

BUDGET 2016

BETTER FOR YOU,
BETTER FOR ALL


Labour

BETTER FOR YOU, BETTER FOR ALL – BUDGET 2016

This Budget is about making life better for our people. Having persevered and done the right thing in restoring the public finances to health, we now have the room to continue the process of raising living standards and investing in essential services.

The recovery is starting to reach the kitchen table. Families have a little bit more at the end of every month. This Budget continues that, but does nothing to risk that recovery. This Budget is also about delivering on opportunity. It shows what Labour in Government is delivering, and what we can deliver if returned to Government.

This Budget delivers for low and middle-income workers, families, retired people and vulnerable groups – because we want a strong economy and a decent society. Labour’s effect is clear across this Budget. We have:

- **Reduced the USC for middle and low income earners**
- **Increased Child Benefit for all families**
- **Reduced the pupil-teacher ratio across our schools**
- **Provided an effective free second year of pre-school education**
- **Granted a €3 pension increase and a Christmas Bonus for many vulnerable people**

Better living standards and fairer taxes - Better living standards require fairer taxes for low and middle income workers. In Budget 2016 we are reducing the USC for low and middle income workers, and providing increases in vital supports for older people and vulnerable groups.

- USC rates to fall from 1.5% to 1%; 3.5% to 3%; 7% to 5.5%
- Low and middle-income earners will also do well, particularly working families, and gains will be capped in monetary terms for anybody earning over €70,000.
- The marginal tax rate will fall below 50% for PAYE workers.
- €3 pension increase, Christmas Bonus increase and Respite Care Grant fully restored

Better start for families and kids – Labour reforming the quality of care and supports available to parents and their children. In Budget 2016 we are increasing child benefit, introducing more paternity leave, providing an effective second year of pre-school, and extending the rollout of free GP care to children aged 6-11.

- Child Benefit increase of €5
- Extension of Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. Starting age for eligibility will now be 3 years of age - an effective second free year.
- Introduction of two weeks’ paid paternity leave to take effect from autumn 2016
- Extension of free primary care for children aged 6 to 11

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- 1 point reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio at primary and post-primary levels

Better jobs and opportunities – The recovery is built on jobs and creating employment and this remains our number one priority. In Budget 2016 we are continuing to support small businesses, directly recruiting more Gardai, and increasing the minimum wage.

- A jobs-focussed Budget aimed at reducing unemployment further from 9.4% rate
- A new tax credit to help self-employed people
- Minimum Wage to increase by 50 cent an hour
- 600 new Garda recruits

Better and more affordable homes for families – The Labour Party recognises that housing provision and affordability remains a major issue for many families. We have already invested €4 billion in a house building programme and in Budget 2016 we are continuing to provide for immediate housing needs.

- Increased funding for social housing for 2016 to over €900 million
- Immediate provision of €10 million for affordable housing pilot scheme
- Additional €17 million for emergency homeless accommodation

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DELIVERING FAIR AND PROGRESSIVE TAX REFORM

This Government is committed to a progressive tax system that gives a fair return for low and middle income workers.

Focusing on reductions in the Universal social Charge tax relief targets low and middle income workers.

Universal Social Charge – a further 90,000 low paid workers exempt

- Starting with workers on the lowest incomes, we have increased the entry point from €12,012 to €13,000, which exempts a further **90,000 low income workers** from USC.
- Since entering Government we have taken **500,000 low income workers** out of the USC net.
- The 7% rate has been reduced to 5.5%
- Lower rates have been cut from 1.5% to 1% and from 3.5% to 3%
- For earners over €70,044 the rates remain unchanged.

Old rate of USC (2015)		New rate of USC (2016)	
Rate	Income band	Rate	Income band
1.5%	Up to €12,012	1%	Up to €12,012
3.5%	Between €12,013 and €17,576	3%	Between €12,011 and €18,668
7%	Between €17,577 to €70,044	5.5%	Between €18,669 and €70,044
8%	Above €70,044	8%	Above €70,044
11%	€100,000+ (Self-employed)	11%	€100,000 (Self-employed)

Income Tax – equity for self employed workers, support for home carers

- A new earned income tax credit of €550 to self employed taxpayers
- The Home Carers Tax Credit is increased from €810 to €1,000

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- The Home Carers Income threshold is increased from €5,080 to €7,200.

The bottom line – Budget 2016 targets relief to low and middle income workers.

