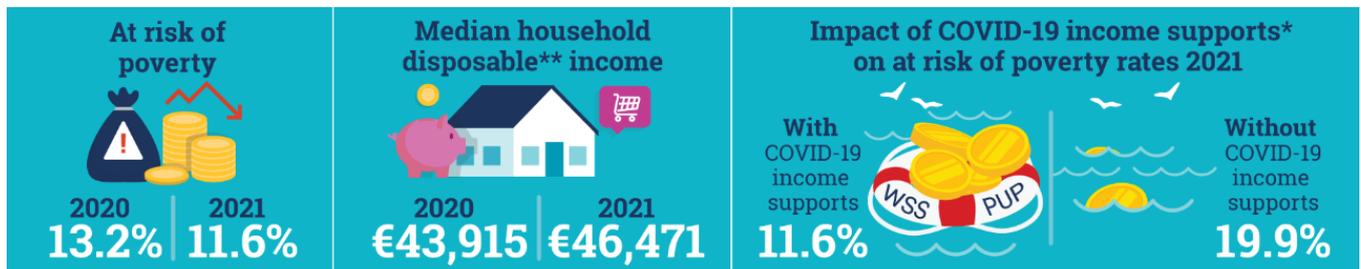


Briefing on 2021 Income and Poverty Data

July 2022

In May 2022 the Central Statistics Office published the [Survey of Income and Living Conditions \(SILC\) for 2021](#). This Survey provides us with important information on income, poverty, and inequality in Ireland and the groups most impacted. It also helps us to see how Ireland is progressing towards its poverty target of reducing Consistent poverty to 2% or less by 2025 which was adopted in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025. This is a roll-over of the same target that was previously set for 2020.

Key points from the Survey of Income and Living Conditions 2021



Income

- The amount of disposable income each person had in 2021 was €25,264. This is the median (middle) disposable income which also takes account of differences in household size and the number of adults and children.

At-risk of Poverty

- In 2021, 11.6% of the population were living below the poverty line (or were at risk-of poverty) as they had an income that was less than 60% of the median disposable income, so €15,158 per annum or €290.49 per week, an increase of €18.26 from 2020. This is over 581,000 people.
- Without the provision of Covid-19 income supports, almost 20% or one in five people would have been at-risk of poverty.
- If all social transfers were excluded from income, the at risk of poverty rate would have been 38.6%.
- Almost 4 in 10 (39%) of those unable to work due to long-standing health problems had incomes below the poverty line. By household composition, the at risk of poverty rate was highest for persons living in households comprised of one adult aged less than 65 years (28.8%).
- Those who were renting were at greater risk of poverty (19.8%) than those who owned their own homes (8.2%).

Enforced Deprivation

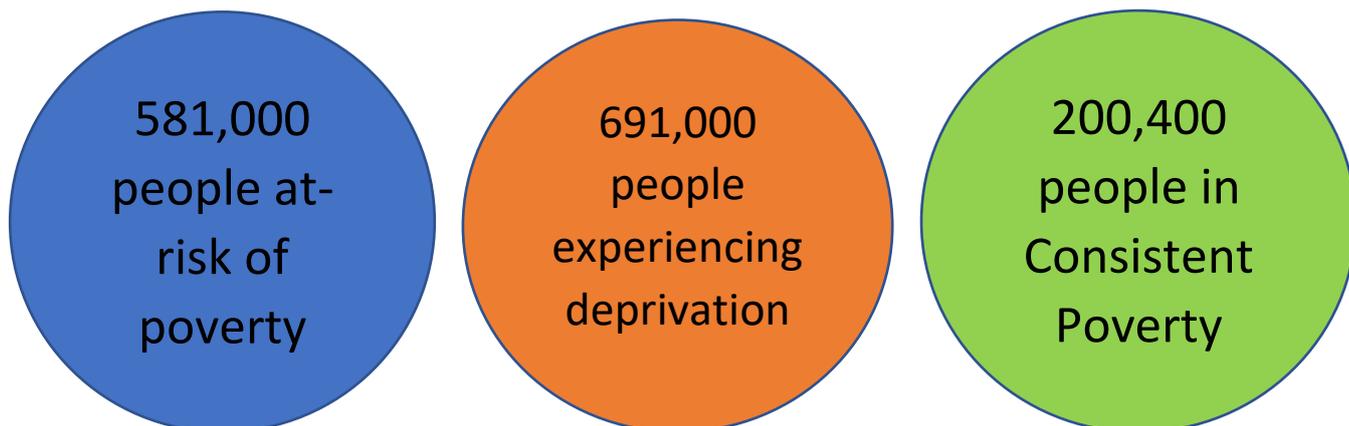
- Enforced deprivation refers to those who cannot afford two or more of the eleven items considered essential¹. In 2021 13.8% of the population or over 691,000 people

