

Annex A

More Information on the Citizens' Panel on Work-Life Harmony

1) What is a Citizens' Panel, and what is the Citizens' Panel on Work-Life Harmony about?

A Citizens' Panel is an immersive way of involving the wider community in examining an issue of national interest and co-developing solutions with the Government. Through this, citizens will be able to deliberate, discuss and make informed recommendations on these matters.

The Citizens' Panel on Work-Life Harmony is an opportunity for Singaporeans to work more directly with the Government to:

- a. identify underlying factors and gain deeper insights on issues that affect Singaporeans' work-life harmony, in the context of supporting families; and
- b. identify trade-offs and develop solutions, including those that could be undertaken directly by business owners, supervisors and workers, to create the conditions for work-life harmony in Singapore.

2) What is the scope of the discussion for the Citizens' Panel on Work-Life Harmony?

The discussions, which will be conducted in the English language, will focus on (i) identifying underlying factors affecting work-life harmony in the context of supporting families (including marriage and parenthood aspirations), (ii) the related issues and trade-offs, and (iii) developing solutions that could be implemented by the whole of society.

Discussion topics may include (but are not limited to):

- a. establishing workplace practices and culture which enable flexible work arrangements¹;
- b. redesigning jobs and work processes to enable those who wish to reduce work intensity to care for their families; and
- c. recognising trade-offs that individuals and companies may need to make between income/revenue, work intensity, relative career trajectories and work flexibility.

¹ **Flexi-Time** (including staggered start/end hours), **Flexi-load** (including Part-time arrangements), **Flexi-place** (telecommuting)

3) When will the Panel be held?

Participants will come together over four Saturdays (28 September, 12 October, 26 October, 9 November 2019) from 9.30 am to 5 pm.

4) Who will make up the Panel?

All Singapore Citizens aged 21 years and above are welcome to apply to be a part of the Panel. From the applications, about 50 members of public from different walks of life will be selected to form the Panel. They will include employers from different industries, employees with different employment status (e.g. full-time, part-time, freelancers), individuals with different marital status, and those with various family responsibilities (e.g. parents or caregivers to other family members).

5) What is expected of participants?

Participants should bring with them a keen interest in improving workplace norms and practices and be open to hear from others who may hold different perspectives.

Given the extended discussions and deliberations of the sessions as a Panel, we seek participants' understanding that we will need them to commit for four full-day (9.30am to 5.00pm) Saturday sessions (28 September, 12 October, 26 October and 9 November 2019). We regret to inform that we will not be able to accommodate part absences from any of the sessions.

6) What will it be like to be part of this Panel?

The Panel will offer participants an opportunity to exchange views and work more directly with the Government on ways to achieve work-life harmony. They will deliberate on practical challenges and trade-offs, and make recommendations to strengthen support for Singaporeans in managing their work and family commitments, including fulfilling marriage and parenthood aspirations, and caring for other family members.

The participants will examine issues related to work-life harmony in small discussion groups, and brainstorm ways to address them. During the process, participants will be supported with access to more information than what is made available in typical engagement sessions. For example, participants will be able to engage a panel of subject-matter experts (e.g. human resource professionals, business leaders, and organisations that work with families) who will provide information and advice on work-life matters (e.g. existing measures, statistics, examples from other countries), to help them make informed recommendations.

Over six weeks of involvement, participants will learn more about work-life issues, have robust and in-depth discussions, and prepare a report of their recommendations that will be presented to the Government. The Government will subsequently provide a response to the Panel's recommendations.

7) How can interested Singaporeans apply to be part of the Panel?

Interested citizens who wish to participate in the Panel can apply at http://www.ideas.gov.sg/public/CitizensPanel_WorkLifeHarmony from 15 to 31 July or call +65 6516 5603 (between 9am and 5pm, from Monday to Friday). Selected participants will be informed by early-September 2019.

8) Whom do I contact should I have queries on the Citizens' Panel?