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Example 1 – Brian and Nicola are married with three children with 3 children

Brian and Nicola are married with three children, Karen, Fiachra and Ciaran, who are aged 8, 10 and 12 years. Brian is a nurse and Nicola is a Garda. They both joined the public sector in 1999. They earn €55,000 and €50,000, respectively. The family will see a gain of €2,351 in their annual net income due to this Budget, including changes to the Pension Related Deduction as part of the Landsdowne road Agreement.

	2015	2016
	€	€
Gross Income	105,000	105,000
Pension contribution	5,148	5,127
Pension Related Deduction	<u>6,750</u>	<u>5,283</u>
Taxable income	93,102	94,590
Income tax liability	17,121	17,716
PRSI liability	4,200	4,200
USC liability	<u>5,639</u>	<u>4,631</u>
Total tax liability	26,960	26,277
Child Benefit	4,860	5,040
Net Income	71,002	73,353
Annual Gain		2,351
Change as a % of net income		3.3%

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Example 2 – Jack is a single man who works 39 hours per week on the minimum wage

Jack will see a gain of €708 in his annual net income due to this Budget and the forthcoming increase in the minimum wage to €9.15 per hour.

	2016	2016
	€	€
Gross Income	17,542	18,556
Income tax liability	208	411
PRSI liability	0	160
USC liability	<u>374</u>	<u>316</u>
Total tax liability	584	888
Net Income	16,960	17,668
Annual Gain		708
Change as a % of net income		4.2%

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Example 3 – Peter and Clare are married and have three children, Barbara, Elizabeth and Paschal. Clare has a part-time Job and earns €6,500 per annum. Peter is employed as an accountant earning €35,000 per annum. The couple will see a gain of €1,457 in their annual net income due to this budget.

	2015	2016
	€	€
Gross Income	41,500	41,500
Income tax liability	1,950	1,050
PRSI liability	1,4000	1,400
USC liability	<u>1,595</u>	<u>1,218</u>
Total tax liability	4,945	3,668
Child Benefit	4,860	5,040
Net Income	41,415	42,872
Annual Gain		1,457
Change as a % of net income		3.5%

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Example 4 - Brigid is retired. She is 71 and living alone. She has a contributory State Pension and is in receipt of a Living Alone Increase and the Fuel allowance. In 2016, she will see a gain of €221 in her annual net income in this Budget. Brigid will also benefit from the 75% Christmas Bonus of €172.73 in December 2015. Taken together this is a gain of €393.73.

	2015	2016
	€	€
Gross Income	11,976	12,132
Living alone Allowance	468	468
Fuel allowance	<u>520</u>	<u>585</u>
Net Income	12,964	13,185
Income tax liability	0	0
PRSI liability	0	0
USC liability	0	0
Annual Gain		221
Change as a % of net income		1.7%

JOAN BURTON TD

TÁNAISTE, MINISTER FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

Budget 2016 is about making life better for our people. A critical role of the budget is to help jobseekers back into work and to invest in welfare improvements. Labour is providing, in a responsible way, targeted increases for pensioners, families and vulnerable groups.

An additional €250 million in Social Protection measures in Budget 2016:

- Christmas Bonus increases to 75% this December for long-term welfare recipients – up from 25% in 2014
- Weekly Pension to increase by €3 for pensioners and Carers aged 66 and over from January 2016
- 623,000 families to get €5 extra per child per month in Child Benefit
- New Paternity Benefit to be launched in 2016
- Carer's Support Grant of €1,700 – to benefit 86,000 carers
- Fuel Allowance to be increased by €2.50 to €22.50 per week
- Family Income Supplement threshold to increase by €5 per week
- €3 increase per week for Pensioners and Carers aged 66 and over – 583,000 people to benefit
- A 75% Christmas Bonus will be paid this December to recipients of a long-term Social Welfare payment (minimum payment of €20) – 1.23 million people to benefit.
- An extra €3 million is being provided towards the School Meals Programme, increasing the funding to €42 million in 2016.
- €18 million extra being provided to increase all Family Income Supplement (FIS) income thresholds by €5 for each of the first two children from January 2016.
- An extra €2.50 per week on the Fuel Allowance for long-term welfare recipients, increasing the payment to €22.50 per week from January 2016, with 381,000 households to benefit including pensioners, people with disabilities, lone parents and jobseekers.
- €30 million for Respite Care Grant, now known as Carer's Support Grant, to increase by €325 to €1,700 per year paid to carers for each person being cared for.
- €3 million additional funding to fund Free Travel scheme, increasing the funding to €80 million in 2016.
- The earnings disregard for Jobseeker's Transitional Payment will increase from €60 to €90 per week from January 2016 for existing and new recipients. All earnings above €90 will be assessed at 50% (currently assessed at 60%).
- Increase in top-up payments for Community Employment (CE), Rural Social Scheme (RSS), Gateway, Job Initiative, Tús and JobBridge participants of €2.50 per week from January.