¹ Two pairs of strong shoes; A warm waterproof overcoat; Buy new (not second-hand) clothes; Eat meal with meat, chicken, fish (or vegetarian equivalent) every second day; Have a roast joint or its equivalent once a week; Had to go without heating during the last year through lack of money; Keep the home adequately warm; Buy presents for family or friends at least once a year; Replace any worn out furniture; Have family or friends for a drink or meal once a month; Have a morning, afternoon or evening out in the last fortnight for entertainment

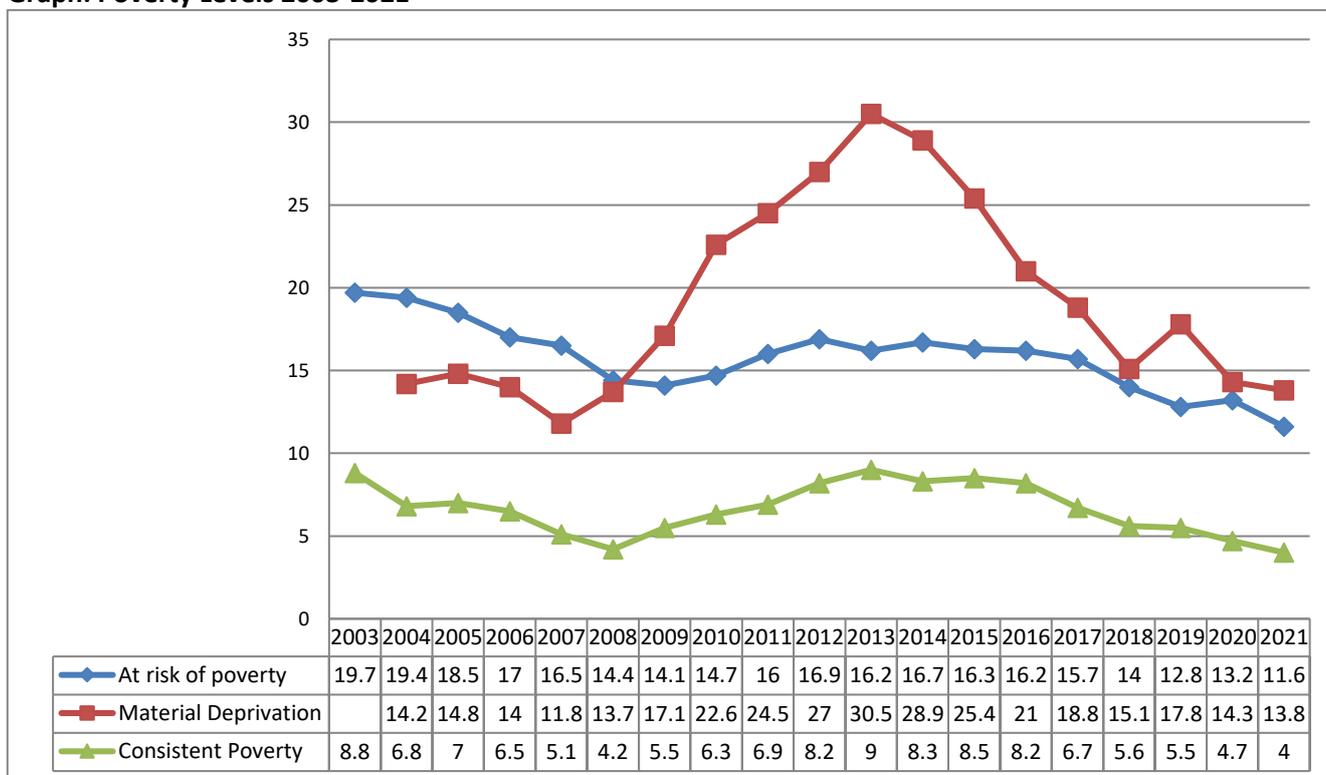
experienced enforced deprivation. This was down from 14.3% in 2020. 44.9% for lone parent households were in deprivation

Consistent Poverty

- Consistent poverty refers to those who are both at risk of poverty and who experience enforced deprivation. In 2021, 4% or one in twenty of the population were in consistent poverty. This is over 200,400 people.
- 19.2% of those of those unable to work due to long-standing health problems were in consistent poverty.
- The Roadmap for Social Inclusion aims to reduce the national consistent poverty rate to 2% or less and to make Ireland one of the most socially inclusive States in the EU by 2025.



