



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

Statement of Strategy 2020-2023



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Foreword by the Minister



I welcome the publication of the 2020-2023 Statement of Strategy for the Department of Social Protection. This Strategy will support the implementation of the priorities set out in the *Programme for Government – Our Shared Future*.

As a Government, our top priority for the next few years is to deliver on the commitments in our Programme for Government, to respond to the challenges presented by Brexit and to ensure our country recovers from the impact of COVID-19. As a Department, our priority is to target our resources to the benefit of our people - to reduce poverty and deprivation and to promote active inclusion by helping people access and sustain employment. To use the words of our mission statement: *“to promote active participation and inclusion in society through the provision of income supports, employment services and other services”*.

Delivering on these objectives requires a significant commitment by Government on behalf of the citizens of our country. Total expenditure by the Department is equivalent to about 34% of all Government current expenditure or about 10% of modified gross national income. In 2020, about 98 cent out of every euro collected in income tax and PRSI was spent by the Department. This reflects the fact that the Department, as well as being the largest payment provider in the State, is also the largest provider of employment services – spending about €2bn each year on employment programmes.

We could not do this without the commitment of our staff and service partners including An Post, the Revenue Commissioners, Pobal, Community Employment sponsors, Local Employment Services and Jobpath providers as well as research partners such as the ESRI and the Vincentian Partnership. The input and advice of community and voluntary organisations and advocacy groups is also essential to helping the Department deliver on its remit.

Most of all, however, we rely on our staff. I am consistently impressed by the commitment of the staff of the Department. This was never more evident than during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their work in developing and implementing new income support schemes in unprecedented numbers was critical to the maintenance of the social cohesion necessary to sustain people through successive public health restrictions. This “can do/will do” approach will be critical in the next few years to deliver on this strategy. I look forward to working with them and thank them for their commitment to public service.



Heather Humphreys TD
Minister for Social Protection

Introduction by the Secretary General



Looking back on progress under the previous Statement of Strategy, it is possible to point to noteworthy progress and achievements.

The work of this Department was critical to the ongoing reductions in inequality and poverty, to the growth in employment and, until COVID-19 struck, the reduction in unemployment.

The Department was also centrally involved in registration of same-sex marriages and in changes to how a person's gender is recognised and recorded. Extension of workers' rights to defined and regular work hours and to additional parent's/paternity leave and benefit were all delivered during the past few years, as were changes to improve pension entitlements of people who had to take time out of the workplace to fulfil caring duties. Access to many benefits was also extended to self-employed people, the Treatment Benefit scheme was greatly expanded and e-certification and closed certification were introduced to help improve processing of Illness Benefit claims.

Underpinning all of this progress were major changes to how the Department and its staff deliver its services. For example, we've seen a significant shift to the use of digital and online service delivery and a renewed investment in QQI certified training to support and recognise the professionalism of the Department's staff.

These changes, in turn, both supported and were, of necessity, accelerated by the Department's response to the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19.

Flattening the Covid curve resulted in the creation of a peak in welfare claims. Between March and October 2020, the Department received and processed the equivalent of over 7 years of normal jobseeker claims

– getting most claims into payment within a week. This took an exceptional effort over a prolonged period and will continue to require a huge effort into the months ahead.

But while we can reflect, for the most part, on a job well done, the purpose of this strategy statement is to look forward, not back.

We must ensure that the Department is organised and managed to deal with recovery as well as crisis and that the changes we make are sustainable into the long term. We need to balance what is required now with what is required in the future.

For the future, we intend, as mandated by Government, to consolidate the progress made in recent years in the range of services and schemes available to workers and to unemployed people, and, to develop new policies with respect to pension provision. We will continue to modernise our service delivery through even greater use of online and digital channels and through the continued roll-out of professional education and training programmes for our staff. We will support Government through the provision of evidence-based advice; incorporating learnings from our own experience and those of peer countries, to inform policy choices. And in doing all of this, we will be ever mindful that our purpose is to help people – to support active participation of our citizens in our society.

That is why, in preparing this Statement of Strategy, we sought and received suggestions from the community and voluntary sector, other Departments and Offices, staff and the public. Thank you all for your considered contributions – they helped to inform and guide the development of this Statement of Strategy.

This Statement of Strategy sets out the high level strategies and outcomes/objectives to be pursued by

Introduction by the Secretary General (continued)

the Department in the years ahead. It also identifies the high-level measures/metrics that will be used to track progress. Appendix A contains the 2021 output targets while further detail on specific actions, targets and milestones is set out in other published documents referenced in this Strategy Statement, most notably the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion*, the *Roadmap for Pensions Reform*, *Pathways to Work* and the *Comprehensive Strategy for the Employment of People with Disabilities*. Other Department strategies also include greater detail on specific actions and targets – including, for example, the Department’s *Compliance & Anti-Fraud Strategy 2019-2023* and the Department’s *Digital Strategy*. We will continue to publish comprehensive data on the schemes and services delivered by the Department in our *Annual Statistical Report*.

