

# **The Irish Council for Human Rights**

Submission to Government on Review of the Equality Acts

8 December 2021



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## Section One: Introduction and Key Messages

The Irish Council for Human Rights (the “**ICHR**”) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation incorporated in November 2020. The ICHR was established as a direct response to the Irish Governments erosion of the most basic fundamental freedoms of the Irish people, not least due to the overwhelming silence from other human rights organisations operating in the State.

The ICHR aims to:

- Defend and promote human rights and civil liberties in Ireland;
- Inform public opinion on the matter of human rights and civil liberties;
- Monitor the situation of human rights and civil liberties in Ireland;
- Carry out research on issues impacting on civil liberties and human rights;
- Influence decision-making in areas of human rights and civil liberties; and
- Initiate legal action as necessary to protect and vindicate human rights and civil liberties.

The ICHR is informed by a Board of Advisors consisting of the following:

### Tracey O’Mahony (Chairman)

Tracey is an Irish lawyer, registered on the Roll of Practising Barristers held by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority. Tracey holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from N.U.I.G, a Bachelor of Laws Degree from N.U.I.G, a Barrister at Law Degree from the Kings Inn and Certificates in Commercial Contract Drafting and Public Procurement Law. Tracey qualified as a Barrister in 2007 and has worked as an in-house lawyer since this time.

### Dr. Fiona Flanagan

Fiona is a former Academic with an early career in the investment banking industry during which time she worked internationally. Fiona holds a PhD in Economics, a MSc in Economics and a BA(Mod) in Computer Science (all from TCD) and an MBA from CASS Business School, London.

### Dr. Michael McConville

Dr. Michael McConville qualified from Queens University Belfast in 1983 MB Bch BAO and completed his vocational training in General Practice in 1988 at the University of Manchester. Michael is an alumnus of the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO), and a certified international content developer for the Systematic Nomenclature of Scientific and Clinical Terminology (SNOMED -CT). Michael’s main interest currently are promoting the universal coding of diseases and clinical records to improve health through better communications.

### Dr. Pat Morrissey

Dr. Pat Morrissey is a GP in practice in Adare, Co. Limerick. He received his MB from UCC in 1998. Since taking over an established practice in 2004 he has developed the service and took an active part in the provision of out of hours medical care by becoming a director and chairman of Shannodoc which covers the entire Midwest region. During his time, he helped bring about important changes to the company structure before being removed on foot of an anti-lockdown speech given at the Custom House in Dublin in early October 2020. Pat has a deep interest in energy provision and the so-called climate change agenda. He is part of a team, 18for0, that includes energy professionals in the main who are planning to introduce modern nuclear reactor technology to Ireland.

### Dr. William Ralph

Billy Ralph is a GP in practice in Ballaghkeen, County Wexford. He received his MB, BCh, BAO, Medicine from the University of Dublin, Trinity College between 1987 and 1994 and trained for six years thereafter in psychiatry in the UK, before training to become a GP. Billy has worked in large commercial practises in Ireland and Australia and currently runs his own GP practice in Co. Wexford.

### Dr. Edmund Shanahan

Edmund is a Barrister and Academic. Edmund holds a BSc in Economics from the University of London, a Certificate in Investment Management from CFA Society London, an MSc in Finance from the University of London, an MBA from Henley Management College, a Barrister at Law Degree from the Kings Inn and a PhD from TCD School of Law. Edmund practices in the areas of Administrative Law, Constitutional Law and Planning and Environmental Law. His research interests include everything relating to Freedom of Expression and the law. Edmund has also taught in a number of universities in both Ireland and the United States.

### Sabrina Sullivan

Sabrina has wide-ranging experience in human rights law, with particular experience in disability rights.

Sabrina completed her LLB at the University of Essex. Sabrina trained as a barrister in the UK at the Inns of Court School of Law. She completed an LLM in Human Rights in Queens University, Belfast, being awarded the Stephen Livingstone Scholarship.

Sabrina has over 16 years' experience working in legal charities, including the Disability Law Service, Law Centre NI and the Citizen Advice Bureau. She has a particular interest in disability rights and has successfully litigated in over a 1,000 disability rights cases.

The ICHR welcomes the publication of this consultation on a review of the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 (the “**Equality Acts**”) and believes this review is timely, in light of the recent legalisation of discrimination by the Irish Government, arising from the introduction of the Health (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2021 on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2021.

The ICHR also welcomes the opportunity to participate in this consultation.

As part of its submission to this consultation, the ICHR published a survey titled Discrimination and Covid-19 (the “**Survey**”). The purpose of the Survey was to assess whether members of the public had suffered discrimination arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and the Irish Government's response to same. We were overwhelmed to receive 26,473 number responses within 16 day (between 12 November 2021 and 2 December 2021).

Within this submission (and using information extracted from the Survey), the ICHR will demonstrate that consistent and significant levels of discrimination are being exercised against persons on the basis of their health status. We will also highlight a worrying and growing trend towards not only an acceptance of such discrimination, but a glorification of such behaviour being perpetrated by the public , media sources and the Irish Government.

Through its Survey, the ICHR will illustrate the widespread disadvantage and discrimination that is being faced by persons on the basis of their health status, in areas ranging from health, education, employment, to participation in public life.

Through this submission, the ICHR makes recommendations for the inclusion of a new protected ground under the Equality Acts, of health/immunisation status.

## Section Two: Summary of Recommendations

The ICHR believes that health care information is personal and sensitive information that if improperly used or released may do significant harm to a person's interests in privacy and health care or other interests; and as such health care information is quintessentially private and deserves the utmost legal protection.

The ICHR consider that it is an unlawful discriminatory practice for:

(a) a person or a governmental entity to refuse, withhold from, or deny to a person any services, goods, facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health care access, or employment opportunities based on the person's vaccination status or whether the person has a COVID-19 immunity passport; or

(b) an employer to refuse employment to a person, to bar a person from employment, or to discriminate against a person in compensation or in a term, condition, or privilege of employment based on the person's vaccination status or whether the person has a COVID-19 immunity passport.

Furthermore, the ICHR believes that an individual should not be required to receive any vaccine whose use is allowed under Conditional Marketing Authorisation only or any vaccine undergoing safety trials (both of which apply to all Covid-19 vaccines being administered in Ireland).

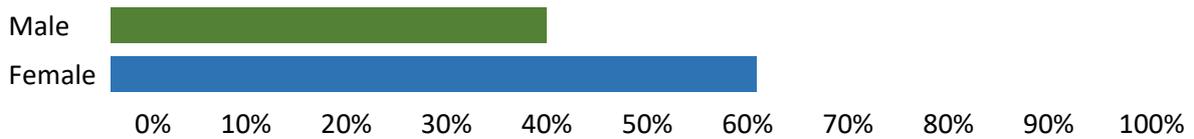
In light of the above, the ICHR recommends the introduction of a new protected ground under both the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 of: health / immunisation status.

## Section Three: The Survey

The following section will detail the questions asked in the Survey and the responses received. A total of 26,472 people took part in the Survey.

### Q1 – What is your Gender?

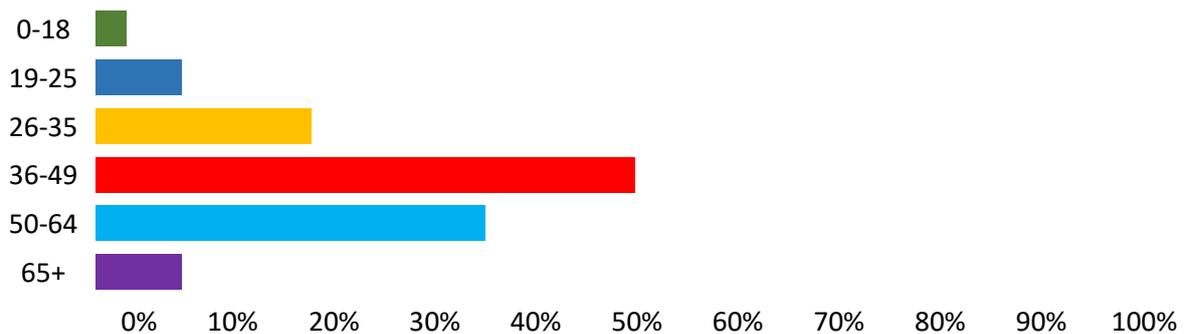
Answered: 26,364 Skipped: 108



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Male	39.00% 10,281
Female	61.00% 16,083
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,364</b>

### Q2 – What is your Age?

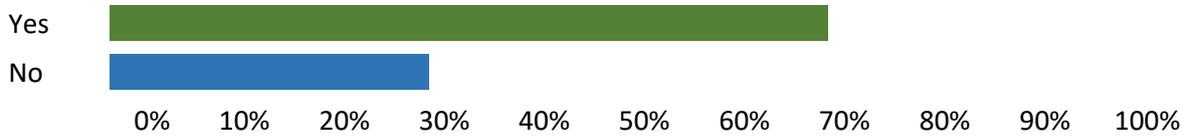
Answered: 26,375 Skipped: 97



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
0-18	0.89% 234
19-25	4.06% 1,071
26-35	17.91% 4,724
36-49	48.88% 12,892
50-64	23.75% 6,265
65+	4.51% 1,189
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,375</b>