Graph: Poverty Levels 2003-2021



Source: CSO Survey of Income and Living Conditions

Note: Change in how income is calculated from 2020 makes at-risk and consistent poverty data not fully comparable to data before this.

Poverty levels among different groups in society

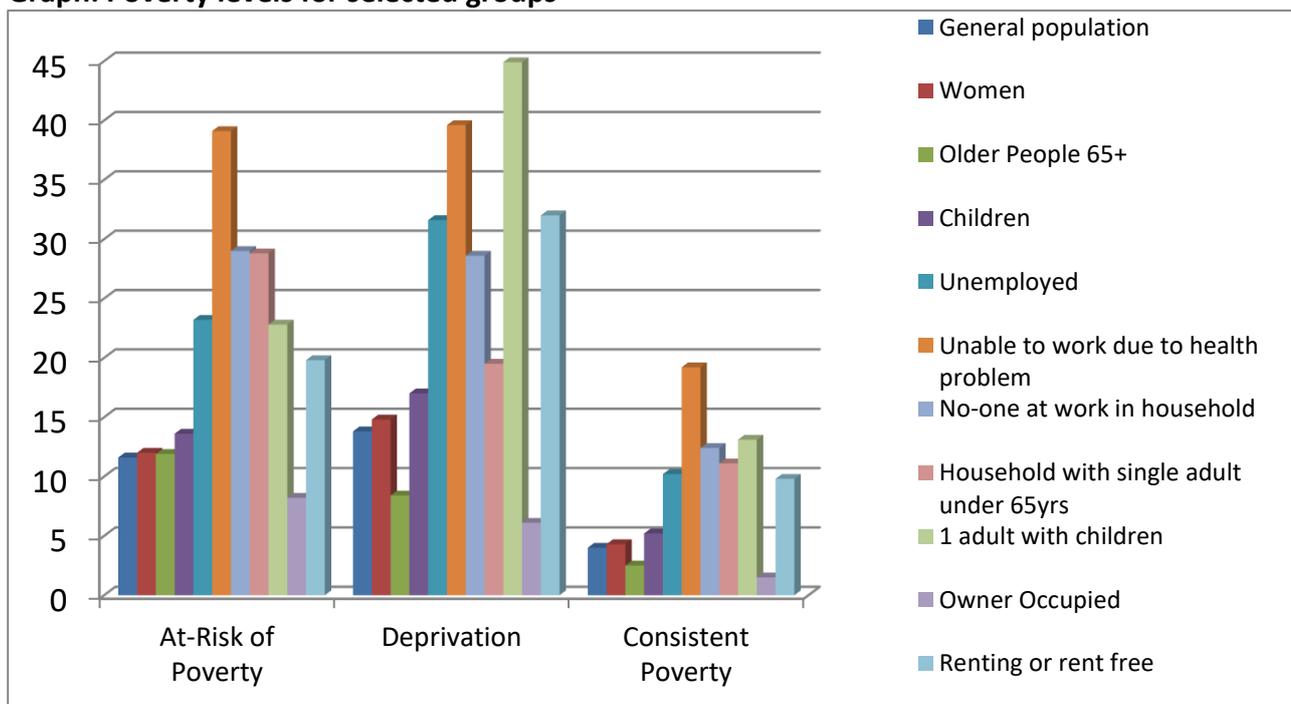
The Report highlights the level of poverty among different groups in society with some experiencing higher levels of poverty than the general population including those who are unemployed, lone parent households, unable to work due to long-standing health problems, and households with one adult under 65yrs, with no-one at work and where someone is renting or living rent free. This is highlighted in the table and graph below.

However, due to the size of the population used in the survey it does not include the poverty levels among groups such as Travellers, Roma, migrants and other ethnic minorities or those who are homeless, and it cannot tell us what the impact of poverty has on people or communities, including disadvantaged socio-economic communities.

Table: Poverty levels for selected groups	At-Risk of Poverty	Enforced Deprivation	Consistent Poverty
General population	11.6%	13.8%	4%
Women	12%	14.8%	4.3%
Older people 65+	11.8%	8.4%	2.5%
Children	13.6%	17%	5.2%
Unemployed	23.2%	31.6%	10.2%
Employed	4.4%	8.6%	0.9%
Unable to work due to long-standing health problems	39.1%	39.6%	19.2%
Lone parent households	22.8%	44.9%	13.1%
Household with one adult under 65yrs	28.8%	19.6%	11.1%
Household with no-one at work	29%	28.6%	12.4%
Household where someone is renting or living rent free	19.8%	32%	9.8%
Household in owner occupied accommodation	8.2%	6.1%	1.5%

