

## European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland



### Press Release- Income adequacy protects households from poverty, not only during COVID-19

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The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland is calling on the Government to ensure that the new Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Support Payment, and all other welfare payments are adequate, in order to prevent more people from falling below the poverty line, and provide for a Minimum Essential Standard of Living.

EAPN Ireland welcomes the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Support Payment which assists people who have lost their jobs or are on a reduced income. However, it is clear the payment is currently not adequate enough to ensure households won't end up living on or below the poverty line and therefore unable to meet essential needs. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ireland was already experiencing a poverty crisis, with overall poverty levels still higher than before the economic crash of 2008.

EAPN Ireland Paul Ginnell Director states: *“While we acknowledge there may well be further Government announcements regarding the COVID-19 Payment, we hope any forthcoming changes will recognise the importance of income adequacy. The Government must step up and enable people to access an income that is adequate, impeding a further escalation in poverty and inequality.”*

He goes on to say: *“If the new payment of €203 is accepted as inadequate to meet the current cost of living, then we must accept it is inadequate for all those already depending on social welfare. The Minimum Essential Standard of Living sets out the income that is needed for households to live with dignity, establishing a barrier against poverty and preventing long-term negative impacts upon communities, our economy, and society at large. This is the minimum benchmark we should be setting for all welfare supports”*

He adds, *“The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us the vital need for well-funded and supported public services, as well as a living wage and welfare adequacy. When these structures are in place it ensures that during times of emergency, Ireland can respond at the highest standard, protecting the health and well-being of people, and preventing any further poverty and social exclusion. These are the standards we should aspire to not just in times of crisis, but for the functioning of any decent and caring society. We need a national conversation on this as soon as the immediate crisis has passed.”*

Ends

Notes:

The Minimum Essential Standard of Living represents the basket of goods and services a household requires to meet basic physical, social, and psychological needs. It is the standard below which nobody should have to live and is based on rigour research conducted by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, which is updated annually to reflect the Cost of Living. See [www.budgeting.ie](http://www.budgeting.ie)