### Q3 – Do you have Children?

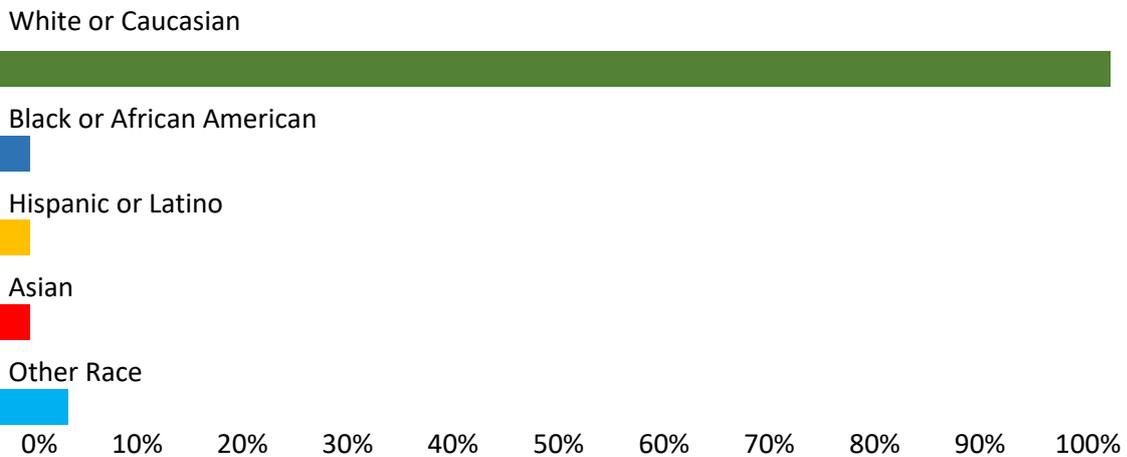
Answered: 26,361 Skipped: 111



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	70.49%	18,581
No	29.51%	7,780
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>26,361</b>

### Q4 – What is your Race?

Answered: 26,352 Skipped: 119



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White or Caucasian	96.80%	25,510
Black or African American	0.48%	126
Hispanic or Latino	0.50%	132
Asian	0.45%	119
Other Race	1.77%	466
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>26,353</b>

### Q5 – What is your Nationality?

Answered: 26,149 Skipped: 323

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Irish	80.50%	21,050
English	5.94%	1,553
Polish	5.66%	1,479
Lithuanian	1.37%	359
American	0.83%	218
German	0.72%	188
Latvian	0.68%	177
Italian	0.59%	153
French	0.53%	139
Croatian	0.52%	136
Spanish	0.42%	110
Slovakian	0.39%	103
Romanian	0.36%	94
Czech Republic	0.31%	81
Brazilian	0.30%	79
Hungarian	0.19%	50
Danish	0.10%	26
Swedish	0.10%	26
Indian	0.10%	25
Nigerian	0.09%	24
Ukrainian	0.09%	24
Austrian	0.07%	19
Swiss	0.07%	18
Chinese	0.04%	10
Pakistani	0.03%	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>26,149</b>

### Q6 – Have you suffered any form of discrimination, since March of 2020, arising from the Covid-19 pandemic?

Answered: 23,525 Skipped: 2,947

Yes



No



No, as I avoid any establishments that may potentially discriminate



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.62%	19,201
No	6.21%	1,462
No, as I avoid any establishments that may potentially discriminate	13.35%	3,140
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>23,525</b>

**Q7 – In circumstances where have answered Yes to Question 6, please tick the box that explains the grounds under which you have suffered discrimination**

Answered: 21,965    Skipped: 4,507

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Health Status (including immunization status)	83.79%	18,405
None of the above	13.46%	2,957
Disability	4.42%	970
Religion	2.42%	531
Age	1.27%	280
Race	1.24%	272
Family Status	1.17%	258
Gender	1.01%	221
Membership of the Travelling Community	0.71%	157
Marital Status	0.55%	121
Sexual Orientation	0.34%	74
Gender Identity	0.17%	38
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>21,965</b>

**Q8 – Do you believe discrimination in the provision of or access to goods and services is on the rise, since March of 2020?**

Answered: 23,477    Skipped: 2,995

Yes



No



0%    10%    20%    30%    40%    50%    60%    70%    80%    90%    100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	94.74%	22,243
No	5.26%	1,234
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>23,477</b>

**Q9 – Has the prospect of being discriminated against prevented you from going about your daily life, since March of 2020?**

Answered: 23,562 Skipped: 2,910

Yes



No



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	89.54%	21,097
No	10.46%	2,465
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>23,562</b>

**Q10 – Have you had to change your habits around shopping or dining because of discrimination, since March of 2020 (such as travelling extra distances or eating outdoors)?**

Answered: 23,580 Skipped: 2,892

Yes



No

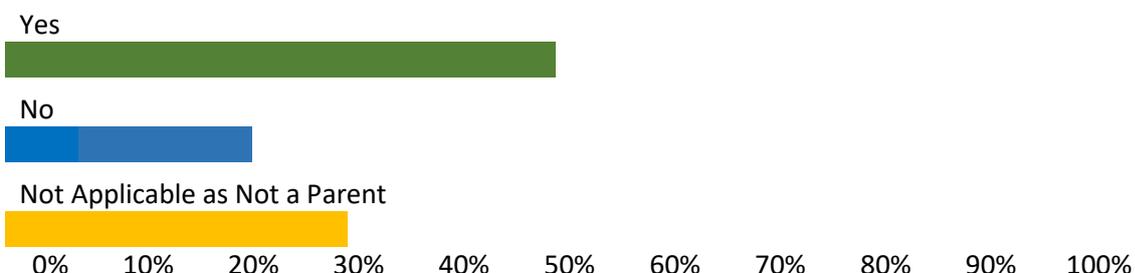


0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	94.19%	22,211
No	5.81%	1,369
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>23,580</b>

**Q11 – Have you been prevented, as a parent, from attending school / sporting / entertainment / medical events, with or without your child, because of your or your child’s health status (including immunization status), since March of 2020?**

Answered: 23,625 Skipped: 2,847



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	50.28%	11,879
No	20.14%	4,758
Not Applicable as Not a Parent	29.58%	6,988
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>23,625</b>

**Q12 – Please tick the boxes to confirm which type of businesses / services / venues you have been subjected to discrimination by:**

Answered: 23,092 Skipped: 3,380

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Restaurants	81.67%	18,860
Pubs	73.66%	17,010
Cafes	73.58%	16,991
Musical Events	48.11%	11,109
Hotels	34.43%	7,951
Sporting Events	30.77%	7,106
Hospital (as visitor)	26.34%	6,083
Retail Outlet (Other than Supermarket)	23.25%	5,368
GP Surgery	20.90%	4,827
Primary or Secondary School	14.12%	3,260
Training Course	11.21%	2,588
Hospital (as patient)	11.15%	2,575
None of the above as I avoid establishments that may potentially discriminate	9.51%	2,197
Dentist	9.24%	2,134
Graduation Ceremony	8.51%	1,966
College	7.22%	1,667
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>23,092</b>

**Q13 – Please detail your experience(s) of discrimination and explain how these experiences have effected your mental health and / or physical health**

Answered: 18,135    Skipped: 8,337

A total of 18,135 people responded to this question, outlining their individual experiences of discrimination and explaining how these experiences have effected them.

The most common themes included feelings of:

- Suicide;
- Depression;
- Anxiety;
- Fear;
- Upset;
- Isolation;
- Stress;
- Anger;
- Humiliation; and
- Intimidation.

Respondents also recounted experiences of:

- Verbal abuse;
- Feeling like an outsider;
- Feeling less than human;
- Feeling excluded from society; and
- Being treated like a second-class citizen.

