



Community Work Ireland working collectively to support and promote community work as a means of addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality and advancing human rights

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## Budget 2018

Budget 2018 was announced by the Minister for Finance on October 10<sup>th</sup> 2017. It outlines the Government's voted expenditure allocations and measures for 2018. It also provides the expenditure ceilings for 2019 and 2020 in a bid to facilitate multi-annual budgeting and planning processes for each government department.

## Budget 2018 – main points of interest

### Department of Rural and Community Development

The budget for the Department of Rural and Community Development will be €228 million, an increase of €19 million on the budget in 2017 which was €209 million. The chapter on the department states that Budget 2018 aims to continue the Government's support for the implementation of the Action Plan for rural Development and the Framework for Local and Community Development in Ireland. Funding, the Expenditure Report states, is being directed towards creating the conditions for sustainable rural development and providing local level supports vibrant and sustainable communities across Ireland.

The aim of the of Programme A – Rural development and Regional Affairs is to facilitate the economic development of Ireland's regions and to foster the sustainable development of vibrant, rural communities and to support delivery of the Action plan for Rural Development. Under this programme, the 2018 allocation will allow the Department to:

- Support ongoing delivery of the LEADER 2014-2020 Rural Economy Sub Programme;
- Further enhance the National Rural Development Schemes including in particular Rural Recreation;
- Provide continued investment of the Town and Village Regeneration Scheme;
- Continue support to the Local Authorities in their preparations for the roll-out of the National Broadband Plan; and
- Provide for a Local Improvement Scheme to support improvement works on private/non-public roads.

The aim of Programme B - Community Development is, working with the Community and Voluntary Sector, to continue to support Ireland's socio-economic development by facilitating integrated development at local level and fostering vibrant sustainable and inclusive communities. Under this programme, the 2018 allocation will allow the Department to:

- Provide labour market training and supports through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme;

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- Provide support to Local Community Development Committees and strengthen local planning;
- Provide support for a range of initiatives in the community and voluntary sector including support for national organisations in the sector and supports to foster and strengthen volunteerism and philanthropy;
- Fund the Senior Alerts Scheme;
- Support Library Development; and
- Consolidate supports for Social Enterprise by the transfer of the Community Services Programme (from the Department of Social Protection).

Programme C refers to the Charities Regulatory Authority and the report states that the Charities Regulatory Authority will continue to meet its statutory obligations under the Charities Act 2009 to establish and maintain a public register of charitable organisations operating in Ireland and ensure their compliance with the Charities Acts.

	2017	2018	2017-2018	2019	2020
	€m	€m	Increase €m	€m	€m
Gross Voted Current Expenditure	132	140	8	140	140
Gross Voted Capital Expenditure	77	88	11	86	70
<b>Total Gross Voted Expenditure</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>Breakdown 2017</b>					
	€m				
Rural Development & Regional Affairs	93.2				
Community Development	130.4				
Charities Regulator	4.6				
<b>Total Gross Voted Expenditure</b>	<b>228.2</b>				

In the Minister's press release he provided a summary:

- €35 million available for LEADER programme
- Funding for Town and Village Renewal Scheme increased by €3 million to €15 million
- Outdoor Recreation Scheme to receive increase of nearly €4 million to almost €11.4 million
- €10 million allocated to Local Improvement Schemes in 2018
- Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme to receive €43.2 million
- €46.2 million Community Services Programme moved to Department of Rural and Community Development
- Increase of €2.9 million to Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE IV 2014-2020), bringing total to €3.7 million

## The Department of Children and Youth Affairs

An increase in funding of 5.7% or €40.6m to Tusla (that will bring its budget to €713 million in 2018) will, amongst other things, allow for further investment and development of the Family Resource Centres network delivering universal services to families in disadvantaged areas across the country. The additional funding will

allow Tusla to develop capacity within the existing 109 Family Resource Centres and build on the strengths of the Programme, community counselling and psychotherapy services.