BRENDAN HOWLIN

MINISTER FOR PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND REFORM

The days of spending cuts are behind us. Thanks to you our strong recovery and stable public finances, it is the second budget in succession in which we are able to increase our support for our public services.

A remarkable turnaround

- When the Government was elected, the budget deficit stood at 12.7% of GDP. This year it will be 2.1%.
- In 2010, the year of the infamous promissory notes, the headline rate stood at over 30%. A staggering deficit.
- Next year, notwithstanding the increases in expenditure announced today, we forecast the deficit to be just 1.2%.
- In 2016, our debt to GDP ratio is forecast to be 97%.from a peak of over 120%
- Unemployment, which peaked at over 15% is now 9.4%. We have created over 120,000 jobs since 2012.
- We have the highest level of economic growth in the OECD. Our economy is now larger than its pre-crisis peak.

Reaping the benefits

- The spending increases announced today are moderate, sensible and in line with our economic and social requirements.
- Our Debt is falling. Our deficit is narrowing. Unemployment is coming down.
- Between 2000 and 2008, gross spending was increased by 139%.
- In the run-up to the 2007 election, between 2005 and 2007, public spending was ramped up by over 25%, or over €11 billion in nominal terms.
- By comparison, in 2016, public expenditure will be 4% higher than in 2014. Over this time, tax revenues are forecast to increase by over 14%.
- GDP is forecast to increase by 18%.
- This Government brought the country back from the brink. Our recovery, though not yet complete, is not only a justification of our policies, but a condemnation of the easy alternatives proffered by some.
- While maintaining the responsible approach that got us here, we are committed to investing in our public services; assisting those most in need; creating jobs; providing a platform for future growth; ensuring that every family and every community, in every part of the country, can share in a better future.
- Today, we reap the benefits of the hard work and resilience of the Irish people, as we set our course for a better Ireland.

ALAN KELLY
**MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

In Budget 2016, investment in new housing infrastructure is a priority. We will continue to increase investment in social housing and provide funds to tackle the scourge of homelessness. Also providing more funding to a number of schemes to improve our communities.

Better for housing:

- Social Housing spending to increase by 18% to just over €900 million
- 7,100 New social housing units to be delivered through buying, building, leasing and refurbishing. This number rises to 17,000 when the Housing Assistance Payment is included.
- 4,000 to be provided through buying/building/refurbishing
- Increased funding of €20m will allow local authorities to bring approximately 3,000 new leased units into operation in 2016.
- New Public Private Partnership to construct 500 units at a cost of €100 million with an estimated 1,000 construction jobs.
- The provision of €76 million for Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) will ensure continued focus on meeting the housing needs of vulnerable groups with some 450 units to be provided for people with specific needs in 2016.
- Building on progress made in 2014 and 2015, a further 1,500 vacant units will be refurbished and brought back to productive use.
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS): Funding of €135 million under the RAS will allow for 1,000 new RAS transfers in 2015.
- Housing Assistance Payment: Funding is being increased by €24.5 million to €47.7million in 2016 in line with the expansion of the scheme which will assist an additional 10,000 families to secure suitable accommodation.
- €4.3m million funding will provide for Traveller Accommodation and Support Services.
- Mortgage to Rent Programme to increase by €10million to €17million – This is a demand lead-scheme so more money will be provided if necessary.
- Funding for Homelessness services to increase to €70 million. That represents an increase of 55% since 2014
- NAMA will ramp-up home building. Estimate over 13,000 houses and 4,000 apartments in greater Dublin area for the start-up market out to 2020.
- Once ramped up this will see 80 houses being started a week. 10% of these in the part V programme will be social housing.

Better for Communities:

- Seniors Alert funding (community support for elderly people) up 10% to €2.6million
- Libraries spending up 83% to €2.75million

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- Leader Funding for the new Rural Development programme to increase from €15 to €40million
- 40,000 people to receive one-to-one Labour market training through the social inclusion programme
- The 2016 provision of €85 million for Regeneration/Remedial Works demonstrates the Government's continued commitment to target the country's most disadvantaged communities.
- The 2017 provision of €70 million for Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting will allow for the continued upgrading of social housing stock providing warmer and more energy efficient homes for thousands of families.
- Private Housing Grants funding of €45 million will provide for some 8,500 grants in 2016 which will assist with adaptation works to enable older people and people with disabilities to remain living independently in their own homes for longer.
- Pyrite Remediation Scheme: Funding of €19 million will be provided in 2016 to support activity under the Pyrite Remediation Scheme.
- €2million – Ireland will make its first contribution to the International Climate Change Fund to combat the effects of Climate Change in the developed world.
- €5million of initial funding for replacing lead pipes in homes.
- Irish Water's capital investment programme increased to €601 million for addressing BWNs, treating sewage pollution & fixing leaks.