Below is a sample of 103 responses, from a pool of 18,135 detailed experiences of discrimination:

- *“Im constantly judged*
- *My panic attacks and asthma have got worse as the humiliation of being told to leave a place while others just watch and say nothing also experiencing more migraines.*
- *Of all the moments of discrimination in the past year the one that stands out for me the most is from an anesthetist who stood over me in theatre and quizzed me on my health status while prepping me for surgery. The rest of the medical team stood and listened as he dismissed my right to choose and called me an antivaxxer. It was very intimidating and I was already very nervous as I was due to have a biopsy done that day. There was no compassion in that room.*
- *Disappointed as a tax payer. I pay tax to the government and now they want to block me from society. I'm simply perplexed that people think this is ok*
- *I had to get an ambulance as I had gastroenteritis and the paramedic made me feel awful for not having the covid vaccine*
- *The thoughts of going anywhere on a daily basis is becoming more and more difficult due to the possible discrimination I would be facing. This in itself is effecting my own personal mental health.*

- *I have been refused entry based in my medical status repeatedly. This is almost always in a very rude and judgemental manner. I have been publicly shamed by owners of restaurants, laughed at, ignored. I have had people verbally abuse me in shops, getting takeaway, in centra,. I am excluded from all social gatherings and I find I now avoid interactions and going anywhere public due to the backlash. Bullying is rife. I have had serious bouts of depression and anxiety.*
- *Anxiety, depression, & high stress levels. Being refused entry to a cafe, bar & restaurant. Had to cancel tickets for a music event because they extended use of the Convid pass. Anxiety over attending college in case I am asked my vaccination status. Avoiding going to the doctor with post partum issues because I havent been vaccinated. Not sure if my doctor will even see me. Feeling social pressure from family & friends about vax status*
- *Can't take my children anywhere as I am not vaccinated.. which is a disgrace.*
- *Stress Anxiety and treated like a diseased animal.*
- *When trying to go about my daily life. I am always wondering will I be aloud into a venue. This brings up a feeling of Anxiety a painful feeling in the pit of my stomach. and when I am turned away I feel less human not a human any more*
- *Not being abale to avail of indoor events meals socialising cinema ect makes u feel like an outsider*
- *I am made to feel like a second class citizen because I have excercied my right to choose my medication. My anxiety is growing over the measures that are being put into place that I feel will force me to take a medication against my will. I am becoming more withdrawn and introverted.*
- *Being turned away because I don't have a covid cert which I have found extremely upsetting and humiliating*
- *I have been refused entry to places and that makes me feel that I am no longer accepted as part of society, which makes me feel isolated, angry and upset*
- *It gas had a profound negative impact on my mental health. I had my 2nd baby just before March 2020 and have been completely isolated from all supports due to discrimination. Also my child ended up.in hospital with a virus this year and I was told it was because I wasn't socialising him enough and mixing with people but we are not allowed to go anywhere to do this.*
- *exclusion from public life, discrimination in restaurants and bars, difficult access to basic health care makes me depressed. I think about leaving the country more and more.*
- *It's gives me anxiety*
- *I gave birth without my partner present, it's against the law for me to feed my baby indoors when out because I am not vaccinated, the GP refused to examine my 4mth old baby in the surgery and stripped her in the car park!! Life is horrendous.*
- *It has a depressing effect and also because of the stress my health deteriorated.*
- *I work in sales in a showroom in Dublin and I had a customer in today who immediately questioned my face shield, being very intimidating and then asked was I vaccinated. Upon*

hearing my status, she refused to deal with me and requested to speak to somebody else. My colleague went to speak to her and she immediately asked her if she was vaccinated. Upon hearing my colleague's status, she asked to speak to someone who is vaccinated in the company, but because we were the only ones in the showroom, she chose to leave. A few hours later someone from HSE (or her directly, as she apparently works with the HSE) rang the business owner and complained about our face coverings (face shields) and the fact that we are not vaccinated and requested to come in tomorrow and speak to someone who is vaccinated. Tomorrow both myself and my colleague would like to take her details and take this further, as we were both shocked by her inquisition and were left feeling shaken and intimidated by her bullying attitude. I am looking for some advice and guidance as how to proceed further with this matter. I really would appreciate any assistance you can give me. I am due to meet up with my employer in the morning to get more details about this.

- Requirement to wear a mask in order to shop causes severe mental stress
- yes feeling suicidal
- I have been refused entry to public transport for not wearing a mask, even though I have an exemption letter from a respiratory consultant stating that because of a lung illness it would not be possible for me to use a cloth face covering.
- Being not allowed to dine indoors, visit restaurants and cafes and not being able to visit my Mother in nursing home is serious impact on my health and well being
- Depression
- Hassled for not wearing a mask. Told it was their policy/no exemptions accepted. Very demoralising.
- Treated like a second class citizen because I choose not to get vaccinated. This causes enormous stress and upset.
- Abused
- Feel excluded from society. Family tensions over vaccine status has led to upset and anxiety.
- Felt excluded from society leading to long term mental health and confidence issues
- Being discriminated at work for not being vaccinated. discriminated in all aspects of society for not being able to wear a mask.
- No celebrations of birthdays, communion possible other than home with only very limited amount of people due to both me and ex partner not being vaccinated. No access to entertainment with kids, no theatre, no cinema. Limited interaction with peers due to our vaccination status. I can handle it, it is affecting the kids big time, to a point they wish we were vaccinated. Not for health reasons, but purely so we can participate in society again
- I have been screamed at by colleagues. I've had to come out of work from the stress of it. My anxiety is through the roof. I wanted to send my children on their school tour in 2023 but was told they would need to be fully vaccinated!! My children were so upset. This doesn't help my anxiety. For the first time in my life, I need to take medication to get me through the day.
- Being prevented from accessing bars, cafes, restaurants, hotels (no doubt the list will grow in the future) because I don't possess a vaccine certificate has profoundly effected my mental

health. It is gross discrimination perpetuated by hypocrites in government who should know better especially those who have marched down O'Connell street during pride week. I feel as though society deems me unclean even though those who are vaccinated can both catch COVID-19 and spread it just as much as those who are not. Maybe I should start to wear a Yellow star of David going forward to warn people that I am unclean.

- *Very upsetting for me and my family. We feel our lives have been damaged for our belief of Democracy. Sadly mistaken*
- *Unable to socialise indoors with friends who are vaccinated. Made me feel like some sort of pariah.*
- *Become more withdrawn and depressed*
- *Not allowed to the gym, swimming pool - I stopped exercising regularly and got 10 kg more of my body weight. Also not allowed to the restaurant, coffee or even cinema caused emotional stress, anger and even depressive thoughts. I stopped calling and meeting my friends as I did not feel like it anymore. Felt at home like in a prison, I started suffering from insomnia. Also travel restrictions did not help to go and meet family. Problem with the access to GP because I am not vaccinated.*
- *Potential for triggering depression and stress related illness*
- *I have been discriminated against in various hospitality settings since summer 2021. It isn't so much the exclusion from such places as an individual that is an issue, but the utter humiliation of having to organise meetings with friends around my health status. Whether that's choosing what restaurants, pubs to go to or going to gigs, my vaccination status dictates arrangements. Not only is it degrading but it also effectively 'outs' my private medical information which I firmly believe should be one's own business.*
- *This medical apartheid has left my entire family excluded from normal society, caused mental health trauma, and destroyed social relationships, especially for my children.*
- *I was attending my best friend going home to Brazil in a restaurant in Dublin city when I was stopped from sitting outside by security. The man began shouting that I didn't have a Covid passport. I was left traumatised. I began to cry and my friends became upset. The security man was intimidating and threatening towards me.*
- *I have been avoiding establishments that are insistent on the covid 19 cert fearing discrimination and shaming on the grounds of my vaccination status. I have my legitimate concerns on the widespread use of experimental medicine and remain open minded to the risks versus benefits of the covid 19 vaccine. I have a right to wait until I am comfortable with the vaccine and should not suffer shaming and discrimination because of my medical choice. I will make my choice in my own time. I have suffered abuse from public and shaming from friends, exclusion, guilt, panic, paranoia depression and anxiety because of the government policies.*
- *My mental health has been affected as I am effectively in indefinite lockdown due to the vaccine passport system.*
- *Refusal of entry into a restaurant/bar to have a meal/drink with my vaccinated girlfriend, I agreed to sit outside but was treated unfairly by staff once they knew I wasn't vaccinated. The manager of the restaurant even said "just go get vaccinated" while I was paying for the meal. I'll never go to the restaurant again and I have been avoiding all establishments since, as I*

*don't want to experience something like that again. It's causing problems with my relationship as I can't take my girlfriend out anymore, we can't even go to the cinema. It's extremely depressing but I refuse to take part in a medical experiment to "protect" myself against a virus that I'm not at risk of dying from, where there are chances of serious adverse reactions which the manufacturers hold no liability for, just so that I can live a normal life. I find the whole thing absurd, vaccinated people are not immune and can transmit the virus just as much as unvaccinated.*

- *I can't seat, eat and drink in the restaurants and pubs. I feel depressed, isolated because I have no any social life.*
- *Not able to dine in, or join most of events make me feel kinda like prisoner in my house.*
- *Not being able to socialise with my vexed friends at pubs, restaurants and music venues. Not being able to visit an aging parent in his nursing home. Being subjected to comments like "selfish", even from Mr Varadkar, who btw also stated we were the problem. Being confined to boundaries during lockdown like a criminal. Constant coercion by the media and blatant lies from RTE regarding numbers, confirmed by the figures on the CSO web. Mental health suffering as a result. Lost my job as a result of covid and no prospect of employment due to unvaxxed status.*
- *I have been unable to visit my 80 year old aunt who resides in a nursing home. She has no family & it is painful not to be allowed to visit her.*
- *Discrimination causes me anxiety & depression*
- *My child now has anxiety issues since covid and not being able to go into the school with her to talk to her teacher in person has made it harder to help her and we couldn't even take her to the cinema with her friends for her birthday or treats out to dinner.*
- *I've been suffering from high anxiety and panic attacks over these rules*
- *Went to Killarney with friends and could only find 1 eatery that allowed me inside. It effected me big time because it got very uncomfortable with my own friends (all mask wearers, all vaccinated) because we were so limited on where to eat and drink because of my choice not to receive that vaccine. I'm exempt from wearing a face mask and have a doctors note to say so but it doesn't matter according to The Spa Hotel in Lucan, they insist on seeing my doctors note even though that's against the law. I've had trouble in The Spar in Dodsboro too where I had to show my doctors in order to get served. It's getting worse, it's genuinely not easy even leaving my house anymore.*
- *I was offered a place on a two year educational course which I accepted and which was then subsequently withdrawn based solely on immunisation status. Personal views of course coordinator made very clear on the matter of vaccination - verbally reprimanded by such individual. Unable to attend events with children, family, friends and work events. I've suffered discrimination, exclusion and isolation, all of which has had a negative effect mentally and emotionally.*
- *Depression*
- *I have had no human contact, I live alone have no family I can't attend events with friends restricted to zoom calls, I feel less human everyday,*