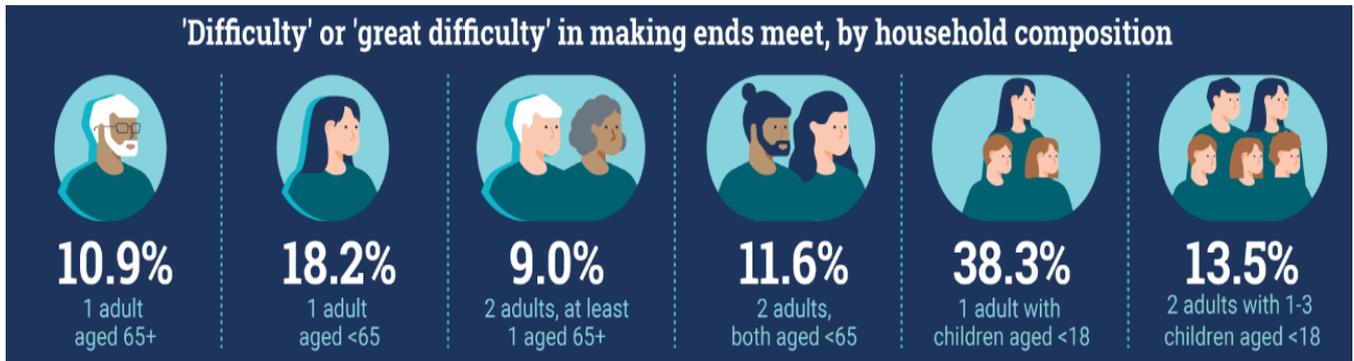
A full table is available on CSO SILC 2021 (Table 3.1)

Graph: Poverty levels for selected groups



Difficulty making ends meet

SILC 2021 also includes information on the difficulties households faced in making ends meet. It shows the following:



- Four in ten households (42.0%) said they had at least some difficulty in making ends meet in 2021, compared with 46.5% of households in 2020.
- Of households that pay rent, 16.2% reported that they did not pay their rent on time on at least one occasion in the last 12 months due to financial difficulties. Of owner-occupied households with an outstanding mortgage, 5.3% reported that on at least one occasion they did not pay their mortgage on time, due to financial difficulties in the last 12 months.
- One in 20 (5.6%) households said they experience 'great difficulty' in making ends meet while one in six (15.9%) households consisting of one adult with children experienced this

Inequality

- Looking at the distribution of income, the poorest 20% of the population had 9.6% of the nation's equivalised disposable income, while the richest 20% had 36.5%. This results in a quintile share ratio stood at 3.8.
- The Gini coefficient measures income equality across the entire income distribution. A Gini coefficient value of 0% means perfect equality, indicating that income is distributed equally amongst all persons. A Gini Coefficient of 100% indicates perfect inequality where all the income is held by one person. In 2020 the Gini coefficient was 27%.

The wealthiest 20% have 3.8 times the income of the poorest 20%

Conclusions

1. The Government has committed to reviewing the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 this year. This review must ensure that the measures included in the Roadmap are adequate to ensure it will achieve its aim of reducing the level of those in consistent poverty to 2% or less by 2025, and that these measures are implemented.
2. Tackling the root causes of poverty can only be achieved in any effective way through the implementation of a genuinely integrated strategy across all relevant policies. This includes economic, social and environmental policy. It must ensure that everyone has access to an adequate income, quality services and the opportunity to access a decent job. It must also involve proofing all relevant policy for its impact on poverty and give an effective and meaningful voice to those impacted by poverty in how policies are developed and implemented.
3. SILC 2021 shows the importance of income supports, and particularly Covid-19 income supports in preventing people from being pushed into poverty. However, many in society still have an income that is not adequate to meet the cost of living or to enable them to live with dignity. As a priority the Government needs to ensure that everyone has access to an adequate income, whether this is from work or social welfare, or a mix of both. The Government must also tackle the long-term drivers of the cost of living, including the cost of services such as housing, alongside tackling the current immediate drivers such as energy and fuel.

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- The full CSO Survey of Income and Living Conditions 2021 is available [here](#).
 - The EAPN Ireland's press release following its publication can be found [here](#).

European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland



The Mission of EAPN Ireland is to put the eradication of poverty at the top of the Irish and European policy agenda and empower groups working to end poverty to understand and influence policy-making. It has almost 170 members, which are mainly national and local anti-poverty groups, and is the Irish member of the European Anti-Poverty Network

EAPN Ireland, Carmichael House 4 North Brunswick Street Dublin 7. D07 RHAS

Phone: +353 (0) 1 8745737; Email: enquiries@eapn.ie ; Website: www.eapn.ie ; [@EAPNIreland](#)



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