JAN O’SULLIVAN

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

This year we have secured an additional investment of €144m to improve the quality of education and opportunities provided to children and young people. We have reduced class sizes, improved school leadership supports in schools, are investing in new apprenticeship opportunities, and will continue to fund necessary and important reforms. Education is the most important investment we can make, and this Budget reflects that.

- €140m secured for 2,260 new teachers, made up of 1,650 classroom teachers in primary and second-level school and 600 resource teachers to be recruited in our schools during 2016
- This will enable us to meet the growing numbers of children in schools across the country, to reduce class sizes and to improve leadership supports in schools.
- We are reducing pupil teacher ratio at primary level, from 28:1 to 27:1.
- We are reducing Pupil teacher ratio second level, 19:1 to 18.7:1
- 20% increase to National Training Fund spending on apprenticeship. This funding will allow for expanded numbers on the existing 27 apprenticeships, and for the rollout of all 25 new types of apprenticeship.
- 250 posts are being allocated to improve leadership supports in schools. The role of Deputy Principals at second-level in schools with fewer than 500 students will be enhanced, and part of this allocation will allow deputy principals to reduce their teaching time, and focus on leadership and management.
- €3m is being made available to invest in the Student Assistance Fund which provides funding to students experiencing hardship, and to invest in supporting disadvantaged students who are accessing third-level.
- €28.5m Minor and Summer Works funding confirmed
- Reform Agenda across education has been reinforced with an additional investment of €16m
- €17m funding the Literacy and Numeracy strategy which has delivered the first improvements to reading and maths for a generation - a €3m increase on the 2015 budget.
- €17m will be spent supporting Junior cycle reform in 2016 - an increase of €8m on the 2015 budget, This funding will be used for teacher training, giving teachers professional time to engage with the reforms, and for curriculum development.
- €5m is being provided in 2016 to invest in shared services, including in the ETB and Higher Education sectors. These shared services will provide greater efficiencies for payroll and other operations.

ALEX WHITE

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

In Budget 2016, Labour will enhance or maintain programmes to help citizens, communities and small businesses benefit from digital opportunities. This is in addition to recently-announced capital funding for the National Broadband Plan, which will deliver high-speed broadband access to every home, school and business in Ireland by 2020, with 85% covered by 2018. And we are continuing to roll out Better Energy Programmes, which are creating jobs, tackling fuel poverty, and contributing to reduced carbon emissions and major energy and cost savings.

Supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy:

- A total of €68 million has been allocated for energy efficiency and renewable energy in 2016. An increased allocation will see the Better Energy Programme support an estimated 2,750 jobs, and several new initiatives will boost the energy efficiency of Irish homes, businesses and buildings.
- An increased budget allocation will allow the Better Energy Homes scheme to provide more grants to householders who want to improve their energy efficiency. Applications are up 78% since the re-launch of the scheme last March, when the value of grants was increased.
- There's also an increased allocation for the Better Energy Communities scheme, which was three-times over-subscribed in 2015. This will enable more community groups to improve the energy efficiency of homes, local businesses, community facilities and sports clubs.
- Continued funding for the Better Energy Warmer Homes scheme will underpin the continued provision of free energy efficiency upgrades to households at risk of energy poverty.
- A pilot energy efficiency programme, targeted at people who suffer from acute health conditions and live in poorly-insulated homes, will be launched as part of a new Affordable Energy Strategy in 2016.
- Businesses will be incentivised to switch to renewable energy through a Renewable Heat Incentive to be introduced in 2016.
- Grants for motorists who switch to electric vehicles are being maintained at their current levels, but an extra €1 million has been allocated for the scheme to reflect the anticipated increase in sales of electronic vehicles in 2016.
- In addition, €4.5 million will be made available for ocean energy research activities.

Fostering digital opportunities and entrepreneurship

- €5.4 million has been allocated to support digital entrepreneurship in the Digital Hub and National Digital Research Centre in 2016.
- Budget 2016 sees further funding of €3 million to support another 1,000 small businesses through the Trading Online Voucher Scheme, which offers grants of up to €2,500 – subject to matching funding – as well as training, mentoring and networking support to help small firms develop their online trading

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capability. Over 70% of participating businesses say they expect to recruit more staff to deal with increased business.