- *Denied access to establishments that once was a given. Not therefore being able to socialise with family and friends, leading to exclusion from key events in my life. I retired from the Defence Forces after 25 yrs loyal service and served 7 times overseas with the UN to safeguard peoples freedoms, and now I am a victim of discrimination by my own government.*
- *I cannot enter any restaurants or cafes, if I bring my baby to town I worry if I don't make it home I cannot feed him as no where will allow us in. It's a huge stress & worry and I cannot spend any length of time out & about.*
- *Makes me feel very anxious and sad*
- *You feel closed and disassociated Increased stress and isolation*
- *I never thought as an Irish Citizen that I will be discriminated on the basis of a vaccine. It has divided both me and my family and my friends as I have chosen as a healthy middle aged lady not receive this vaccine. It is also prevented me from doing things that I want with my son like go to the cinema or into any outdoor play areas. It's an absolute disgrace and I cannot believe that it is allowed in a modern day free society*
- *Due to my decision for health reasons to not have the vaccine I can no longer take my child for lunch or dinner or even to the cinema. I am now suffering from severe anxiety and am awaiting counselling. My mental health has deteriorated which in turn effects my physical health. It is disgraceful what is going on.*
- *Makes us feel scared*
- *It has effected my mental health big time I am afraid to book anything for my daughter incase I am discriminated against for no vaccine*
- *Feeling singled out based on false claims of who can transmit. Feeling let down by politician's, which gives a feeling of constant worry, constant fear of what more discrimination is produced by legislation. Legislation which can not be backed up and is made under false claims. Leading to thoughts of constant worry because not able to cope with future threat to our health, future of our children with lack of being listen to and falsely accused of harming others. Lost trust in politicians to care for our people especially children, lost trust in honesty of presented facts and in media. Not being able to speak out and looking over shoulder who is listening. Worry about repeat of history similar to what happened less then 80 years ago in Germany.*
- *I'm in depression because I can't live my life anymore in Ireland*
- *The dentist refused to treat me as I had no covid cert! Access to pub was denied too for same reason created by the government*
- *Being denied entry to pubs, restaurants and cafe has been very upsetting because I am a new mother and I feel I am confined to the house now. Its very isolating, I cant even meet anyone for a coffee because I am unvaccinated and cannot enter cafes. The most upsetting thing for me though, is not being allowed to go to my local breast feeding support group because I do not have a covid cert. It is very hard not to feel alone right now, and with a small baby and newly post partum, my mental health was already fragile but this has added to the heartache 10 fold. A few short months ago they were advising breast feeding mothers not to get the vaccine, now it's suddenly safe? It doesn't make sense to be and I shouldn't be made to feel like a disease animal because I don't want to put myself and my child at risk by taking this vaccine*

- *The discrimination experienced by myself and my wider family has been very severe on our mental health. The feeling of being disconnected and blamed for all of the public health issues has left me feeling marginalised and very very concerned about our immediate future and that of our family. We are seriously considering leaving the country as although not as bad as what is happening in Austria, I have no faith in the government to protect my rights as a citizen. Nothing would surprise me anymore in how unvaccinated people are treated. A year ago if you told me the government would round up the unvaccinated people in camps I wouldn't have believed you but that could be a real possibility with the legislation that is being put forward at the minute. It's terrifying.*
- *Horrific. I have felt less than human, treated in a truly disgraceful manner. All government induced.*
- *I am not allowed to dine with my family, go iceskating, attend parental meeting to see my children's work, do face2face training, my accountant refuse to let me in her office, I can't travel to see my family, I couldn't attend my godchild graduation and niece's confirmation, my son's Holy Communion, my kids are not allowed to go to cinema, have birthday parties, I feel like worst category of human at my working place....*
- *I can't celebrate any family events in a restaurant as before, eat indoors, most of the entertainment is not accessible at the moment, at work there is a lot of black mailing, experiencing a fear of losing a job and at the same the basic income. I feel unsecured, depressed, worried about future.*
- *I feel like a 2nd class citizen since the vaccine pass came in. My anxiety levels have increased. I've been picked on by vaccinated people, one person said unvaccinated people should be ostracized from society. I'm trying to shield my children from what's going on at the moment. No longer freely able to go for food, drinks or to a cafe. Having to explain to your vaccination status to establishments.*
- *Experiencing anxiety and feelings of isolation and exclusion.*
- *I feel like I'm being looked at as someone who is below everyone else, also as if they look upon me as a lepper because I've chosen to not take a vaccine which is my choice, why should I be forced to.*
- *Isolation is one of the main risk factors for poor mental health, which lockdowns and covid certs have perpetuated. Mental health in general and the consequences of public policy on it have been completely ignored in the last two years.*
- *Mental health is wrecked.*
- *I have children. I can't go to the movies with them, I can't go to a restaurant with them for dinner. I am asking why? How can I explain to the children that we cannot go together? The right to a normal life is limited at every step. I am afraid for my future and my children's future.*
- *Not being able to enter a premises due to vaccination status. This causes me to feel low on mood and isolated because I was always used to having a good social life and going to meals. I'm also separated from being able to socialise with friends due to a vaccine that was ment to be personal choice to take or not. This makes me feel angry yoo*

- *Sometimes I feel depression because even rain I can't eat inside restaurants with my children because of covid restrictions. It's really hard to explain my daughter why people are inside but we can't*
- *Cant do basic activities with family and friends and the extreme vitriolic and violent rhetoric coming from members of the government who have arbitrarily placed me and parts of my family and friends into some sort of societal sub class based on exercising our basic rights to bodily autonomy has shook me to the core. I don't even know if i will be allowed to work, to go and get food in a shop or worst of all raise a family of my own if this pace continues. I don't even know how to process the thought of my future ahead of this when you have your own government deciding you are now undesirables and incite the public and the media against you.*
- *Refused entry into many places due to no vaccination, covid vax. My mental health has suffered as my day life has changed,I feel sad,upset,and almost like an outcast from society.*
- *I have been called dirty by too many establishments now. I work for a mental health charity and I have the tools to cope but even for me this is horrific to endure. I have friends who won't let me hold me their child because they think I am a danger to them when it is clearly not the case with vaccinations only showing efficiency for 90days! I feel completely exiled.*
- *Depression and loneliness*
- *Made me disconnected from society, I felt isolated and suicidal*
- *I am living with a terminal disease. Access to Healthcare is limited Access to participate in society is limited Time to die perhaps*
- *I dont go out much as it is with mental health issues but if there is a family occasion and it is in a pub or restaurant I cant attend and I am starting to feel isolated. Booked a santa experience in tayto park to bring my 2 kids with other family. Received an email a month after booking to say you need covid cert and I.d. or you cannot attend. Kids went off with family while I sat at home crying about missing the experience with them.*
- *It is severely affecting my mental health. I feel extremely anxious and unwelcome everywhere I go now.*
- *I feel I lost my freedom ,and my mental condition is very bad since march 2020*
- *GP asked was I vaccinated and would only do over phone consultation as I wasn't. Dentist asked status on form but didn't make an issue. Cannot get into any bars or restaurant. School parent teacher meeting cancelled ,only by phone due to vaccination status. Asked not to return to local bar by landlord as customers were afraid of catching covid from me even though they are all vaccinated and I was in good health,wouldn't be at a bar if I wasn't one would imagine .*
- *Its embarrassing when you are pointed out in a crowd of people, I have been told to just leave a till because I had no mask as that man would not serve me. I can wear a mask for 5 minutes max after that I find it hard to breathe*
- *Gp sent me to hospital instead of treating me when she heard I wasn't vaccinated. Doesn't want to see me in the surgery next to impossible to get an appointment.*