For queries on the Citizens' Panel, please email your query to [SG Play A Part@pmo.gov.sg](mailto:SG_Play_A_Part@pmo.gov.sg).

9) When will the Panel be expected to submit their recommendations to the Government?

The Panel will submit their recommendations at the last session on 9 November 2019.

10) Why the need for a Citizens' Panel on Work-Life Harmony when we have been grappling with work-life balance issues for a long time?

Workplace culture and social norms are powerful influences on people's choices at work and in their personal lives, including their decisions on dating, marriage, having children and caring for family members. While there have already been efforts to support more family-friendly workplace practices (please refer to Question 12 below), it is timely to review these efforts, build on them and also seek fresh ideas on how to create the conditions for work-life harmony for Singaporeans. Citizens on the Panel will deliberate on the potential benefits and trade-offs of their recommendations, and co-develop and deliver solutions which can better support Singaporeans in this aspect.

11) How is the Citizens' Panel on Work-Life Harmony different from other engagement/feedback sessions?

The Citizens' Panel on Work-Life Harmony is an opportunity for Singaporeans to go beyond contributing ideas, to co-creating solutions with the Government. They may even put some of the recommendations into action themselves. Panel participants take ownership of their ideas by formulating a set of their own recommendations at the end of the engagement sessions. This report will be presented to the NPTD and MOM, who will subsequently provide a response to the Panel's proposed recommendations.

12) What measures are currently in place to support Singaporeans in achieving work-life harmony?

Today, parents are eligible for 22 weeks of leave in the child's first year, which include:

- a. 16 weeks' paid Maternity Leave for working mothers

- b. Shared Parental Leave - working fathers are eligible for up to four weeks of the 16 weeks of Maternity Leave, subject to the agreement of the mother)
- c. Two weeks' Government-paid Paternity Leave for working fathers
- d. Six days' paid child care leave per parent per year
- e. Six days' unpaid infant care leave per parent per year (if they have at least one child aged below two years)

All employees benefit from more flexibility in managing their work and family commitments. Employers are encouraged to provide this through:

- a. Work-Life Grant of up to \$105,000 per company, to encourage employers to sustain employees' adoption of flexible work arrangements (FWAs)
- b. Tripartite Standard on FWAs, which encourages employers to offer FWAs in their companies
- c. Tripartite Standard on Unpaid Leave for Unexpected Caregiving Needs, which encourages employers to provide unpaid leave when their employees have urgent caregiving needs

A job-sharing implementation guide to educate and guide employers to put in place such a FWA was also recently launched.

13) Why is the Panel limited to 50 participants and not more? How can others who want to share their views do so?

We plan to recruit a Panel of about 50 members to provide sufficient diversity in experiences, backgrounds and views to enrich the discussions. At the same time, we also want to ensure that all Panel members are meaningfully engaged, and are given the opportunity to discuss and deliberate the issue and recommendations in-depth. We also recognise that the bigger the Panel, the more challenging it would be for the participants to organise themselves, given the intensity of discussions and time constraint.

In addition to the Panel, we welcome Singaporeans to share their views and ideas on strengthening support for work-life harmony and/or marriage and parenthood through our online surveys and our suggestion box at heybaby.sg/PlayAPart. These survey results and suggestions will also be provided to the Panel for their consideration and deliberation.

14) How have Citizens' Panels/Juries been used overseas and to what effect?

The Citizens' Panel is based on the Citizens' Jury process invented by political scientist Ned Crosby, the founder of the Jefferson Center in the United States of America, with the aim of creating a process where citizens could participate in policy-making, discuss trade-offs involved, and develop solutions that the whole of society can participate in. The concept has also been adopted in other countries such as the UK and Australia, on issues ranging from "Economy and Federal Debt" (USA), to the sharing of health records (UK), and compulsory third party insurance (Australia). The reports of these Juries have been published and submitted to policymakers.