- There is continued funding for the Benefit programme, which has so far delivered over 135,000 training places to help people develop basic internet skills. The funding will provide training for a further 30,000 citizens in 2016. Training has been delivered to groups including older people, parents, job-seekers, farming communities, people with disabilities, and ethnic minority and traveller groups.
- The School Digital Champion pilot programme will be introduced. This follows investment in recent years to rollout 100Mbps broadband connectivity to every second-level school in Ireland.

Delivering the National Broadband Plan

- The National Broadband Plan (NBP) will bring high-speed broadband access to every home, school and business in Ireland by 2020, with 85% covered by 2018.
- The State intervention element of the NBP will go to tender by the end of 2015 and a contract (or contracts) will be awarded in mid-2016.
- The allocation of an initial €275 million in the Capital Programme will provide funding for the initial build-out, in a project that will feature staged payments over a longer period of up to 20 years.

Supporting Geoscience

- €9 million is being provided for geoscience initiatives including the INFOMAR and TELLUS programmes, which will support expanded geoscience research programmes in Ireland's offshore and onshore.

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GED NASH

MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

Labour in Government is committed to raising the living standards of all our people and continuing to create jobs, reduce unemployment and making sure that work always pays. We want to ensure that everyone, but particularly those on low and middle incomes, share the benefits of the hard won recovery. Today we have secured agreement for an increase in the National Minimum Wage to €9.15

- Increase in the National Minimum Wage of 50 cent to €9.15 per hour. Minister Ged Nash has signed the order which will result in more than 120,000 people on the lowest pay receiving a welcome boost to their pay packets from January.
- This is the second increase to the National Minimum Wage Labour in Government has secured. In July 2011, the rate increased by €1 to €8.65 following a particularly cruel cut imposed by Fianna Fail. We are committed to ensuring that those who are on the lowest wages also share in the economic recovery.
- We have also made changes to the PRSI system for employees and employers to make sure that those on the minimum wage see the benefits of the 50 cent per hour increase directly in their pockets and businesses are not unduly burdened by hitting higher employer PRSI thresholds.
- A person who is working full-time on the minimum wage will receive an increase of more than €1,000 per year, with a further €500 going into their pockets as a result of USC changes.
- In order to support those who are the job creators in our economy, the Capital Gains Tax Entrepreneurial Relief will be reduced to 20% from 33% for up to €1 million. This represents the start of bringing the Irish rate in line with our nearest neighbour and competitor for investment, the UK.
- The self-employed and farmers can look forward to an earned income credit of €550 per year. This begins the process of bringing their tax liability more in line with PAYE workers.
- Tax relief for film is also being extended in order to promote Ireland as a location for major movie and tv series productions.
- A “best in class”, first OECD compliant Knowledge Development Box with a competitive rate of 6.25% on qualifying income has been announced.
- Extension of tax relief for startup companies for a further three years

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- Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme to increase availability of investment finance for business. The scheme has been extended to include all geographical locations and increased thresholds.
- We are continuing to invest in job creation and supports for enterprise. More than 60,000 gross new jobs are to be supported by the capital budget in the Dept of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. Measures include:
 - Continued rollout of 8 regional jobs plans backed by €250 million in new capital investment
 - IDA Ireland – target of 175 new investments in 2016, leading to more than 15,000 gross new jobs
 - Enterprise Ireland – target of 13,000 gross new jobs and exports of €21 billion
 - 31 Local Enterprise Offices – more than 4,000 additional jobs
 - Science Foundation Ireland – train 3,000 researchers and invest in 12 Research Centres
- Protect the budgets of the Low Pay Commission, Credit Review Office, Health and Safety Authority and Construction Contracts.

KATHLEEN LYNCH

MINISTER FOR PRIMARY CARE, SOCIAL CARE (DISABILITIES & OLDER PEOPLE) AND MENTAL HEALTH

Health

- €13.2 billion is being provided for the delivery of health services next year
- This restores the resourcing of our Health Services to its 2008 level
- €13.5 million for primary care initiatives including the extension of GP care without fees to children aged under 12 and enhanced access of ultrasound and other tests in primary care centres
- Two million people are now covered by a medical or GP visit card - a 25% increase on 2010
- Funding of €940 million for Fair Deal ensuring that everyone who needs Fair Deal funding will be approved within 4 weeks
- €7.25m for young adults leaving school with a disability for school and training
- €8million for therapeutic services for children, particularly speech and language therapy.
- €13.5 Primary Care initiatives
- €2 million for expansion of Respite Beds
- €2.5m for expansion of Vaccine programme
- €3.5m for the opening of new units in Roscommon, Kilkenny acute floor, new Limerick ED, Wexford maternity and renal, St James, Galway and Kerry Hospices
- €3m for Maternity Services
- €3million for promised hospital service developments including recruitment of essential posts and a Living Donor Programme in Beaumont.
- €9million for Cancer Services
- €3.75million of Children's Hospital Development including North /South cardiology
- €2million for National Ambulance Service
- €0.5million for Organ Transplantation
- €2million for implementation of nursing taskforce recommendations as a pilot