Finally, as a Department, we deliver a vast range of services that touch on the lives of every citizen in the State. We strive to do so to a high standard and can do so only with the support of our staff whose dedication, professionalism and commitment is second to none – to them, as ever, I say a sincere thanks.



John McKeon
Secretary General

Our Mission, Strategic Objectives and Values

The Department's Mission is:

To promote active participation and inclusion in society through the provision of income supports, employment services and other services.



The Department's overall objective for 2020 to 2023 is:

To continue putting our clients at the centre of all our operations, providing an efficient and effective service and to continue developing our staff, structures and processes.

1 Put the Client at the Centre of Policy and Service Delivery

2 Drive Cost, Efficiency and Effectiveness

3 Develop Staff, Structures and Processes

As a Department, we value:

Public Service

We are dedicated to serving the people of Ireland in an efficient and impartial manner.

Customer Focus

We are totally committed to the positive difference we can make to our customers' lives and Irish society.

Total Professionalism

We are proud of our professionalism and commitment to quality in everything we do.

Engaged Staff

We believe that our effectiveness as an organisation is dependent on a highly skilled and engaged workforce.

Innovation

We believe that having the attitude and environment to adapt and innovate is core to our future success.

Strategic Objective 1

Put the Client at the Centre of Policy and Service Delivery

High Level Strategies

- Deliver Social Protection commitments in the Programme for Government
- Deliver commitments in *PathWays to Work*, *Roadmap for Social Inclusion* and *Roadmap for Pensions Reform*
- Focus policy on promoting active participation in society, supporting employment and ensuring the sustainability of the social welfare system
- Inform policy through robust research and evaluation and through seeking inputs from civil society and other stakeholders
- Ensure continued delivery of the Department's schemes and services to the highest standard including that:
 - Decisions, payments, reviews and appeal decisions for all schemes are made promptly
 - Queries received from clients and their representatives are answered promptly and clearly
- Ensure that the Department's services and information are accessible to all service users and compliant with its Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty in all its activities
- Contribute to achievement of Ireland's international commitments including the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the EU Social Charter
- Support the Department's Agencies in the delivery of their functions
- Identify client service requirements/satisfaction via surveys and the provision of feedback mechanisms
- Continue to deliver climate action commitments contained in the Climate Action Plan 2019 and contribute to its successor
- Support the whole-of-government approach to climate action
- In line with Government policy, target changes to key social welfare payments to ensure that increases to carbon tax have a progressive impact on the most vulnerable thus contributing to a Just Transition.

Key Outcomes

- Delivery of goals set out in the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion* – including reduction in poverty rates and improvement in living standards
- Delivery of schemes and services to the highest standard
- Progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Increased labour market participation rates
- Help safeguard vulnerable adults at risk
- Improvement in employability of clients and increased engagement with employers
- The ability of all service users, including people with disabilities, to access all of the Department's services and information services
- Achievement of the EU, UN and Ireland's strategic agenda and goals in the social affairs domain
- Production of evidence-based advice to Government on social protection issues
- Government approval and adoption of policy reforms to support the sustainability of the social insurance system and, in particular, the sustainability and adequacy of the pension system
- High levels of client satisfaction
- Progress towards delivery of the Department's goals on climate action.

High Level Indicators

- Progress in implementation of the commitments in the Programme for Government, the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion, Pathways to Work* and the *Roadmap for Pensions Reform*
- Achievement of the indicators/metrics set out in the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion, Pathways to Work* (including *Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities*)
- Commencement of the implementation of the Total Contributions Approach and an Auto-enrolment system in pensions
- Achievement of claim processing standards and processing targets
- Quality of decisions and the communication of same
- Increase in the level of, and trends in, client service satisfaction measures
- Information on [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie) and application forms written in plain language and in an accessible format
- Adherence with all regulatory requirements
- Publication of relevant policy papers/reform plans
- Publication of the Report of the Commission on Pensions
- Progress in implementation of the commitments in the Programme for Government on climate action.



Strategic Objective 2

Drive Cost, Efficiency and Effectiveness

High Level Strategies

- Continue to migrate services to, and promote use of, online and digital service channels
- Complete migration of schemes and services from legacy IT platforms
- Continue re-organisation to a front-office/back-office model of working including establishment of dedicated customer contact teams
- Implement the *Compliance & Anti-Fraud Strategy 2019-2023* to improve control and compliance across all schemes
- Continue to improve corporate governance, financial management and reporting systems
- Continue to exchange information with other Public Sector bodies in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation requirements
- Continue to provide services and payments for other public bodies on an agency basis
- Evaluate reforms to underpin the long-term sustainability and adequacy of our income support system (pensions, in particular)
- Develop and implement a Management Accounting system to inform operations, management decisions and strategies
- Continue to implement robust supplier and contract management processes.

