



European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland

Press Release on Budget 2019

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European Anti-poverty Network Ireland welcomes increases to social welfare rates and calls for an ambitious approach in the new National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland welcomes measures announced in Budget 2019 that sees a focus on increases to social welfare rates and investment in housing solutions.

The Network stated however that in 2019 the Government must also adopt an ambitious approach to the new National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, which is now overdue, in order to ensure that everyone has access to an adequate income, quality services, and decent jobs.

Budget 2019 sees increases of €5 across social welfare rates including increases to payments for qualified children, the full restoration of the Christmas Bonus payment, and a maintenance disregard for the working family payment.

Paul Ginnell Director of EAPN Ireland said: *“The 2019 increases to welfare payments are welcome, bringing us closer to pre-austerity levels however we are disappointed that there has not been a more meaningful move to restore payments to adult rates for those under 26 on Jobseekers. We need to see all welfare rates benchmarked against a level which is adequate for people to live a decent life.”*

He added that *“In light of the current homelessness and housing crisis, Budget 2019 includes welcome increases to investment for social and affordable housing programmes, however we question any long-term viability around increased spending in tandem with an over reliance on the private sector.”*

He went on to say *“We believe the Government should take the opportunity provided by the upcoming National Action Plan for Social Inclusion to take a multi-faceted and ambitious approach to public investment and the social policies required to end poverty.”*

The Programme for Government makes an important commitment to the proofing of the budget to ensure it contributes to advancing equality and reducing poverty.

Mr Ginnell continued, *“We welcome the commitments to improving equality budgeting, and specifically to look at the impact of measures on those living in poverty. If the Government is serious about tackling poverty it is essential that it strengthens how it carries out equality and poverty proofing of all policy making including budgetary decisions.”*

Ends

Also see: [EAPN Ireland Pre-budget submission 2019](#)