KEVIN HUMPHREYS

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT, COMMUNITY & SOCIAL SUPPORT

In Budget 2016, Labour is ensuring that we continue to help people back into work, ensure work pays, and ensure low and middle income earners benefit from the recovery. There is a range of measures in Budget 2016 that will make a positive difference for many who return to work

- Family Income Supplement threshold changes will support 60,000 families
- Increase of €2.50 per week in top up payment for over 43,000 people on Activation Schemes.
- Earnings disregard for Jobseeker's Transitional Payment paid to lone parents will increase from €60 to €90 per week.
- Class A PRSI credit for employees earning between €352.01 and €424 will benefit over 88,000.
- A number of top-up payments are paid for those on Community Employment (CE), Tús, Rural Social Scheme, Gateway and JobBridge employment schemes. Jobseekers who avail of these schemes are working with organisations providing services in the community, voluntary sectors and SMEs. Participants of these schemes will receive a top-up payment of €2.50 per week from January. In 2016 this will benefit 43,000 people across these five activation schemes.

AODHÁN Ó RÍORDÁIN

MINISTER FOR EQUALITY, NEW COMMUNITIES & CULTURE & DRUGS STRATEGY

As we approach the centenary of the 1916 Rising, it is right that Budget 2016 is investing in our arts and 1916 centenary programme. Justice has also been earmarked as an area of utmost priority for public investment with the planned recruitment of an additional 600 Gardaí.

Investing in the Arts

- 12% increase in funding for the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht compared to 2015
- Over €48 million for the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme, including almost €31 million for major capital works, and additional funding for an inclusive and wide ranging national and international commemorative programme, including State events, local community initiatives, a wide range of arts and cultural projects,
- €3 million earmarked for Culture Ireland's international programme for 2016 and the Abbey Theatre – doubling its funding on 2015 levels
- An additional €8 million for a cultural infrastructure programme grants for existing regional arts and cultural centres and funding for Cork Event Centre
- Increase in the cap on the Section 481 film industry tax relief from €50 million to €70 million
- An additional €2 million in funding for the Department's heritage programme
- Boost in funding for the National Cultural Institutions and the Arts Council.

Supporting Justice

- €2.2 billion is being allocated to the Department of Justice for current expenditure.
- Funding for the recruitment and training of an additional 600 Gardaí in addition to resources for improved ICT and for the new Policing Authority
- Funding of €25 million has been allocated for the necessary structures and supports for the new Irish Refugee Protection Programme and the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner
- €3.8 million for the National Disability Authority
- €4.4 million for the Office of the Promotion of Migrant Integration
- €400,000 for National Womens' Organisations
- €855,000 for Traveller Initiatives
- €1 million for Positive Actions for Gender Equality
- €1.5 million for European Refugee Fund
- €6.3 million for Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Drugs

- €6.4 million for community based drugs initiatives in 2016 to fund drugs education and training projects in Local Drug and Alcohol Task Force areas

ANN PHELAN

MINISTER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS

Labour is working to support the development of strong and vibrant local communities. Labour has a longstanding commitment to rural communities and a will to energise Ireland's rural economy, assist balanced economic development and stimulate job creation in rural areas.

Helping communities across Ireland:

- €135m will be invested in Community programmes in 2016, which includes funding under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and LEADER programme.
- In 2016, some 40,000 people will receive direct one-to-one labour market training and supports through the SICAP.
- €46 million will be invested in 2016 to increase access to formal and informal educational activities and resources and to increase people's work readiness and employment prospects.
- SICAP is well placed to create opportunities and provide supports to ease the transition into meaningful employment for the harder to reach in the most disadvantaged areas in society.
- There will also be increased funding for seniors alert of 10%, which supports the provision of monitored alarms to enable older persons, of limited means, to continue to live securely in their homes with confidence.
- The new LEADER programme 2014-2020, will assist projects that improve quality of life and promote growth and diversification of the rural economy.
- LEADER is addressing many of the challenges facing rural communities, including through increasing economic activity and generating employment. It is a key multi-annual programme which will continue to be supported in 2016 with the provision of €40m.
- €30m in funding over 6 years will be provided under the new Village Renewal Scheme, with €5m to be provided in 2016.
- Funding will continue to be made available to support a range of initiatives in the community and voluntary sector, including support to strengthen and foster volunteerism and philanthropy.