Key Outcomes

- Increased self-service through digital provision
- Greater use of shared services provided by the Department
- Improved processes and procedures
- Reduction of fraud and error
- Timeliness of decision-making to claim award/refusal
- Enhanced corporate governance
- Greater inter-agency cooperation
- Improved sustainability of the social welfare system
- Strong evidence base for policy development
- Improved measurement of unit cost data for Department activity
- Improvement in the timeliness and value of debt recovery.

High Level Indicators

- IT systems service availability and performance
- Implementation of Digital Strategy Actions and front-office/back-office method of working
- The number of people using online services and the range of services available through [MyWelfare.ie](https://www.mywelfare.ie) and [MyGovID.ie](https://www.mygovid.ie)
- The level of control activity against targets
- The proportion of overpayments recovered
- The level and trend in unit processing and service costs
- Adherence to administrative/operating budget
- Satisfaction of other public bodies in the quality and efficiency of services and payments provided on their behalf
- Administrative and operating costs as a proportion of total operating costs.

Strategic Objective 3

Develop Staff, Structures and Processes

High Level Strategies

- Implement the commitments of *Our Public Service 2020* as well as the *Civil Service Renewal Plan*
- Provide high-quality, tailored training, accredited learning and education opportunities for staff
- Ensure that appropriate supports are provided to support the decisions, payments and appeals processes through staff training, sound processes and good IT systems
- Provide appropriate technological and other tools to assist staff in their work
- Work closely with staff representative organisations on all aspects of employee relations including organisation change
- Continue to sponsor and implement the Engagement and Innovation Programme to engage staff in developing solutions to issues identified within the Department
- Learn from and extend as appropriate, remote working and other practices developed in response to COVID-19
- Embed the 'can-do/will-do' and flexible approach to innovation, building on the experience from our response to COVID-19
- Continue to develop the workforce planning framework with stakeholders to reduce time-to-hire
- Encourage and support staff mobility within the organisation
- Develop approaches to ensure a resilient workforce by promoting wellbeing throughout the organisation
- Promote and develop diversity and inclusion initiatives and programmes
- Implement the Customer Service Strategy - in particular, to achieve recognition for ISSA best practice guidelines for administration of social protection systems
- Continue to implement civil service arrangements relating to attendance, illness, performance and discipline.

Key Outcomes

- High levels of staff engagement
- High levels of staff performance
- Low levels of staff absence and turnover
- Consistently high customer service standards
- Programme for Government targets for remote working achieved or exceeded
- Timely staff recruitment and assignment
- Further certification of International Social Security Association (ISSA) management guidelines for social security institutions
- Staff awareness of and empathy with service requirements of clients with particular needs
- Structured training, accredited learning and educational curriculum provided to staff.

High Level Indicators

- Staff engagement metrics as reported in staff surveys
- Number of staff completing accredited programmes
- Staff attendance metrics
- Staff turnover metrics
- Customer service and customer satisfaction metrics
- Contribution made to the achievement of actions in the *Civil Service Renewal Plan*
- Delivery of HR Strategy commitments
- Implementation of structural, technological and organisational changes
- ISSA certification for key functions/processes
- Levels of staff and manager awareness of diversity and inclusion issues from staff surveys
- Level of engagement and take-up of Learning and Development opportunities
- Proportion of staff working remotely.

Key Challenges and Opportunities in our Operating Environment

Economic Context: COVID-19 and Brexit

DSP expenditure represents about 34% of all gross current Government expenditure and plays a key role in reducing inequality. However, the ability of the Exchequer to finance this expenditure will be dependent on developments in the wider economy. Economic and social recovery from the public health crisis, against the backdrop of Brexit, will require a renewed and intense focus on the development and delivery of employment services. Similarly, maintaining the Government objective of sustainable public finances, within the terms of the Stability and Growth Pact, in the face of increasing demands on the social welfare budget will need careful management during the lifetime of this strategy statement.

Demographic and Other Pressures

Ensuring an adequate and sustainable welfare and pension system in the years ahead will be made more difficult by demographic pressures (the ageing of our population) and incipient developments in the nature of work/employment. These developments will challenge our Pay-As-You-Go model social insurance system - a system that is premised on PRSI contributions from paid employment. The new Commission on Pensions will be examining these issues and will provide a report to Government for follow-up action during 2021.

Making Innovation Real

The Department remains committed to innovation as we deliver our mandate and believes that continuing to build the environment to adapt and innovate is core to our future success. Ensuring adequate and sustained staff engagement over the lifetime of this Strategy will be challenging but it is key to achieving our goals and we will harness the Department's Engagement and Innovation Programme to embed a culture where all staff are inspired, empowered and enabled to innovate.

Poverty Reduction and Active Inclusion

Social transfers play a vital role in alleviating poverty and fostering a sense of social cohesion. Some groups, particularly children and young families, lone parent families and people with a disability experience higher rates of poverty than society generally. The evidence suggests that the higher level of market income inequality in Ireland is associated with low employment/participation rates among these groups. Focusing improvements in welfare supports on these cohorts and supporting people into work will be prioritised as a means of reducing and alleviating poverty and inequality. This will be supported by the implementation of the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025: Ambition, Goals, Commitments*, and the whole-of-government national strategy for poverty reduction.