- *Collectively bullied because I chose not to get covid jab, discriminated to go nearly anywhere. Manipulation from media, pharma companies and government. My mental health is really down.*
- *I am thinking about suicide*
- *Not vaccinated due to fertility issues and the unknown impact of the vaccine and my mental health has been severely affected as I have not been able to attend family events*
- *My mental health has suffered greatly due to this its also affecting my day to day activities and relationships*
- *Very anxious, consistently worried, fearful, worn out, feeling vulnerable, feeling alone*
- *The messaging and fostering of blame and ridicule towards people who are not vaccinated has had a profound impact on my mental health. The fact that I can't participate in many normal aspects of living when others are 'allowed' to is very isolating. But it also serves as a mechanism to 'out' me to others while they are simultaneously being encouraged to dismiss me or essentially hate me. I have had several breakdowns over this. I am made to feel stupid, selfish, and backwards. The weight of blame put on me and others who have so far decided not to get vaccinated is incredible. Society has lost its humanity. The first year of this pandemic my mental health held up well while my partner was not coping. This year I am hitting rock bottom. I feel like people are being trained to dehumanise me. I'm just in shock at how well it's working. I've had long term friends rant at me and dismiss me before I say a word. That's not normal. I am a human being.*
- *This has gotten way out of had. I am a mother of one I have tried countless time to bring my son to the cinema, sporting events, out for a meal to be refused time and time again. Discrimination on any level is NEVER okay especially around medical status. My mental health is suffering if I'm being extremely honest and I don't know what to do.*
- *I'm in utter disbelief that I have been turned away from many establishments and events. It's hard to describe the shock you go through to know that you're effectively 'locked out' and are actively and openly being discriminated against. How is this acceptable and justified. How can this be happening in a country that would describe itself as a democratic republic.*
- *I felt like second class Citizen*
- *Bullying in the workplace, unable to socialise with family members or friends in a social setting! Extreme isolation from society as a whole.*

**Q14 – Have your children suffered any form of discrimination, since March of 2020, arising from the Covid-19 pandemic?**

Answered: 20,348 Skipped: 6,124

Yes



No



No, as they avoid any establishment that may potentially discriminate



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	51.25%	10,428
No	25.31%	5,151
No, as they avoid any establishment that may potentially discriminate	24.73%	5,033
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>20,348</b>

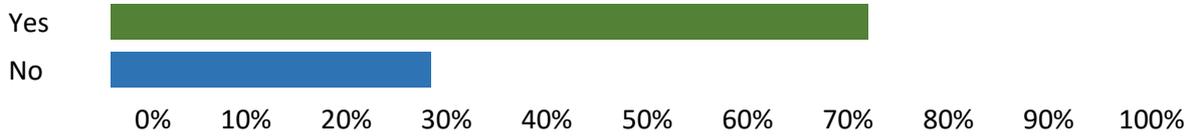
**Q15 – In circumstances where you have answered Yes to Question 14, please tick the box that explains the grounds under which your children have suffered discrimination**

Answered: 17,159 Skipped: 9,313

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Health Status (including immunization status)	60.61%	10,400
None of the above	37.12%	6,370
Disability	2.35%	404
Age	1.66%	285
Family Status	1.59%	273
Religion	1.51%	259
Race	0.83%	143
Membership of the Travelling Community	0.57%	97
Gender	0.31%	54
Sexual Orientation	0.23%	40
Marital Status	0.22%	37
Gender Identity	0.15%	26
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>17,159</b>

**Q16 – Have your children had to change their daily habits and / or lives because of discrimination, since March of 2020?**

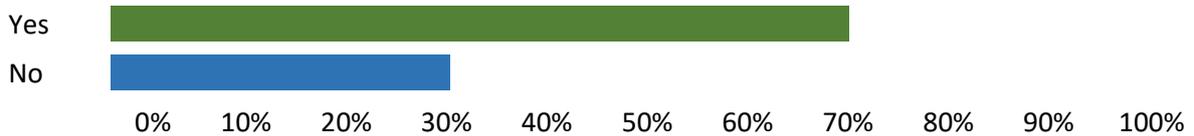
Answered: 19,168 Skipped: 7,304



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	71.35%	13,676
No	28.65%	5,492
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>19,168</b>

**Q17 – If the answer to Question 16 is Yes, has this change in your children’s habits / lives, affected their mental and / or physical health**

Answered: 18,136 Skipped: 8,336



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	69.73%	12,647
No	30.27%	5,489
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>18,136</b>

**Q18 – If the answer to Question 17 is Yes, please describe how your child’s mental and / or physical health has been affected by the discrimination they have suffered**

Answered: 11,956    Skipped: 14,503

A total of 11,969 people responded to this question, describing how their child’s mental and physical health has been affected by the discrimination they have suffered.

The most common themes included feelings of:

- Panic attacks;
- Anxiety;
- Depression;
- Fear;
- Worry;
- Withdrawn;
- Isolated; and
- Stressed.

Below is a sample of 100 responses, from a pool of 11,969 detailed experiences of discrimination:

- *“She has chest pains was referred to a specialist that put it down to stress*
- *My child has questions about their future, wondering if they will be excluded from sports, discos, youth clubs, school tours etc*
- *My 12 year old son was told in school by his friend in class, that he was crazy for not being vaccinated. And asked if he didn't care that he killed his grandmother. My son was shaken by the comments, and didn't want to play with him and the group of boys that he usually play with, and didn't want to go to 'children's club' after school, so he isolated him self, and now he is sad, feeling he doesn't have any friends.*
- *It is very distressing for children. The effects could be felt even when they are adults. Their childhood, the best years of their lives are destroyed.*
- *Mental health affected causing emotional upset due to lack of social gathering*
- *Panic attacks, anxiety depression and loss of interest in school and hobbies*
- *We have had to change the way we live and consider every plan we make to ensure they will accept us as we are.*
- *Fear*
- *Being isolated by peers*
- *Worry.. anxiety*
- *The kids feel estranged, they miss playdates, karate trainings, art classes, sleepovers, birthday parties, socializing outside school hours. My 8yo daughter starts showing signs of depression. Winter is going to be tough with the weather being not so great for outdoor play...*
- *My children have become insular and depressed due to COVID restrictions on their freedom.*

- *My daughter likes to keep her mask on so people won't "see" her. She doesn't meet her friends. She's found it hard to develop new friends since starting secondary school because of masks, social distancing and lockdowns. My son has become very down. And has regular angry outbursts. He has ASD and the masks have made social communication so much harder for him at school.*
- *Both children are in college and most of their lectures have been online. Both kids have 'gone into themselves'*
- *suffer from anxiety and stress over the vax pass for socialising*
- *They are deeply unhappy about being marginalised*
- *Mask mandates and vaccination coercion has severely affected their ability to socialise, access education and crippled their mental health with anxiety eating disorder and ocd*
- *They are a toddler and have not been able to socialize and this massively affects their development, masks will also take a toll on their recognition of things like facial cues. The children should never be made to suffer and they are*
- *My daughter has repeated been victim to a lecturer in her college calling unvaccinated people murderers. And she cannot socialize with her friends. She has become very down..*
- *My children now suffer with anxiety , afraid to go out without a mask because of the shouting they have had to put up with from grown adults asking them to wear a mask. Lost friends because family's won't allow unvaccinated inside their homes or to be with their kids. Anxiety and hating to go to school because of having to wear a mask for up to 10 hours a day*
- *Discrimination as unvaxxed could not attend a concert. Sense of loss , the straw that broke the camel's back. Sees very little point in life at the moment.*
- *This has caused my child to become depressed, anxious, withdrawn and isolated from friends and excluded from socialising and taking part in events at a crucial time in said child's life.*
- *Having to wear masks at school is affecting my children mentally & physically.They are not able to study or focus properly with the lack of oxygen .Tis horrendous .Also by not taking an experimental injection is another area where they are seen as different etc.The while situation is atrocious & criminal.We no longer live in a Democratic country !! This must change!*
- *I don't have kids but I am a child that has mental health issues since March 2020 such as increase in anxiety and agoraphobia*
- *They have been ostracised by their peer group, due to their vaccination status. They can't partake in so many outings with others as they once could. This has led to stress, anxiety and emotional frustration.*
- *He is sad, lost a lot friends. He's at home all the time*
- *My daughter has extreme anxiety OCD a tic disorder from the pandemic*
- *My son has not been allowed to part take in indoor activities, this started when he was 5 years old and he is now 7. We have to pack a picnic wherever we go and bring a potty in case he needs the toilet as we are not welcome anywhere. He is not allowed in any indoor playcenters, allowed eat indoors, or visit Santa Claus. We were turned away from a school fundraiser at*

*Halloween due to me not having a covid cert. this is heart breaking to watch. I do not want to watch this life for him.*