SEÁN SHERLOCK TD

MINISTER AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT, TRADE PROMOTION AND NORTH SOUTH CO-OPERATION

In Budget 2016, Labour is increasing the aid budget by 7% to over €640 million. Ireland will continue to deploy Irish naval personnel to the Mediterranean and provide assistance in humanitarian crises particularly in the Middle East and Africa.

Deploying Irish Naval Personnel to the Mediterranean:

- Ireland is having a greater presence in responding to humanitarian crises throughout the world. The deployment of Irish Naval personnel to the Mediterranean signals a new departure beyond deploying resources to Aid agencies working in specific regions.
- We are developing a greater capacity to deploy Irish personnel, be they military or civilian, in greater numbers because of the skill sets that they have. The deployment of financial resources is important but utilising key personnel in a targeted way can also have an impact.

Increasing the aid budget:

- We have committed clearly to working to achieve the UN 0.7% of GNP target. We played a leading role in brokering agreement in the EU to recommit to the target, and to reaching it collectively by 2030 in the context of the new global development framework, Agenda 2030.
- 2016 will see the first substantial increase in the aid budget in seven years: we will provide a total of over €640 million in Overseas Development Aid, an increase of €40 million, or 7%.
- This includes an increase of €10 million in the Irish Aid budget, to €486 million. The remaining €155 million will comprise contributions by other Departments together with Ireland's share of the EU Development Cooperation budget.
- Ireland's ODA/GNP percentage has been falling in recent years as GNP growth resumed. We will halt this trend in 2016, with an estimated percentage of 0.36%, up from the estimated percentage of 0.35% for 2015.

Providing assistance in humanitarian crises:

- We have a proud record in providing assistance in humanitarian crises. Over the past three years, we have provided over €300 million for humanitarian assistance worldwide in response to suffering caused by conflict and natural disasters. This includes over €100 million for the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, over €40 million of which has been for people affected by the conflict in Syria. We have also provided funding for other crises in Africa, from Somalia and South Sudan to the Central African Republic and the Sahel, all of which are contributing to the refugee crisis.

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- We will now do more. In 2016 we will increase our direct funding for the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East and Africa. Ireland will play a leading role in a comprehensive response to the humanitarian crisis which is causing the refugee crisis. We will address immediate needs and root causes.
- We will review every aspect of our aid programme to ensure maximum impact for vulnerable communities. We will use our humanitarian aid and our long term development assistance in a more coordinated and linked way to respond to the immediate humanitarian crisis and to build the resilience of endangered communities against future crisis.
- Ireland has been recognised internationally for our approach in protecting the aid budget at a time of extreme economic difficulty, following major cutbacks in 2009/10, and for placing development at the heart of our foreign policy. We are determined to maintain our focus on ending poverty and hunger, especially in the poorest countries in Africa.

Better for families and kids

Labour has put families at the heart of Budget 2016 and we are reforming the quality of care and supports available to parents and their children. In Budget 2016 we are increasing child benefit, introducing more paternity leave, providing an effective second year of pre-school, and extending the rollout of free GP care to children aged 6-11.

Child Benefit

- Child Benefit increase of €5 to €140 per month

Childcare & Early Education

- Extension of Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. The starting age for eligibility will now be 3 years of age - an effective second free year.
- Allocation of €15 million in new funding, to facilitate the full participation of children with disabilities into the scheme.
- Introduction of two weeks' paid paternity leave to take effect from autumn 2016
- €3 million for the development of after school services in school buildings

Free GP Care

- Extension of free primary care for children aged 6 to 11

Education

- Extension of free primary care for children aged 6 to 11
- 1 point reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio at primary and post-primary levels
- Funding for 2,260 new additional teaching posts.

Christmas Bonus

- Christmas Bonus increased to 75% this year

School Meals

- Increase spending on school meals by €3m increasing the total provision from €39m to €42m.

Family Income Supplement

- Increase the Family Income Supplement income thresholds by €5 for families with one child and €10 for families with two or more children.

