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NEWS REPORT

Country:	Ireland
Title:	Gender Pay Gap
Date:	6 July 2018
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<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Equal pay
Ground of discrimination:	Sex
Source:	Policy development
Field:	Equal pay
Applicable law:	Commission Recommendation 2014/124/EU

Content

Policy development: The Government on Tuesday, 26 June 2018 approved the General Scheme of the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill. The proposed legislation will be cited as the Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2018. The Employment Equality Act 1998 will be amended by the insertion of a number of sections to include: "*Gender Pay Gap Information*." The Minister will make regulations requiring employers to publish information related to the pay of their employees for the purpose of showing whether there are differences in the pay of male and female employees and if so, the scale of such difference.

The Minister will also have regard to the cost of complying with such regulations. These regulations will not apply to employers having fewer than 50 employees. It is proposed that for the first two years of the legislation that it shall apply to employment having over 250 employees, and then within three years that upper limit shall become 150 employees. The regulations may prescribe classes of employer to which the regulations shall relate including by reference to the number of employees the employer has; classes of employee; how to calculate the number of employees; how to calculate the pay of employees; and the form and manner in which and the frequency with which information is to be published under the proposed regulations. The proportions of male and female employees who are paid bonus pay and benefits in kind. There is to be provision for publication of the hourly rate of pay for men and women in respect of each category of employee; and also whether the employees are permanent, on fixed-term contracts or are part-time employees. The mean and median rate(s) of pay shall be published for each group of employees. It is proposed that such information shall be published each year. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) may make application to court if there is an alleged breach of the proposed legislation. There will also be additional enforcement powers and access to the Workplace Relations Commission if an employee considers that there has been a breach of the legislation.

Regulations may require the employer to publish information in respect of each Department of State, each scheduled office within the meaning of the Public Service Management Act 1997 (various state bodies), An Garda Síochána (police), and the Defence Forces.

Key points of analysis: The Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2015 make provision for Gender Pay Gap Information. There has been a consultative process by the Minister for Justice and Equality over the last year. The opposition Labour Party had introduced a private member's Bill in Parliament entitled the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (Gender Pay Gap Information) Bill 2017. The government agreed with the general thrust of the Bill. The government has now published its General Scheme following consultation with all interested parties.

Internet link source: <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR18000210>. Accessed 27 June 2018.