- *When your 7yo is asking you why we can't go visit Santa this year is really heartbreaking*
- *I have a four year old who has spent half his life in either lockdown or restricted from entertainment ... as his parents aren't vaccinated places where the pass is required for parents but not children mean my kids routinely can't enter places to socialise as their guardian cannot enter*
- *My son has developed an eating disorder/habit out of boredom, not being to play sports mix with other kids during lockdowns ..... my children are constantly questioning myself and my partner as to why we all can't attend events and play activities, this causes so much stress and anxiety in our household ,so much so that my child with allergies has said to me , that he just wants to take the vaccine, so he can return to normal life , as a parent I feel it my absolute right to decide on the welfare of my children, and not be coerced into taking any medicine that I feel would be detrimental to my children or my own health, I believe this is my human right as an Irish citizen to decide .*
- *Upset not being able to be brought by mammy or daddy to their cousins birthday and that grandparents had to bring him and mammy and daddy had to wait outside to collect him after*
- *Because (we) mum and dad are not vaccinated, my kids are being targeted by other kids parents in vaccine discrimination for e.g. You can't invite her to your party because her parents aren't vaccinated. They are cut off, isolated and the social engineering the media and government are to blame for warping peoples mindsets.*
- *They are anxious about what's going on. They know their mum is unvaccinated, we can't go to the cinema or out for food like we used to. My 7 year old is suffering with anxiety at the moment. My 9 year old is terrified that they are bringing masks in for age 9 plus in schools.*
- *My kids suffer the same discrimination I do. I try protect them as much as I can but it's difficult to tell a 9,8 and 4 year old we're not allowed do things we use to.*
- *I worry for my childrens mental health as the state sponsored segregation is creating a wedge between the citizens. Government is showing its ok to discriminate, and as it has been shown by medical data vaccinated people spread Covid as much the segregation is completely unjust.*
- *Hasn't seen her grandfather in nearly 3 years , worries about him every day . Cried her heart out for a full day when he said he couldn't come home for Christmas again. Couldn't attend a friends birthday party without a vaccination cert.*
- *Not letting a 5 year old child into the cinema because of their parents immunisation has left my child completely confused. Aswell as the way the person spoke to her mother.*
- *Terrible anxiety and depression*
- *They are terrified being around people now.*
- *She had become very secluded and lonely. She has no siblings her weight has increased dramatically and we are really concerned for both her mental and physical health*
- *They are more anxious and don't want to engage in outside activity*

- *My youngest child wants to go to school but I will not send him with the current covid situation where he would have to wear a mask all day. My eldest has a medical exemption for facecovering of any kind yet in one shop, within 3 minutes of entering the shop the manager was called and he threatened to punch my son in the (swearing) face!!!! He is 16yrs old and was with me. He is autistic and having been faced with similar treatment in other places now rarely leaves the house for fear of being attacked again. I no longer take either shopping with me for fear of exposing them to the vile attacks I am regularly receiving from both staff and the public. The mental affects are obvious already but who knows what the long term effects will be of treating out children like this. I frequent playparks with my youngest and other children have been told not to play with him, presumably for fear of catching covid. My eldest is keen to go and get a job but is scared of the reaction to being exempt from wearing a mask and choosing not to be vaccinated.*
- *My Childs mental health has deteriorated with every lockdown. Not being able to go to school, socialise with friends or play sports has been very difficult for him. Children are unaffected by Covid 19. What we have done to them in the past 2 years is disgraceful. I fear for their future, as this will have long lasting negative impact on their lives.*
- *My 16 yr old is now attending counselling due to the effect of lockdowns, others discriminating due to vaccine status, the relentless fear that is needlessly driven by gov & msm*
- *She has less friends, kids from neighborhood don't want to play with her anymore because in all estate we are the only unvaxinated family*
- *My eldest (now 13) a very confident child has become withdrawn and uneasy always expecting to be asked about vaccine status. The kids were made put their hands up in class if they'd had the vaccine. He put his hand up even though he's not vaccinated as he was too embarrassed, and didn't want hassle from friends or teachers. My daughter who wet herself as we weren't allowed to go to the bathroom no longer thinks she's a big girl and worries about it happening again. My 8 and 9 year old are upset they can't go bowling or to the cinema like their friends.*
- *Severe stress anxiety that caused alopecia*
- *my son has autism, adhd, spd & gad. socially he regressed hugely during the lockdowns and now that we are 'allowed' out again we cannot frequent many places that had become part of our routine because of masks/vax status*
- *My daughter has lost all her hair through the stress*
- *Daughter could not have family who weren't vaccinated at her graduation event or dinner. Son turned away from sporting activities and under age disco cause of no covid cert , they are missing out on being with they're family and friends and they get very upset*
- *My daughter is now excluded from all her normal social activities. She has lost friends. She's lost job opportunities. She feels very isolated and alone and her mental health is suffering badly*
- *My child couldn't attend a school disco with her friends. Was upset for days over it*
- *They have both been excluded from several social gathering and sporting activists because the organisation have taken it on themselves to only include vaccinated children. My children feel very much left out and are fearful for what the future holds for them if they remain unvaccinated.*

- *My child used to love going out with me for a treat to the cinema or a happy meal or a slice of cake in a cafe or to the cinema for a movie... It was our mom and son time and now we have to sit outdoors in all types of weather or not go at all because of my vaccination status... He misses those times and as a child with ADHD he already has a hard enough time with his mental health without adding to it and there's been a big change in his personality and even his sleep and behaviour since covid*
- *Anxiety levels are debilitating Fear increased Not being able to take part in things their friends are taking part in It goes on & on*
- *My children are over 18 but my Son suffers with anxiety and depression. He felt bullied into taking the vaccine because after being isolated in lockdown for so long he couldn't bear the thought of not being able to socialise with his friends again. He did NOT want it ut felt he had no other choice if he wanted to be a part of society again and to be able to travel.*
- *They have been asking what is wrong with their family that they cant sit inside like everyone else*
- *My children's mental health are all suffering by news and scaremongering. Anxiety depression and even a 10 month waiting list for cams. My children are being excluded from many venues. This has to stop they are ruining the next generation and their little minds*
- *They are really sad that their friends parents can bring them to the soft play and cinema and their parents me and dad cannot. Distressed a lot*
- *Has become a lot more anxious ... any external interaction became a "big deal" with lots of hyper nervous energy visibly on display. One particular instance has stuck with me ... when something trivial happened and he felt like he had been wrong he burst into uncontrollable tears that went on for hours. No real cause no real reason, external interaction that had (to his mind) not gone 100% prompted a pretty major melt down. Never seen this before or after.*
- *They feel like not belong it anymore, all conversations in schools are about vaccinations. My 10 year old wanted me to book appointment for pcr test to make sure she don't have Covid19. She is terrified*
- *My child is Autistic and has been severely effected*
- *My oldest child 22 years is now recivecing support from a psychologist due to the discrimination.*
- *She cry all the time .she afraid go to school because I'm not vaccine*
- *2 of my grandchildren have no memories of before covid. The children have suffered more than any one else in this so called pandemic. They cannot be the carefree kids that we experienced when we were their age. No happy childhood memories*
- *My daughter will not leave home, she now suffers panic attacks and is terrified that someone will verbally or physically abuse us. She is also terrified of what new ridicules rules the government will bring out next. She lives in constant fear.*
- *Depressed and feel like leppers*
- *Subdued and nervous around people*

- *My child is terrified of masks. Can't trust adults that wear masks. Asks constantly if we allowed sit in here. We've been refused at the cinema recently, and he sobbed for an hour afterwards*  

- *My children I fear will take longer to recognise facial expressions or learn due to face coverings. My children and I were forced outside of business premises in bad weather due to not being in possession of a digital cert or undergoing a medical treatment. Security guards have approached and shouted at me scaring my children.*
- *Depression has set in where it never existed before,*
- *They are being bullied at school*
- *Very isolated and depressed. No interest in doing anything*
- *anxious worried scared isolated increasing feeling sad social anxiety*
- *Lonely, scared, isolated, fearful, confused, worried, hopeless*
- *My 5 year old son is asking why we have to sit outside of restaurants. He asks why only vaccinated people are allowed inside. He is too young for me to explain and understand. It's upsetting him.*
- *They've been shouted at for touching things in shops, witnessed me being verbally attacked for my mask exemption, lost relationships with family and friends, been denied access to entertainment, missed birthdays (their own parties and others)*
- *We aren't able to interact with many children as play centres are only open to vaccinated people. They are just kinda sad and bewildered wondering why they can't go into some places and it's just heartbreaking.*
- *My daughter feels totally alone isolated judged*
- *My children are very stressed and anxious and feel they are being coerced into taking a vaccine they don't need to live a normal life*
- *My child was forced to sit outside on a cold day with his grandmother on the one occasion she took him out for the day. An old lady and a toddler sitting in the cold eating a sandwich is disgraceful and goes against the tenets of a caring society. We have not taken him anywhere since*
- *She is not going to school and have depression. We need help.*
- *There has been untold psychological damage done to my children as a result of them being classed as second class citizens...not being able to access cinemas arc with their friends!*
- *Not being able to use the same services as friends or others, very isolated*
- *She has been challenged at school by teachers and other supervisory staff as she is exempt from wearing a mask. She has suffered anxiety and stress as a result.*
- *Isolation. Alienation from friends.*
- *my children had a nervous breakdown when we had a lockdown, they stop to speak with me, they have a bad mood, very aggressive, have an anxiety, confusion, Irritability and mood changes.*