The Tusla website outlines its intention to invest an additional €5m into its Family Resource Centre Programme between now and the end of 2018. This includes additional once off funding to centres between now and the end of 2017, further increases in funding to existing centres next year and the expansion of the Programme to include an additional 11 new centres. The funding available falls into a number of categories:

- €2.120m to fund small works and the upgrading of equipment in existing FRCs before the end of this year;
- €1.76m to set up and support 11 new FRCs in 2018
- Subject to centres satisfying certain criteria, it is intended that additional funding of up to €10,000 will be made available to each of the existing 109 FRCs.

The Budget also includes an additional €5.5m to be invested in youth work programmes.

## Department of Justice and Equality

The budget for the Department of Justice and Equality will increase by 4.2% from €2,388 in 2017 to €2,488 in 2018.

### Vote 24 – Justice and Equality

Under Programme D - An Equal and Inclusive Society, the Department says that it aims to promote equality and human rights in society. In 2018, the allocation for this Programme will allow:

- Continued support for the services for refugees, mainly from the Syrian conflict, who will be resettled in Ireland as agreed at EU level; and
- Funding for the Decision Support Service, a key reform contained in the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act (2015) to support decision-making by and for adults with capacity difficulties.

Under Programme E - An Efficient, Responsive and Fair Immigration, Asylum and Citizenship System, the Department the Department will continue to maintain the integrity of the immigration system and to improve the protection and direct provision systems. In 2018, the allocation for this Programme will allow for:

- The establishment of a Passenger Information Unit (PIU) by May 2018 in order to implement the EU Directive on Passenger name Record data (PNR). The Directive is aimed at the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime; and
- The continuation of immigration and international protection services including the response to the ongoing EU migration crisis.

### Vote 25 – Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)

Under Programme A - Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Function, the IHREC will continue to meet its statutory obligation to protect and promote human rights and equality as Ireland's independent national human rights and equality body and to build a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding across Irish society.

## Department of Social Protection

The following changes have been made as a result of Budget 2018:

- €5 increase in maximum rate of all weekly payments e.g. pensioners, lone parents, jobseekers, carers, people with disabilities, widows - 1.47 million beneficiaries
- €5 increase for jobseekers aged under 26 on a reduced rate of payment
- Proportionate increases for people on reduced rate payments and for qualified adult dependants
- €2 increase in all qualified child dependant weekly payments – 400,000 children
- Income disregard for working lone-parents increased by €20 to €130 per week
- Working Family Payment (formerly Family Income Supplement) thresholds increased by €10 per week for families of 1, 2 or 3 children
- Back to Work Family Dividend will continue in 2018
- National Minimum Wage increases to €9.55 per hour – benefiting 155,000 employees
- One additional week of Fuel Allowance (to 27 weeks) – 375,000 households to benefit
- New Telephone Support Allowance for 124,000 people living alone
- New Youth Employment Support Scheme for young jobseekers
- Enhanced JobsPlus Recruitment Incentive to hire older workers
- A Christmas Bonus of 85% will be paid in early December to 1.2 million recipients
- Extra 250 places for the Rural Social Scheme
- The higher rate of the JobsPlus employer subsidy of €10,000 will be made available to employers who hire people over 50 years of age who have been unemployed for more than a year.
- A new work experience programme for young jobseekers called the Youth Employment Support Scheme, aimed at young, long-term unemployed jobseekers will be introduced. Participation in the scheme will be completely voluntary, and participants will receive the equivalent of a net minimum wage payment. The details of the new scheme are still being finalised, but it is expected to launch in quarter two of 2018.

The increases to social welfare payments will not commence for five months.

## Equality Budgeting

The Expenditure Report states that it is important to ensure that Government maintains its focus not only just on the level of expenditure, but also on *how* public funds have been spent. To this end, work on equality and gender proofing of the Budget is set to continue. The Expenditure Report states that the Government is working with partners such as the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to achieve the goal set out in the Programme for Government relating to equality and gender proofing of Budget measures.