Organisation Change

The ongoing implementation of organisation change to move to front-office/back-office methods of working and self-service via online channels will be challenging to staff and managers at all levels. However, it will also present opportunities for new ways of working and, potentially, enable staff to move into new roles – particularly in employment services and control – and to take advantages of opportunities such as remote working. These changes will need to be navigated within the context of wider public service agreements.

Beyond Income Support

There will be greater integration of income supports with employment, training and activation measures, closer engagement with employers and robust evaluation of labour market policies and outcomes, to support clients, on the route back to employment and self-sufficiency.

In addition to the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025: Ambition, Goals, Commitments, Pathways to Work 2021-2025* will aim to extend and enhance the provision of employment services beyond the registered unemployed to include additional groups such as those with caring responsibilities, people with disabilities and qualified adult dependents of recipients of working-age payments.

Data Protection

The Department is fully committed to maintaining Data Protection compliance over its entire range of schemes and services. This requires significant resources, continuing audit programmes along with ensuring Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) are completed as business processes are changed.

Digital Services Opportunities

As client demand for online services continues to grow, the Department remains committed to the design, build and delivery of client-focused online services. An online channel provides an additional opportunity for clients to apply for schemes and services and seek information with regard to claims and payment status remotely, in a safe and secure way. The value of digital services proved essential in the delivery of services in recent unprecedented times to large numbers of clients.

Public Service Reform

The Government's *Public Service Reform Programme* and the *Civil Service Renewal Plan* provide ongoing opportunities and challenges for the Department.

Policy Development and Legislation

Policy and legislative development for over 80 social welfare and inter-department schemes as well as policy responsibility for civil registration and gender recognition.

Support of Other Departments, Public Sector Bodies and Contracted Service Providers

Continuing to foster the good working relationships the Department has with other Government Departments, public sector bodies and contracted service providers will be critical to achieving the Government's objectives. Co-operation and support will be necessary in implementing the cross-cutting commitment in the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025: Ambition, Goals, Commitments, Pathways to Work 2021-2025* and the *Roadmap for Pensions Reform*.

European Union and International Co-Operation

The Department engages on an international level with the European Code of Social Security and the European Social Charter. The Department also plays a key role in Ireland's implementation of the Social Pillar and continues active engagement, including through the Council's preparatory bodies, with the European Semester in respect of the jobs and growth agenda, guidelines and country specific recommendations.

Following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the Department continues to play an important role in ensuring that the social security rights of citizens under the Common Travel Area arrangements are safeguarded and maintained.

Staffing

The Department has a high quality, knowledgeable and experienced workforce that has shown its ability both to adapt to, and, drive change. However the age profile of the Department's staff – many of whom were recruited in the 1970s and 1980s - will bring challenges, with the loss of experience, corporate knowledge and skills in a relatively short time-frame. Knowledge and experience transfer will be critical to the maintenance of service levels as we recruit new staff to take the place of experienced staff. In addition, the organisational changes required by this strategy will require new approaches in how we recruit staff as well as how we remunerate, train, develop and retain these new staff.

Climate Action

As part of the Just Transition, the Government is committed to protecting vulnerable households from the impact of energy costs. This Department provides a range of payments to assist people on welfare with their energy costs. The Department also contributes to the achievement of the Government's sustainable energy goals through the greater use of online/digital delivery and the more efficient management and use of its IT and premises estate. In terms of energy efficiency, the initial goal set in 2009 was a 33% efficiency improvement target by 2020, which the Department has achieved. Under Ireland's Climate Action Plan (June 2019), and the Programme for Government, this ambition has been increased, to a 50% energy efficiency improvement by 2030.



Achieving our Strategic Objectives will be supported by these enablers

People and Structures

- Communication and embedding of organisation culture and values
- Management of team and individual performance
- Alignment of Department structures and staff deployment with this strategy
- Close engagement and co-operation with staff representative organisations
- Continued use of strategic workforce planning
- Use of Continuous Professional Development to strengthen knowledge, capabilities, leadership and skills throughout the organisation
- Establishment of internal and external engagement, consultation, communications and networks
- Availing of opportunities presented through Public Service Reform and Renewal (e.g. staff mobility)
- Encourage and embed a culture of innovation across the organisation
- Support staff to work collaboratively and cultivate new partnerships and networks
- Use of contracted and third party services to complement and augment the Department's own service capacity including branch offices, An Post, Local Employment Services/Jobpath
- Provision of supports to staff to promote wellbeing
- Supports for staff for new ways of working in line with emerging best practice
- Development and embedding of the digitalisation culture and structure through staff training and engagement.

Technology and Processes

- Deployment of modern technologies in an innovative way to maximise efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources – including through remote working
- Availability of cross-Government programmes, such as shared services and data sharing
- Ongoing analysis and improvement of key business processes
- Increased use of the online platforms, [MyWelfare.ie](#), [MyGovID.ie](#) and [WelfarePartners.ie](#) to provide services and information digitally and securely to clients, stakeholders, partners
- Greater use of management accounting techniques to inform business decision making
- Investment in energy efficiency technologies, and in Reduce, Reuse and Recycle initiatives.