- *they feel threatened and afraid because of their vaccination status*
- *My child is currently seeing 2 therapists as she has been diagnosed as chronic depressive*
- *Sleepless nights anxiety stress worry the list goes on its the destruction of a generations mental health and well-being*
- *My child is 2 yrs old and has been to no toddler groups there was a time when I couldnt even take my baby to the only place that was open which was a playground then they sealed that off too we cant go to soft play areas we cant or haven't ever eaten out as a new family of 3 since she was born she has never seen santa as they too are discaminating becuae her mother choose to not have the vaccine I'm worried that since shes been born all she has seen when we go out for a walk that all she sees is people without faces covered with masks it must be so scary it scares me this is not normal*
- *Children are laughing at my son, or looking at him like freak , as he's not vaccinated and the most of his class colleagues is. He realises that we unvaccinated people are treated like worst than other citizens in this country. We don't have " privileges" like vaccinated, and that puts him in distress and sadness.*
- *My child has become withdrawn and self isolates from their friends and family and has had a course of anti-depressants*
- *One chis has attempted suicide 3 times in the lockdown. The other has had to watch.*
- *One of my daughters best friend is not allowed to be friends anymore as us parents aren't vaccinated. I cannot explain why we are not allowed to cinemas and/or restaurants and other indoor activities, just because they all are to young to go on their own, but I'm not allowed in as I'm not vaccinated. They keep asking to go, I keep saying no and at the end of the day they feel guilty somehow, I just can't explain to them all this situation so they would understand it properly and it ends up with disappointment, my eldest daughter(6) started to bedwetting because of stress covid restrictions and rules. Physically she's healthy and all good, but few months after all covid started she's been having problems with wetting bed. My son(11), who has autism, are in dark place now, he doesn't like himself, talking a lot of dieing, that he's fat and not smart enough, and it all started during this pandemic times. Normally he's one happy man, that enjoys life. But now he comes home with runny nose (after a day outside in cold weather, running and jumping) straight away takes one of my masks puts it on goes to his room and says he has covid, it's good, he takes care of his and ours health, but to state that he already has it only because he gas runny nose is wrong. Youngest(5) daughter suddenly is stick to me or any other family member like she's gonna lose one any minute, and we in our family have never made things that way so she would felt insecure. All that started during pandemic.*
- *Child seems to think he has done something wrong as we can't consume drinks or food on premises where others are dining.. tantrums and upset due to not understanding how he's being treated different to others.. all due to my vaccination status*
- *Not allowed to attend swimming lessons, Scout group, dance class anymore. Causing increased anxiety and depression.*
- *Sadness, loneliness, depression, anxiety as a result of decreasing social interactions and activities. Horrifying to see in a 4 year old.*

- *I work long hours so on Saturdays I've always brought my eldest off to cinema or play centres to give Mammy a rest and spend some time just the two of us. I can no longer bring her to cinema or play centres as they look for COVID pass. my little one said to me that she's sad that she can't go to the places she loves even though her friends can."*

**Q19 – Has your family suffered any form of discrimination, since March of 2020, arising from the Covid-19 pandemic?**

Answered: 21,540 Skipped: 4,932

Yes



No



No, as they avoid any establishment that may potentially discriminate



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	79.10%	17,038
No	8.03%	1,730
No, as they avoid any establishment that may potentially discriminate	13.59%	2,928
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>21,540</b>

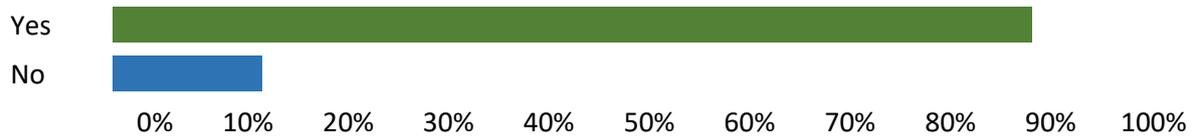
**Q20 – In circumstances where you have answered Yes to Question 19, please tick the box that explains the grounds under which your family have suffered discrimination**

Answered: 19,695 Skipped: 6,777

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Health Status (including immunization status)	84.33%	16,609
None of the above	13.58%	2,674
Disability	3.45%	680
Religion	2.41%	475
Family Status	2.13%	420
Age	1.47%	289
Race	1.22%	241
Membership of the Travelling Community	0.98%	193
Gender	0.55%	108
Marital Status	0.52%	102
Sexual Orientation	0.26%	52
Gender Identity	0.22%	44
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>19,695</b>

**Q21 – If you have answered Yes to Question 19, has the discrimination your family has suffered created stress and tension in the home?**

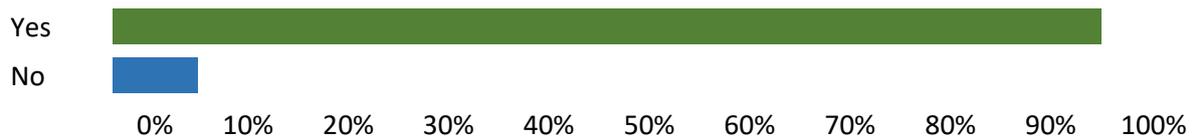
Answered: 19,846 Skipped: 6,608



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	86.67%	17,217
No	13.33%	2,647
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>19,864</b>

**Q22 – Do you believe discrimination has become more acceptable within society, since March of 2020, arising from the Covid-19 pandemic?**

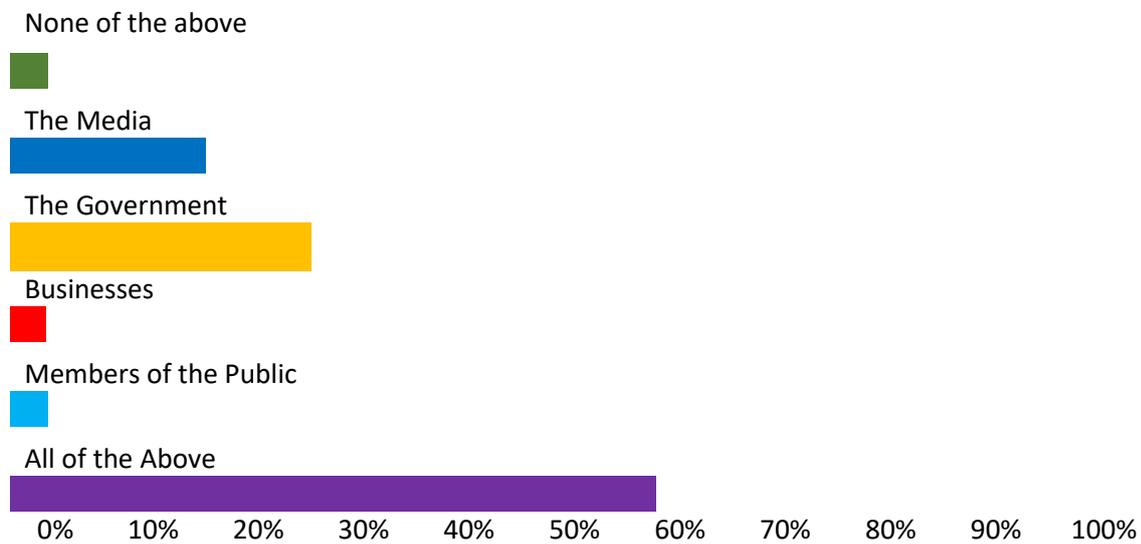
Answered: 21,960 Skipped: 4,512



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	96.14%	21,113
No	3.86%	847
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>21,960</b>

**Q23 – If you have answered Yes to Question 22, do you believe this acceptance of discrimination is due in whole or in part to the actions of: Please choose one.**

Answered: 21,709 Skipped: 4,763



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
All of the above	56.95%	12,363
The Government	24.33%	5,282
The Media	15.83%	3,437
None of the above	1.92%	416
Members of the Public	0.75%	162
Businesses	0.23%	49
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>21,688</b>

## Section Four: What Does the Survey Tell Us

26,473 people responded to the Survey, of this number approximately 40% were male and 60% female.

48% of those who responded were aged between 36 and 49 years, it is also notable that 234 respondents were aged 18 years or less, while 1,189 respondents were older than 65 years.

Those with children represented a majority of those who responded at 70%, while the vast majority of respondents (96%) were white or Caucasian, that said persons of other race were also represented in the Survey, with 126 black or African American, 132 being Hispanic or Latino, 119 Asian, and 466 being of another race.

As one might expect a high percentage, 80% to be exact, of respondents were Irish, while the remaining respondents were English, Polish, Lithuanian, Romanian, Latvian, Brazilian, Spanish, Italian, French, German, Indian, American etc

The first question of note in the Survey (Question 6) asked respondents to confirm whether they had suffered any form of discrimination, since March of 2020, arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. While it is unsurprising to the ICHR, we are still alarmed to record that 81% of respondents confirmed that they had suffered discrimination, with a further 13% confirming that they have not suffered discrimination because they avoid establishments that may potentially discriminate.

Those who answered in the positive to Question 6 were asked to answer Question 7, which requested information on the grounds under which they had suffered discrimination. Again the ICHR is not surprised to record that 84% of respondents have confirmed that they have suffered discrimination since March of 2020 due to their Health Status (including immunisation status). It is also worth noting that only 0.17% of respondents recorded suffering discrimination on the basis of their gender identity. This is worthy of note considering that the Irish Government wishes to introduce a new protected ground of gender identity, not least given the very serious and marked difference in recorded levels of discrimination on the grounds of gender identity (at 0.17%) compared to health/immunisation status (at 83.79%).

When respondents were asked (through Question 8) if they believed that discrimination in the provision of goods and services was on the rise since March of 2020, 95% confirmed that they did. Further to this, 90% of respondents confirmed that they have altered how they go about their daily lives as a result of this discrimination.

