

PPC 7 Costings with Responses Budget 2021

Department Of Transport

- Extend the free travel scheme to full time third level students for travel to and from their college.

Response:

The National Transport Authority (NTA) is responsible for the regulation of fares in respect of subsidised public transport services. The table below sets out details of the total fare revenue collected by contracted public transport operators from students in 2019. What is not included is the cost of the provision of additional capacity across the modes as a result of the additional demand generated by reduced fares/free travel. Student fare revenues are likely to be understated as many third level students pay adult fares depending on what the operator offers students. On many services there are no specific student fares, but there are lower student caps which is a means of providing a discount to students. It should also be noted that the NTA does not have a role in the regulation of fares charged by the operators of commercial public bus passenger services. Accordingly, the NTA is not in a position to provide any similar data in respect of those services.

Operator/ Revenue Stream	Student
	Fare Box
	2019
Dublin Bus	€3,384,797
Bus Éireann	€12,379,165
Irish Rail	€30,329,657
Luas	€8,971,200
Other contracted PSO services	€213,984
Total	€55,278,803

- Double funding for Western Development Commission and regional tourism initiatives.

The Western Development Commission is a body under the remit of the Department of the Environment and nothing to do with this Department. Therefore there is no action required from either Tourism Division.

Department for Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht

- **Double funding for Údarás na Gaeltachta,**

Response:

The core exchequer allocation from this Department to Údarás na Gaeltachta in 2020 is €23.652m, as set out in the 2020 Revised Estimates for the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. This comprises €10m capital and €13.562m current.

- To double this funding would therefore require an additional €23.652m.

Department Of Health

- **Provide an additional 1,250,000 home help hours, 1,946 home care packages and recruit an additional 384 primary care workers.**

Response

An additional 1946 Home Care Packages would cost 2.572612 Million

An additional 1,250000 Home Help Hours would cost 31.8 Million

The cost of a Home Care Package and Home Help Package is based on a rate of €24.44

- **Expand and support the health services provided in community settings and closer to home care for patients. Include diagnostic services in Primary Care Centres as standard.**

In 2020 €10 million was committed for enhanced community care, increasing to €60 million in 2021. This funding level will provide enhanced community care cover for 1 in 4 of the population. A further €182 million will be required to roll-out the full supports nationally. This funding will entail the roll out of the following services within the community:

- Community Healthcare Networks
- Integrated Care Programme Older Persons
- Integrated Care Programme Chronic Disease Management
- Health & Wellbeing
- Community & Voluntary supports
- Community Intervention Teams

- Dementia
- Falls Prevention
- Sláintecare Integration Fund Projects

The above is supported with structured chronic disease management and other services as part of the reformed GP contract.

Additional home help hours, homecare packages and community residential beds are not included in above costing.

Costings not available in regard to providing diagnostics in Primary Care Centres. It is recognised that a “one size fits all” approach is not intended for all PCCs. It is essential that services in centres reflect the needs of local communities and are determined by local needs assessments, geographical location and so on. This means that there will always be some variation in the nature of PCCs and the range of services that may be delivered from a particular site.

Costs would vary depending on the type of diagnostic services to be provided while costs would have to be considered for each individual PCC given the variation in capital requirements. In some cases, it wouldn't necessarily be practical or appropriate to provide diagnostics services in a PCC.

These costings relate to the revenue element of the service.

Capital, IT and equipment costs have not been included in the above costs.

- **Prioritise urgent capital investment in existing Community Nursing Units (CNUs) to comply with HIQA requirements and support the rollout of Minor Injury Units.**

Response:

In January 2016, Government announced a comprehensive programme of investment in public residential care Community Nursing Units (CNUs) to replace, upgrade and refurbish care facilities at 90 locations. Following the amalgamation of some projects the number of locations currently stands at 88. The majority of funding for the programme comes from the Exchequer Capital Plan, with a smaller amount being sourced through PPPs. It is anticipated by the end of 2020 that 32 projects will have been completed. Construction is underway on several more facilities, and the remainder are at various stages of appraisal, planning and/or design. At present, it is anticipated a further 10 will be completed in 2021, 16 in 2022 and the remainder before 2025 or thereafter.