Governance

- Corporate Governance Framework
- Independent Social Welfare Appeals Office
- Integrated risk management, strategic planning and business planning system and process
- Data privacy and security policies, standards and guidelines
- Internal controls
- Oversight by Internal Audit Unit and the Audit Committee
- Ongoing review of legislative code
- Use of external advisory bodies, such as the Labour Market Advisory Council, to challenge and advise the Department on policies and services
- Structured engagement with stakeholders and the use of client insights (e.g. from client surveys) to provide a client view of performance
- Progress towards achievement of the 2030 energy efficiency targets
- Achievement of ISO50001 energy management accreditation.

Appendix A - Output Measures and Targets

2021 REVISED ESTIMATES OUTPUT TARGETS

Details of Programmes - Objectives, Outputs and Financial Human Resources
PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE
A - SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEMES, SERVICES, ADMINISTRATION AND PAYMENT TO SOCIAL INSURANCE FUND
Key Outputs and Public Service Activities

<i>Key High Level Metrics</i>		<i>2018 Output Outturn (2018 Output Target)</i>	<i>2019 Output Target</i>	<i>2020 Output Target</i>
Pensions	Average no. of weekly payments	590,993 (590,190)	607,960	632,630
	Average no. of monthly payments	43,942 (44,720)	44,220	44,420
	% of contributory claims to award within processing time standards	92 (90)	90	90
	% of State Pension Non Contributory claims to award within processing time standards	69 (75)	75	75
Working Age - Income Supports	Average no. of weekly payments	299,672 (298,380)	267,520	273,185
	Average weekly Live Register	221,320 (225,000)	191,800	188,319
	% of claims to award within processing time standards	93 (90)	90	90
Working Age Employment Supports	Average no. of weekly payments	55,897 (63,480)	53,070	45,793
Illness, Disability and Carers	Average no. of weekly payments	347,565 (347,890)	353,510	368,207
	Average no. of annual Carer's Support payments	110,879 (112,640)	118,090	126,709
	% of Illness Benefit, Invalidity Pension and Occupational Injury Benefit claims to award within processing time standards*	77 (90)	90	90
	% of Disability Allowance claims to award within processing time standards	58 (75)	75	75
	% of Carer's Allowance claims to award within processing time standards	20 (70)	70	70
	% of Domiciliary Care Allowance claims to award within processing time standards**	77 (70)	90	90
Children	Average no. of weekly payments	57,302 (59,420)	57,400	53,333
	Average no. of monthly Child Benefit payments	1,196,118 (1,195,390)	1,202,480	1,208,362
	% of Child Benefit claims to award within processing time standards	79 (90)	90	90
Supplementary Payments	Average no. of Rent Supplement payments	26,680 (27,620)	19,960	16,490
	Average no. of Household Benefits payments	434,470 (435,870)	447,800	448,860
	% of Household Benefits & Free Travel claims to award within processing time standards	97 (90)	90	90
Control	No. of control surveys completed and published	1 (2)	2	2
	% of debtors*** receiving a weekly social welfare payment making debt repayments	75% (75%)	80%	80%
	% of the value of outstanding debts being repaid***	47% (47%)	50%	50%
Appeals	No. of appeals awaiting decision at year end	8,963 (8,000-9,000)	8,500-9,500	8,500-9,500
Payment Services for Other Departments	No. of customers with Local Property Tax deductions from their payment	25,382 (26,000)	25,250	25,300
	No. of Magdalen Commission customers in payment	420 (305)	480	460

* Illness Benefit and Occupational Injury Benefit statistics are not available due to migration to a new IT platform.

** From the 1st of April 2018, the processing time standard for Domiciliary Care Allowance was amended from 70% of claims cleared in 15 weeks to 90% of claims cleared in 10 weeks.

*** Excluding new claimants with debts and new debts raised (under one month).

Appendix A

2021 REVISED ESTIMATES OUTPUT TARGETS

Details of Programmes - Objectives, Outputs and Financial Human Resources
PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE

<i>Legislation</i>	<i>2018 Output Outturn</i>	<i>2019 Output Target</i>	<i>2020 Output Target</i>
	- Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 - Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Act 2018	- Civil Registration Act 2019 - Social Welfare Act 2019 (Jobseeker's Benefit for the Self-Employed) - Social Welfare (No. 2) Bill 2019 (Budget Bill)	- Social Welfare (Spring) Bill - Social Welfare (Budget) Bill - Payment of Wages Bill (to amend Payment of Wages Act 1991, in relation to treatment of tips) - Gender Recognition Bill (to amend certain provisions of Gender Recognition Act 2015) - Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 (Amendment) Bill (to bring the legislation into line with the EU Working Time Directive) (Note: It may be possible to effect the necessary changes by Statutory Instrument, negating the need for a Bill. Final advice pending.)
<i>Publish Documents</i>	<i>2018 Output Outturn</i>	<i>2019 Output Target</i>	<i>2020 Output Target</i>
	- Recommendations of the Low Pay Commission for the National Minimum Wage (2018)	- Recommendations of the Low Pay Commission for the National Minimum Wage (2019) - Pathways to Work Impact Evaluations of JobPath and Jobsplus	- Recommendations of the Low Pay Commission for the National Minimum Wage (2020)

