

Why We Work for Social Justice



Deprivation¹

The Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) in 2025 showed there were

824,248

people experiencing enforced deprivation.

There were

95,167

children in consistent poverty



One parent families have the highest rate of deprivation at

48.7%



People who are unemployed have a deprivation rate of

42.1%

People not at work due to permanent illness or disability have a deprivation rate of

39.2%

More than **3 in ten**



people living in rented accommodation experienced deprivation (31.6%)

Housing

There are

17,548

people homeless in Ireland at the end of April 2026, including **5,604 children**.²



This is an overall increase of **12.6%** over the last 12 months, but worryingly, there was **20.6% increase** in the number of families homeless

Education

Chronic absence rates remain well above pre pandemic levels and are not falling fast enough.

In 2023–24,

22.1%

of primary students missed 20+ days, far above the pre pandemic average of 11.43%. At post primary level, this rate was 21.2% well above the pre pandemic 16.19%



Energy

Compared to March 2025, the urban household energy cost is

12.1%

higher, and

47.3%

higher for rural households³



¹ Central Statistics Office. (2026, March 11) *Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2025* (Statistical release). <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2025/>

² Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. (2026, May 29). *Homelessness report: April 2026*. <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/homelessness-report-april-2026>

³ Vincentian MESL Research Centre. (2026). *Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL)*. Society of St. Vincent de Paul. <https://budgeting.ie/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/MESL-2026.pdf>

Summary of Key Recommendations for Budget 2027

Income Adequacy



1. Increase core social welfare rates by €15 per week.
2. Raise the National Minimum Wage to €15.40 per hour, with appropriate adjustments to income thresholds and earnings disregards.
3. Increase the income disregard for the One-Parent Family Payment and Jobseeker's Transitional Payment to the equivalent of 16.5 hours of minimum wage work and index-link the disregard going forward.
4. Extend the Living Alone Allowance to one adult households with dependent children in receipt of a primary social welfare payment.

Children Living in Poverty



1. Increase the Child Support Payment by €10 to €68 for children under 12, and by €18 to €96 for children 12 and over.
2. Introduce the International Protection Child Payment without further delay, at a rate equivalent to Child Benefit, to improve income adequacy and reduce child poverty among families in IPAS accommodation and increase the Daily Expenses Allowance rates to reflect rising living costs, with a commitment to regular indexation to prevent further erosion in adequacy.
3. Extend access to Transition Year for low-income households. Introduce a double Back to School and Footwear Allowance payment for qualifying young people entering Transition Year.

Housing and Homelessness



1. Increase the provision of social housing stock and affordable cost rental homes for vulnerable and low-income households, including new builds and vacant homes.
2. Establish a ring-fenced Homelessness Prevention Fund, aligned with the Homelessness Prevention Framework and the Child and Family Homelessness Action Plan, amounting to 20% of all homelessness expenditure.
3. Provide targeted homelessness prevention and move-on supports for households transitioning from International Protection and Temporary Protection accommodation.
4. Reform the Housing Assistance Payment scheme to ensure it reflects actual housing costs and protects low-income households from housing insecurity. Until HAP reform is implemented, the Department of Social Protection should provide an Additional Needs Payment to ensure households have a minimum after housing costs income.

Early Years Education



1. Progress towards €200 per month ECEC fees, as committed to in the Programme for Government, with proportionate thresholds for one parent families, by taking responsibility for educators' wages, to improve affordability for families and support a more sustainable and publicly funded system.

Education



1. Increase capitation grants significantly to reflect actual running costs and eliminate reliance on voluntary contributions, alongside extending the Free School Meals Programme to all post-primary schools.
2. End direct costs to families by funding school-based digital device loan schemes and extending medical card fee exemptions to include mock examinations and correction fees.
3. Reform SUSI by benchmarking grants and income thresholds to the cost of living and earnings and substantially increase financial supports for apprentices to cover the real costs of accommodation, food and travel during training.

Energy and Climate Justice



1. Increase the Fuel Allowance by €4 to €42 and retain the 32-week Fuel Allowance season, to restore the purchasing power of the Fuel Allowance to its 2020 levels and ensure certainty for households.
2. Increase the Household Benefits Package by €5 to €40 as a step toward gradually restoring its original purchasing power. This will ensure older people and people with a disability can meet their electricity needs this winter.
3. Pilot energy poverty retrofit schemes targeting private rented sector tenants, focusing initially on HAP tenancies. This could include improved monitoring of landlord uptake of existing schemes and greater incentives for participation, conditional on security of tenure.
4. Pilot a programme of Community Energy Advisors to provide people in energy poverty with tailored, expert guidance on issues ranging from tariffs and switching to long-term pathways out of energy poverty. A community energy advice service would both protect households in energy poverty and facilitate Ireland's just transition.

Disability



Supports for Children with Additional Needs, and Supports for People Accessing Medical Appointments

1. Introduce a weekly Cost of Disability Payment, informed by the outcome of the public consultation on the Cost of Disability and the Strategic Focus Network Summit, to help meet the additional costs experienced by people with disabilities.
2. Increase financial supports for medical-related travel and accommodation costs for low-income households accessing healthcare services, particularly in rural and regional areas. This should include strengthening existing transport and accommodation supports to ensure that they are fit for purpose and responsive to the real costs faced by households accessing essential care.
3. Provide targeted investment to address delays within the Assessment of Need process, including ring-fenced funding to eliminate backlogs and ensure compliance with statutory timelines.
4. Increase investment in special educational provision to ensure every child can access an appropriate school placement within their local community. This should include expanding special classes and special school places in line with identified need and investing in forward planning to prevent future shortages.