Funding of €535m was allocated to the programme from 2016 to 2021. The majority of funding for the programme comes from the Exchequer Capital Plan while a smaller amount of €150 million is to be sourced through PPPs.

Individual projects in the programme are at various stages of development, but total costs of the programme are expected to be in the band €500m - €1 billion. In 2020 it is anticipated circa. €50m will be spent with this figure rising in 2021 and 2022, to over €100m each year respectively, subject to the availability of funding.

It is important to recognise that all capital development proposals must progress through a number of approval stages, in line with the Public Spending Code, including detailed appraisal, planning, design and procurement before a firm timeline or funding requirement can be established.

The delivery of capital projects is a dynamic process and is subject to the successful completion of the various approval stages, which can impact on the timeline for delivery.

Department of Agriculture & Marine

- **Introduce a Suckler Cow Environmental Scheme which pays €200 on up to 20 cows to support sustainable suckler beef production based on the Smart Farming Initiative.**

Response

If all current suckler herds participate (61,000) then it will cost €131,760,400 with the maximum grant capped at €4,000.

If only those currently in BDGP (24,000), our existing multi-annual suckler scheme, were to participate on the basis of €200 for up to 20 animals the cost of the proposed scheme is €72,445,200.

- **Increase the Sheep Welfare Scheme budget to €50m.**

Response

Based on the current number of animals in the scheme, the current budget allocated to the scheme amounts to €18m. To increase the budget to €50m would cost an additional €32m.

Expenditure on the Sheep Welfare Scheme is based on a payment of €10 per breeding ewe upon completion of 2 actions chosen by the farmer from a menu of options provided in the Scheme Terms and Conditions. The amount of expenditure in the scheme is dependent on the number of farmers who apply to participate in the scheme, the number of eligible breeding ewes held by these farmers, and on the farmer successfully complying with their obligations under the scheme.

In addition, Sheep Welfare Scheme payment rates are based on the agreed costings underlying the actions to be undertaken in the scheme, and an increase in payments

would thus require changes to the actions currently being undertaken by farmers. Any such changes to the details of the scheme would require the agreement of the European Commission via the formal Rural Development Programme amendment process.

Department for Employment Affairs and Social Protection

- **Increase the number of places on the Rural Social Scheme by 1,000.**

Response:

The 2020 provision for Rural Social Scheme is €54.07m.

Assuming that the existing participants supported by Rural Social Scheme as of 1st January 2020 remain at the current payment rate, the estimated cost an additional 1000 places for a full year is €16.5m gross, or €5.3 million net (the net cost of the scheme is the excess of the cost over the welfare entitlements that would be paid in its absence).

This costing includes participant payroll, supervisory costs and associated administration costs. Estimates are also dependant on how quickly the additional places would roll out.

Note:

There are currently 3,350 places available on RSS. As of 25th September 2020, there were 3,132 participants on RSS. RSS is delivered through 35 Implementing Bodies or Local Development Companies, and Údarás na Gaeltachta.

- **Increase the Carers' Allowance/Benefit rates and the income disregard for same**

Response:

The estimated full year cost of a €1 increase in Carer's Benefit and Carer's Allowance is €0.15million and €3.45million respectively. It should be noted these

costs include reduced rates where applicable and are based on 2020 recipients which are subject to change in the context of emerging trends.

The current income disregard for Carer's Allowance is €332.50 per week for a single person and €665 per week for a couple, making the means test for carers the least onerous within the social protection system.

A couple earning a joint annual income of up to €37,500 (net of PRSI and other allowable deductions) can qualify for maximum payment and, given the tapered withdrawal approach, retain a payment of just under half-rate while earning €49,750. A single person may retain a full-rate payment while having an annual income of just under €19,000, and retain a payment of just under half-rate while having an annual income of €25,400.

Changes to schemes are considered in an overall budgetary and policy context and from an evidence based perspective. Some 92% of the current recipients of Carer's Allowance have no means or means of less than €7.60 per week and would not benefit by an increase in the disregard. Carers who would benefit from an increased disregard would be in higher income households.