Context and Impact indicators

	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
No. of payments	80.7m	79.7m	79.5m
No. of claims decided - weekly paid schemes*	742,958	755,957	667,499
No. of telephone calls answered	7.3m	7.5m	6.5m
% of population at risk of poverty**			
Pre Social transfers	44.9%	43.8%	40.9%
Post Social Transfers	16.5%	15.7%	14%
Consistent Poverty Rate	8.3%	6.7%	5.6%
Pension Coverage***			
Defined Benefit scheme members	471,608	457,220	494,289
Defined Contribution scheme members	299,782	329,297	351,657
Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs)	250,719	264,664	281,127

* Stats exclude SWA weekly payments; Due to migration to new IT platform, some statistics excluded for certain periods Illness Benefit and Occupational Injury Benefit (Aug-Nov 2018).

** SILC survey, CSO annual publication- data not yet available for 2018.

*** Figures as per Pensions Authority Annual Report.

Appendix A

2021 REVISED ESTIMATES OUTPUT TARGETS

EQUALITY BUDGETING OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

High Level Goal: Promote active inclusion and reduce the proportion of jobless households in society by providing targeted activation and development and employment services

Key Outputs and Public Service Activities

Key High Level Metrics

Share of population aged 18-59 years resident in jobless households²

Target an aggregate progression to employment rate across activation programmes of 40% (measured 6 months after completion of programme)³

Reduce the ratio between youth and overall unemployment⁴

	2018 Output Outturn (2018 Output Target)	2019 Output Outturn (2019 Output Target)	2020 Output Target ¹
Share of population aged 18-59 years resident in jobless households ²	9.5% (<10%)	8.8% (<9.5%)	Not yet available
Target an aggregate progression to employment rate across activation programmes of 40% (measured 6 months after completion of programme) ³	55% (40%)	58% (40%)	Not yet available
Reduce the ratio between youth and overall unemployment ⁴	2.2:1 (2:1)	2.8:1 (2:1)	Not yet available

Context and Impact Indicators

	2017	2018	2019
1- Unemployment rate ⁵	6.8%	5.8%	4.9%
2- Long-term unemployment rate ⁵	3.0%	2.1%	1.4%
3- Youth unemployment rate ⁵	14.4%	13.7%	13.5%
4- Employment rate ⁵	67.7%	68.7%	69.1%
5- Number of participants on employment programmes ⁶	31,830	31,585	30,690
6- Number of participants on employment supports (Back To Work Enterprise Allowance and Back To Education Allowance) ⁶	20,581	15,514	11,024
7- Number of Working Family Payment recipients ⁶ : - Families - Children	57,745 129,274	54,116 122,056	52,036 117,238
8- Proportion of population 0-17 years resident in jobless households ²	11.9%	11.8%	11.3%

¹ Targets for 2020 are not yet available as these will be published as part of the new Pathways to Work policy in early 2020

² Jobless household statistics are from the CSO's LFS Households and Family Units release Q2, 2019, and these figures refer to Q2 each year.

³ Figures are from Q3 each year

⁴ This is a volatile metric which is prone to revision

⁵ 2019 figures refer to CSO LFS Q3 2019

⁶ 2019 figures are to end of October

Appendix A

2021 REVISED ESTIMATES OUTPUT TARGETS

EQUALITY BUDGETING OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

High Level Goal: Increase the take-up level of Paternity Benefit among eligible employees and self-employed people

Key Outputs and Public Service Activities

Key High Level Metrics

Paternity Benefit claims as a percentage of Maternity Benefit claims¹

	2019 Outturn (Output Target) ²	2020 Output Target
58%	62% (>60%)	>60%

Context and Impact Indicators

- 1- Number of Paternity Benefit claims awarded²
- 2- Number of Maternity Benefit claims awarded²
- 3- Number of births³
- 4- Number of male PRSI Class A, E, H & S contributors⁴
- 5- Number of female PRSI Class A, E, H & S contributors⁴
- 6- Number of males in employment⁵
- 7- Number of females in employment⁵

	2017	2018	2019
1-	26,559	24,080	23,210
2-	45,621	41,429	37,500
3-	62,053	61,016	Not yet available
4-	1.313m	Not yet available	Not yet available
5-	1.146m	Not yet available	Not yet available
6-	1.186m	1.221m	1.252m
7-	1.008m	1.036m	1.065.5m

¹ It should be noted that Paternity and Maternity Benefit claims are not directly comparable as eligibility is dependent on the person's employment status and PRSI contribution record, which may differ for each parent of a child. In addition, Maternity Benefit is (generally) taken from two weeks before the birth of the child, while Paternity Benefit can be taken within 6 months of the birth of the child.

