence from women can support a better and more efficient environment for everyone to live and work. Decisions made by male only groups are lacking in a female perspective and can lead to chronic lack of understanding of the needs of the female population. History is peppered with examples of this. When the favelas of Mexico City were decentralised, the government failed to account for the complexity of the needs of women and children. The families were removed from a community of shared care and work and placed into an isolated environment with no transport infrastructure. The results were devastating and worsened conditions and poverty for the families involved⁶⁸.

Pervasive inequalities and biased decision making abound in the areas of research, cultural institutions and medicine to name but a few sectors that have far reaching effects.

7.3 GOLD STANDARD

Gender inequalities in relation to women in leadership have been addressed through affirmative action and equal opportunities programmes. Affirmative action policies concern preferential treatment for specific groups and often involve quotas, whereas equal opportunities programmes are target driven but do not involve preferential treatment⁶⁹. In Ireland, quotas are rare, despite the aforementioned female political candidates' quota and female-only professorship appointments introduced in 2019.

When considering the IESE (2018) Index, Sweden, Iceland and Norway are the top three countries in relation to women in leadership⁷⁰. Iceland has the most gender equal parliament in the world in the absence of a quota system⁷¹. Sweden operates a party list system and despite measures to increase female representation since 1978, it was only in 1993 when the Social Democratic Party introduced the 'zipper' quota that female representation reached more than 40 per cent and has never fallen below. The 'zipper' involves a party list for males and a separate one for females which are then 'zipped' together, and the list then alternates male and female candidates⁷².



Joanne Hession, Founder of LIFT Ireland.



Delegates at the #WorkEqual Conference 2019

68 Criado Perez, pp. 56-7

69 Russell, et al, 2017,

70 Chinchilla et al, 2018.

71 Criado Perez, 2019, p. 76

72 Criado Perez, 2019, p. 275

7.4 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE

In order to address women's underrepresentation in the workplace, as well as positions of leadership in the workplace and wider society the following measures should be taken:

I. GOVERNMENT

- Introduce target led employment initiatives in sectors where women are underrepresented at all levels of organisations.
- Introduce a state-driven quality assurance mark for organisations that demonstrate deep gender parity and a framework to strive towards equality.
- Enable access to credit or bond systems for self-employed women, with state support for female entrepreneurship by introducing a state guarantor credit scheme.

II. BUSINESS

- Introduce mentoring and sponsorship programmes for women at all stages of their career.
- Introduce business policies and procedures for recruitment and progression to manage and mitigate unconscious bias.
- Introduce gender targets at leadership levels and an action plan to achieve the targets.

III. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Build and maintain an awareness of the importance and benefits of female representation in decision making.
- Sponsorship and support of women in their career progression.
- Personal education around the hidden challenges of women in the workplace. See "That's What She Said" by Joanne Lipman.



Bestselling author Christine Armstrong delivering her keynote address at the #WorkEqual Conference 2019

8.0

GENDER PAY GAP

8.1 OVERVIEW

The unadjusted gender wage gap is defined as the difference between median earnings of men and women relative to median earnings of men. Data refer to full-time employees on the one hand and to self-employed on the other.

The Gender Pay Gap Information Bill 2019 requires companies of 250 employees or more, revised upwards from the original 50, to submit data gender pay scale disclosure. The bill is currently lapsed with the dissolution of the Dáil. There is no defined published methodology and no date for its implementation.

The gender pay gap is a visible symptom of workplace inequality and will continue to persist until structural and cultural changes are both implemented and lived within organisations.

Learning from the UK experience, and based on client case studies from eminent UK based consultant in the field, Hayley Barnard; we know that without the requirement on companies to consider and publish strategies and action plans for gender equality in the workplace, the requirement can become a tick box exercise and move us no closer to a gender equal workplace.

8.2 WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW

In 2019, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) published a Gender Equality Index to measure the progress of gender equality in all member states of the EU. Ireland scores 71.3 out of 100 points, placing it above the EU average. While Ireland has improved its Index scores since 2005, gender inequalities are most pronounced in the domain of power (53.4 points), reflecting the low levels of political and board representation of women in Ireland⁷³. The Index also shows that:

- Women's mean monthly earnings are €2,808 in Ireland, compared to €3,423 for men.
- The full-time equivalent employment rate for women is 43.9 per cent, compared to 60 per cent for men.
- A woman's working life in Ireland lasts for 33.1 years, on average, compared to 40.1 for men.
- 88.7 per cent of women are doing cooking and / or housework every day, compared with 48 per cent of men.

Since 2016, DFSD – through the #WorkEqual campaign – has argued that the experiences of women in more vulnerable situations are being overlooked in the gender pay gap debate. More vulnerable women include those in low-income roles, part-time roles, zero-hour contracts, underemployment and unemployment and women with lower levels of educational attainment.

⁷³ European Institute for Gender Equality (2019), *Gender Equality Index 2019- Work Life Balance*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

In short, DFSD believes the experiences of the poorest and most vulnerable women in Irish society are not being reflected in the current discourse on gender equality. Bennedsen et al (2019)⁷⁴ examine whether pay transparency reduced the gender pay gap and affects outcomes in organisations by exploring Danish legislation introduced in 2006, which required organisations to produce gender disaggregated wage statistics. They report that the legislation had had an effect in reducing the gender pay gap by slowing wage growth for male employees and suggest that “regulatory mandates on pay transparency, as a means to overcome biases against women in the workforce, may be effective in closing the gender pay gap”.⁷⁵

Systemic unconscious bias and organisational legacy have contributed to a deeply unequal working environment for women at all levels of industry.