Better jobs and opportunities

The recovery is built on jobs and creating employment and this remains Labour in government's number one priority. In Budget 2016 we are continuing to support small businesses, directly recruiting more Gardai, and increasing the minimum wage. Labour has ensured a jobs-focussed Budget aimed at reducing unemployment further from 9.4% rate

Supporting Low Paid Workers

- Minimum Wage to increase by 50 cent an hour - means minimum wage has been increased by nearly 20% with Labour in government
- Increase the Family Income Supplement income thresholds by €5 for families with one child and €10 for families with two or more children.

Self-Employed

- A new tax credit to help self-employed people

More Public Sector Job Opportunities

- 600 new Garda recruits
- Funding for 2,260 new additional teaching posting

Supporting Jobseekers'

- Increase the Jobseeker's Transitional Payment income disregard from €60 to €90 and reduce the taper from 60% to 50%
- Increase top-up payments for Community Employment (CE), Tus, Rural Social Scheme, Gateway and JobBridge by €2.50 per week.

Rural Jobs

- €135m will be invested in Community programmes in 2016, which includes funding under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and LEADER programme.
- €46 million will be invested in 2016 to increase access to formal and informal educational activities and resources and to increase people's work readiness and employment prospects.
- The new LEADER programme 2014-2020, will assist projects that improve quality of life and promote growth and diversification of the rural economy - €40million has been allocated in 2016.

Under 25s

- A Youth Activation Scheme combining training, education and work placement measures targeted at unemployed under 25s.

Better for Older People

Labour has always recognised the huge contribution that older people make in Irish society and their communities. In government, we have prioritised supporting older people in society. That's why during the past four years in government Labour has always protected vital supports including the State Pension and Free Travel Pass. It's why in Budget 2016

Pension Increase

- €3 pension increase for all state pensions - the first increase since 2009

Christmas Bonus

- Christmas Bonus increased Christmas Bonus increased to 75% this year

Carers'

- Respite Care Grant fully restored in 2016
- Extend Carer's Allowance by 6 weeks, from 6 weeks to 12 weeks, following the death of the care recipient

Fuel Allowance

- Increase the rate of the Fuel Allowance by €2.50 per week, from €20 to €22.50 per week (for the 26 week duration of the fuel season).

Seniors Alert Scheme

- Seniors Alert funding (community support for elderly people) up 10% to €2.6million

Free Travel

- Increase funding for Free Travel by €3 million, from €77 million to €80 million to meet increased numbers eligible for the scheme. There will be *no change in eligibility to hold a pass*, nor in the conditions for transport companies to enter the scheme.

Fair Deal

- €940 million has been allocated for Fair Deal in 2016 to make sure that everyone who needs Fair Deal funding will be approved within 4 weeks.

Better and more affordable homes for families

The Labour Party recognises that housing provision and affordability remains a major issue for many families. We have already invested €4 billion in a house building programme and in Budget 2016 we are continuing to provide for immediate housing needs.

Investing in Homes

- Increased funding for social housing for 2016 to over €400 million
- Social Housing spending to increase by 18% to over €811 million* (*Figure does not include LPT contribution of over €112 million)
- 7,100 new social housing units to be delivered through buying, building, leasing and refurbishing - rises to 17,000 when the Housing Assistance Payment is included.
- 4,000 to be provided through buying/building/refurbishing
- Increased funding of €20m will allow local authorities to bring approximately 3,000 new leased units into operation in 2016
- New Public Private Partnership to construct 500 units at a cost of €100 million with an estimated 1,000 construction jobs
- The provision of €76 million for Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) will ensure continued focus on meeting the housing needs of vulnerable groups with some 450 units to be provided for people with specific needs in 2016
- Building on progress made in 2014 and 2015, a further 1,500 vacant units will be refurbished and brought back to productive use

Affordable Homes

- Immediate provision of €10 million for affordable housing pilot scheme

Homeless Services

- Funding for Homelessness services to increase to €70 million -that represents an increase of 55% since 2014

RAS & Housing Assistance Payment

- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) - funding of €135 million under the RAS will allow for 1,000 new RAS transfers in 2015.
- Housing Assistance Payment - funding is being increased by €24.5 million to €47.7million in 2016 in line with the expansion of the scheme which will assist an additional 10,000 families to secure suitable accommodation.

Traveller Accommodation

- €4.3m million funding will provide for Traveller Accommodation and Support Services.

Mortgage to Rent

- Mortgage to Rent Programme to increase by €10million to €17million –a demand lead-scheme so more money will be provided if necessary.

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NAMA & Housing

- NAMA will ramp-up home building - estimate over 13,000 houses and 4,000 apartments in greater Dublin area for the start-up market out to 2020.
- Once ramped up this will see 80 houses being started a week.
- 10% of these in the part V programme will be social housing.