² 2019 figures are to end October

³ CSO Vital Statistics 2018

⁴ P35 Revenue data, figure is number of people by primary class

⁵ 2019 figures refer to CSO LFS Q3 2019

Details of Appropriation-in-Aid

B - APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID

APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID:

1. Recovery of administration expenses from the Social Insurance Fund

	2019 Estimate			2020 Estimate		
	Current €000	Capital €000	Total €000	Current €000	Capital €000	Total €000
	131,930	-	131,930	121,980	-	121,980
<i>Subtotal:-</i>	<i>131,930</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>131,930</i>	<i>121,980</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>121,980</i>
APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID: Other						
2. Recoveries of Social Assistance overpaid	58,800	-	58,800	58,300	-	58,300
3. Repayment from the Social Insurance Fund of amounts paid initially as Social Assistance	5,420	-	5,420	4,000	-	4,000
4. Receipts under "Liability to Maintain Family" provisions in Part 12 of the Social Welfare Act 2005	320	-	320	320	-	320
5. Receipts from the General Register Office	310	-	310	340	-	340
6. Receipts from Additional Superannuation Contribution on Public Service Remuneration	7,410	-	7,410	6,000	-	6,000
7. Receipts from European Social Fund	-	-	-	7,250	-	7,250
8. Receipts from National Training Fund (Community Employment)	6,100	-	6,100	6,100	-	6,100
9. Receipts from Pensions Board - Staff Superannuation	600	-	600	600	-	600
10. Homeless Unit Operational Cost - contributions from external agencies	2,500	-	2,500	-	-	-
11. Receipts from Dormant Accounts	550	-	550	5,000	-	5,000
12. Recovery of assistance from Insurance Claims	2,700	-	2,700	2,800	-	2,800
13. Receipts from Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived	260	-	260	4,500	-	4,500
14. Miscellaneous	800	-	800	1,000	-	1,000
<i>Subtotal:-</i>	<i>85,770</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>85,770</i>	<i>96,210</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>96,210</i>
Total:>	217,700	-	217,700	218,190	-	218,190

Appendix B

Commitments in the Programme for Government 2020, where the Department of Social Protection has a lead role

- We will improve budgeting for demographic-related costs. Spending in the areas of health and social welfare will be prioritised for improved budgeting. Each minister will be required to produce service improvement and reform plans in conjunction with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Budget overspends within the budgetary year must be included in department budgetary plans each year, in line with changes in Budget 2020
- Protect core weekly social welfare rates
- Recognise the importance of ancillary benefits and eligibility criteria to vulnerable groups
- Any changes made in social welfare provisions will continue to be gender and equality-proofed
- Examine options for a pension solution for carers, the majority of whom are women, particularly those of incapacitated children, in recognition of the enormous value of the work carried out by them
- Increase the availability of activation schemes, including those run by local employment services
- We will use the recent research into the cost of disability to individuals and families to properly inform the direction of future policy
- Develop initiatives that improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities living in rural areas, including through remote working options
- Fast-track the return to Disability or Invalidity Pension for people where employment opportunities do not succeed
- Fine-tune and expand targeted employment schemes, such as the Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) and the Ability Programme, to help more people with disabilities stay in the workforce
- Put in place strong and varied labour-market activation programmes
- Enhance back-to-work schemes and initiatives to assist in upskilling those who are seeking new employment opportunities after the crisis
- Review the Back to Education Allowance, to ensure that it can help those unemployed as a result of COVID-19 to access education and training

- Continue to fund the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Service, Abhaile
- Maintain the entitlement for the Free Travel Scheme for all individuals aged 66 and over
- Work with private bus operators and the National Transport Authority (NTA) so that the Free Travel Scheme is available on all publicly licensed bus routes
- Remove the need for a person aged 16 and 17 years to have two specialist reports before they can apply for legal gender recognition, by providing for self-declaration, with parental consent and by making mediation available on a voluntary basis. These improvements will include the provision of a gender-recognition certificate providing proof of change of name, as well as gender. Commence research to examine arrangements for children under 16. Complete the work of the interdepartmental group tasked with examining legal recognition of non-binary people
- Ensure that Rent Supplement and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) levels are adequate to support vulnerable households, while we increase the supply of social housing (in conjunction with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage)
- Ensure that the increases in the carbon tax are progressive by spending €3 billion on targeted social welfare and other initiatives to prevent fuel poverty and ensure a Just Transition
- Set out the future distribution of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, based on the principles of fairness and equity
- Improve jobseeker supports for people aged under 24 over the lifetime of the Government
- Continue to prioritise and protect supports for lone parents, having regard to the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection's Report on the Position of Lone Parents in Ireland (2017)
- Act to reform our child maintenance system and address key issues such as calculation, facilitation, and enforcement, guided by international best practice and in light of the findings of the Murphy Review
- Maintain the State Pension as the bedrock of the Irish pension system
- 65 year olds who are required to or chose to retire early can receive an 'Early Retirement Allowance or Pension' at the same rate as jobseekers benefit without a requirement to sign on, partake in any activation measures or be available for and genuinely seeking work
- Establish a Commission on Pensions to examine sustainability and eligibility issues with state pensions and the Social Insurance Fund. The Commission will outline options for Government to address issues including qualifying age, contribution rates, total contributions and eligibility requirements
- Pending the report of the Commission on Pensions and any subsequent Government decisions on its recommendations, the State Pension age will remain at 66 years and the increase to 67 years will be deferred. This will allow full consideration by Government of any permanent changes. The Commission will report by June 2021. The Government will take action having regard to the recommendations of the Commission within 6 months

