

Benchmarking - used the example of the qualified adult payment linked to core social welfare rate, but that the Child Support Payment isn't and that MESL shows that the CSP only meets 92% of needs of primary school child and 67% of needs of a post-primary school child.

Index linking - Used the example of income disregard for OPFA and JST. It is 61% of the value it had when it was first introduced. In 2000, you could work 26 hours on minimum way before your social welfare was cut, today it is 12.22 hours.

Poverty and Deprivation - Discussed the increase in consistent poverty, as more people at risk of poverty are now also experiencing enforced deprivation. We also spoke about the consistent child poverty rate rising this year to 8.5%. We highlighted that it is 6% for children in two parent families, but 11% for children in one parent families.

DSP role in homelessness - We discussed the impact HAP top-ups were having on households and used the SILC data to highlight it. We explained that households were at risk of homelessness because they were falling into arrears because of the unsustainability of top-ups and they were also living way below the means for their household. We emphasised the importance of cross-departmental work between housing and DSP to support these families. We explained that family homelessness is driving homelessness, and this is impacting on a gender basis. Homelessness increased by 11.19% from March 2024 - March 2025, female homelessness increased at a faster rate 13.35% compared to 8.81% for male homelessness. Family homelessness increased by 11.66%, but this was broken down by 16.85% in one parent families and 5.21% for two parent families.

Fuel Allowance - We raised concerns about fuel poverty with energy credits being removed this year. We quoted MESL that showed from March 2020 - March 2024, fuel costs increased by 62.7% in urban areas and 54% for rural areas. In the same period fuel allowance increased by 34.7%. We also discussed the numbers already in arrears with their utility providers and that we have no stats on the self-disconnection rates of people on prepay. We emphasised the need for targeted supports and welcomed the proposal to extend fuel allowance to people in receipt of working family payment.

Cost of Disability Payment - We spoke about the higher poverty rates experienced by people with a disability and our concerns around what would happen next after the green paper. He said there was a lot of work going on in this area and that he would be in contact with us again for further consultation.

Child Benefit Payment for children in Direct Provision - We highlighted that although this was included in Budget 2025, we are concerned that it is not implemented, and we emphasised the need of these children.