



Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality 2021

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the Government puts in place a **Victim's Commissioner**. An independent advocate and voice for victims.

Recommendation 2: That we have an **Independent Authority** on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence

The Authority provide policy specialisation on the issue of DSGBV around the issue, best practice and emerging issues drawing on the range of information and stakeholders.

Provide advice to Government on performance through an annual audit and in an ad hoc manner as need arises.

Set guiding principles and standards to be achieved in activity in this area.

Have a role in ensuring accountability and transparency of all activity addressing DSGBV.

Recommendation 3: That the whole of government activity be overseen by a **Minister**

Coordination across Government under a national strategy that tracks, drives and ensures performance and activity.

The Authority and Commissioner to submit annual reports and recommendations to the Minister.

Recommendation 4: That all activity on DSGBV is informed by the realities of gender inequality, sexism, misogyny and all other forms of hate.



**RCNI Submission to the
Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality**

February 2021

Introduction:

RCNI believe the impact of gender-based violence is highly significant in any discussion of gender equality and that we cannot fully understand the persistence and pervasiveness of inequalities unless we understand how domestic and sexual violence shapes and dictates our public and private spaces, individual choices and opportunities.

About sexual violence¹

Sexual violence is highly prevalent and pervasive in our society. Sexual Violence includes rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual violence, sexual exploitation and online sex crime. It encompasses threats and attempts to penetrate and assault also.

It can happen to anyone but is predominantly perpetrated against children of both sexes and women. In addition to being a child and a woman, other characteristics such as having a disability or being LGBT+ can increase the likelihood of being targeted for sexual violence.

It is predominantly perpetrated by men, approximately 95%. Most female perpetrators act alongside male perpetrators, but a few perpetrate individually. A growing area of perpetration is on online spaces and through electronic means.

A note on survivor care: Just as in any part of society, the Citizen's Assembly includes multiple survivors of sexual violence. Each survivor's experience enriches our knowledge, but no survivor should feel pressurised to share their experiences or to represent all survivors through their own experience. Solidarity with and safety for survivors in the group in this discussion includes not stating that you have never experienced sexual abuse as this reduces the protection in numbers for survivors in the group.

In an Assembly of 100 people you can expect there will be:

- 10 women and 8 men who have experienced contact sexual abuse as children,
- For up to 3 of those women and 2 of the men the childhood abuse will have included rape,
- When including experiences as adults as well as childhood abuse, 5 women and 2 men will be rape survivors.
- 21 women and 14 men in the group will have experienced some form of sexual abuse or assault over the course of their lives.

¹ all numbers in this section derived from the 2000 prevalence of sexual violence survey, the SAVI Report <http://www.drcc.ie/about/savi.pdf>

RCNI believe the scale of the issue should be matched with commensurate resources, leadership and infrastructure. This is currently not the case.

RCNI recommendations

1. That the government puts in place a **Victim's Commissioner**
 - a. The Commissioner would be established in law giving them independence, authority and security. The legislation would define its remit and powers.
 - b. Would advocate for Victims' rights.
 - c. Would take up complaints from individual victims and represent them.
 - d. Would advocate for reform on the basis of Victim's needs.

2. That we have an **Independent Authority** on Domestic, Sexual and Gender- based Violence
 - a. The Authority to be established under the law giving it independence, authority and security. The law would define its role and powers.
 - b. The Authority to provide policy specialisation on the issue of DSGBV around the subject, best practice and emerging issues. The Authority to be engaged with stakeholders, including the NGO sector, to be best informed.
 - c. Provide advice to government on performance through an annual audit and in an ad hoc manner as need arises.
 - d. Set guiding principles and standards to be achieved in activities in this area.
 - e. Have a role in ensuring accountability and transparency of all activity addressing DSGBV.

3. That the whole of governments' activity be overseen by a **Minister**
 - a. Coordination across government under a National Strategy that tracks, drives and ensures performance and activity.
 - b. The Authority and Commissioner to submit annual reports and recommendations to the Minister.

4. That all activity on DSGBV is informed by the realities of gender inequality, sexism, misogyny and all other forms of hate.

If you wish further information, please contact:

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