It is also clear that parents are suffering great levels of discrimination with 50% of respondents confirming that they (as parents) have been prevented from attending school / sporting / entertainment / medical events, with or without their child, because of either of their health status (including immunisation status). This percentage is even more alarming when one considers that only 20% of respondents confirmed they had not suffered any such discrimination, with the remaining 30% advising that they are not parents and therefore the question was not applicable to them.

The levels of discrimination illustrated through the Survey are having a detrimental effect on families and family life, with 87% of respondents confirming that the discrimination being suffered by

members of these households is creating stress and tension in the home. It should also be noted that the discrimination being suffered by individuals and families has resulted in feelings of:

- Suicide;
- Depression;
- Anxiety;
- Fear;
- Upset;
- Isolation;
- Stress;
- Anger;
- Humiliation; and
- Intimidation.

Perhaps the most telling and worrying result is the finding that 96% of respondents believe that discrimination has become more acceptable within society, since March of 2020, arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Given the constant rhetoric being expelled by both the Irish Government and media suggesting that it is only right that those who exercise bodily autonomy are treated as second class citizens or less than (examples of which are set out below), it is fair and reasonable to place the burden of responsibility on such parties to remedy the legalisation of such discrimination and segregation.

#### Examples as discussed above

Malcolm Byrne FF: Referring to limiting services to unvaccinated people –

*“We need to ensure that we put the interests of people who are vaccinated first... but to those who are unvaccinated, who are being so selfish, I think the message from Government has to be, we’re going to stand up for those who are being responsible”.*

Gerry Horkan FG: Referring to expanding the use of Vaccine Passports –

*“And I think, like others have said, gyms, hairdressers, but why not supermarkets, why not public transport, I know it’s difficult to police some of these things but, really if you want to participate in society you need to be vaccinated, and if you don’t want to participate in society, okay... Stay at home, that’s your own business”.*

Sean Kyne FG: Referring to the masking of 9yr old children –

*“I heard a commentator compare masks in school to a form of child abuse, which is absolutely ridiculous and scandalous, and is an insult to anybody to has unfortunately suffered a form of child abuse. Masks are an inconvenience, they’re a bit of a pain, that’s it, that’s as much as*

*they are... Most children will have no issue... They'll see them as what grown-ups do, and wear, and have, they'll probably enjoy it... and in many cases, it's their parents that are the problem".*

Leo Varadkar FG: Speaking on CNN –

*"We do have among the highest vaccinations rates in the world, around 94% of adults are fully vaccinated. Unfortunately, the 5pc that are not, are causing a lot of the trouble."*

Fergus O'Dowd FG: Referring to limiting services to unvaccinated people –

*"This is the only way to proceed, we cannot allow unvaccinated people to take up services which are urgently required and not available to the population who are vaccinated".*

It is clear in terms of:

- i) the number of people who responded to the Survey in general;
- ii) the number of people who responded to the Survey in such a short space of time (16 days);
- iii) the results from the Survey; and
- iv) the thousands of individual accounts of recorded discrimination -

that one could deduce Government policy in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, has created an entire new category of discrimination, based on a person's health / immunisation status.

At no time in recent memory has it been acceptable for the political establishment to create laws which segregate a large portion of the population based on their personal health decisions. Furthermore, the confidence with which the Irish Government suggest such discriminatory policies are acceptable, has given life to the idea that not only should such treatment be normalised but glorified.

The evidence gathered through the Survey suggests that it has become a virtuous act to seek out the personal medical information of strangers through uncomfortable and public interrogation. The Survey results also suggest that it has become socially acceptable, and indeed celebrated, to mistreat members of the public who are found not to be complying with Government guidelines around Covid-19, irrespective of the reason for any such noncompliance. Such mistreatment comes in the form of verbal abuse and harassment, being denied basic services, and being ostracised from social events.

Many of the written responses contained in the Survey, refer to the stress of everyday life being magnified at the prospect of performing the most mundane activities, like buying the weekly groceries or attending a school event with children.

The prospect of being challenged and confronted over private medical information, at any time, by anybody, has left the majority of respondents to the Survey, feeling intense levels of undue stress and anxiety.

Such conditions also put immense strain on the family, with parents feeling hopelessly limited by their choices for fear of receiving negative repercussions, which may affect them, but more importantly, their children.

It is a repetitive theme throughout the Survey results, that such hostile living conditions would not have been made possible, but for the fact our political and media establishments, have helped to package and sell the idea, that those who do not adhere fully to all Covid-19 guidelines (irrespective of the reason), have only themselves to blame for the way they are being treated (including but not limited to discrimination). The Survey results confirm that there is a feeling among respondents that the Irish Government, and the Irish Media, have encouraged a change in acceptable behaviour and societal norms, through laws, guidelines, radical proposals, and hateful rhetoric – which has resulted in widespread discrimination being exercised against members of the public on the basis of their health / immunisation status.

Considering the dominance Covid-19 has over everyday life, it is reasonable to suggest that the persecution and discrimination suffered by the vast majority of respondents, will not stop unless done so through legislative protection.

We at the ICHR find the needless suffering of people abhorrent, and completely unacceptable, and expect the Irish Government to rectify the appalling increase in discrimination that has been made possible through their actions.

## Section Five: ICHR Recommendations

It is clear from a review of Section Four: Survey Results that there has been a significant rise in the levels of discrimination being suffered by members of the public due to their health / immunisation status. That said, the most extraordinary development in this regard, is that this rise in discrimination has taken place as a direct result of Government action and policy. This is particularly appalling in light of the Governments declarations that it strives to combat and outlaw discrimination both in the employment context and in the provision of goods and services – see example below.

Extract from Department of Justice website below<sup>1</sup>:

### ***“Anti-Discrimination***

*Equality Division develops policy and draft laws to improve equal opportunities and to work towards a more equal society in the area of employment and family friendly policies, and in the access to goods, facilities and services.*

*We work to promote greater respect for the person and for diversity, equality and cultural difference, mainly through laws and administrative practices.*

*We also support family-friendly policies through laws on maternity leave, adoptive leave and parental leave.*

- *The Maternity Protection Acts 1994 and 2004 provide your statutory minimum entitlements in relation to maternity at work including maternity leave.*
- *The Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016 provides fathers with two weeks of paternity leave and two weeks of paternity benefit, for babies born on or after 1 September 2016. This is a significant piece of legislation which recognises the key role that fathers play in the life of newborn babies and young children. The Act can be accessed on the Oireachtas website. Details on how to apply for Paternity Benefit are available on the Department of Social Protection's website. A Regulatory Impact Analysis was prepared in advance of the Act and is available here: Regulatory Impact Assessment*
- *Under the Adoptive Leave Act 1995, as amended by the Adoptive Leave Act 2005, the adoptive mother is entitled to avail of adoptive leave from employment, except in the case where a male is the sole adopter.*
- *The Parental Leave Act 1998, as amended by the Parental Leave (Amendment) Act 2006, allows parents to take parental leave from employment in respect of certain children. On 8 March 2013 the European Union (Parental Leave) Regulations 2013 increased the amount of parental leave available to each parent to eighteen weeks per child.*

*We are currently preparing legislation to consolidate maternity, adoptive, parental and carer's leave into one piece of legislation, to be known as the Family Leave Bill.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/WP15000116>

### **Anti-Discrimination legislation**

*Discrimination occurs when you are treated less favourably than another person because of your:*

- *gender*
- *civil status*
- *family status*
- *religion*
- *sexual orientation*
- *age*
- *disability*
- *race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins) or*
- *membership of the Traveller community.*

*The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2011 outlaw discrimination at work including recruitment and promotion; equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment.*

*The Equal Status Acts 2000–2012 outlaw discrimination outside the workplace, in particular in the provision of goods and services, selling renting or leasing property and certain aspects of education.*

*The Workplace Relations Commission (formerly the Equality Tribunal) investigates or mediates claims of unlawful discrimination under equality legislation.”*

As stated earlier in this submission, the ICHR believes health care information is personal and sensitive information and that if such information is improperly used or released, any such disclosure may do significant harm to a person’s interests in privacy and health care or other interests; and as such health care information is quintessentially private and deserves the utmost legal protection.

In light of the above, the ICHR recommends the introduction of a new protected ground under both the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 of: health / immunisation status.

## Section Six: Conclusion

Through this submission, we believe that we have demonstrated that a sizable portion of the public are experiencing consistent and significant levels of discrimination on the basis of their health status and that there is a growing trend towards not only an acceptance of such discrimination, but a glorification of such behaviour.

We believe that we have also demonstrated that this discrimination is not only widespread but is actually invading every aspect of a person's private and public life, in areas such as health, education, employment and participation in public life.

At the ICHR we believe that the Irish Government must take action to undo the wrongs that have been committed through the Government mandated legalisation of discrimination on the basis of a person's private medical information (should they truly condemn discrimination and inequality as alluded to on many occasions by the Government) and as such the ICHR hereby call on the Government to introduce a new protected ground under both the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 of: health / immunisation status – before it is too late and the damage done to society is irreparable.