- Introduce a Total Contributions approach, aligning a person's contributory pension more closely with the contributions they make. This will include a provision for credited contributions, ensuring that people who take time off work to care for loved ones are not disadvantaged
- The new Government will introduce a pension auto-enrolment system. Taking account of the exceptional strain both employers and employees are now under, we will seek to deliver gradually an automatic enrolment scheme based on the following principles: Matching contributions will be made by both workers and employers and the State will top up contributions; There will be a phased roll-out over a decade of the contribution made by workers; There will be an opt-out provision for those who choose to opt out; Workers will have a range of retirement savings products to choose from; There will be a charges cap imposed on pension providers
- Introduce a system to enable people to defer receipt of their state contributory pension on an annual basis, to include actuarial increases in payment as soon as practicable
- Facilitate those without a full social insurance record to increase their retirement provision by choosing to continue making PRSI payments beyond pensionable age
- Consideration will be given to increasing all classes of PRSI over time to replenish the Social Insurance Fund to help pay for measures and changes to be agreed including, inter alia, to the state pension system, improvements to short-term sick pay benefits, parental leave benefits, pay-related jobseekers benefit and treatment benefits (medical, dental, optical, hearing)
- Continue to support the annual Social Inclusion Forum as an important means of promoting engagement between people experiencing poverty and exclusion, the community and voluntary sector and Government
- As we emerge from the COVID pandemic, we must build upon the unity, which was fundamental in our response, to improve outcomes for those who are struggling on low incomes, struggling with caring responsibilities, having to raise their families alone, or living with a disability. Any changes made in social welfare provisions will continue to be gender and equality-proofed. We will do this by rigorous implementation of the new social inclusion strategy, *A Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025*.



Appendix C

Commitments in the Programme for Government 2020, where the Department of Social Protection has a contributory role

- Legislate to provide for adoptive leave and benefit for male same-sex adoptive couples (in conjunction with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)
- We will establish a Commission on Welfare and Taxation to independently consider how best the tax system can support economic activity and promote increased employment and prosperity, while ensuring that there are sufficient resources available to meet the costs of the public services and supports in the medium and longer term (in conjunction with the Department of Finance)
- Extend free GP care to carers in receipt of the Carer's Support Grant (in conjunction with the Department of Health)
- Further develop the integration of digital services in Government and the creation of a single digital unit to drive more public services online (in conjunction with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)
- Implement an upskilling and reskilling programme so that workers from sectors that are unlikely to return to full capacity in the following year can avail of the opportunities in other more sustainable sectors. As part of this, we will publish an updated Apprenticeship Action Plan to look at new ways of structuring, funding, and promoting apprenticeships. It will have specific targets for the uptake of apprenticeships by women, people with disabilities and disadvantaged groups. We will, by the end of 2020, develop a strong pipeline of apprenticeships and traineeships (including mature apprenticeships) to support our recovery phase and to provide new career paths for people with different interests and abilities. We will embed apprenticeships and traineeships into Irish enterprise (in conjunction with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Innovation and Science)
- Introduce returnships in partnership with employers, to support women who have taken time out of work to raise their families or care for loved ones, to re-enter the labour market through new education, training, and personal development programmes (in conjunction with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Innovation and Science)
- Extend paid parental leave for parents, to allow them to spend more time with their baby during its first year (in conjunction with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)

- Investigate the provision of paid leave and social protection provision to victims of domestic violence (in conjunction with the Department of Justice)
- Promote an awareness and support programme for employers to support the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities
- A balanced scorecard for each area of public policy, focused on outcomes and the impact that those policies have on individuals and communities. Initially, this will be focused on housing, education, and health
- Explore how Ireland can be at the forefront of protecting citizens' rights with respect to facial recognition technology, access to encryption tools, and net neutrality
- Drive digital transformation in the public service, with greater integration of digital services. Budget and expenditure plans for each department must include measures that drive the digitalisation of public services and work within our public services, while maintaining access to those services to all (in conjunction with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform)
- We are committed to the introduction of personalised budgets, improving the provision of services for people with disabilities through a range of options, including service brokers, and empowering people to choose the supports that most meet their needs. This will be based on the experience of the pilot schemes
- Set out a pathway for the future implementation of the Temporary Wage Subsidy
- Work across government to address food poverty in children and ensure no child goes hungry.





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