Egan, Matvos, and Seru (2017) show that female advisers face harsher outcomes following misconduct, but this effect is mitigated for firms with more female executives⁷⁶. Adams and Ragunathan (2017) show that gender barriers tend to discourage women from working in finance.⁷⁷ Duchin, et al (2019) show that female division managers are allocated less capital, especially in firms where CEOs grew up in male-dominated families.⁷⁸ Tate and Yang (2015) show that male leadership cultivates a less female-friendly culture within firms. They suggest that regulatory mandates on pay transparency, as a means to overcome biases against women in the workforce, may be effective in closing the gender pay gap.⁷⁹

8.3 GOLD STANDARD

Bennedsen et al (2019) examined wage statistics of organisations prior to and following the introduction of Denmark’s 2006 Act on Gender Specific Pay Statistics which obligates companies with more than 35 employees to report on their gender pay gap. They analysed data from 2003-2008 in organisations with 35-50 employees and compared their pay data with identical information from a control group of firms with 25-34 employees who were not required to release gender-segregated data. They reported that the organisations paid their male employees a 18.9 percent wage premium before the law was introduced, which is statistically significant for both firms that complied to the legislation and those who did not. Bennedsen et al found that the gender pay gap had shrunk by seven per cent in the approximately 1000 organisations governed by the new 2006-legislation relative to the control firms, that were not required to publish pay statistics. They concluded:

“We know now that wage-transparency works, and it is a measure that can be applied nationally as well as internationally. So, from this point, it is really just a question of whether or not the politicians actually wish to do something about the pay-gap between men and women.”⁸⁰

Moreover, the legislation also seems to have a couple of unintended gender-related consequences. Organisations which were covered by the legislation hired four per cent more women in the intermediate and lower hierarchy levels suggesting organisations attract more female employees in positions where they offer higher wages. Further to this, more women were promoted from the bottom of the hierarchy to more senior positions, after the implementation of the law, with no significant change in promotions for male employees⁸¹.

74 Bennedsen, M, Simintzi, E, Tsoutsoura, M & Wolfenzon, D (2019) Do Firms Respond to Gender Pay Gap Transparency, NBER Working Papers 25435, National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc.

75 Ibid, p. 7.

76 Egan, M.L., Matvos, G. and Seru, A., 2017. When Harry fired Sally: The double standard in punishing misconduct (No. w23242). National Bureau of Economic Research.

77 Adams, R.B. and Ragunathan, V., 2017. Lehman sisters. Available at SSRN 3046451.

78 Duchin, R, Simutin, M, and Sosyura, D, The Origins and Real Effects of the Gender Gap: Evidence from CEOs’ Formative Years (December 8, 2019). Paris December 2018 Finance Meeting EUROFIDAI - AFFI; Rotman School of Management Working Paper No. 3171292. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3171292> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3171292>

79 Tate, G. and Yang, L., 2015. Female leadership and gender equity: Evidence from plant closure. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 117(1), pp.77-97.

80 https://news.ku.dk/all_news/2018/12/wage-transparency-works/

81 https://news.ku.dk/all_news/2018/12/wage-transparency-works/

8.4 GENDER PAY GAP – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE

In order to address the issue of gender pay gap in Ireland the following recommendations are being made:

I. GOVERNMENT

- Implement a public awareness campaign to explain the gender pay gap and why it matters.
- Implement mandatory gender pay gap reporting (GPGR) for companies in Ireland.
- Include a requirement for mandatory submission by companies of their strategy and action plan to close the gap, as part of the GPGR legislation.

II. BUSINESS

- Run internal communications strategy to explain GPGR and its implications.
- Develop and communicate clear action plans relating to how any identified gap will be reduced.

III. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Understand the salary landscape within your company.
- Get comfortable negotiating.



Sonya Lennon, Founder of Dress for Success Dublin, delivering the closing remarks at the #WorkEqual Conference 2019

9.0

Conclusion

Sonya Lennon

Five areas have been proposed for consideration in this report based on a shared opinion of multiple and diverse stakeholders. None of these areas on their own will solve the issue of workplace gender inequality. In fact, these areas have been defined as the priority, rather than exclusive considerations for government.

Mental health issues, low engagement, social poverty in a climate of high employment are just some of the major problems that we are experiencing today in Ireland. If we fully invest in the UN Sustainable Development Goals under the heading of gender equality, we *'will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.'*

UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 - Gender Equality

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Unfortunately, at the current time, one in five women and girls between the ages of 15-49 have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within a 12-month period and 49 countries currently have no laws protecting women from domestic violence. Progress is occurring regarding harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM (female genital mutilation), which has declined by 30 per cent in the past decade, but there is still much work to be done to completely eliminate such practices. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. Implementing new legal frameworks regarding female equality in the workplace and the

eradication of harmful practices targeted at women is crucial to ending the gender-based discrimination prevalent in many countries around the world.

In the longitudinal Kauai Study, the achievement-oriented behaviour of resilient girls was related to the model of educated and professionally committed mothers. High-risk children who reduced their anti-social behaviour more often had 'resilient' mothers with good self-esteem, low helplessness, and active coping behaviour (Kolvin *et al* 1990a)

How we are valued as individuals within our society and economy defines the value that we place upon ourselves. It creates the mood of our nation. When our citizens are valued, we create a functioning, progressive society for all.

We have made a commitment to follow on from this report with three more #WorkEqual conferences and three more annual reports as we continue to drive and accelerate this conversation in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

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Practical Policy Measures to progress workplace equality in Ireland

The #WorkEqual Conference